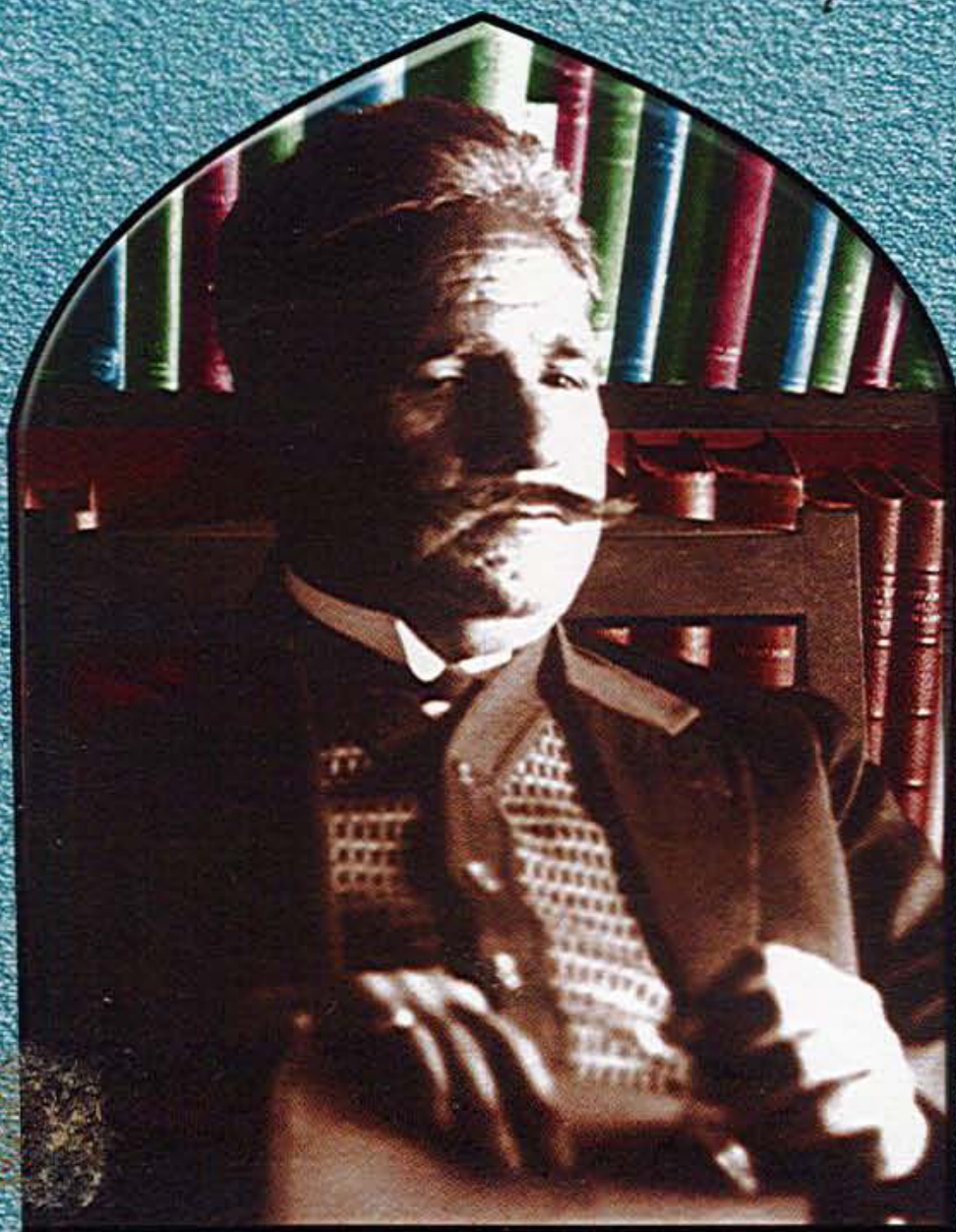


***IQBAL***  
**COMMEMORATIVE  
VOLUME**



*Ali. Sardar Jafri  
K. S. Duggal*



### Note

Due to oversight some names have been wrongly printed. Readers are requested to read the following names as correct.

<i>Page</i>	<i>As printed</i>	<i>Correct name</i>
1	B.B. Sahni	B.B. Sawhney
4, 8, 144, 320	Mr. G.P. Polinskaya	Mrs. L.R. Gordon-Polonskaya
4, 8, 294, 321	Dr. Tara Chand Rastogi	Dr. Tara Charan Rastogi
6	Lance Dave	Lance Dane



**IQBAL**  
**Commemorative Volume**







# **I Q B A L**

## **COMMEMORATIVE**

### **VOLUME**

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*Edited by*  
**ALI. SARDAR JAFRI**  
**K.S. DUGGAL**

**IQBAL ACADEMY PAKISTAN**



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I







*When enslaved nations' blood stirs,  
The direction-clad world of colour and scent  
Trembles. Incessant blows break into splinters  
The granite-hearted, crystal faced colossus of Autocracy.*





# Introduction

**D**R. SIR Mohammad Iqbal was a literary colossus who strode the Indian sub-continent in the early part of the twentieth century. A poet-philosopher, along with Rabindranath Tagore, he has influenced contemporary writing in the sub-continent most decisively. Whether it is India or Pakistan, there is an undeniable stamp of his genius on the creative talent of our times. It is, therefore, not surprising at all that both India and Pakistan vied with each other in celebrating his birth centenary that fell on 9th November 1977. In fact, the whole of the year 1977 was devoted to Iqbal with seminars and symposia, discussions and dissertations on the multi-faceted genius of the poet.

With a view to celebrating the centenary of the great bard appropriately, an All India Iqbal Centenary Celebrations Committee was constituted in India with Mr. Durga Prasad Dhar, the then Union Minister of Planning, as its Chairman. After his sad and sudden death, Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral, currently India's Ambassador in Moscow, was invited to shoulder the responsibility. He was assisted by a prestigious Executive Committee elected by a large number of eminent litterateurs meeting in Delhi. The Executive Committee comprised Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral (President), Mr. V. Shankar (Chairman, Finance and Accounts Committee), Prof. Syed Nurul Hasan (Vice President), Dr. Bharat Ram (Vice President), Mr. Krishan Chander (Vice President), Hakim Abdul Hamid (Vice President), Dr. Narayana Menon (Vice President), Pandit Anand Narayan Mulla (Vice President), Dr. Abid Husain (Vice President), Mr. Ali Sardar Jafri (General Secretary), Prof. Jagan Nath Azad (Jt. Secretary), Mr. Yusuf Teng (Jt. Secretary), Dr. Qamar Rais (Jt. Secretary), Mr. Mehrban Singh Dhupia (Jt. Secretary), Mrs. Amina Ahuja (Jt. Secretary), Mr. B.B. Sahni (Treasurer) and Mr. Akhtar Saeed Khan, Dr. Naresh, Mr. Abid Ali Khan, Mr. Suhail Azimabadi, Dr. Waheed Akhtar and Mr. Athar Nabi as members.

The late President of India, Janab Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, was the Patron of the Committee.

In order to assist the Executive Committee, a seminar committee including the following scholars was nominated : Dr. Khwaja Ahmed Farooqi, Prof. Ale-Ahmed Suroor, Dr. Masood Husain Khan, Dr. Prabhakar Machwe, Mr. Malik Ram, Dr. Gopi Chand Narang, Prof.

Rashiduddin Khan, Dr. Moonis Raza and Dr. Zoe Ansari. The panel of the foreign delegates to be invited for the International Seminar was prepared in consultation with this committee.

Apart from the International Seminar a number of regional seminars with the assistance of the Iqbal Centenary Celebrations Committee were also held in various parts of the country. More important among these were those held at Hyderabad, Srinagar, Jamia Millia Islamia (New Delhi) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi). The Hyderabad seminar was inaugurated by the late Mr. Durga Prasad Dhar and the Srinagar seminar was inaugurated by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. The Ambassador of Pakistan, Syed Fida Hussain, attended the Jawaharlal Nehru University seminar to convey the greetings of the people of Pakistan. He also contributed a thought-provoking paper to the seminar. The Jamia Millia seminar was also attended by friends from the Pakistan Mission in Delhi. It was a welcome development since the cultural relations between the two countries had long been non-existent. The Iqbal Centenary was a turning point as it were and these relations have ever since been improving.

The Iqbal Centenary Celebrations Committee received ample financial and moral support from the Central as well as the State governments. A number of Union Ministries participated in the programme actively.

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting arranged a photographic exhibition on Iqbal's life with the help of Prof. Jagan Nath Azad. Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral, then Minister, I & B, was the inspiration behind it. This exhibition was inaugurated by Sheikh Abdullah in Srinagar and ever since it is going round in different towns and literary centres. A pictorial album based upon the exhibits was also produced by the Ministry of I & B on the occasion of the International Seminar. The staff of the Urdu magazine "Ajkal" of the Publications Division helped in the preparation of this beautiful album. It was released at the International Seminar in November 1977 by Mr. L.K. Advani, the then Minister of Information & Broadcasting.

The Films Division decided to produce a documentary film in colour on the life, philosophy and poetry of Iqbal. Khwaja Ahmed Abbas and Mr. Ali Sardar Jaffri were entrusted with the production of the film. The

Government of Pakistan rendered valuable help in the preparation of the film. The External Affairs Ministry of the Government of India and the Pakistan Embassy in Delhi took active interest in it. The film was shot in Delhi, Bombay, Kashmir, Lahore and Sialkot, the birth-place of poet Iqbal. An attractive feature of the film is the projection of a number of paintings of celebrated artists, including the renowned Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Sadiqain and Raiba. Permission for using Chughtai's paintings was given by his son, Arif Rahman Chughtai. Sadiqain, the renowned artist of Pakistan, has made several paintings, providing a new aesthetic dimension to Iqbal's poetry on the occasion of the celebration of the poet's birth centenary. He offered 36 transparencies to the celebrations committee in India through Mr. Jafri. Iqbal's son, Justice Javed Iqbal, made himself available for an interview for the film. He rearranged all the articles in the manner in which they happened to be at the time of Iqbal's death in his room on 21st April, 1938 at 5 a.m. It provided another attraction for the documentary. The film was released on the 40th death anniversary of Iqbal in 1978. A copy of this documentary was presented by the then foreign minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, on behalf of the Government of India to the Government of Pakistan. The film provided a unique opportunity for cooperation between India and Pakistan and as such it is no less significant an event in the history of the sub-continent. It ensures a bright future for cultural cooperation between the two neighbours.

The Department of Culture of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare assisted whole-heartedly to make the International Seminar a brilliant success.

The celebrations were inaugurated at Vigyan Bhavan on 29th October, 1977 with an All India Mushaira. It was inaugurated by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Mr. M.M. Beg, with Mr. V. Shankar presiding over it. There were a number of foreign diplomats among the audience besides the Ambassador of Pakistan who conveyed the greetings of his country. The then foreign minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, Mr. Rajeshwar Rao, also attended the mushaira.

The mushaira was followed by the International Seminar on 30th October for four days. Besides India, scholars from Pakistan, the Soviet Union, Iran, Czechoslovakia, West Germany, Great Britain, the U.A.R. and



Iraq took part in it as delegates. Pakistan was represented by the Director of the Iqbal Academy, Dr. Moizuddin, a well-known critic, Dr. Jameel Jalibi, a noted litterateur, Dr. Ibadat Brelvi, the Dean of the Arts Faculty, Punjab University, Dr. Waheed Qureshi and Dr. Aliya Imam. The delegation from Pakistan was greeted with these words : "Your presence here gives us great pleasure. While welcoming you in this seminar, the whole of India welcomes you. It is our heartiest desire that you should visit our country again and again." (It was the first cultural delegation from Pakistan since the 1965 war.) Among the intellectuals who came from Iran were Mr. Mohammad Ali Eslami Nadushan, Mr. Jalali Naini, Dr. Parvez, Mr. Natil Khanleri, poet Nadir Nadirpur, Dr. Muhtabai and Dr. Ganjavi. The Soviet Union was represented by Prof. Mohammad Assimov (Chief of the University of Tadjikistan), Prof. Y. Chelyshev (Moscow), Mr. Ghafurov (Tadjikistan), Mr. G.P. Polinskaya (Moscow), and Dr. A.S. Sukhochev. Mr. Jan Marek came from Czechoslovakia and Prof. Anne-marie Schimmel, Professor of Comparative Religious Studies at the University of Bonn, represented the Federal Republic of Germany. England was represented by Prof. Sabri Tabrizi, who is head of the Persian Department in Edinburgh University. Victor Kiernan who has translated Iqbal into English was also to participate in the seminar but could not do so for unavoidable reasons. However, he sent his paper as a token of his participation. The U.A.R. was represented by Dr. Syed Mohammad Abdal-Wafa Taftazani and Iraq by the poet Yasin Taha Hafiz who has written a beautiful poem on Iqbal in Arabic.

Those who participated in the seminar from India among others were Prof. Abdi, Dr. Waheed Akhtar, Prof. Waris Alavi, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, Mr. Hayatullah Ansari, Dr. Zoe Ansari, Dr. A.W. Azhar, Mr. K.S. Duggal, Mr. Asghar Ali Engineer, Prof. Jagan Nath Azad, Prof. Khwaja Ahmed Farooqi, Prof. Mohammad Hasan, Mr. Ali Sardar Jafri, Dr. Umashankar Joshi, Mr. Abid Ali Khan, Prof. M.H. Khan, Dr. Alam Khundmiri, Dr. Prabhakar Machwe, Dr. Narayana Menon, Prof. Gopi Chand Narang, Mr. Kuldip Nayar, Prof. P.N. Pushp, Maulana Sabahuddin Abdur Rahman, Dr. Qamar Rais, Dr. Tara Chand Rustogi, Dr. S. Rehman, Prof. Attar Singh, Miss Zahida Zaidi, Mr. N.H. Ansari, Dr. Yusuf Husain Khan, Prof. Rashiduddin Khan, Mr. Suhail Azimabadi, Mr. Yusuf Teng, Mr. Akhtar Saeed Khan and

Mr. Rashid Hasan Khan. The President of Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu (India), Pandit Anand Narayan Mulla, and its General Secretary, Dr. Khaliq Anjum, also took part in one of the sessions. Mr. Hasrat Suhrawardi could not attend the seminar but had sent his paper. The Presidium of the International Seminar included Prof. Annemarie Schimmel (Germany), Prof. Mohammad Assimov (Tadjikistan), Dr. Parvez Natil Khanleri (Iran), Dr. Moizuddin (Pakistan), Dr. Narayana Menon (India), Dr. Prabhakar Machwe (India), Prof. Ali Mohammad Khusrro (India), Dr. Masood Hussain Khan (India) and Dr. Mohammad Hasan (India).

The seminar opened with two scintillating ghazals of Iqbal, followed by Mr. Ali Sardar Jafri, who spoke as General Secretary and chief organiser of the seminar. Prof. Umashankar Joshi, Chairman, National Academy of Letters, then inaugurated the seminar followed by the Minister of Information & Broadcasting, Mr. L.K. Advani, who released the pictorial album on Iqbal brought out by the Publications Division of the Government of India. In his speech, Mr. Advani paid glowing tributes to the great poet and philosopher. The Soviet delegates presented books produced on Iqbal in the Soviet Union to the Celebrations Committee. As many as 36 papers were read spread over eight sessions. Most of the papers were in English, some in Urdu and Persian and one in Arabic. The Iranian poet Nadir Nadirpur and the Iraqi poet Yasin Taha Hafiz read their poems composed in Persian and Arabic to pay their tribute to Iqbal.

The seminar was an unqualified success. The papers read and the discussions held were of a high order. The foreign delegates appreciated the intellectual calibre of the papers and discussions thereon. Some papers turned out to be critical, for example, those of Waris Alavi and Asghar Ali Engineer. The aim of the seminar was to make an objective evaluation of Iqbal's thought and art.

Apart from the mushaira and the seminar, a number of other cultural programmes were arranged in Delhi on the occasion. A play entitled "Iqbal" written by S.M. Mehdi was presented by Sabras, an organisation headed by Begum Abida Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations presented a dance-drama based on Iqbal's poetry. The Iranian Embassy held a reception for the delegates participating in the International Seminar. Hakim Abdul Hameed Saheb

hosted a dinner for the delegates on behalf of the Ghalib Academy. DAVP arranged a photographic exhibition on Iqbal from 29th October to 3rd November 1977. Amina Dehlvi has transformed Iqbal's verses into light and colour through her paintings; these beautiful paintings were also exhibited in Vigyan Bhavan, the venue of the seminar.

The celebrations are officially over but a lot more remains to be done. The International Seminar passed a resolution that a permanent commission on Iqbal be set up under the auspices of UNESCO and those countries who value Iqbal's literary and philosophic heritage should be invited to serve on the proposed commission. This resolution moved by the delegates from India, Pakistan, Iran and the Soviet Union was unanimously passed. (A similar resolution in a slightly different form was also passed in the International Iqbal Congress held in Lahore in December 1977.) This resolution has to be pursued and given practical shape with the cooperation of the Government of India.

The Commemoration Volume contains the papers submitted for the seminar as well as papers received after the seminar. It is hoped that this publication would make a useful contribution to the shelf of literature on Iqbal. It is regretted that it has not been possible to retain the quotations in the original Urdu and Persian in the text of the papers due to technical difficulties.

We are grateful to Mrs Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, who gave her gracious blessings to the Iqbal Centenary Celebrations when she was approached by Mr. Jafri in 1975-76. We are also thankful to Dr. S. Nurul Hasan, the then Minister of Education and Social Welfare, for granting funds for the International Seminar.

Our thanks also go to M/s Marwah Publications for producing the volume for the Celebrations Committee, in particular to Mr. P.R. Kaikini of Hind Pocket Books who was involved in reading the proofs. We are also thankful to Mr. Lance Dave of Marg Publications, Bombay, who helped in reading the papers. Finally, we thank Mr. Sadiqain for permission to include some of his paintings in this book and Qurratulain Hyder for translating the couplets relevant to the paintings into English.

K. S. DUGGAL



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## INVOCATION TO THE PERFECT MAN

Appear, O rider of Destiny!  
Appear, O light of the dark realm of change  
Illumine the scene of existence,  
Dwell in the blackness of our eyes!  
Silence the noise of the nations,  
Imparadise our ears with thy music!  
Arise and tune the harp of brotherhood,  
Give us back the cup of the wine of love!  
Bring once more days of peace to the world,  
Give a message of peace to them that seek battle!  
Mankind are the cornfield and thou the harvest,  
Thou art the goal of Life's Caravan.  
The leaves are scattered by Autumn's fury.  
Oh, do thou pass over our gardens as the Spring!  
Receive from our downcast brows  
The homage of little children and of young men  
and old!  
And silently undergo the pains of life.

*Asrar-e-Khudi*





# Opening Speech

THE WELL known German Orientalist, Prof. Annemarie Schimmel of Harvard University, has said of Iqbal : "Nobody would assert that he was a prophet, but we may admit that he has been touched by Gabriel's Wing!"

If I borrow her style of expression, I would say that Iqbal was not a revolutionary in the political sense of the word, but he was definitely touched by the revolutionary spirit of the twentieth century. Like a bee, he imbibed nectar from the flowers and turned it into his own honey. This was the creative process of his poetry and thought.

Iqbal, like his great contemporaries, both in the fields of politics and art, was a multi-dimensional personality who often reflected tendencies that seemed to be contradictory. To isolate one dimension of his personality and thought from the other dimensions is to distort the picture of the total man, the total poet. Yet at times for a study in depth of a particular dimension, that dimension would be isolated. This is bound to happen in such seminars as we have organised, where scholars representing different schools of thought and different ideologies have come together to pay their tribute to a universal poet of the modern age. But it would be necessary for the scholars presenting their papers or those who would take part in the discussion, to strike a balance between the various aspects of the great poet and philosopher.

Iqbal was born in the later part of the nineteenth century and matured in early twentieth century. The complexities of the historical situation and the economic development in our country were such that revolutionaries like Aurobindo combined religious revivalism, and deeply religious souls like Iqbal welcomed the winds of change and glorified the revolutions of our age and wrote a new kind of poetry

ALI SARDAR JAFRI  
General Secretary,  
All India Iqbal  
Centenary Celebrations  
Committee

which had never been written before.

Secular minds like Gandhi, in the words of Romain Rolland, introduced into human politics the strongest religious impetus of the last two thousand years and succeeded in stirring millions of people to revolt and shaking the foundations of the British Empire. Our task is not only to understand their contradictions but to find the basic truth which is beneficial to modern man. These great personalities do not confront each other, rather they complement each other.

A thinker and poet who finds himself at home in the company of Nietzsche and Shopenhauer, Marx and Lenin, Ghazali and Jalaluddin Rumi, Darwin and Einstein, MacTaggart, Whitehead and Bergson, Bhartarihari and Ghalib, Tahira, Qurratulain and Goethe, Tipu Sultan and Jawaharlal Nehru is a difficult subject. Islam and the Quran are his ideal, yet he has a word of praise for the Geeta. The Prophet Mohammad for him is the most perfect man, yet he respects Sri Krishna, Vishwamitra and Guru Nanak and pays his tribute to them. He takes pride in his Brahmin origin to be able to understand the secret of Rumi and Tabriz. Such an eclectic mind is like a mirror in which everyone can see reflected his or her face and read in that face his or her own thoughts. This is also a way of paying respect to the great poet and philosopher. The present International Seminar would provide many opportunities to witness this phenomenon.

On the political level, I try to understand Iqbal as a poet of Indian awakening and this includes present-day Bharat, Pakistan and Bangladesh. At the same time, he is a poet reflecting the Muslim awakening of Asia and the awakening of entire humanity. His greatest contribution is his philosophy of the Self which envisages man as a continuator of God's creation trying

to take the imperfect world to perfection. He would, like a prophet, try to awaken all the physical and spiritual potentialities of man to be able to realise his creative power and urges. This leads to the quest for a Perfect Man. Therefore, we celebrate Iqbal's 100th Birth Anniversary.

I welcome you all, dear friends from various countries of the world and various national languages of India, to this feast of poetry and thought.

I welcome you on behalf of the All India Iqbal Centenary Celebrations Committee and on my behalf. I should like to make a special reference to the delegates from Pakistan.

Our hearts are full of love for our friends from Pakistan who have come in a cultural gathering after many years. We welcome you and when we welcome you here in this seminar room, we know that the whole country is welcoming you. We would love to receive you as our guests in India again and again.

In this moment of joy, we remember with love and respect our departed friends and comrades whose enthusiasm for the Iqbal Centenary Celebrations we should commemorate : They include our late President of India, Janab Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, who was the Patron of the All India Iqbal Centenary Celebrations Committee, the late Chairman of our Committee Mr. D.P. Dhar and the eminent short story writer, Krishan Chander, a member of the Executive Committee. They are no more and we bow our heads in reverence.

It is my pleasant duty to thank the Government of India and the various State governments for their help and co-operation extended to our Committee and for their generous financial aid. Our special thanks go to the Ministry of Education whose help has made this International Seminar possible and also to the Ministry of

Information & Broadcasting for organising the Iqbal exhibition and sanctioning a documentary film in East-mancolor on Iqbal through the Films Division. We must also thank the Government of Pakistan for providing us the necessary facilities to shoot part of the documentary film on Iqbal in Lahore and Sialkot.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not thank the officials of the Department of Culture who have given their whole-hearted co-operation for the International Seminar.

I once again welcome the delegates from foreign countries and various national languages of India.



# Inaugural Address

I DEEM it a great honour to be asked to inaugurate this International Seminar on Allama Iqbal.

Great poetry is one of those things which gain with the lapse of time. Iqbal is today, when we have assembled to celebrate his birth centenary, a symbol, above all, of poetic excellence. Iqbal must have meant, in all probability he did mean, many things to many of his contemporaries. Today, however, what should concern us most is to try to understand a little more intimately what has contributed to the richness of his poetic voice.

For those of us, who began writing around 1930, the literary landscape of our vast sub-continent presented two towering personalities, Tagore and Iqbal.

If I may be permitted a personal reference, while in jail, during the Civil Disobedience Movement, I found an opportunity to learn some Bengali and Urdu. I am sorry I did not make such headway as I would have liked with Urdu; this is perhaps inexcusable in one who hails from Ahmedabad, the city credited with nursing the Muse of the first great Urdu poet, Wali. I was singularly lucky in my contacts with Muslim scholars and poets who introduced me to the treasures of Urdu poetry. I also found Urdu couplets adding flavour to the speeches in Parliament and conversations in the Central Hall, sometimes coming from unsuspected quarters. I would not permit a certain member, a zealous propagator of Hindi, to pass by me unless he recited a *shair*, and I was amazed at his resourcefulness.

While some of us Indian writers were on a visit to the USSR, the great Hindi poet, the late 'Dinkar', regaled us with hundreds of Urdu couplets during our tour in Uzbekistan. If I have dwelt at some length on such details, it is just in order to suggest the obvious, the compelling charm of Urdu poetry.

UMASHANKAR

JOSHI

Urdu seems to have been assiduously cultivated

for poetic articulation. And Dag could not be more right when he said: "*Ati hai Urdu zaban ate ate*". (To acquire Urdu is a slow and arduous process.) When successful, the poetic utterance is pithy, quintessential and captivating, as in the case of the famous seventy-two poignant lines of Mir selected by his contemporaries.

When one scans the nineteenth-century literary scene during the first half of the century in the various languages of this sub-continent, the observer is struck by the sheer paucity of peaks of excellence. To my knowledge, no language is in a position to claim the presence of a man of genius, as Urdu is, with its Ghalib, who is a world poet by any standards—not to talk of Mir, who flourished till the first decade of the century. Perhaps the *ghazal* form did the trick. Maybe the association of the language with the court had not a little to do with it. In any case, while several Indian languages were making a beginning almost from scratch under Western influence, Urdu had the tools of poetic expression handy, perfected by tradition.

Paradoxical as it may sound, Urdu, which reached a high watermark during the mid-nineteenth century, was rather tardy in adapting itself to and benefiting from the impact of the West. The reason lies in the politico-cultural milieu of the time. The none-too-happy outcome of the Nationalist Revolt of 1857 and the wiping out of Muslim power must have proved a traumatic experience. But the main factor was the shifting of the focus of interest to the sea-coast. The Western impact meant primarily a busy harbour. New ports came into being and the quickening of new life was felt at most of these new ports, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, which became the seats of the first three universities. The vast stretches of the Northern Indo-Gangetic plain lay for a while in a state of stupor, if

not of coma.

To realise clearly the odds under which Iqbal commenced his poetic career, one has only to have a look at the propitious cultural climate in which Tagore did his. Raja Ram Mohun Roy, a great colossus, had ushered in the renaissance early in the century. The reformist movement got a tremendous impetus from the fiery youthful Derozio. Tagore's father, Debendranath, who took over from Raja Ram Mohun Roy as a Brahmo leader, leaned only on the monistic philosophy of the Upanishads. The Brahmo Samaj divested Hinduism of its gods and goddesses and brought it, so to say, as close to Christianity as possible. Tagore is intensely devotional, but in his *Gitanjali*, "an offering of (devotional) songs", barely once is Krishna mentioned. In his metaphysical meditations, he rarely finds it necessary to refer to the *Gita*. In his novel *Gora*, he shows discomfiture and irrelevance of the revivalist spirit. *Qua* poet, he is fortunate in having Michael Madhusudan Datt as his predecessor, who evolved and made available for him the Bengali blank verse, as Marlowe did for Shakespeare.

For Iqbal, a voice of the modern age, things could not be more overwhelming. Renaissance, Reformism and Revivalism all seemed to be packed into a short space of time. The only saving grace was the emergence of Sir Syed Ahmad, a tower of strength, and the new poetic vein of poets like Hali and Azad. Iqbal went on forging new tools of expression as he went along and attained a voice of his own.

His voice was to be a distinct one. He could not remain a passive witness to what was happening to and in Turkey and Persia. His studies in England and Germany helped him crystallize his ideas and define his approach to the pressing problems of his time. As against the soulless cupidity and cruelty of the physi-

cally mighty West, he sang full-throatedly of self-affirmation, not an empty and vain assertion of the ego but the force of the soulfulness of personality, which has found a happy expression in these oft-quoted lines:

*Khudi ko kar buland itna ke har taqdir se pahle  
Khuda bande se khud poochhe bata teri raza kya hai.*  
“Make your personality so lofty that God would  
Himself ask you, every time He decides your destiny,  
to point out how you would wish it to be.”

Iqbal's voice came to be hailed as an authentic voice of the Indian Renaissance.

With *Asrar-e-Khudi*, Iqbal switched to Persian.

There has been an unending debate on the question whether the poet was well-advised in choosing another language as a medium for his poetry. Even some of his ardent admirers feel that he should have poured out his heart in Urdu alone and should not have taken to writing poetry in Persian, which many Urdu-lovers could not fully follow. The detractors argue that if Iqbal's idea was to reach a larger audience beyond the frontiers of his native land, he did not quite succeed, because his work, even as Ghalib's, fell short of being accepted as a significant part of contemporary Persian literature. They refer to Brown's *History of Persian Literature*. There was quite a furore over some remarks of members of the Iranian Cultural Mission who visited India six years after the poet's demise.

Not being qualified to speak on the quality of the Persian verse, I would restrict myself to making one or two observations on his choice of a newer medium. In early youth, I avidly read Nicholson's translation of *Asrar-e-Khudi*, and I have with me in Gujarati script *Zabur-e-Ajam* and *Payam-e-Mashriq*, rendered into

Gujarati by Shri 'Munadi' of Surat and published from Karachi by the Iqbal Academy, Pakistan. We all know that to write poetry in a language to which one is not born is often frustrating, and as somebody has wisely said, to do creative work in two languages is next to impossible. However, one can point out that Urdu is not so much removed from Persian, as Urdu or Bengali is, say, from English. And we know all too well how much of the creative energy of quite a number of Indians has flowed through English without adding significantly to the vast body of its literature. What is relevant is not the craving for or attainment of fame through the use of the other medium, but a satisfactory answer to the question—Was the use of another medium warranted by the times?

It should not be forgotten that Persian was the language of quite a large section of the ruling elite in India, before English took over, and it used to be studied as an important language. The greatest modern Gujarati poet, Nhanalal, whose birth centenary we are celebrating this year, studied Persian at college. Believe it or not, some Nagar Brahmins in Surat did their 'Sandhya' (morning puja) in Persian in early nineteenth century and those in Ahmedabad exchanged letters with their sons in Persian even during the middle of the century. No wonder, a poet of the calibre and vitality of Iqbal, born in Punjab in 1877, looked upon and handled Persian as a living language and not just a classical one and put it to creative use.

The use of English was highly warranted during the modern period. But look at what has happened to the English translations of Tagore in present-day UK and USA. They have become completely unreadable, and if interest in his work is to be revived, fresh translations will have to be made available. However,

even the old ones do meet a need as far as the English-reading public at home is concerned. A more relevant case is that of Sri Aurobindo, whose thirty volumes, published during his birth centenary, are mainly in English. They include an epic poem, *Savitri*, running into about thirty thousand lines. I wonder how those who write poetry today in English in Great Britain and America would take it as a poetic composition. But it does meet a need. Those who know English and are interested in the understanding of the supramental would feel drawn to the work and enjoy it aesthetically also. The Chilean poetess, Nobel Laureate Gabriela Mistral, is said to have benefited from the work of Tagore and Sri Aurobindo.

I think the works written in a medium other than one's mother tongue under the compulsion of the times should be viewed in a different perspective. It would be more profitable to explore what impact Iqbal's Persian work made on discerning minds in different parts of the world.

May I invite you to look at the phenomenon from still another point of view? From time immemorial, hordes of people from Central Asia, Persia and beyond have entered this land wave after wave through the Khyber Pass. If the voice of a major modern poet would not have aimed at reaching beyond the native frontiers to those Western areas, there would have been something lacking in the full orchestration of the Renaissance voice during the early decades of this century in India.

Much store is laid by Iqbal's philosophy. His political ideas and ideals also come in for discussion, for example, his pan-Islamic approach ("... *vatan hai sara jahan hamara*"). The detractors demur that he dropped this pet idea of his when he could feel the feasibility of an independent Muslim state emerging



in this subcontinent. While he is credited with conceiving the idea of 'Pakistan', Edward Thompson refers to a letter of Iqbal stating what his real views were. All such controversies and debates point to the fact that those who start discussing Iqbal the poet find themselves soon lost in discussing Iqbal the prophet.

The Latin word for 'poet' is 'vates', which also means 'prophet'. A poet need not become a prophet, as poet he *is* a prophet, because there is no poet who is not a kind of seer, a sage. Iqbal, a poet-prophet, accepts ideas from wherever he finds them, but he deals with them primarily as a poet. Because one comes across in Iqbal '*andar-khatar-zi*' ('live dangerously'), the Nietzschean slogan, one should not run away with the impression that he is much under his influence. As a matter of fact, no two personalities could be so dissimilar as our poet and the German philosopher. Bergson seems to have played a far more important role in the shaping of the poet's attitudes. On the whole, his emphasis on the affirmation of a dynamic soulful personality is peculiar to Iqbal himself, born of his vision of the interaction of the Western civilization and the Eastern during the pre-First World War period. It is essentially a poet's vision. His deep religious-mindedness, his concern for the down-trodden and the exploited, his humanism had also much to do with it. Though emerging from a certain time-space context, it has something universal and permanent about it. It embodies his musings on the destiny of man on this earth and purports to define man's relationship with God and, what is more immediate, with fellow-man.

*Mohammad bhi tera, Jibril bhi, Qur'an bhi tera,  
Magar yah harf-e-shirin tarjuma tera hai ya mera?*  
"Mohammed is yours and Gabriel too, the *Quran*

is yours. But this sweet speech, does it interpret you to me or me to you?

Iqbal's poetry is the product of a soul aflame with Truth's beauty. His sheer vitality is amazing. He hates to imitate. He would rather emulate to become what he admires. Michael Madhusudan Datt devotes the better part of a canto in his epic *Meghnadavadha* to Rama's visit to the world of the manes *a la* that of Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Iqbal identifies himself with Dante and chooses as his 'guide, master, lord' Jalaluddin Rumi, who was, so to say, Virgil and Beatrice rolled into one. In response to Goethe's Western *Divan*, he presents himself as an Eastern Goethe in *Payam-e-Mashriq*, which—it should be noted—is justifiably in Persian. It is, as the Gujarati translator avers, to West's 'assalama alayaqum', a return-greeting 'valay-qum assalam' on the part of the East.

When one thinks of the total poetic achievement of great poets like Kalidasa, Tagore and Iqbal, one is reminded of Rilke's words about Michelangelo:

"That was the man who always reappears  
When any age, to mark its closing years,  
Strives yet once more to recapitulate.  
There's one who still can heave its total weight  
And hurl it into his abysmal breast."

To a votary of *harf-e-shirin*—mellifluous speech, who had earned so to say a permanent domicile in the world of Rumi, love was the only salvation. For the earth-dwellers salvation is in love, he said (*Dharati ke basiyonki mukti pareet main hai*). A year after his death, a young English poet, W.H. Auden, was to remind mankind at the time of the breaking out of the Second World War:

“We must love one another or die.”

The poet Iqbal will remain a golden link between Pakistan and India and with his cosmic vision will attract pilgrims from other parts of the world to participate in celebrations like the present one, so appropriately hosted by India. At every consecutive centenary the participants will feel more and more justified in vouching for the fact that his verse is ever-fresh and ever-new—*taza-b-taza nau-b-nau*.

With this humble homage to the poet, I have great pleasure in inaugurating this seminar.



## IQBAL : A TRIBUTE

FIDA HUSAIN

*Ambassador of Pakistan*

IT gives me great pleasure to associate myself with this function to pay tributes to the genius of Allama Mohammad Iqbal and the great contribution he has made towards the emancipation of minds during a critical period of the history of South Asia. As a poet, thinker and philosopher, he urged the people to shake off their lethargy. He gave the message of constant struggle and action. He called for inculcation of self-discipline, self-respect and self-reliance through his concept of *Khudi* and wanted its expression through righteous action.

He provided intellectual leadership during a time of stagnation and utter demoralisation and re-built the self-confidence of his compatriots as a first step towards the overthrow of alien domination and bondage. His message, however, is for the time beyond. He called for constant action and struggle because anything contrary is according to him synonymous with death. It is this message which is relevant today and will remain a beacon light for the generations of freemen and women to come, for, according to Iqbal, the state of slavery was but an artificial situation and of human freedom an abiding one. In fact, Iqbal's philosophy can best be imbibed and acted upon by a free people and by following it they can soar to those heights which were the abode of his imagination.

Allama Iqbal was born a hundred years ago. We in Pakistan are observing his centenary and the year-long programme includes a deeper study of his times and message, a definitive biography of the great poet, a travelling exhibition of his relics and manuscripts, seminars, declamation contests, mushairas and essay competitions. The construction of the Iqbal Memorial and Iqbal Museum in Lahore, the setting up of Iqbal Chairs in some selected universities and an international congress on Iqbal in November this year are also part of these celebrations. It has

also been decided to institute an annual prize of the value of rupees five lakhs to be known as the 'Iqbal International Prize for Promotion of Universal Brotherhood of Man' commencing this year.

As a poet, Iqbal reached dizzy heights which are hitherto unsurpassed. His genius in the field of poetry showed itself early and his lyrical outpourings in ghazals and poems are of exquisite charm and beauty, full of music and rich with colour and imagery. His excellence in this field is undisputed. He made Urdu and Persian the vehicles of his profound thoughts and no other poet has left a deeper and more indelible stamp on his times and a richer legacy. His intense patriotism, his passion for freedom and his urge for a new world based on justice and peace influenced the writers of his age and those who followed. He turned them all to the problems of life and helped relate art to life.

Allama Iqbal saw the individual in the corporate context. He turned his attention to the individual and sought to rebuild him in God's image so that when he aggregated to the totality of a nation, the new entity should be braced for greater tasks and onerous responsibility. In a society where the individual sought his salvation on his own, Iqbal reminded him that this was the path which had led to fragmentation and subjugation.

He lived through momentous times. His was the generation which grew in the aftermath of the failure of all efforts to prevent the insidious stranglehold of the British Empire and also the struggle to throw off the colonial yoke when it had finally established itself. This last decade of the nineteenth century during which he attained his manhood was the period of extreme despair and utter demoralisation. The people were not talking of freedom any more. Instead, they had reconciled themselves to bondage and were talking of the benefits of British rule. At this time, his clarion call tore the veil of silence. He shook his people out of listlessness, talked of incessant struggle and thought of reaching soaring heights. He talked of the past with a quiver of anticipation rather than that of longing or a lingering look behind. He looked back only to draw inspiration for the onward march. He was more interested in the present and the future.

During his stay in Europe soon after the turn of the century, he had seen two European empires hastening towards their end. He also saw the rise of liberalism, the rise of the movements against Romanovs and the victory of an Asian power over European arms. In his homeland, however, oppression held sway. Ghalib had seen this tyranny taking roots and sought refuge in a death wish.

Iqbal also bore this sorrow deep in his heart. He found very few to whom he could bare his tortured soul. But this deep sorrow did not lead him to despair. In fact, it goaded him into action and he by his tortured soul and dynamism urged his countrymen to rise and change their destiny. How could a sensitive and perceptive mind like his keep silent over



such a situation? He lit that spark of freedom which in his lifetime became a burning flame. Had he lived a few years more, he would have seen this fire of freedom which he helped kindle burn down the edifice of tyranny and oppression and sweep away the exploitative system of colonialism and imperialism.

Allama Iqbal was among those leaders of South Asia who examined and analysed the Western civilisation closely. He did not reject everything but at the same time he was far from being overawed by its glitter as he described it. But he drank deep at the founts of Western knowledge and philosophy and was influenced by the German philosophers. His Perfect Man resembles in many ways the superman of Kant except that the Kantian superman is amoral, while Iqbal's Perfect Man is a moral and righteous person. With Goethe he shares the concept of the struggle of will in man. Iqbal's Perfect Man, however, discriminates between good and evil and his *khudi* develops after he has mastered his self and by his own supreme will and volition chosen the path of right as a moral being. When he compares himself with Goethe, the major difference he found was, whereas he had been reared in the garden of freedom, Iqbal was born in a soil stricken with death. It was the life-giving nourishment of Iqbal which re-animated his country and made it throb with new life and activity.

He, however, never considered the imperialist fort as impregnable. He repeatedly reminded the Asian and African peoples of their past glories and predicted that the Asian phoenix would rise again. He addressed South Asians, Afghans, Iranians and Arabs and reminded them of what they had been and to what state of degradation they had been reduced. He asked them to regain the initiative and be their old selves again. He foretold the awakening of the sleeping Chinese giant and also predicted the death of the era of colonialism delivered from the womb of capitalism.

The new world he visualised was in terms of unity of the third world to face the post-colonial situation. How far the stream of Iqbal's thought has influenced the current of contemporary thought is difficult to say. But it cannot be contested that he had achieved his objective in no modest manner. Few poets have had such a large audience as Iqbal has. His works, though not all, have been translated into English, French, German, Bengali, Hindi, Sindhi, Pushtu, Turkish, Indonesian and Arabic.

He called for a new world based on equality and respect for the rights of nations. Today's struggle will, I am certain, realise one of his ideals by establishing a new international order based on justice and fair play.

His political thought is very clear. Having seen the havoc caused by Western colonialism based on narrow nationalism and materialism, he called for a polity which integrated statecraft and humanism born out of spiritualism and religion. It was an anguished mind that said:

*Jalaal-e-Padshahi ho ke jamhoori tamasha ho  
Juda ho deen siyasat se to rah jati hai Changezi*

We should, however, remember that his concept of *deen* is

*Mazhab nahin sikhata aapas mein bair rakhna*

A philosopher, poet, guide, seer and reformer, he was among the profoundest thinkers of his age. He was the messenger of renaissance for the people of South Asia and the Muslims of this region. His great contribution as a Muslim poet, however, does not take away anything from the universality of his message. He stood for the respect of man and a system in which he would be able to attain his aspirations.

With these few words, which I realise could not have done justice to the many-sided genius of the Poet of the East, I express my grateful thanks to the organisers of this meeting for providing me an occasion to join this galaxy of renowned scholars to pay my homage to one who was one of the most outstanding of them in his time. Such rare and great minds are indeed not born every day and blessed are those nations who find such personalities among them every now and then.

An address read in the Jawaharlal Nehru University seminar on Iqbal held with the cooperation of the All India Iqbal Centenary Celebrations Committee.

## II





*Open thine eyes, look at the earth, the high-spread sky,  
The azure air,  
Behold the lustrous sun rising in the East.*



## IQBAL'S RELEVANCE TO THE PRESENT-DAY WORLD : PERSIAN WRITINGS OF IQBAL

G. R. SABRI TABRIZI

**M**ANY scholarly books and papers have been written about Iqbal. Some have regarded him superficially as a national poet with dogmatic religious views, and others, more thoughtfully, have tried to link him with the ideas of Nietzsche, Bergson and Goethe. In other words, Iqbal's poetry and philosophy are regarded as following a European model or influence. But a close study of Iqbal's writings rejects these extreme views. He was neither a nationalist in the limited meaning of the term, nor was he a student or follower of philosophers like Nietzsche.

Iqbal is above all the product of his social and historical environment. His writings are the voice of millions of people who either had no opportunity to speak out or were silenced by social and political oppression. India and most of Asia and Africa were blighted and reduced to poverty by Western imperial and colonial powers. The native culture and languages of these countries were trodden upon by foreign invaders. European languages, particularly English, gradually, though often by force or the need for better employment, became the official language and were regarded as the sign of civilisation and hence of superiority. Western industrial goods were sold in Eastern bazaars. Their military weapons were used against the people. The philosophy of 'Reason', religion and literature were also imported alongside industrial goods, and taught in universities. Thus the people were exploited both economically and intellectually—physically and spiritually. The operation took more than a century, during which native literature, language, religion and philosophy were buried underneath the imported and artificial culture—Islam, in particular, which had originally been a revolutionary movement and had risen against the suppressive system of Qur-

aish, the Persian Empire and the rigid philosophical systems, had already become (like Orthodox Christianity) passive and abstract. This is the history of the times in which Iqbal lived. Only within this social and political atmosphere can Iqbal's voice, particularly in his Persian writings, be fully understood. His imagination and philosophy are rooted in Eastern culture and inspired by his love of the people and his share in their sufferings. Now this leads us to question ourselves: (1) What is the importance of Iqbal's writings and his historical and moral stand or commitment? (2) What is his relevance to the present-day world?

Iqbal, like the great English poet William Blake, was a poet of the people. In other words, the centre of the poet's inspiration and attention must be man or the man in the street: "My streets are my Ideas of Imagination", writes Blake in his book *Jerusalem*. By mentioning Blake, I do not intend to suggest that Iqbal was writing with Blake as his model. Probably Iqbal had not read Blake at all. But what I intend to convey here by mentioning Blake is the definition of the poetry, personality, and social or historical commitment of Iqbal. Iqbal, like Blake, was a poet committed to the people. Contrary to many European Romantic poets (for example, Wordsworth), Iqbal was committed to Man rather than to Nature.

Iqbal was born in Panjab while it was occupied by the British colonial power, and brought up among poor and hard-working people of Lahore and other cities. In other words, Panjab's streets, gardens and people formed his imagination. This mental form of the objective world or society became the root and source of inspiration for the poet. He always looked within himself to this source. "Until we see an environment or society closely, until we live in it, mix with the people, and hear and share their griefs and learn about their wants," wrote Samad Behranghi (late famous contemporary Persian writer from Azerbaijan), "it is vain and useless to show ourselves sympathetic to that society and people, and even to write stories for them . . ."<sup>1</sup> A person who is living comfortably in Europe cannot be objective and aware of difficulties resulting from living and political conditions in Asia or Africa. Even a writer or poet who lives in comfort and writes only about nightingales, flowers, his girlfriends, or in flattery of kings and lords, would not do much good to society. Poets or writers, no matter whether their subject be educational, economic, historical, philosophical or political, ought to have a social and human responsibility. In other words, mere learning or the acquisition of knowledge is not enough. In *The Secrets of Selfhood*, his first long philosophical poems in Persian (published in 1915 and 1918), Iqbal writes:

"Gaining information about knowledge and science is not the only end,



The buds and flowers cannot replace the meadow,  
But knowledge ought to be a means for the security of life,  
It ought to be the means of self-assertion.

Knowledge and science grew and rose with life,  
They were born and brought up with human existence,  
We live by recreation of ends,  
We shine by the light of desire."

(pp. 17-18)

Iqbal's imagination was neither abstract nor limited. It was rooted in his society. His driving desire and aim was to create society and protect its interests rather than to use knowledge for his limited and selfish interests. For "the buds and flowers cannot replace the meadow" or the people. When he attacks philosophers like Plato, he attacks abstract philosophy and the limited nature of knowledge which is used by the ruling class to teach love, affection, democracy and reason, but which they do not put into practice. Satirising this kind of philosophy and abstract knowledge, he writes in *Zabur-e-Ajam*:

"I won't depend on the kind of reason with which Plato regards  
the world,  
For there is a small joyful and seeing heart with me.  
What is this world? It is the idle-house of my assumptions,  
Its manifestation depends on my seeing eyes.  
Existence and non-existence depend on my seeing and not seeing  
For the idea of 'Time' and 'Place' is only a joke of my thoughts.  
Logic and philosophy have made me heavy  
Oh my Elias! Remove this heavy burden from my head,  
The kind of Reason which wanders the universe deserves a Turkish  
surprise attack by night,  
A small heart-to-heart chat is better than Platonic knowledge."

(p. 32)

When Iqbal attacks 'Reason', he in fact attacks the mechanical and philosophical system of Europe. He criticises the poverty of philosophy and 'Reason', which were taught by the ruling colonial interests to their poor subjects. Reason was respected but emotion and heart were suspected. The ruling class tried, by the Newtonian concept of the universe and social outlook, to maintain the *status quo*. Otherwise, Iqbal was a supporter of the right kind of philosophy, the philosophy which honoured human values and attacked the exploitation of man by man. "There is indeed a difference between selfish or limited 'reason' and the 'reason' with the 'world outlook.'" (*Payam-e-Mashriq*, p. 228.) When he says that "a small heart-to-heart chat is better than Platonic knowledge", he wants to bring knowledge from vacuum to reality—to organic life, to turn eyes

from the limited life to the unlimited one, from abstraction to action. Only the marriage of heart to heart or common interests can bring change and unseat the ruling class—not Newtonian ‘Reason’.

Iqbal's poetry is organic and rooted in the heart of the masses because he shares their feelings and desires, and speaks and writes for them. Although in some of his poems, for example, *Javed Nama* and *Zabur-e-Ajam*, he seems to be flying high in his own realm, yet all these seem to me a necessary part of human imagination. All true poets create past, present and future by their creative imagination. This creation has, in one way or another, its roots in their streets, in reality—the objective world of colours and senses. By bringing in mythological stories and allegorical tales (such as the ascendancy of Mohammad to heaven, Gabriel's flight, etc.), the poet recreates the past and suggests that these are part of human imagination and desire which can remove obstacles and turn systems upside down by translating vision or imagination into action. In other words, Man has created his own myth and allegory, but later on forgetting and ignoring the power of the poetic or creative genius of Man (which is as old as Man), he has allocated these mythological and allegorical tales to God or gods. Here Iqbal has common ground with Rumi, who attacked rationalists and those who interpreted the *Quran* literally. Iqbal criticises mullahs and priests for using these allegorical tales for the enslavement of Man. Satirising mullahs by calling them the ‘Wise’ and the ‘Elect’:

“I am returning from the lesson of the Wise unhappy and disturbed  
 Sometimes the world on top of me and sometimes I on top of the  
 world,  
 Here is neither winking of the wine-giver nor is there a word of  
 lover,  
 I am returning from the feast of Mullah and Sufi very sad,  
 A time will come when your Elect will need me  
 Because I am a man from the desert who is coming to visit the king  
 without fear.”

(*Zabur-e-Ajam*, p. 43)

Iqbal knew that when religious leaders (the ‘Wise’) escape from reality to the solitary and abstract world of Sufism or give their service to the ruling interests (the ‘Elect’) in order to receive money and live comfortably, then their minds become passive and enslaved and thus lose their creativity. But the poet, by honouring human values, frees himself from this passivity and bondage and sides with the people of the desert against the ‘Elect’. This assertion of human values helps the poet to be independent from God or gods, so that he wishes to free others from mental enslavement by saying constantly: “Turn your eyes within

yourself." Turning to oneself is the starting-point of individual perception or emancipation and social revolution. Revolting against the concept of God and passivity, he writes in *Zabur-e-Ajam*:

"Either you should not issue orders for Muslims to sacrifice  
Or you should create a new soul in this run-down body.  
Either do this or that!  
Either a new world or a new test  
For how long will you treat us as you treated those before us,  
Either do this or that!  
Either kill in my heart the zeal of revolution  
Or you should turn the foundation of this earth and time,  
Either do this or that!  
Sparks rise up from my earth: where should I pour them, whom  
should I burn?  
You have made a mistake by putting this zeal and desire in my  
soul!" (p. 38)

Through this independence and freedom, Man is revealed as a responsible being in his individual and social life. Here is the difference between abstract knowledge or philosophy and the practical. The former binds and enslaves human imagination to a super-power which is separate and divorced from Man, but the latter frees human imagination and thinking power from all sorts of mystical and mysterious powers outside human existence or society. An abstract writer or philosopher acts outside human and social reality, but the true poet or philosopher sees reality and uses all mythology and allegory as a vehicle to assert human values and creation. Attacking those who put the mind to sleep by negating and denying the material world, Iqbal writes:

"Do not say that the universe is without foundation  
And that every minute of our life is covered with a veil,  
Take today firmly in your hand  
Because tomorrow is not yet born from the universe.

....

The universe of colours and smell is understandable,  
There are too many flowers to be picked by you in this land,  
But do not close your eyes to within yourself  
For there is an interesting thing to see in your soul too."

(*Payam-e-Mashriq*, pp. 85-88)

Iqbal is a dialectical thinker. While stressing the importance of the material world, he stresses, at the same time, the importance of the human soul or human perception, without which the world becomes

dead. He often tells us not to close our eyes to that within ourselves. By this he in fact stresses the importance of the world's impression on Man and his mental perception from it. This perception forms the world within from which the driving force, or 'Selfhood', which is social, takes its energy.

Iqbal's revolt against the existing philosophical system manifests itself in two ways: one is in his satire of the whole universe and its creator, and the other is in his philosophy of 'materialism' formed in opposition to the selfishness and passivity of 'spiritualism'.

What do we mean when we say that Iqbal is a materialist philosopher? The ruling interests and their philosophical system (including orthodox religion) taught that the source of all life is the spiritual world. Love of Allah and the spiritual world was regarded as good, and love of the material world and bodily desire was considered evil. The orthodox religion and philosophical system, while living amid wealth and worldly riches, taught self-denial and the love of Allah. Orthodox Islam, like Orthodox Christianity and other state religions, advocated self-restraint, warned people of 'Hell' on the one hand and promised 'Heaven' in the world after. Thus they defiled the humanism of Islam and suppressed its social and revolutionary spirit. Opposing these abstract and passive teachings, Iqbal writes:

"A handsome youth with a colourful hat  
His look like a lion without shelter.  
He is sent to school to learn the knowledge of sheep,  
Which cannot even offer him a leaf of a tree."

(*Armaghan-e-Hejaz*, p. 144)

The knowledge of sheep is the key word which shows how minds are tamed and formed, how eyes are blinded by the abstract and empty teachings of the established system. The system is a slave-seller and wants people to follow its rules like sheep without thinking and questioning. Rejecting the rigid and mechanical system, Iqbal writes in *Armaghan-e-Hejaz*:

"What is the use of that thought which is wandering in the universe,  
And goes round planets,  
Such a thought is like a piece of cloud  
Which is tossed in space by the wind."

(p. 140)

"When you see that a caravan is killed by thieves on its way,  
Why do you ask how the caravan was killed?  
Do not be sure of the knowledge that you are taught  
For this knowledge can kill the spirit of a nation."

(p. 144)

"Your struggle is not for development and achievement,  
 You are not aware of sufferings and poverty  
 I have escaped from that non-existence  
 Where you cannot hear lamentation at midnight." (p. 8)

Iqbal brings knowledge from an abstract level to a practical and human level. In other words, knowledge and religion which are divorced from people and their needs are abstract and thus useless. Iqbal's stress on the word 'action' (*Amal*) should be understood in its social context. Satirising those who have reduced religion to a discussion about this world and the world after (*Qiyamat*) he writes:

"I do not want this world and the world after,  
 It is enough for me to know only the secret of life.  
 Show me the way to enthusiasm and joy  
 By which I can make the earth and heaven delightful."  
 (*Armaghan-e-Hejaz*, p. 12)

"The Muslim who is poor and has no proper clothing  
 Makes Gabriel angry about his condition.  
 Rise and let us create another nation  
 Because this nation has become a burden." (*Ibid.*, p. 18)

"When a nation has a plan for working  
 When a nation is rewarded joys for her efforts  
 Then such a nation cannot be satisfied with one world,  
 But carries two worlds on her shoulders." (*Ibid.*, p. 19)

In other words, he marries the material world to the spiritual one. The intellectual life corresponds to the material world—Man develops both bodily and spiritually, or economically and intellectually.

Iqbal attacks the philosophical system which teaches metaphysics on the one hand and accumulates wealth on the other. Iqbal asserts that Man is made of matter and that his existence, desire, love and motivation are ruled by the material world. Man's dependence and independence are determined by his material circumstances. The root of suffering is social injustice and poverty. Merely reciting the *Quran*, or calling for help from the Prophet, is in fact degradation of the dynamic philosophy of Islam:

"The poor Muslim sighs and pours out grief from his heart  
 His heart is lamenting! Why is it lamenting?  
 He does not know.  
 And saying: look down upon me, look down upon me, O Prophet of  
 Allah." (*Ibid.*, p. 38)

Again he writes:

“What shall I write about that poor and suffering Muslim who is  
valuable,  
He has neither energy nor excitement in his blood  
No tulips are being grown on his farm,  
His hands are as empty as his pockets,  
And his Book is lying in his ruined house.” *(Ibid., pp. 40-41)*

Although Iqbal is philosophically a materialist, he is morally a spiritualist and humanist. He asserts the importance of the material world but criticises selfishness. The material world is not evil, but evil can exist in the nature of human relationship with the material world. The man who works and enjoys material rewards is not committing a sin. But he who forbids others the material world, while accumulating wealth at the expense of others is sinful. When Iqbal attacks Frang or the West, he is attacking the nature of her relationship with the East. In other words, he is attacking the colonialism and imperialism of the West. Western culture teaches love and morality on the one hand, and exploits on the other. She takes with one hand and offers aid under the banner of ‘Christian charity’ with the other.

“A Muslim who is in the bondage of the West  
His heart cannot be fulfilled easily.” *(Armaghan-e-Hejaz, p. 11)*

“The West knows how to gain her economy  
She offers to one and takes from others.  
Satan is benefited in such a way that even God is surprised at it.”  
*(Ibid., p. 209)*

Criticising the West for her support to the minority-ruling businessmen, Iqbal continues:

“There is no need to extend this tale  
I shall put down the hidden secret in a word.  
The world is the world of businessmen.  
How can one appreciate a place which does not exist?”  
*(Ibid, p. 209)*

Iqbal’s criticism of the philosophers of rationalism in the West was essentially because of their social outlook. Rationalism was abstract and mechanical. Reason, which was introduced as a magic word from the civilised West, served as a banner for colonialism. In order to civilise the uncivilised world, Reason was used as a tool. It was the burden of the

civilised West to teach the uncivilised East how to bear suffering by mastering the mind. Iqbal in his philosophical writings often attacks the philosophy of rationalism.

In *Naqsh-e-Frang* Iqbal comments on European philosophers. He prefers Rumi to Goethe "who is not a prophet but a writer". Hegel's birds of reason apparently soar too high but in reality "are mere stupefied hens who stay in the yard without a mate" (p. 245). Hegel is trying to discover the way of love through reason as if he were seeking the sun through a lamp (p. 243). Kant emerges from the night of eternity with a glittering counterfeit star (p. 251). Nietzsche is regarded as a 'bull in a china shop' (p. 238). He is superficially attractive but his basic ideas are chaotic and lead the follower into the trap of egoism.

Iqbal's opposition to European philosophers is not superficial or mere prejudice of a Muslim thinker against non-Muslim thinkers. His criticism is fundamental and rests on moral and social bases. His quarrel with Nietzsche, for example, if we go to the heart of the matter, is based on human principles, and is thus important and relevant to the present day. Nietzsche's outlook on the world is totally different from Iqbal's. Nietzsche regarded the world as a stormy ocean with currents of conflicting forces and energies fighting for power and lasting supremacy. Their sole aim is power. Nietzsche's 'blond besti', the 'herrenrasse' or 'race of leaders' and 'Übermensch' or 'Superman' gave inspiration and a philosophical basis to German Nazism. This kind of thinking was practised in Vietnam and is still being practised in parts of Africa and Asia by fascist regimes. Nietzsche's philosophy can thus lead to a disastrous kind of jungle rule, the strongest dominating the weakest. Iqbal opposed this social racialism and idea of conflict, and his opposition is still relevant in the present-day world.

While Iqbal urges his fellow-countrymen to rise against imperialism and free themselves from the 'Lords', at the same time he tells them that freedom from Western colonialism is not the end of the matter. They should also free themselves from prejudice and idol worship:

"You have freed yourself from the Western lords  
But you are still worshipping graves and tombs  
You are so used to being lulled to sleep  
That you still carve your stone idols.  
While you are yet bound by water and land  
You talk about being a Rumi [Turk] or Afghani.  
I am, above all, a human being regardless of colour and peculiar  
odour.  
Only after that, I am either an Indian or a Turanian."

(*Payam-e-Mashriq*, pp. 85-91)

Iqbal's message is universal and his outlook is unlimited. Those scholars who interpret Iqbal's defence of his wretched people as limited nationalism are indeed mistaken and have misread his works. In *Payam-e-Mashriq* (pp. 52-4), for example, he condemns racialism and limited world outlook to the extent that he tells us that if ever an Arab (Prophet Mohammad or Islam) considers himself superior because of the colour of his skin, then you should leave him, that is to say, leave Islam.

"To our eyes the meadow has only one colour,  
Who knows what it looks like to the nightingales?  
O you people who behave childishly, discipline yourselves,  
Are you a true Muslim? Then leave your class superiority,  
Even if the Arab regards himself superior because of the redness of  
his blood and colour of his skin  
Then leave the Arab too."

To the limited eye the meadow has only one colour, but to the eye of the 'bird', or the unlimited eye, the meadow is formed of many colours. This is true Iqbal, who rises above all limited outlooks and inhuman racialism. He believed in Islam because of the human and social principles that Islam stood for. Iqbal's message is:

"I am, above all, a human being regardless of colour and peculiar odour.  
Only after that, I am either an Indian or a Turanian."

In other words, there is only one race, which is the 'human race', and all should unite against the enemies of this race.

Iqbal knew that, in order to fight against the enemies of the 'human race', we have to cultivate and revive the original culture within the masses by giving them a sense of place and security. He recognised the power of the masses as a deciding factor in this struggle. He himself made a historical choice by siding with the workers and peasants. He felt at home and at peace with the people, rejecting the ruling class.

"You stay here and mix with the Elect  
I am going to the home of friends."

(*Armaghan-e-Hejaz*, p. 164)

His friends were the people rather than the elect or individuals—the 'meadow' rather than the buds and flowers. "The buds and flowers cannot replace the meadow."

He attacks the injustice of the existing social system, and defends the oppressed against the hypocrisy of the ruling interests:



"Do not tell me that God has done this,  
 You can wash away the dust by this excuse.  
 Just turn this world upside down  
 Where the unjust steals from the just!  
 Bring hatred out of your heart  
 For smoke should go out of the house.  
 Refuse to pay tax from your dearly cultivated land,  
 And do not be the headman who plunders the village."

(*Armaghan-e-Hejaz*, pp. 164-65)

Iqbal sided with the working class and the suffering peasants. By rejecting selfish individualism, Iqbal asserts the importance and values of the social and universal Man. In other words, a heart which beats only for its own limited interest is a selfish heart and thus non-human. Humanity should be understood in its social relationship, and the human heart must be unlimited—embracing the whole society. Attacking those who associate social evil with human nature, he remarks:

"You say that the heart is made of earth and blood  
 And is bound by materialism.  
 Our heart is confined in our chest  
 But it is not unlimited and exists outside our own limited world."

(*Ibid.*, p. 168)

This unlimited heart of Man has been reduced to this limited state by selfish interest. Thus Iqbal, remarking on Marx, concludes that Man has become the enemy of Man by the conflict of material interests.

"Man who is creative and discoverer of all things has become  
 alienated from his own creative past  
 Man has become killer of Man because of capitalism."

(*Payam-e-Mashriq*, p. 235)

In order to free ourselves from all sorts of bondage and exploitation, Iqbal advises us to rely on human creative power. Only by faith in the creative and practical power of Man can Muslims redevelop and flourish.

Bearing in mind what has been said, and the progressive ideas that Iqbal has expressed in most of his writings, one essential question occurs to one's mind: "Why are we not taught about Iqbal's progressive ideas or, even if we are taught, why have we not put them into practice in society?" Iqbal, as I pointed out at the start, revolted against imperialism, colonialism, and all sorts of exploitation of Man by Man; but later on, after his death, he was used by the conservative governments and ruling interests in order to win the support of the people and, at the same

time, to defuse his revolutionary and progressive ideas which ultimately can endanger the interests of the ruling class. Thus Iqbal's ideas are distorted and his poetry is reduced to fit merely ceremonial occasions.

However, Iqbal still belongs to the people, and his message is still very relevant to our present-day world, and I repeat it once more:

"I am, above all, a human being regardless of colour and peculiar odour.

Only after that, I am either an Indian or a Turanian."

In order to free human beings from the chains of racialism and exploitation:

"Just turn this world upside down  
Where the unjust steals from the just!"

#### NOTES

I have translated all quotations from Persian texts into English:

(a) *Payam-e-Mashriq*, Lahore, 1923.

(b) *Javed Nama*, Lahore, 1932.

(c) *Zabur-e-Ajam*, Lahore, 1924.

(d) *Armaghan-e-Hejaz*, Lahore, 1938.

(e) *The Secret of Selfhood and Selflessness*, Lahore, 1930.

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<sup>1</sup>Samad Behrangi, *Study of Educational Problems in Iran*, pp. 63-4, Teheran, 1969.

## IQBAL AS PROPHET OF CHANGE: THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

V.G. KIERNAN

IQBAL like Wordsworth looked upon himself as first and foremost a teacher. For him poetry was not entertainment, but part of the functioning of human life and society. Too obvious a didactic intent is likely to defeat itself, and this sometimes happened with Iqbal. When he was thinking most seriously, he wrote as a rule in Persian. More important than the choice of language is the contrast between his long poems, expounding doctrine, and the poetically far superior short ones, whether in Persian or in Urdu, where he felt at liberty to speak frankly and intimately, revealing his doubts and uncertainties, his intuitions and conjectures, as well as his fixed beliefs. His *Payam-e-Mashriq*, 'Message of the East', published in 1923,<sup>1</sup> is a collection of detached pieces or sequences, combining a loose unity of theme with the freedom of the short poem. With many of the poetical qualities to be found in the best of his Urdu verse, it contains most of the thoughts amid which he struggled to find meaning in a bewildering world.

Much of the 'Message' is criticism, even denunciation, of Europe; yet the whole work had a European model, Goethe's *Western-Eastern Divan*, itself an imitation of Hafiz; a good example of how East and West have interacted. In his very perceptive preface, Iqbal pointed to resemblances between the condition of Germany in Goethe's day and of Asia in his own, rousing itself at last from the slumber of centuries. Tempests were blowing through the world which heralded 'an immense spiritual and cultural revolution'. Social revolution too formed part of what he was hoping for and expecting; but he was emphasizing an indispensable part of the truth when he added that no vast change could come about until an inner revolution took place in men's minds. It was in helping to bring this on

that he saw his own function, as discoverer or preacher of things needful for the development of individuals and of peoples.

The Great War, he wrote also in this preface, destroyed the former world system. It was a premature judgment in terms of political actuality after 1918, but perfectly correct in moral or psychological terms. This stupendous conflict was the vital turning-point in Iqbal's own development, transforming him from a cloistered scholar preoccupied with metaphysical abstraction into one of the authentic voices of his age. Europe's 'civil war' was the downfall of its lofty pretensions as fountain-head of civilisation, sender-out of missionaries to nations lost in darkness. There is an evident allusion to it in Iqbal's words about an 'outrage against Jesus' (p. 227). He saw as clearly as any Marxist what the war, with all its high-sounding slogans, was really fought for. In one poem in this collection, imperialism performs a bloodthirsty danse macabre, disguised as a League of Nations which is nothing more than a league of bandits (pp. 229-30). In another satire the League figures as a gang of grave-robbers (p. 233); an apt comment at the same time on the Asian decadence which gave imperialism a free hand. Europe's wonders, so impressive to a visitor like Sir Syed Ahmad not long before, and a hundred years of other pilgrims from India, now seemed exposed as mere trickery or 'sorcery' (p. 210). From now on Iqbal turned very often to this image of Western magic, juggling, conjuring, as summing up the artificialities of European life and politics, especially colonial policies.

No doubt in condemning them he was tempted at times to forget that without borrowing from the West he himself would not have been what he was, and Asia would never become what he wanted it to be. In one poem at least he was very clear-sighted about this. The War sharpened the national awareness he had given expression to from time to time earlier on: the Indian national movement and its parallels elsewhere were salient elements in the process of change he had been living through. Now in verses addressed to England he declared that her Indian subjects had learned from her the Western ideals of government, and wanted the right to practise them for themselves: England should not be astonished at rebellion set in motion by her own teachings (pp. 254-5). For many and complex reasons these ideals of government were not always in harmony with Iqbal's instincts, and this helps to explain why for him a path leading straight on to Indian national independence proved impossible to find.

Far more fully and deeply the War stirred Iqbal to think of social justice and social revolt; and this mainly through its most unintended and most momentous consequence, the Revolution of 1917 in Russia. His first two long 'philosophical' poems in Persian, published in 1915 and 1918, are unreadable today. It was the cataclysm of 1917 that fully ignited his poetic imagination, even if he would only distantly or in fantasy relate it to the destinies of his own people, or of Asia. Its reverberations, echoing across

Asia as well as Europe, riveted his attention on the actual events of an outer world which, left to itself, his mind hovered far above. In 'Song of the Stars' (pp. 112-5), though it is typical of this remote viewpoint that events on earth are contemplated through celestial eyes, the blaze of empires in flames, and falling thrones, is intensely vivid. Iqbal realised moreover that their collapse was not the result of their worm-eaten condition only, or their crimes, but was the work of human hands, the revolt of the masses. One sequence of poems begins with a tribute to Farhad, the archetypal labourer (pp. 230-1). Alexander and Darius have fallen, Farhad is making himself master. It was no bad poetic equivalent of the dictatorship of the proletariat Lenin was trying to set up at Moscow. The famous lines in an Urdu volume, *Bal-e-Jabril*, where angels are sent down to earth to rouse the poor to overthrow their tyrants, had their source here, and helped to inspire a generation of Indian socialists.

As a philosopher, Iqbal was much concerned with the problem of time: the earth-shaking events of 1914-1918 quickened speculation into emotional realisation, and made him one of the great poets of time and change, the death of the old and the birth of the new, humanity's long march through its wilderness. Here, too, Western thinking supplied essential ideas; he drew them from Nietzsche, from Bergson, and from his much-admired Goethe. One poem, 'The Stream' (pp. 151-52) is a version of an 'oriental' poem by Goethe which Iqbal describes as wonderfully close to Islamic thinking: another instance of the complex interaction of East and West. Many verses in this volume have the same theme of movement and change, action and passion; the same note of challenge to all Asian languor or passivity, now coming, as he understood earlier than most of his contemporaries, to an end.

All this feeling of mutability, impermanence, and through it of advance and progress, Iqbal turned into unforgettable images, whatever diverse sources his idea may have derived from. There is a recurrent imagery (e.g., p. 229) of spark bursting into flame, flame into star, sun, universal conflagration (again we may if we wish see an analogy in Lenin's obscure underground newspaper *Iskra*, 'The Spark', which helped to kindle the bonfire of 1917). Atom and planet, straw and mountain, are other motifs, (e.g., pp. 231-32), reflecting vertiginous growth, the swelling up of the small and unnoticed into the enormous, the acceleration of time in our century, a whole world breaking out of the bond of outworn custom and inertia, Dawn is at hand, the lamp is extinguished to make way for the sun (p. 232).

Most of Iqbal's private life was a stationary one, but in fancy he was in perpetual movement, striding across time and space (cf. p. 55). To the restless soul, all time is a mere moment (p. 68). There is a hint here of the oriental hyperbole of an older day, the reflex of minds bounden into a social nutshell and wanting like Hamlet to count themselves kings of infi-

nite space. Iqbal's East had indeed been shut up for too long, and now was feeling the stir and bustle of the outer world, and aspiring to a share in its doings. Of all this and its fevers and frustrations, its energy in quest of goals still hidden from it, Iqbal's verses are a marvellous expression.

If the times were changing, man must, he saw, alter with them and through them, so that change may be purposive, progressive, instead of chaotic. Of anything like a regular programme he had little to offer, either at this time or later, and some of the formulas he had recourse to, in order to fill blanks, were perilously hazy, and might lead to anything but progress. He stood at a twilit, pre-political stage of his community's evolution and that of most of Asia, when aspiration was already insistent but comprehension still faint; a time when emotion rather than intellect held sway, and poetry could flourish as it could seldom do in plain daylight. He extolled action, saying in his own fashion what Marx had meant by saying that the task was to transform the world, not merely philosophize about it. His leading thought, the fostering of 'Selfhood', was the theme of the two long war-time poems, and later of many far more effective short ones, where intense feeling was not imprisoned in sermonising. It was another concept with some of its roots in the West, but made his own by Iqbal, and belonging to his own place and age yet at the same time invested with a universal significance.

Selfhood contained a lurking dualism which he seems more often than not to overlook. It meant either a turning inward or a turning outward. He never tires of urging his hearers to look within themselves, where alone the greatest things are to be found; not so much in the critical spirit of the Greek adage, 'Know thyself', as—it would often appear—in a traditionalist, mystical spirit, almost a kind of solipsism, a search for unknown Eldorados within, already existing fully-formed. Such thinking had been the offspring of times when any free emergence into the world outside was barred by a rigid social and political framework reinforced by a rigid ideology; it was akin to the 'interior emigration' that many Europeans who could not escape from fascism learned to practise under its shadow. Man is the measure of all things (p. 49): again, what is intended is not the rationalising Greek maxim but a sort of deification of Self. Iqbal is prepared to assert that the world contains nothing else than the Self (p. 78). Poetry should startle by a fine excess, as Keats said, but this may sound an altogether excessive excess.

In prosaic language (and the plain prose of any poet's existence has to be taken into account as well as its romance, if he is to be understood) Iqbal was telling his listeners to explore within themselves for buried treasures because nearly all external, tangible wealth was in the hands of others, British bankers or governors, bania traders or moneylenders. But selfhood had another aspect, more faithful to what was dynamic or dialectical in Iqbal's thinking: it was self-development as well as self-creation,

and it was to be achieved through self-expression, action and experience in the real world of men, not the Maya-realm of inner consciousness. Within this other horizon he could speak not for the pinioned, blindfolded mind of the old East alone, but for the stirring, hopeful elements of new Asia. His own spiritual strivings were always tempestuous, a 'mental strife' like Blake's, the opposite of any quietistic longing for Nirvana. With him as with Shelley, the poet is the trumpet that sings to battle: his summons is to adventure, to an unappeasable hunger for experiment (e.g., pp. 218-9). "I live dangerously" was one of the watchwords that drew him to Nietzsche. It must be confessed that he, like Wordsworth and Tennyson and others, though not all poets, was somewhat lacking in humour; there is a touch of absurdity in his fable of one gazelle exhorting another to live dangerously (pp. 143-44).

The fascination of exposure to peril has not seldom been felt by recluses like Nietzsche or (during most of his life) Iqbal; it may be felt also by a whole class, like his, hearing through half-open windows the far-off tumult of a new age it cannot yet participate in. At any rate, it was the positive, outward-turning Selfhood that struck the generation growing up round him in his native province; and unquestionably the young men who owed to Iqbal a new-found confidence, a willingness to break with convention, were Hindus as well as Muslims. Even the frailest bark can put out to sea and face storms (p. 189); such verses were a clarion to minds too long tied to mouldering wharves in forgotten harbours. To perform something oneself, even if it be no more than a sin, is better than any slavish imitation (p. 62): young men were being pushed by the times and pulled by their hopes into many acts sinful by the reckoning of their elders. The influence of Iqbal's fiery proclamations radiated in many directions, some of them little anticipated by him. Lines of his on human heroism are said to have been on the lips of youthful terrorists, preparing to risk their lives for their motherland.<sup>2</sup>

In the forefront of what Iqbal stood for was iconoclasm, deliverance from the unreal but potent fetters of fossil beliefs, cramping custom, dread of shadows (cf. pp. 49, 59). Any such *seisachtheia* or shaking off of burdens must include those of religion, or rather its age-old incrustations of superstition, ritualism, bigotry. A good half of all of Iqbal's utterances about religion were scathing attacks on such evils, the pir-worship of the Panjab and Kashmir, for instance. He saw Muslim history as a prolonged decline after a brief golden age, long centuries during which the blind led the blind further and further into futility and senility. Sometimes at least he recognised how religion had been perverted by the interests of the rich, the domination of class. In one of his graphic sketches of Kashmir, the land of his ancestors, the servile, superstitious peasant goes about in rags, while his oppressor is robed in silk (p. 134).

Nothing indeed runs more strongly through all Iqbal's ponderings on

the human condition than this painful conviction of the faith of his fellow-Muslims having dried up, shrivelled into meaningless observances and charlatanry. The Islam he advocated may almost be called a new faith, for when his inspiration is at its most torrential, there seems scarcely room in his universe for any creed reducible to words. It was a free, spontaneous faith or vision, the soaring and diving spirituality of the Sufis revived and enlarged into what he trusted could be a faith for a modern Muslim community, firmly rooted in tradition yet turning with bold confidence towards the future. His veneration of Rumi, the medieval mystic, must have owed much to a feeling that the release from spiritual bondage of which he saw Rumi as the supreme exemplar was a warrant for his own heterodoxy.

Iqbal mirrored the confusions and contradictions of his highly complex environment, and there were to be moments when he could come near the brink of a narrow sectarianism. But he was far more completely, genuinely, himself when he held up a Love transcending all sects; when, as so often, he rejected mosque, temple, church as all inadequate (e.g., pp. 31-39) and bade men rise above their limitations. All the thoughts and prayers with which men of diverse creeds have clothed God are acceptable, even though the Arab cloak is the finest of all (p. 218). It is worthwhile from this point of view to recall Iqbal's fellow-Panjabi and fellow-poet Bhai Vir Singh, born a few years before him; as deeply a Sikh as Iqbal was a Muslim, but penetrated by the bhakti spirit as Iqbal was by the Sufic, and able like him in his best hours to leave behind the boundaries of any single community and enter a realm open to all men.<sup>3</sup>

God Himself was to be discovered by the light of the Self (p. 75); God was even the Self's own image (p. 76). There was a profound humanism in such words, whatever theology may make of them. This can be said in spite of the fact that Iqbal seems to have had in mind the human individual, rather than the human race. It was to the individual, or his higher self, that his poetry was habitually addressed. In the plain prose of history, once more, he was in this the representative of a trading and professional middle class eager for opportunity, like the one to which Samuel Smiles gave his message of individual self-help in the Britain of the Industrial Revolution. What is more relevant to Iqbal's poetic genius is his solitariness, of which he was acutely conscious (p. 26). If his door was always open to a troop of visitors who flocked to see him out of admiration or curiosity, this may have been an attempt to forget that he was in reality an exceptionally isolated being. His family circle—not much is known of it—would seem to have had little to give him. He had numerous acquaintances, but—again it would seem—few if any close friends, and few readers qualified to comprehend his ideas, or, what would have been as valuable, to criticise and debate them with him. As to the political life of his province, into which he ventured at one stage, the tumultuous mass agita-



tion of the first post-war years was quickly succeeded by a dreary squabbling over loaves and fishes among rival careerists and toadies of the government.

Iqbal's poems have strikingly little to say about relationships among human beings, those of friendship, the family, love in its ordinary meanings, comradeship in a cause. The men who peopled his world were men of future, yet to be born. All time-honoured social bonds were crumbling, as he felt with a poet's sensitiveness to the air he breathed, and the individual was thus being released, but left to grope for new links, fresh partnerships, which Iqbal could envisage only dimly. His individual, his emancipated Self, often seems doomed to perpetual wandering, like a Flying Dutchman. Stars may weary of their eternal journey, man must learn not to (pp. 109-110).

It is because Iqbal's private world was so empty that he spoke often through voices of the dead, making famous men (European philosophers as a rule—Hegel, Tolstoy, Nietzsche, Marx) his poetic mouthpieces. Oftener still he turned to Nature, animate or inanimate, for voices to speak for him. A surprising number of these poems are parables or fables, dialogues among animals, birds, planets. If they are sometimes inappropriate, like the gazelle infatuated with danger, or a deep-sea fish thrilling with ardour of soul (p. 125), a dewdrop abstaining from wine (p. 138), a bird quoting Sa'adi (p. 163), humour is after all a social endowment, easily starved by isolation like Iqbal's or Wordsworth's. One of the great poems (pp. 136-7) is called 'Solitude': it carries us through a cosmos where all these voices have died away, and wave, mountain, moon, God, are all silent.

Iqbal's frequent estimates of his influence on the hearers he was trying to reach fluctuate between the over-sanguine, chiefly when he thinks of Muslims in far-away lands, and depression, when he seems to have felt like one addressing an audience of the deaf. Here doubtless is one reason why so much of his work was written in a foreign language. At one moment, Arabia and Persia are to be revived and fertilised by his words; at another, he takes a wry satisfaction in having found no readers worthy of him, as proof of the loftiness of his message (p. 185)<sup>4</sup>. 'I am all mystery' (p. 17). Doubt, misgiving, uncertainty, were a part of him that old Persian-Indian poetic usage encouraged him to admit; and in short poems he had no infallibility to claim, whereas in the long didactic poems, his professions of confidence are apt to sound overstrained. So do some of his paeans of praise to the Self; he must have had as much need of brave words to support him as any of the young men who learned hope and fortitude from him.

Iqbal can be thought of as struggling all his life to find a way out of this isolation, to discover new modes of association among men, for himself and his fellows. Just as 'Selfhood' might be turned either inward or

outward, so by another linking of opposites 'Love' might be either the energy of the individual self unrolling, or a unifying force, a societal instinct. Iqbal uses this term obsessively, and in such varied contexts that its meaning may become elusive. His situation prevented him from grasping with sufficient clarity the interrelations of individual and society, the impossibility for either of them to advance for long without the other, or the discords which might arise between them. But in his dithyrambs on Man and his immeasurable potentialities (pp. 102-03), it is often clear that he has mankind collectively in view, not the individual. In general, he may be said to have contemplated Self and Society as each prodigiously endowed, and to have wanted self-development and social progress to go forward hand in hand.

Even when he writes specifically of Islam, it is characteristic of Iqbal to find one of its virtues, perhaps its supreme virtue, in the overleaping of national or social frontiers, and the pride and prejudice of race (p. 52). I am first of all a man, he declares, and only then an Indian or a Turanian (p. 91). Personally he was, we are told, unmistakably a Panjabi; but it is the grandeur of Man that he hymns, not, like too many other poets, that of German, Frenchman, Indian, Japanese. Christianity claimed this power of transcendence, until imperialism and the Great War showed up glaringly the hollownesses of its pretensions. It was one aspect of the reaction of Asia against the West that the ideal of a more genuine internationalism should appeal so strongly to Iqbal. Since then both socialism and 'non-alignment' have in some degree fulfilled it, each in its own way; but nationalism has been dominant, and the Muslim peoples were moving with the rest towards a 'sacred egotism' which would show itself no less intransigent than Europe's. Nor did the annals of the past give Iqbal much warrant for his vision of Islam as the highway to a true brotherhood of peoples. He paid little attention to history, it may be remarked: his imagination required freedom to remould the past as well as the future. But whatever may be said of his mode of presenting it, his ideal of human brotherhood was of the highest value, and as a poet he could very often bring it to life, endow it with a vitality purged of all mortal inadequacies.

In an India whose nationalist leaders were slow and reluctant to recognise social problems or class tensions, Iqbal was deeply concerned with the relations between employer and worker. This came more naturally to him than to most Congressmen because in the Panjab the employer was usually a Hindu; more naturally also, one must add, than sympathy with the Muslim peasant exploited by a Muslim landlord. It was not an industrial province but the Great War was followed by industrial agitation and strikes everywhere, and the third session of the All India Trade Union Congress was held in 1923 at Lahore. Iqbal voiced the workers' grievances as eloquently as anyone else in India, though it cannot

be said that he pointed to any clear remedy for them, except in his revolutionary mood. In one of many short pieces in dialogue form, Comte, the Positivist philosopher, recommends class collaboration, the workman accuses him of advising submission (pp. 244-5). All wealth and enjoyment go to the capitalist; misery and toil are left to the worker: there is a threat, obscurely expressed it may be, that the position will before long be reversed (pp. 255-6; cf. pp. 257-3).

Thus in Iqbal's mind the reign of social equality and fraternity went with the brotherhood of nations. 'In the realm of love, there is no lord or master' (p. 210). Like most middle-class intellectuals, however, he hesitated between sympathy for the masses and distrust of them, and his political reasoning was at odds with his social instinct. His section of the middle classes preparing to take the lead in India was a weak one. Within his own Muslim community the majority were sunk, as he lamented incessantly, in ignorance and inertia, their heads stuffed with nonsense. He might respect the British parliamentary model, at least when he was confronting Britain with a demand for an Indian parliament; but he could not be politically a democrat, or put his trust in majority voting. He had great faith in what men might become, very little in men as they were. In one poem Lenin and the ex-Kaiser converse (on some unspecified meeting-ground), and the latter predicts that Demos in the saddle will behave as badly as he did: power always holds the same temptations (pp. 249-50). Nazism was to demonstrate that it was no groundless prediction.

Iqbal was an elitist, though it was a meritocracy, not an aristocracy, that he wanted at the helm. A man of the humblest origin may turn out to be a Moses, a prophet (pp. 158-59). Such thinking was in one way an idealised version of what had always been the practice of Muslim countries, with their social mobility and easy ascent from the ranks for the talented and ambitious. Too often this meant also the unscrupulous, and such mobility did nothing at all to end the oppression of class by class; it simply reshuffled their membership. Iqbal was not enough of a political thinker to find a way forward from this older pattern to the better one he desired. Similarly, Muslims all through their history had lived under one-man rule or leadership, and Iqbal endorsed the leadership-principle which was to prove so disastrous to the world as the twentieth century went on. Forgetting his own warning of the temptations of power, he declared that since men in the mass are fools they should leave it to 'a man of ripe experience' to take charge of their affairs (p. 158).

Monarchs disappear, their peoples live on (p. 78). But while Iqbal had small regard for kings by mere inheritance, he was ready to admire self-made leaders and heroes, sometimes extravagantly, and see the destinies of nations embodied in them. A cult of the great man went with the backwardness of popular movements in many parts of the twentieth-century world, with their many variants of 'Populism', and it could blend with the

philosophy of Selfhood. On the other hand, to find suitably heroic figures was not easy. *Payam-e-Mashriq* opens with a long address to the then king of Afghanistan; in retrospect, its language sounds very inflated (cf. pp. 34-5). Later he fell back increasingly on heroes of bygone days, of whom his picture was gloriously indistinct. One was Timur. If we are taken aback by praise of such a monster, we may do well to recall that Hazlitt, unsurpassed among English radical writers, was a lifelong admirer of Napoleon, in whom he likewise saw incarnated aspirations which he had little belief in the ability of his own class or nation to achieve.

After his years of study in England and Germany before the war, Iqbal returned from 'the tavern of the West' a stranger to himself, in want of Eastern wine to restore him (p. 208). In plainer speech, his lengthy stay abroad must have unsettled all his previous assumptions, and to this he must have owed much of the intellectual emancipation he shared with so very few in his community; also much of his sensation of solitariness. He had somehow to come to terms with his native surroundings, as he was endeavouring to do, on many planes, for the rest of his life. Rediscovering the 'East', he was in good measure inventing it, or fusing the values and achievements of his two worlds; the 'message of the East' was far more his message to the East, though one with a pointed meaning for the West also.

Groping towards a modern outlook, he was hampered by the tangled complexity of his historical and social setting, full of contradictions hard or impossible to overcome. He was hampered also by the tragic enmity of Europe and Asia, the outcome of imperialism, itself the result of Asian morbidity as well as European greed, which rendered everything Western, everything modern, suspect. An uneasy dualism emerges at many points in Iqbal's identification of Europe with intellect, the East with emotion, as two things mutually exclusive. In his environment reason was feebly developed, and his bergsonian critique of Europe could sound unbalanced (p. 227). All hostility to reason is perilous, as the record of fascism shows with terrible clarity. Yet Iqbal's emphasis on the supremacy of 'heart' over 'mind' was at bottom a true emphasis on the primacy of human feeling, arising out of human relationships; it was something democratic in the deepest sense.

Repeatedly also he succeeded in bridging the gap, and reconciling intellect with Love, as two powers complementary, not antagonistic (p. 80). There is a poem in honour of Einstein (pp. 239-40), and another where the universalising spirit of science is praised, and only scientific work of a petty egotistic sort condemned, as breeding doubt and hesitation (p. 228). Science ought to be inspired by good-will, and aid it in transforming earth into paradise, instead of going its own way careless of human suffering, and poisoning life (pp. 111-2). Science harnessed to profiteering and militarism has been poisoning our planet in a very literal

sense since those words were written. In one poem Iqbal brings in an aeroplane, that new-fledged thing, a rare intruder into his pre-industrial—almost pre-human—world of empty spaces and talking flowers and birds. It is a triumph of man's mental resources, but one for which he is morally unready and unfit (pp. 162-3). Guernica and a thousand other hecatombs were soon to reinforce the warning.

When Iqbal invoked 'the wind from the desert', reviving and purifying (p. 161), he was close in mood to the eighteenth-century middle classes in Europe with their return to Nature, their cult of the noble savage. He was also, half-unwittingly, recapitulating a basic feature of Muslim history, the cycle of irruptions into decadent urban cultures by hardy nomads who quickly relapsed into the same decadence. Baffled by the intricacies of the present, Iqbal was too often tempted to turn back to the past in search of ready answers, which it could not give. But he was truer to himself when he proclaimed his faith in the future, in new cities to be founded as he said in *Bal-e-Jabril* by new men: 'my eyes are not fixed on Kufa or Baghdad'. He ends a poem with the same thought of a goal still unreached, a march still to be continued, that ends a well-known poem, more political in character, by his successor Faiz.

Frequently Iqbal may seem to be urging us to action with only an indefinite indication of its motive, as if action were an end in itself (p. 99). But Marx left his followers with only a very rough outline of the socialist society to come; and both men were right in implying that mankind could only advance by advancing, exploring, by trial and error. Iqbal's Asia like the Germany of Marx's youth had been for too long sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought: his contemporaries might have seen themselves, as Marx's often did, in the mirror of Hamlet. In such a climate energy, resolve, action really were cardinal virtues, and no one has ever paid more glowing tribute to the splendour of mankind's capacity for them. The thought is always with him of the contrast between man's physical frailty and grandeur of spirit, between the handful of dust and the limitless desire. His compass needle may have wavered, some of the symbols he made use of in his efforts to chart an unknown future may have been outworn; but the last lines of all in *Payam-e-Mashriq* are a call, once more repeated, to throw off the chains of the past, not to imitate but to create.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>I have relied chiefly on the French translation by Eva Meyerovitch and Mohammad Agha (Paris, 1956). References to page numbers are to the Persian text (Lahore, 1923).

<sup>2</sup>I owe this information to Dr. P.D. Tripathi of Patna University.

<sup>3</sup>See the anthology, *Bhai Vir Singh, Poet of the Sikhs*, translated by Gurbachan Singh "Talib" and Harbans Singh (Delhi, 1976).

<sup>4</sup>The first edition of *Payam-e-Mashriq* was of 1000 copies. It was not until 1944, with the 5th impression, that the total number of copies printed reached 6000.

## IQBAL: A UNIVERSAL POET

MULK RAJ ANAND

**I**N a hauntingly poignant verse Iqbal once wrote: 'How troubled is the eye of desire in the aspiration for vision!' Certainly, this utterance indicated the poet's predicament in the being-in-situation, in which he found himself fairly early in his career.

At the end of the nineteenth century, in spite of the impact of the dynamic West, or perhaps because of it, the various cultures of India were in a state of breakdown.

The end of the feudalist Mughal Empire, the decay of the Hindu concept of Ram Rajya, one-man rule, the reduction of both Islamic and Vedantist faith to ritual, the prevalence of dead habits and customs in the empty shell of daily life, while the upper orders approximated to the values of the alien rulers, the reduction of woman's status to that of chattel, the repetition of prayers to gods in mosques and temples in language which the worshippers did not understand, the vast ignorance due to an educational system in a foreign language—all these and other factors had made the vast landscape into a desert. The sects of Islam fought against each other. The main religions were at loggerheads. The self-governing institutions, promised by Queen Victoria, were nowhere within sight, the legislative bodies being packed by conformists, flatterers and compromisers. So the sanctions of the promised democracy did not apply. The Christian Church, which had come with the sword, did not impress the intelligentsia, but mostly converted the outcastes through largesse and charity. The army and the police maintained the semblance of law and order, while the bulk of the population survived in the labyrinths, in an existentialist disorder, where everyone's Kismet had been ordained by forces no one could understand. The trees of Indian civilisation which had once given the shadow of their protection in the heat and torment of life's

pilgrimage had shed their leaves. No one knew what would happen next.

To be sure, there had been heard voices of protest from a few enlightened people in various parts of the country. Raja Ram Mohun Roy, the Tagores, Keshub Chandra Sen and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar had initiated the reformist Brahmo Samaj, which issued a manifesto, seeking to combine the deepest truths of the ancient Hindu philosophies with modern scientific learning of the East, and they campaigned against the burning of widows, child marriage, ritual murder and other barbaric customs in Eastern India.

In Western India the Prarthana Samaj and the Servants of India Society professed similar aims.

In Northern India the Arya Samaj proclaimed the return to the pure Vedic culture and the revival of the ancient order without caste.

The liberal bourgeoisie, fashioned on the example of the British middle class intellectuals, who read Spencer and Mill, indulged in exalted rhetoric, dressed themselves in frock-coats and supplicated to the Sarkar for the grant of more privileges. The Indian National Congress, founded by a genuine English ex-ICS official, Allan Octavio Hume, sought to create political consciousness, with a view to realising the distant goal of dominion status.

The Hindus were more vocal than the Muslims, the latter having denied themselves the privilege of education in the British Indian schools, colleges and universities.

The Islamic intelligentsia sulking, because, through its *divide et impera* policy, the Imperial Government preferred the majority community, ignoring the minority which had been victimised, as the Mughal Emperor, the poet-king Bahadur Shah Zafar, had nominally led the mutiny of 1857.

The long poem "Musaddas" written by Altaf Hussain Hali of Panipat, and patronised by Sir Syed Ahmed, the head of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh, was the only heart-felt utterance on behalf of the Muslims of India, implying the longing for a new passion that may unite the disintegrating followers of the Prophet Mohammed and save Islamic culture.

## 2

IT was in this tragic period that Muhammed Iqbal, the descendant of a Kashmiri Brahmin family, converted to Islam, was born in Sialkot in 1877. After schooling in the little township, he went to Lahore with his parents and took a degree at the Government College, Lahore.

Doubtless he had heard the folk tale of Raja Rasalu of Sirkup (ancient Sialkot), and may have been inspired to conquer the world.

But we soon find him in his teens, confronting himself as a juvenile

poet in the mushairas (poetical recitals).

In one of his earliest poems entitled "Sada-e-Dard" (The Cry of Pain), he calls out:

"I am burning.  
I have no rest on any side  
On waters of the Ganges drown me!"

The titles of his poems of that time reflect sadness—*Cry of the Orphan*, *The Birds' Complaint*, *The Orphan's Address to the Id Crescent*.

The intelligent young of that time were compelled by the tensions in the environment to be sensitive to the oppression of alien rule, as also they were alienated from every tradition, tenet and value, of the family, religion, and the febrile impulses of the conformists.

Under the influence of a learned guide, Maulana Mir Hasan, Iqbal had indeed tried, in his student days, to understand the purity of original Islam of the prophet Mohammad. But he could not see the relevance in the British period of petit bourgeois creature comforts, seething spiritual neglect and don't-care attitudes.

The penetration of secular ideas of the European renaissance had brought other sanctions than those of Islam and Hinduism. The impulses for national freedom seemed to be the only uniting force, but were lost on the complacent. Out of the anguish of seeing the indifference of people to their slave status, Iqbal warned his countrymen in 1904:

"Think of your country, Oh! thoughtless ones!  
Trouble is brewing.  
In heaven there are signs for your ruin  
See that which is happening  
and that which is to happen!  
What is there in the stories of olden times?  
If you fail to understand this,  
You will be exterminated  
Oh! people of Hindustan!  
Even your story will not be preserved in the annals of the world!"

### 3

INTENSE, ardent and bursting into impetuous utterance, from the smouldering fires of discontent inside him, he decided to write a long poem in the manner of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. But he later realised that he was unequal to this ambition.

At that stage he met Professor Thomas Arnold, the orientalist, and



borrowed books from his library about the various quarrelling philosophies of the West. He felt that, in spite of the differences of schools in Europe, the thinkers were much more troubled by the collapse of faith through rank materialism even than the Asian decadents. Prof. Arnold advised him to go and study in England, while someone in his family suggested going to Mecca. Iqbal decided on the pilgrimage to London. After taking a degree at Cambridge, and having qualified as a barrister, he went to Munich to do research in Philosophy. Life in the dominantly commercialist West soon made him aware of the impending decline of European civilisation. Of course, this hunch was not a dogmatic reaction against the 'eat, drink and be merry' sensational hedonism prevalent there.

Indeed, he came into contact with some of the finest minds like MacTaggart, Henri Bergson and Bertrand Russell. The thinkers in Cambridge like MacTaggart suggested that recovery of the individual was possible through the coming together of the world's peoples. But in view of the dissolution of the hopes of the nineteenth century bourgeoisie, that material plenty would solve every problem, the English neo-Hegelians felt that complete adjustment of an unequal world into a new order was not possible. The individual could make the effort, along with other individuals, to connect, but the journey from chaos towards order would take time as order itself was emergent but not strictly definable, the Universe being in a process of uncertain growth.

The theory of creative evolution of Henri Bergson offered more hope, as it emphasised the truth that the development of the individual in the Universe was through interaction of both and could be achieved through conscious effort. Bertrand Russell was emphasising the need for logical argument, denying the existence of God and doubted whether there was, or could be, any order in the Universe.

Iqbal sensed that science was, indeed, revealing life to be a process, original, essential and spontaneous. But he felt that he himself was involved in Hamletian doubt—To be or not to be!

And yet he had the hunch that, according to Islam, an adult human being was possible. And he persisted in reconciling the neo-Hegelian tentativeness with the more positive outlook of the Prophet Mohammad. Thus, on joining the University of Munich, he took the subject 'Development of Persian Metaphysics' for his thesis.

The research was to take him deeper into the *Quran*, the Hadith and, in fact, he was immersed in the realms of the entire Islamic literature, in Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages.

IN his inmost being he was urged by the instinctive desire to emerge

from the breakdown of personality in the East to become a man, a human being, a self-conscious modern individual of the new world.

One of the most discussed philosophers in Germany at that time was Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911). This philosopher rejected the *Cogito ergo sum* of Descartes by asserting: 'I live, therefore, I am.' He felt that the art of knowing is through a limited part of the mind, but understanding required the powers of the whole self. 'We understand more than we know' as 'understanding can never be translated into rational comprehension'. The powers of the personality are involved. And, as any one person is defined only in relation to other persons, man lives through participation in the social process. Thus the spiritual life is bound up with the totality of the historic process. 'Culture is a union of tendencies. Each of those like language, jurisprudence, myths, religion, poetry, philosophy, has an inner lawfulness determining its structure and hence its development.' And we are all part of the diffusion of the vast world heritage which included Leonardo and Shakespeare and Luther and Pascal and Goethe, and Roman Law and the humanists. Dilthey was inclined to be sceptical about the Divinity, but the stages of the ascent of the soul towards redemption suggested by him correspond to the phases prescribed by the Christian theologians. But while he insisted that we live in and through others, he felt that we were alone, in death—and death was a fact which was completely incomprehensible. Iqbal does not mention Dilthey, but it is reasonably certain that he was impressed by the apprehensions of the 'great humanistic positives' of this philosopher, even though he may have recoiled against his existentialist despondency about the aloneness of man at the end of life.

A thinker whom the poet did mention is Karl Jaspers (1883) though he deprecated him as 'restrictive'. Iqbal thought that Jaspers was right in his reaction against the vacuity of the modern world, in his pursuit of faith away from revelation, and in his reference to constant tension. But he did not think that Jaspers' prognostications about liberty as the acceptance of the possibility of 'shipwreck' could lead to the triumph of Being. He was sympathetic to Jaspers' concept of 'Dasein', the achievement of true existence by the intermingling of being in a particular situation in time and space, though he preferred his idea of man being himself by transcendence or 'gushing forth', which our poet thought Jaspers may have taken from the Hindus. He spoke warmly of the influence of the man, of the positive oriental hunches, of the flow and reflow, of rhythm of the German thinkers. He agreed with Jaspers' critique of Descartes' doubt as 'pale and bloodless', appreciated the feeling of contradiction at the roots of existence, as also the efforts at objectivity, but deplored the final nihilistic thought that life is only 'the enthusiastic communion of a few friends' out of which may arise a spiritual creation.

Another challenging thinker whom Iqbal read with interest was

Martin Heidegger (b. 1889). Like the Buddha, Heidegger contrasted life as the 'unauthentic existence' of 'dailiness' and the 'authentic existence' of a being—in advance of himself. Man has the power, by a 'bounding leap', as it were, when he goes out of himself, to force himself on the same plane of co-existence. Thus a human being is in constant flight from the social personality into an uprooted existence, escaping always from personal responsibility. He can only free himself from this feeling by attaining the impersonal—thyself. The anguish of being-in-tension is itself the urgent desire for attaining authentic existence. Only there is little hope, 'Every moment increases this sense of abandonment by handing me over defenceless to the hostile world.' The universe is absurd. All salvationism arises from fear of anguish. Ultimately, even the 'bounding leap' is a rebound from nothing to nothing. Life is death on the instalment plan. Against the existentialists, Iqbal took to one of their own tribe, Nietzsche (1844-1900).

There is no doubt that, among the many philosophers and poets of the West whom he read, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Goethe, Schiller, Fischte, Holderlin, he felt great admiration for the 'Son of the Sun', as Nietzsche had come to be called in his life-time. It is likely that Nietzsche's oriental predilections, which made him entitle his important utterances as *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, interested the Indian poet.

Clearly, this German had attempted a universalist synthesis. He had rejected the suffering of Christ, and conquered his polarities, asserted a unity beyond good and evil, and tried to get on to the other side of all problems! In doing this, he was often inconsistent, but declared, like Walt Whitman, 'Every artist contains multitudes.' Besides, he was more poet than philosopher, just as Iqbal himself wanted to be. He was against the extension of rationality. And, insisting on man's eternal quest for values, he wrote from his hunches, more than four thousand aphorisms in the search of the whole man. Starting off from the sense of the abyss, characteristic of the existentialist philosophers of his time, restless, tormented, he seemed to cry out: 'I pray to God to rid me of God!' And he asserted: 'Man is created to be surpassed.' Ignited by lightning and inflamed by frenzy, says Zarathustra, the Supreme transcends reality and achieves the sense of glory in which 'one is completely beside oneself,' 'conscious of countless delicate tremors and thrills,' in 'an ecstasy whose frightful tension is occasionally released in a stream of tears.' This state of passion was to be reached by intuition, by the will to power, by the utterest longing. The goal was to reach the source of all life, where one may 'recover the pristine purity and innocence of the stream of becoming.' He felt that in dance the ideal may be reached more intensely than in thought or poetical feeling.

There is no original sin, as in the Christian existentialist Pascal and no fear and trembling, no conscience, as in Kierkegaard. The spirit evolves almost like the body, in the thesis-antithesis of ebb and flow, decay and

renewal, systole and diastole.

The inspired utterances of Nietzsche may have reminded Iqbal of another man who dared to confront reality, Mohammad.

And one can speculate how the Indian searcher turned more and more to the Prophet of Islam for the sense of coherence.

## 5

ON his return home in 1908, after a brief spell of teaching Arabic in London, Iqbal was faced with the choice of whether he should enter active politics or dedicate himself to a life of reflection. After an indecisive period of teaching philosophy and English literature in the University of Panjab, and practising at the Bar of the High Court, he seems to have decided to give himself to poetry. This did not mean that he removed himself from the struggle for freedom; for there was no occasion of decisive political action in India and the world which did not draw inspired verse from him. In fact, he had brought back from the West a permanent state of tension, which made him, as against the romantic Urdu writers, the poet of the decisive moment. A news item about racial discrimination made him say:

“He who will make distinction of colour and blood will perish,  
He may be nomadic Turk or a pedigreed Arab.”

Disenchanted by the no-change mentality of his countrymen, he, who had been inwardly transformed from passivity to dynamic thought and feeling, wrote *Shikwa* (The Complaint) and *Jawab-e-Shikwa* (Answer to the Complaint), *Shama aur Shair* (The Flame and the Poet).

Iqbal found orthodox opinion enraged at the implications of his complaints. The conventional Urdu poets accused him of bringing in European romanticism. It got known that he had objected to his marriage arranged for him by his family. The poet in his self-imposed exile had been impressed by Shelley's phrase:

“For love, beauty and delight  
There was no death nor change. . .”

And the dictum ‘Beauty is Truth’ of Keats appealed to him from the bent of his Kashmiri inheritance of the creative arts. Besides, he was aware that in Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore and others had accepted the impact of the West and rejected the old Indian tendency to go from the infinite to the finite. The younger nationalists seemed to want a living civilisation, based on give-and-take of culture and not the revivalism of the

entire past. Soon Iqbal was to sing of the 'New Temple':

"If I may tell the truth  
Oh Brahmin old!  
The idols in thy temple have grown cold. . ."

Iqbal had been impressed by Goethe's partiality for scientific researches and told his friends that, though the commercialists of the West were doomed, the finest minds there were projecting into unknown realms, like Einstein with his theory of Relativity, were solving the mystery of life. As the divines of Islam murmured the accusation 'heretic', the poet began to talk of the passivity of Islam being an important factor retarding the growth of Muslims everywhere and particularly in India. And he reminded his audience about the condemnation by Islam of those *Jahils* (ignor-amuses), who merely asserted doctrines without remembering that the Prophet uttered his words for 'guidance' and not as dogmas. At the same time as Mohammad had talked of God and the way to Him, he had also stressed the ethical, psychological and human status of man. Life was to be lived in the here and the now. Everyone had meaning in terms of others.

To be sure, Iqbal was aware that an active life demanded a total manhood, the development of Self, by the attainment of certain inner and outer qualities. And it is to the exploration of those conflicts in the human psyche which arise from the attempt of man to be Man, that the poet began to address himself during the next few years.

## 6

THE result of the tensions caused by the difficulties of his own growth to adulthood, the denigration of his chance utterances as a modernist; and the general contumely of the new decided him to launch on the long poem *Asrar-e-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self).

This remains the testament of Iqbal not only for generations of his own countrymen, but for all those in this world who are concerned with the question of renewal of man from contemporary decay.

*Asrar-e-Khudi* was recognised, immediately on its appearance, to be a challenge to all thinking men and women as the first part of Goethe's *Faust* had been accepted in the eighteenth century. Ostensibly, because Iqbal wanted to appeal to a universal audience, he wrote it in Persian.

Professor Reynold Nicholson of Cambridge rendered the poem into English and the message reached the West soon after its delivery in India.

Self-consciously, Iqbal set out to achieve an integral synthesis of the

dynamic elements in Islam, with the co-incidental essences he had absorbed in the West. This long poem, then, inherits the tension between passion, idea and image of Persian poetry from 'Jalal-ud-din Rumi, through Nizami, Saadi, Khusrau and Hafiz to Jami, as well as the 'lightning and frenzy' of Nietzsche. In fact, the model for the *Asrar-e-Khudi* may be Rumi's *Masnavi*, interspersed with aphorisms in the style of Zarathustra. The accent is traditional, but there is a fresh approach to problems of human destiny. Thus Iqbal invokes the proverbial wine-bearer, 'Saki', the cup-bearer, to 'fill his cup'—'pour moonbeams into the dark night of his thought.'

"That I may lead home the wanderer,  
And imbue the ideal lookeron with a restless impatience,  
And advance hotly on a new quest,  
And become known as champion of the new spirit."

In response to Professor Nicholson's plea for a summary of his philosophical ideas, the poet wrote down a few paragraphs embodying the essence of his prognostications.

As against the hypotheses of those who distinguish between appearance and reality, like Sankara or Professor Bradley, and other believers in the Absolute, 'in which the finite centres lose their finiteness and distinctness and are only appearance, infected with relativity', Iqbal finds that 'the finite centres of experience' are a 'fundamental fact of the universe'. 'God Himself is individual'. 'He is the most unique individual.' He accepted Professor MacTaggart's idea 'that Universe is an association of individuals'. But he felt that the adjustment was not always achieved. This is the result of 'instinctive or conscious effort'. We are, indeed, 'travelling from chaos to cosmos', but the Universe is nowhere near completeness. The process of creation is still going on. And 'man can take part in this to bring order into at least a portion of the chaos.' Iqbal ventured to say that the *Quran* indicates the possibility of other creators than God.

This view of growth is contrary to sufi pantheism, which regards absorption and universal self, or soul, as the final salvation of man. 'Self-affirmation should be the religious ideal.' Man attains this ideal by becoming more and more individual and more and more unique. Iqbal quotes the Prophet to have said: *Takhullaqu bi-akhlag Allah* (create in yourself the attributes of God).

Life, then, is individual in its highest form. Physically, as well as spiritually, man is a self-contained centre. But he is not as yet a whole man. The greater the distance from God, the less individual he is. But he is not finally absorbed in God. Instead he absorbs God into himself. Also, the individual absorbs the world of matter by mastering it into his own ego. Man removes all obstructions by assimilating them. He continually

creates desires and ideals. For his preservation and expansion, life has developed out of itself certain instruments, senses, intellect, will, which help man to overcome obstructions. The greatest obstruction in the way of life is matter. Yet nature is not evil, since it enables the inner powers of life to unfold themselves.

The ego is not egocentric as in Nietzsche's 'perfect man'. For Iqbal the ego attains to freedom by the removal of all obstructions in its way. It is partly determined and reaches fuller freedom by approaching the individual who is most free—God. Life is an eternal endeavour for freedom. Iqbal defines the personality as a state of 'tension'. It can only rise to higher levels if that state is maintained. 'Relaxation' leads to passivity. That which fulfils personality is good, that which weakens it is bad. Art, religion and ethics are purposive in so far as they build the personality. Iqbal felt that 'the idea of time is adulterated, as pure time has no length'. Personal immortality is an aspiration. You can have it if you can make an effort to achieve it. It depends on our adopting in this life modes of thought and activity which tend to maintain the state of tension. The philosophies which are passive cannot help except as opiates. Even the shock of death must not be allowed to affect one. The true nature of time is reached when we look into our deeper self. Real time is life itself, which can preserve itself by maintaining the particular state of tension (personality), which it has so far achieved. Spatialised time is a fetter which life had forged for itself in order to assimilate the present environment. In reality we are timeless. And it is possible to realise our timelessness even in this life. This evaluation, however, can only be momentary.

The growth of the individual ego is achieved by love. 'This word is used in a very wide sense and means the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is in the creation of values and ideals and the endeavour to realise them. Love individualises the lover as well as the beloved.'

The ego of the man, which does not make the effort to love, as when a young man inherits wealth, remains a weak ego, an asker, a beggar. The prophet is cited by Iqbal as an example of assimilative action of the supreme giver and taker of love. Further, the ego in its search for personality may have to go through three stages: (a) Obedience to the law; (b) Self-control, which is the highest form of self-consciousness of ego-hood; (c) The viceregency.

The last stage is achieved by the 'perfect man'.

The assembly of such men risen from among the people could bring heaven on earth—they would be the ideal rulers.

IN the midst of the passivities inherited from fatalistic religions, the survival of the patriarchal family, the oppression of tyrannical rule, this message of hope came as a tonic. If proof was needed of the decay of the West, the first World War, caused by the rivalries of the Imperialist powers, had given it in the prolonged suffering of four years of bloody battles, which did not, however, cleanse the power-mad partisans. The ideals of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, which the poets of the romantic movement had put forward, were decimated. Few intellectuals could use the word Love without being called white-livered humanitarians.

Although the *Asrar* was not a poem which could be read by many people in Asia and Africa, the emergent intelligentsia received it as a culture shock.

The Islamic leadership had never dared to interpret the *Quran* to proclaim free will. No one had interpreted God as the most perfect human being. And, apart from Tagore, Gandhi and Aurobindo, few men in the East had escaped the tendency to despair about the dark slavery.

The impact of Iqbal's message on the younger writers was to release them from the formalistic literary poetry of tradition and to ally them with freedom itself in all its purpose and meaning for human life. Taha Hussain in the Arab world, Abul Kalam Azad and Prem Chand in India, Lu Hsun in China were to ally themselves with the liberation movements of their countries. The new young were inspired by a buoyancy which almost took them to the extreme position : that words could become acts. The emergence of Lenin at the head of the Russian Revolution, Mustapha Kemal who upset the old Caliphate and Sultanate of Turkey, and Reza Shah, a commoner, who upset the decadent monarchy in Iran, seemed to confirm, for even the non-listeners, that those individuals who are fired by faith in the possibility of growth through enlightened will, can change man's fate, not only for themselves but by their own example for others.

Iqbal had his own subtle manner of recreating the essential values of the achievement of selfhood by his heroes. In the trilogy of poems, *Lenin*, *Angel's Song* and *God's Command*, the poet makes Lenin ask God: 'Whose deity are you? For the East white man is the God. For the West, the glittering sovereigns. And yet there is misery in the world. You are just and powerful and yet in your world, the labourer has still to put up with iniquities. When is Capitalism going to end?' The angels assure the Almighty that 'things are not right with His world.' The Almighty is touched to the core and orders the heavenly hosts 'to rock the foundation of society based on injustice and to awaken the long-suffering poor'.

There is a telling chronogram about the year when Kemal Pasha ended Greek rule in Western Turkey:



'Listen if you want the zest of conquest,' Iqbal said, 'verily the exalted name is Mustapha.'

To emphasise the parallelism of his view of Time and Space with that of Einstein, he writes a panegyric:

"Impatient like Moses, he wanted a manifestation of the glories  
So his bright intellect resolved the mysteries of light,  
Whose flight from the heights of the sky to the observer's eye takes  
but one instant,  
And so swift that it cannot be conceived."

The traditionalists were indignant at Iqbal's heresies. Since, however, he drew his sanctions from the *Quran*, and often from the Prophet Moham-mad, they could not accuse the poet of defiance openly. But they whispered that he was a utopian, who would soon go mad like his mentor Nietzsche. They did not want to notice that and, though Iqbal owed much to the German poet-philosopher's fire, he had criticised the super-man ideal of Nietzsche and foretold the dangers of transgression through egoism. Iqbal once said in a conversation that he felt most conservative politicians were like the Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, who was apt to shout : "Off with his head," if a man with a brain appeared.

Obviously, Iqbal never suggested an abstract individual as the perfect man possessed of all virtues. He used poetical metaphors to suggest the actual condition of man. Man is weak, though weakened by fear of authority. He is foolish because he will not make the effort to learn. He fulfils himself, because the conventional religions teach him that he is subject to Fate. So the poet does not berate him. He opens up the possibility of struggle for growth. Man can make himself, according to Iqbal, by constantly unmaking himself, through self-examination, and remake him into a higher and more intense consciousness of his own worth.

The poet offers no sugar-coated pills for the cure of the sick men of our civilisation. But to him man is not eternally 'sinful', as to Kierkegaard. And he is not a 'mere monkey with the gift of speech', as to the tormented Louis Ferdinand Celine.

## 8

INSPIRED by the impact of *Asrar* and the subsequent poems, and the emergence of a fighting intelligentsia, Iqbal himself felt buoyant enough to feel that the time for hope had arrived. In spite of difficulties and contradictions, the liberation movement of India was making head-way. But Iqbal showed a tendency to ally himself with a number of politicians, who were lesser men than himself and much more concerned with

small material gains than with regeneration. Perhaps, he felt, that they would gradually assimilate his message and accept attitudes, habits and ways of behaviour, which may exalt them above petty gains. A noble spirit himself, he did not realise the psychological truth that sermons do not change human beings. In an age of tragic change, no utopia could be established against the chaos of the money power civilisation.

The new young of his time were involved in deep crises of living, where even bread, without butter, was in short supply. Everyone was for himself. Every community was fighting for survival. Every dogma was being revived to cover the demand for jobs and privileges. The non-violent non-cooperation movement of Gandhi had, indeed, introduced certain virtues; even few followers of the Mahatma lived up to his ethical ideas.

The assertion by many Hindus in the freedom struggle of their sectarian impulses led to counter-assertions by the Muslims, in the same movement, of their own sectarian bias. The alien rulers naturally stimulated the rivalries to promote their own interests.

Towards the end of his life, Iqbal seemed to be more and more disillusioned, though he could not desist from reasserting his fundamental belief in the immortality of man, so long as he pursued the process of rebirth. But the many elegies in his later writings show an undertone of sadness. In the chronogram on himself, he wrote "Truth, sincerity and virtue are no longer to be found."

## 9

THE rediscovery of Iqbal, by the new young in the contemporary period, is a sign of the fact that they wish to recapture the exuberance of his spirit for renewal.

Our own generation has to discover the causes of tragedy in the world—not only in the loss of faith in manhood, but in the integration of that faith with the concrete needs and interests of human beings. We assert 'not by bread alone,' and demand bread as the essential of life. And then we ask for the soul.

The modern revolution cannot be a mere moral revolution, or a mere material revolution; it has to be a total cultural revolution.

The radical transformation by Lenin and his followers of the concepts of the Hegelians, the Kantians, and the Existentialists has been followed not only by propaganda, but also by the unspoken sermons of the liberation struggles of Russia, China, Asia and Africa. The truth has dawned that man can make himself. But the making of history by man, today, imposes new responsibilities not only on the leaders but also on every human being.

The challenge of death through a possible nuclear war has to be answered by an agonising reappraisal of whether the large centralised states of the world can avoid war, if they do not decentralise themselves. Is it possible for freedom of the individual to prevail without the state withering away? Is it likely that men and women can liberate themselves from age-old inhibitions, prohibitions and oppressions, and enable themselves to achieve a new consciousness for an entirely new age? The truth of Iqbal that man can make himself by renewing his faith in himself, and by constant self-criticism, remains the ever relevant message of this sage for our time, as it was for his own era.

Strength, indulgence, self-assurance through personal gain, the false pride born of pride of race and colour, the flabbiness derived from the tinsel story of the consumer goods civilisation, cannot help man in the future where our life hangs by a thread. Man will not survive unless the drama of the tension between life and death, posed by the bomb, and all that goes with it, can create the necessary 'tension' in the human soul to compel our 'burning consciences' to come alive.

## IQBAL AND GERMANY, GERMANY AND IQBAL

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL

IN 1957, Herman Hesse wrote in the introduction to the German verse translation of the *Javed Nama* the following: "Sir Muhammad Iqbal belongs to three kingdoms of the spirit: three kingdoms of the spirit are the sources of his extraordinary work: the world of India, the world of Islam, and that of Occidental thought. A Muslim of Indian descent, trained spiritually by the Koran, by the Vedanta and by Persian-Arabic mysticism, but also strongly touched by the problems of Western philosophy and conversant with Bergson and Nietzsche, leads us in ascending spirals through the Provinces of his cosmos."

No longer a mystic, he has still been consecrated by Rumi. No longer a Hegelian or Bergsonian, he has still remained a speculative philosopher. The source of his strength, however, lies somewhere else. In the religious sphere, in his faith, Iqbal is pious (*Momin*), one who has devoted himself to God; but his faith is not a child's faith; it is all masculine, glowing, fighting. And his faith is not only a wrestling with God, but also a wrestling with the world. For Iqbal's faith absolutely raises the claim of catholicity. His dream is a humanity united in the name and in the service of God. For the spiritual travellers to the East (*Morgenland-fahren*), it is not Iqbal's comprehensive education and his desire of speculation, full of subtle nuances, that will be the most important and truly supreme aspect of the powerful genius, but rather his poetical power of loving and creating. They will venerate him because of his heart's fire and his world of images and will love his work as the *East-West Divan*.

Indeed, Iqbal can be regarded as the only Muslim poet who has succeeded in amalgamating Eastern and Western thought into a fascinating picture. And in the Western world it was particularly Germany which he considered to be his spiritual home.

The young scholar studied in Cambridge and then went on to Heidelberg (1907) where he took courses in German. Atiya Begum has described his enthusiastic love of everything German. The finest result of the days in Heidelberg is the Urdu poem 'Ek Sham' (One Evening) written on the banks of the Neckar, and strongly influenced by Goethe's *Wanderers Nachtlied* (Über allen Gipfeinist Ruh). In November 1907, Iqbal got his Ph.D. from Munich University; his promoter was F. Hommel, Professor of Semitic Languages. Goethe remained Iqbal's guiding star even after his return to Lahore in 1908. His notebooks of 1910, published as *Stray Reflections*, contain numerous sayings about German culture, and Goethe's *Faust* appears to Iqbal as the supreme expression of the German character, or, as he says in another place, as 'humanity individualized'.

Iqbal's love of Goethe, which had made him compare the German poet, who sleeps in the 'rose gardens of Weimar' to Mirza Ghalib, resting in ruined Delhi, manifested itself best in the composition of the *Payam-e-Mashriq*, the 'Message of the East', which he declared to be his answer to the *West Oestliche Divan*. The Urdu introduction to the *Payam-e-Mashriq* gives a good survey of the so-called Oriental Current in German literature. Goethe appears in the *Payam-e-Mashriq* along with Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, for both of them are 'not prophets but have a book', Maulana the *Mathnawi*, Goethe the *Faust*.

In some poems Iqbal follows Goethe's lead closely, thus in 'Houri and Poet', which takes up a topic of the *West Oestliche Divan*, but expresses very well Iqbal's central idea of the never-resting quest for deeper and deeper knowledge, which will not stop even in the meadows of paradise. This theme is taken up again in the *Javed Nama*. But also a poem that belongs to Goethe's earlier period had inspired the *Payam*; it is 'Mohamad's Gesang', that wonderful description of the prophetic spirit under the symbol of a mighty river which, growing out of a tiny fountain, takes into himself the rivers and brooks to carry them home into the arms of the Divine Ocean. Here, Iqbal found a perfect expression of the dynamic spirit of the Prophet, and his pen-name which, he assumes in the *Javed Nama*, e.g., Zindarud, 'Living Stream', goes back to this image of the prophetic activity.

It is a strange coincidence that the last visitor to see Iqbal a few hours before his death was the German globe trotter philosopher H.H. von Veltheim, who, like Iqbal, was an ardent lover of Goethe. He describes his visit on the evening of April 20, 1938, in his *Tagenbuecher aus Asien*: "As a good friend of Germany which he knew well, he had agreed with me already for some years previously that closer spiritual bonds between Indians and Germans would now be an even more important demand of the time." And he describes him as "one of the great stars of the Asiatic and in particular the Islamic Indo-Persian spiritual firmament, a philosopher and poet of transcendental importance."

When Veltheim wrote these words, Iqbal's poetry was little known outside the subcontinent. The only German translation of some of his early Urdu poems is found in the book *4000 Jahre indischer Dichtung* (Berlin 1925), by Otto von Glasenapp, the father of the well known Indologist Helmuth von Glasenapp. The translator particularly thanks Iqbal for having sent him some of his poems, and although the translation is slightly old-fashioned, it conveys a good impression of Iqbal's early poetry.

The *Payam-e-Mashriq* soon attracted the interest of the German orientalisists. In the 'thirties, the Professor of Arabic at the University of Erlangen, Joseph Hell, produced a German prose version, which, however, was too pedestrian to be published.

Iqbal's Six Lectures became known in Germany rather early. But while R. Paret in his review of 1935 expressed the opinion that "as a non-Muslim, one will only rarely be able to follow his conclusions."

G. Kampffmeyer gave a much more appreciative review of the book in 1933. The author, noted for his knowledge of the modern Middle East, seems fascinated by Iqbal's approach, by his "all embracing view and his method". He stresses particularly the fact that Iqbal drew from the best sources of both Oriental and Occidental literature, in the latter also from the German of the Turkish modernist movement, and Friedrich Naumann (Max Norten, August Fischer), to whom he owes his knowledge.

The first scholarly analysis of Iqbal's work in German was made by Professor Johann Fueck, who devoted an article on Mohammad Iqbal (1954). This article is still the best introduction to the Six Lectures. He stresses Iqbal's appreciation of Einstein—who was called, in the *Payam-e-Mashriq* "A Zoroaster from the Family of Moses and Asron"—and underlines Iqbal's understanding of Kant's philosophy. (In the Stray Reflections not yet published when this article was written, Iqbal stated that one can understand the rigidity of Kant's stance only when one has studied the political history of Germany.) Fueck also expressly states that "Iqbal is not less anti-classical than the Koran," and this leads to his aversion to Islamic Hellenism. And he concludes his study with the words: "His ideal is an Islamic confederation of nations, formed by the voluntary joining together of all individual states. . . . He believes that the democratic form of state is most beautifully consonant with the principles of Islam. . . . Iqbal shows the same openmindedness in his attitude towards the reform of Islamic law. He does not enter into details of a legal reform as, in general, every occupation with daily problems was far away from his universal spirit."

Two years later (1956), a booklet by a Turkestani scholar living in Germany, Baymirza Hayit, gave a simple introduction to Iqbal's work.

In 1951 I received a letter from a German poet, Hanns Heinke

(1884-1972). He was a great lover of Maulana Rumi and of Iqbal, about whom he had read something. He had written to the poet-philosopher and received from him both *Javed Nama* and *Payam-e-Mashriq*. Since he was not acquainted with Persian, he kindly gave me these books. Heinke himself, then a retired school teacher, translated some of Iqbal's verses into German poetry, but these translations are, like most of his works, extant only in a few beautifully caligraphed manuscripts which he gave to friends.

Another member of the same group of intellectuals but much more a philosopher than a poet, was Rudolf Pannwitz (1881-1969). He had started, like Iqbal, from a deep study of Nietzsche, and then, again much like Iqbal, built up his own philosophy, which, though more 'abstract' than Iqbal's reaches similar conclusions. I sent him translations and drew his attention to Iqbal's Six Lectures. The response was warm and enthusiastic, and Pannwitz wrote: "I am so sorry that I did not know him and that he is no longer among the living. There would have been good and deep mutual understanding."

Indeed, the similarity of the approach of the two thinkers is remarkable. What Pannwitz says about the role of poetry is of its time and yet more than its time. "It completes the time, lifts out of its undeveloped layers of germination what it lacks, what future shall bring, and what is valid in eternity. . . Thus, poetry is not passive but active history, prophecy that is instrumental in causing history. . . ."

Pannwitz, like Iqbal, dreamed of man as a co-worker with God, "not a superman but more humble than ever. That is why he, after studying the Six Lectures, expressed the view that: "Once more I find confirmed what you have stressed, that the correspondence between Iqbal and myself is remarkable. Especially this: the complete exhaustive realisation of the Ego by its inner activity which is not mystical. He comes to meet Europe as far as it is possible at all, and his criticism is largely also our own criticism."

Indeed, Iqbal's relation with Nietzsche is a constant topic for discussions. At the time when he wrote *Asrar-e-Khudi* (1915) he was accused of borrowing ideas from Nietzsche. However, the difference between the Uebermensch and Iqbal's Man, the *mard-e-momin*, is like day and night. For while the Uebermensch will appear after 'God has died', Iqbal's ideal man grows stronger the closer he comes to God, and the more deeply he experiences the relation of God and himself as that of an I and Thou (We are reminded here of Buber, whose work was known to Iqbal). Nietzsche was the thinker with whom Iqbal wrestled most. Nietzsche, though endowed with great spiritual power, was misled, and did not take the necessary step that leads from the *la* 'No God' to the *illa* "Save God". Iqbal sees him, in the great vision in the *Javed Nama*, whirl-

ing beyond the spheres, repeating one verse (Critique of the Eternal Recurrence).

Iqbal had read Eucken, and one can easily compare expressions of his to sayings of Lotze, Heinrich Scholz, even Tillich. Of course, he was well acquainted with classical philosophy, and not only Hegel but also Schopenhauer finds a place in his poetry.

One can see Iqbal as a political or social figure, as a great poet in two languages, Urdu and Persian, as a philosopher or as a prophetic thinker. Personally I find his religious attitude most interesting and my numerous studies on this subject were published, in enlarged form, in 1963 as a book under the title *Gabriel's Wing—A Study into the Religious Attitude of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*. A complete German verse translation of the *Javed Nama* (Buch der Ewigkeit) appeared in 1957, one year later a Turkish prose translation with a commentary: in 1963, the complete German verse translation of the *Payam-e-Mashriq* was published. Nine years later an anthology of Iqbal's works came out under the title *Persischer Psalter*.

For the Iqbal centenary, a new edition of all previous translations, which contain both poetry and prose appeared in October 1977 under the title *Botschaft des Ostens* (Erdmann, Tuebingen), and a collection of articles in German and English, written by German scholars—among them a reprint of Fueck's above-mentioned article—is in the press.

Taking into consideration how deeply Iqbal drank from the fountains of German wisdom and how grateful he remained throughout his whole life to the German spirit, we sincerely hope that these publications and celebrations will make his name better known outside the rather narrow circle of specialists.



## IQBAL, ISLAM AND THE MODERN AGE

JAGAN NATH AZAD

**I**QBAL'S six lectures delivered under the auspices of the Madras Muslim Association at Madras, Mysore, Hyderabad and Aligarh in 1928 and 1929 and later brought out with an additional lecture in the form of a book entitled *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* occupy a unique place in the world library of philosophical thought. The importance Iqbal attached to this book is evident from the following anecdote given by Prof. M.M. Sharif in his book *About Iqbal and His Thought*, wherein he says:

"In my reading of *Asrar-e-Khudi* and *Rumuz-e-Bekhudi*, I felt that at one or two places, which I cannot now recall, I came across some contradictory ideas. I availed myself of the opportunity of taking up these topics with him. He tenderly smiled and observed: "My dear Sharif, *Asrar* and *Rumuz* are poetic works and not books of philosophy."

What Iqbal meant to say was that for an elaborate ideological exposition of his views, a student of his art and thought should not confine his study to his poetical works but should also delve deep into some of his other writings. Obviously, these writings are the "Development of Metaphysics in Persia" and the seven lectures contained in the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

Again, Iqbal, referring to these lectures in *Javed Nama* says:

"I spoke two words to the nature of my age.  
I have encompassed the two oceans in two vessels . . .  
. . . knotty expression, and an expression with a sting,  
So that I take in my noose both the heart and the mind of the people.

An expression deep after the style of Europe.  
 The other, a wail of ecstasy from the chord of a harp.  
 As the temperament of my age is different from the previous ones  
 My nature created a different tumult."

In these couplets, Iqbal draws a line between his poetical works and prose works, describing the former one as a "wail of ecstasy" and the latter as "with a sting" and "a knotty expression after the style of Europe" or for that matter European philosophy.

Before attempting to discuss Iqbal's approach to the philosophy of Islam as manifested through his poetical and prose works, it would be worthwhile to understand Iqbal's conception of philosophy in general.

Like his predecessors in the domain of thought in India, philosophy for Iqbal is not a mere theory but a life in practice. In this regard he is in line with the Indian philosophers, whether they belong to the days of the Vedas or to the later periods of history. For him philosophy is not only an attempt to conceive the world logically and remain satisfied with the formulation of barren theories about it, but a sincere endeavour to see the truth, face to face, by the inner concentration of man to contemplate the ultimate reality including the world and even beyond. Iqbal has endeavoured to approach the reality with a harmonious attitude of mind in which logic has been utilised to check wanton contemplation and the visualisation of the potentiality of mind has been charged with the force of a passionate will. Philosophy for Iqbal is not a subject but a way of studying all subjects including his religion. He is dead opposed to philosophy being taken as a subject. In this context, he emphatically says: "I am afraid, I have no philosophy to teach. As a matter of fact, I hate systems of philosophy, nor do I trust the principles and conclusions of philosophy. No man has condemned the human intellect more than I, i.e., as applied to the ultimate realities of religion. No doubt I talk of things in which philosophers are also interested. But with me these things are matters of living experience and not of philosophical reasoning." (*Eminent Musalmans*, Madras, 1928). In *Bal-e-Jibreel*, he describes philosophy as something "keeping you away from life" and in *Payam-e-Mashriq*:

"More the intellect opens its wings to soar,  
 more in bondage it finds itself."

However, all this does not detract even an inch from his greatness as a philosopher. He has in his system of thought represented a synthetic and balanced approach to the two tendencies—"know in order to believe" and "believe in order to know". According to Dr S. Radhakrishnan, "Indian philosophy has its interest in the haunts of men and not in the

supra-lunar solitudes. It takes its origin in life and enters back into life after passing through the schools." Says Heinrich Zimmer in his book *Philosophies of India*: "The chief aim of Indian thought is to unveil and integrate into consciousness what has been thus resisted and hidden by the forces of life—not to explore and describe the visible world." This aptly applies to Iqbal in respect of his approach to philosophy. The supreme and characteristic achievement of Iqbal's mind is its discovery of the Self, as an independent, imperishable entity, underlying the conscious personality and bodily frame. Iqbal's philosophy is close to life and, therefore, does not merely seek to quench intellectual thirst. It has a higher and profounder aim in view, i.e., to tackle the ultimate problems of life. It is born and bred in life. His works are not divorced from human life; rather they are mirrors in which one sees human life's ideals and feelings.

Therefore, in spite of what he observes about philosophy as a subject, he attaches highest importance to the process of thought. Nothing pains him more than to notice that "during the last five hundred years, religious thought in Islam has been practically stationary". Stressing the point that there was a time when European thought received inspiration from the world of Islam, he refers to "the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the West" as "the most remarkable phenomenon of modern history". However, Iqbal sees nothing wrong in this movement for, according to him "European culture, on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam". His only fear is that "the dazzling exterior of European culture may arrest our movement, and we may fail to reach the true inwardness of that culture". It is this unquenched thirst for quest that is the key-note of Iqbal's system of thought. In the *Javed Nama* he gives a hint of it, though in a different context:

"The Europeans have a lofty purpose in view;  
They did not dig the graves only to have the precious stones.  
The knowledge of the story of Egypt, Pharaoh and Moses  
Can be revealed through the old ruins.  
Knowledge is nothing but a constant quest to unfold the mysteries;  
Wisdom without an effort to search is base and worthless."

And, again, since the Middle Ages, when the schools of Muslim theology were completed, "infinite advance has taken place in the domain of human thought and expressions". Iqbal is conscious of the fact that it is only by keeping pace with human thought and experience resulting in the discoveries in the physical and metaphysical world that Islam can continue to be a living force. It is with this background that Iqbal made his laudable attempt to reconstruct Islamic thought with due regard to

past traditions, in a progressive world order.

A remarkable aspect of the modern age is that a wave of renaissance is passing all over the East, particularly the Muslim world and the influence of Western materialism is clearly visible on the Eastern mind. Wilfred Centwell Smith traces it back to the early nineteenth century. Dilating on the subject in his thought-provoking book *Modern Islam in India and Pakistan*, he argues: "The first major development in Islamic modernism, therefore, and the point at which we begin our study, was the working out of a liberal Islam compatible with the nineteenth-century West, similar to it in general outlook, and, especially in harmony with its science, its business method, and its humanitarianism. This was done by separating out principles from the letter of the law, and attending to them only, disengaging the religion from its feudal manifestation and especially from the corruptions of recent decadence; repudiating from Islam, as later accretions or misrepresentations, all that prohibited or ran counter to Western bourgeois principles; and stressing the similarity of the fundamentals of all religions, specifically Islam and Christianity. Above all, there was a change of attitude; a this-worldly, dynamic approach that was new. The outstanding figure in connection with this movement is Sir Syed Ahmad Khan with his liberal Aligarh School in the latter part of the last century." Dilating on the subject, W.C. Smith continues: "The recent progressive phase of Islamic modernism has appealed to those who look to the future rather than to either the present or the past." Conclusively, according to him, "The outstanding figure in both movements is Sir Mohammad Iqbal. At the level of idea, the two movements have been in many respects aspects of one attitude."

However, Iqbal, in his attempt to reconstruct religious thought in Islam, traces the secret for rational foundations in Islam to the words and deeds of the Holy Prophet. In the words of Iqbal, the Prophet's constant prayer was: "God! grant me knowledge of the ultimate nature of things." It is this prayer of the Holy Prophet that finds its echo in Iqbal's prayer in *Zabur-e-Ajam*:

"O Lord, I pray to thee; bestow upon me a conscious heart  
in my breast.  
Grant me a sight that would see intoxication in wine."

Discussing further the question of research for rational foundations in Islam, Iqbal says: "The work of later mystic and non-mystic rationalists forms an exceedingly instructive chapter in the history of our culture, in as much as it reveals a longing for a coherent system of ideas, a spirit of whole-hearted devotion to truth, as well as the limitations of the age, which rendered the various theological movements in Islam less fruitful than they might have been in a different age. As we all know, Greek

philosophy has been a great cultural force in the history of Islam. Yet a careful study of the *Quran* and the various schools of scholastic theology that arose under the inspiration of Greek thought discloses the remarkable fact that while Greek philosophy very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers, it, on the whole, obscured their vision of the *Quran*. Socrates concentrated his attention on the human world alone. To him the proper study of man was man, and not the world of plants, insects and stars. How unlike the spirit of the *Quran*, which sees in the humble bee a recipient of divine inspiration and constantly calls upon the reader to observe the perpetual change of the winds, the alternation of day and night, the clouds, the stormy heavens, and the planets spinning through infinite space. As a true disciple of Socrates, Plato despised sense perception which, in his view, yielded mere opinions and no real knowledge. How unlike the *Quran*, which regards 'hearing' and 'sight' as the most valuable divine gifts and declares them to be accountable to God for their activity in this world. This is what the earlier Muslim students of the *Quran* completely missed under the spell of classical speculation. They read the *Quran* in the light of Greek thought. It took them over 200 years to perceive—though not quite clearly—that the spirit of the *Quran* was essentially anti-classical, and the result of this perception was a kind of intellectual revolt, the full significance of which has not been realized even upto the present day."

Iqbal's main source of inspiration as a poet and a philosopher is the teachings of Islam and the life of the Holy Prophet. The preface to the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* begins with the assertion: "The *Quran* is a book which emphasizes the 'deed' rather than the 'idea'." And Iqbal feels that in order to keep pace with the modern times, the teachings of the *Quran* as a living force are to be projected in the light of modern thought. Elucidating his stand-point on this issue, he says: "Most of my life has been spent in the study of European philosophy and that view-point has become my second nature. Consciously or unconsciously, I study the realities and truths of Islam from the same point of view." It is with this purpose in view that he undertook to write his seven lectures. Referring to the idea of this book, Iqbal, in a letter dated September 2, 1925, to Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum, stated that he would like to call this book "Islam as I understand it" because in the words of Dr Mohammad Din Taseer, "it was to be the statement of his personal views" on Islam. And about his personal views on his religion in so far as "receiving any fresh inspiration from modern thought and experience" is concerned, how modestly he says: "I have tried to meet, even though partially, this urgent demand by attempting to reconstruct Muslim religious philosophy with due regard to the philosophical traditions of Islam and the more recent demand in the various domains of human knowledge. And the present movement is quite favourable for

such an understanding." However, at this stage he does not forget to sound a note of caution when he says: "It must, however, be remembered that there is no such thing as finality in philosophical thinking. As knowledge advances and fresh avenues of thought are opened, other views and probably sounder views than those set forth in these lectures, are possible. Our duty is carefully to watch the progress of human thought, and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it." These are the urges of an open mind, a searching mind, a mind throbbing with a zest for quest.

Iqbal has a firm faith in perpetual change. A static mind or a static society is unimaginable for him. According to him, constant human endeavour and constant change go hand in hand. For him movement as true change is the fundamental reality. Even as far back as 1904, he upheld this view. In his delightful poem, "Kunar-e-Ravi" (On the Bank of the Ravi) he says:

"A fast moving boat is on its run on the breast of the river,  
The boatman is in confrontation with the rushing wave.  
The boat, in swiftness, is like the eye-sight  
In a moment it disappears from our view.  
The vessel of the life of men is also on the move like this. . .  
It appears and disappears exactly like this in the ocean of eternity;  
It never suffers a defeat (at the hands of death)  
It gets away from the sight but never fades into non-existence."

And again in another charming poem in the form of a dialogue, "Chand Aur Tare" (The Moon and the Stars):

"Afraid of the breath of the dawn  
The stars said to the moon:  
'The sky has still the same old scenes to show;  
Tired and weary we are due to constant shining.  
Our job, every morning and evening, is to be on the move,  
To be on the move, to be on the move, to be on the move  
constantly.  
Every atom in this universe is restless  
What is called peace and tranquillity is traceable nowhere  
Everything is under the stress of motion  
Whether stars or human beings or trees or stones—everything.  
Would this journey ever come to an end?  
Shall we ever arrive at our destination?'  
Replied the moon, 'O companions!  
O the beneficiaries of the farm of night!  
The life of the Universe springs from the movement.

This is an ancient practice here.  
 The character of Time is on the run  
 Being lashed upon by an urge for a fresh achievement.  
 To halt on this path is inopportune;  
 There is death hidden in the static state.  
 Those on the move have gone ahead,  
 And those who halted a bit have been trampled upon  
 The achievement of this move is Beauty  
 Love is its beginning but Ultimate Beauty is its goal.' ”

Discussing this subject in his lecture entitled “The Conception of God and Meaning of Prayer”, Iqbal again goes to the *Quran* and observes: “The teaching of the *Quran*, which believes in the possibility of improvement in the behaviour of man, and his control over natural forces, is neither optimism nor pessimism. It is materialism, which recognises a growing universe and is animated by the hope of man’s eventual victory over evil.” Summing up this idea in the *Zarb-e-Kaleem*, he says:

“This universe is perhaps incomplete so far  
 As the sound of *Kun Fayakun* is being constantly heard.”

It should, however, not be ignored that Iqbal’s conception of movement is completely different from that of Bergson. In Bergson’s view the forward rush of the vital impulse in its creative freedom is not aiming at a result. It is not with a purpose. For Iqbal the result of consciousness has a forward aspect. “Life” for Iqbal “is only a series of acts of attention, and an act of attention is inexplicable without reference to a purpose, conscious or unconscious.” In the words of Iqbal, “Even our acts of perception are determined by our immediate interests and purpose.” He further explains this idea with great poetic charm in *Bal-e-Jibreel*, when he says:

“Calm and Immovability are nothing but deception for eye,  
 Every particle of the Universe is palpitating.  
 The caravan of Existence does not halt anywhere,  
 As the manifestations of Existence are ever fresh.  
 You are under the impression that life is a secret;  
 Life is only an urge to move on.  
 It has experienced a number of ups and downs;  
 Journey is more dear to it than destination  
 Journey is the tool and equipment of life  
 Journey is a reality, while rest is unreal.”

Iqbal's concept of the forward rush of the vital impulse culminates in a constant process of ascendance of man as he says in *Bal-e-Jibreel*:

"The stars are getting terrified at the ascension of man  
Lest this star rent apart from its origin may come to shine again  
as a full moon."

And again in *Zabur-e-Ajam*:

"Brighter shall shine man's clay  
Than angel's light one day,  
One day shall soar, and clear  
The whirlpool of the sphere  
Why askest thou of me?  
Consider man, and see  
How, mind—developed still,  
Sublime this subject will.  
Come fashioned forth, sublime,  
And with its beauty's rapture  
Even God's heart shall capture."

(Translation: Arthur Arberry)

Iqbal envisages the new man of the future society as an all-round, harmoniously developed personality. His concept of the new man is in utter contrast to Nietzsche's superman who is free from all moral obligations. Iqbal's *mard-e-momin* is a God-fearing personality with lofty ethical principles and of physical perfection. These qualities, however, according to Iqbal, do not develop automatically; they are to be moulded and inculcated. Iqbal has a firm belief that the new man with aesthetic qualities, tastes and the ability to appreciate and to create the beautiful in art, in life and to construct life in harmony with the laws of beauty is on the way. Iqbal's system of thought shows fulness of feeling and interests as an integral part of the picture of the new man who would find new happiness in the fulness of life. This new man would have a feeling of mastery over nature and a sense of his own dignity. He would be passionate in his efforts to understand human culture of feelings. Iqbal very clearly elaborates his view of the future of man in one of his lectures, "Knowledge and Religious Experience", wherein he argues: "The extension of man's power over nature has given him a new faith and a fresh sense of superiority over the forces that constitute his environment. New points of view have been suggested, old problems have been re-stated in the light of fresh experience, and new problems have arisen." Not only that, he goes a step further and says: "It seems as if the intellect of man is outgrowing its own most fundamental categories—time, space and casuality." And



what he foresees in the distant future as man's strides in various fields is not going to happen according to Iqbal as a mere accident, but would result as a process of evolution.

During the course of this discussion, Iqbal again turns to the *Quran* and observing that "this immensity of time and space carries in it the promise of a complete subjugation by man whose duty is to reflect on the signs of God, and thus discover the means of realising his conquest of nature as an actual fact," he quotes the *ayats* of the Holy Book:

"See ye not how God hath put under you all that is in the Heavens, and all that is on the Earth, and hath been bounteous to you of His favours both in relation to the seen and the unseen?" (31:19)

"And He hath subjected to you the night and the day, the sun and the moon, and the stars too are subject to you by His behest; verily in this are signs for those who understand" (16:12).

Regarding Iqbal's attempt to "guard Islam as a living force" by reconstructing the Muslim religious thought, M.T. Stepanyants writes: "Furthermore, he was familiar with Western philosophy and sciences, and knew how to present the ideas of religious modernism with theoretical persuasion. His desire to bring the teachings of Islam closer to Western philosophy and the findings of modern science echoed the mood of the younger generation of the national bourgeoisie and intellectuals, who wanted to cast off the burden of the old dogmas and adopt new ideals." And again: "Iqbal himself did take from the West whatever corresponded most to the basic premises of his philosophical conception. He made it his goal to create a system resting on modernised Islam, and tried to prove that the philosophy of Islam was not out-dated but merely needed to have its principles expressed in the terminology and ideas of the new times. From that premise it remained for him to find points of contact between Muslim philosophy and the modern theories of the West." I am afraid Miss Stepanyants has rather tried to oversimplify the issue which concerns the future of Islam in the whole world. She perhaps ignores the important point that with the advance of scientific thought, the concept of intelligibility is also undergoing a change. The theory of relativity propounded by Einstein not only brought a new vision of the Universe but also suggested new ways of looking at the problems common to both religion and philosophy. It is in this context that in the words of Iqbal "the younger generation of Islam in Asia and Africa demand a fresh orientation of their faith." It is this re-orientation of Islamic

ideology by Iqbal which Miss Stepanyants has confused with finding 'points of contact between Muslim philosophy and the modern theory of the West'. "With the re-awakening of Islam," Iqbal further adds while throwing light on the factors that prompted him to undertake this venture of re-orientation of Islamic philosophy, "therefore, it is necessary to examine, in an independent spirit, what Europe has thought and how far the conclusions reached by her can help in the revision and, if necessary, reconstruction, of theological thought in Islam."

The theory of 'points of contact' built up by Miss Stepanyants crumbles in view of the extract given above from Iqbal.

In his attempt to re-orientate Islamic philosophy a number of dogmas came in contact with his fresh approach. In Iqbal's system of thought the principle of free will has appeared in sharp contradiction to the prevalent doctrine of pre-destination. Like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Iqbal stressed the point that actually there was no point of contact in divine pre-destination and the freedom of human action. Rather Iqbal goes to the length of saying in *Bal-i-Jibreel*:

"Exalt the Self to the extent that before assigning Destiny,  
God says to the individual, 'Come out with your desire'."

And long before that in *Payam-e-Mashriq*, he had said:

"You created the night, and I brought the lamp into existence.  
You created the earth; I made a cup out of it.  
You created deserts, mountains and their barren slopes,  
While I transformed them to meadows, gardens and orchards,  
I am the one who can create a mirror from a stone;  
I am the one who can produce cures from poison."

Again, in the same work:

"Love clamoured that one with bleeding heart is born,  
Beauty quivered saying that one with keen insight is born,  
News went from the skies to the night—abode of eternity  
'Beware! O veiled ones, a knower of the secrets is born'."

According to Iqbal, this limitation of God's boundless will has been accepted by God consciously. "It is born out of His own creative freedom whereby He has chosen finite egos to be participants of His life, power and freedom."

Iqbal, while trying to bring about a synthesis between Darwin's theory of evolution and the Quranic conception of the creation of man, originates an attitude of hope and kindles a fire of enthusiasm for life, which according to him is one continuous process. For him Man's ego,

although an offshoot of the Ultimate Ego, is a free ego, even able to create new situations. Discussing this issue in *Zarb-i-Kaleem*, he says:

“Every moment a new Sinai mountain and a new flash!  
May the destination of ardent desire never be reached!”

It would not be inappropriate, in order to throw still more light on Iqbal's conception of Man's upward advance from lower to higher levels, to quote him once again: “It is not a universe, a finished product, immobile and incapable of change. Deep in its inner being lies perhaps the dream of a new birth.” And again: “His (Man's) career, no doubt has a beginning, but he is destined, perhaps, to become a permanent element in the constitution of being—for man as conceived by the *Quran* is a creative activity.”

Mysticism or Sufism is the religious philosophy of Islam. It is described as the apprehension of divine realities. But Iqbal's scathing criticism of this order in India and the Middle East, both in his poetry and prose has given rise to an impression that Iqbal is opposed to Sufism. This is far from true. Iqbal's wrath is all against the religious formalism degenerated to schools of surrender and renunciation. Iqbal saw a doctrine of destiny spreading round, which made all human effort appear futile and he raised his voice against this attitude to life.

As for his genuine love for Sufism, he is the first author to have attempted a chronological account of Persia's mystical thought in his remarkable treatise entitled *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. This was his thesis for Ph.D. at the University of Munich in 1908. Time rolled on and in 1914 appeared his mathnavi *Asrar-e-Khudi* which sparked off a controversy over Iqbal's approach to Sufism. In this poem, Iqbal did not spare even the great mystic poet of Iran, Khwaja Hafiz Shirazi, and spoke out strongly against him for the education of passiveness and inactivity that he advocated. It was a dangerous path that he trod, for in India, in the days of Iqbal, there was no dearth of admirers of Khwaja Hafiz Shirazi who was regarded as a great mystic. Akbar Allahabadi, a revered Urdu poet of the day, was so annoyed with Iqbal's attitude to Sufism that in a letter to Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, he wrote: “I simply fail to understand why Iqbal has started a campaign against Sufism” (August 6, 1917). In another letter to Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, Akbar Allahabadi wrote: “Iqbal, these days, is fond of making attacks on Sufism. He says, ‘Persian philosophy describes the universe as God, and that this theory is incorrect’—It is opposed to the teachings of Islam” (September 1, 1917). In yet another letter, he says: “I am unhappy with Iqbal as he has openly condemned Hafiz Shirazi. I hope you have seen his mathnavi *Asrar-e-Khudi*. Now (the second part) *Rumuz-e-Bekhudi* has appeared. I have not seen it. I didn't feel like going

through it." (January 11, 1918).

We can well imagine how perturbed Iqbal must have felt over all this. In one of his letters dated June 11, 1918, he wrote to Akbar Allahabadi: "... I have never levelled this allegation against Khwaja Hafiz that his poetry has led to excessive use of alcohol by society. My objection is of an altogether different nature. What I wrote in *Asrar-e-Khudi* was a criticism of a literary objective, popular among Muslims for centuries. It might have done some good to society in some period but in the present-day context, it is not only useless, it is harmful. . .

"I have already stated that my objection is to a particular type of Sufism. Whatever I have written is nothing new. Hazrat Ala-ud-Daula Sinjani and Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi have already stated long back what I have written today. . .

"No doubt Persian Sufism lends a sort of charm and beauty to literature but it has a depressing and degenerating effect on the reader. Contrary to this, Islamic Sufism gives strength and vitality to the mind and heart and it invigorates literature."

In the same vein, Iqbal wrote to one of his close friends, Maharaja Sir Kishan Pershad, Prime Minister of Hyderabad State, on January 20, 1918: "About two years back, I expressed my views on certain aspects of Sufism. Actually there was nothing new in the controversy that I started. This has already been there in the Sufistic circles for a long period. But unfortunately some people, ignorant of the subject, attributed it to my opposition to Sufism. I have explained my position, particularly because Khwaja Hasan Nizami had severely criticized my views expressed in the mathnavi (*Asrar-e-Khudi*)."

Iqbal's concept of Sufism is that it should function as a source of courage, heroism and self-sacrifice and not as a fountain-head of resignation and inactivity. In the preface to *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, he draws a line between genuine and non-genuine Sufism. Lashing out at the latter, he says: "The more genuine schools of Sufism have, no doubt, done good work in shaping and directing the evolution of religious experience in Islam; but their latter-day representatives, owing to their ignorance of the modern mind, have become incapable of receiving any fresh inspiration from modern thought and experience." Iqbal does not accept the theory that the Sufistic order is ascetic, world-neglecting, static or life-destroying. The real Sufistic order according to Iqbal is dynamic, pragmatic and inspired by spiritual vision. It does not ignore the natural motives before humanity and aims at evolving a civilisation which is socially just, aesthetically beautiful and spiritually integral. In *Zarb-e-Kaleem* he says:

"Submissiveness, slavery and eternal disappointment—

If these are the attributes of mysticism,

(I am afraid) you will have to invent a new Islam."

And, again:

"This celestial wisdom and this divine knowledge  
Are worthless if they do not provide a remedy for the agony of the  
Heraclitus.

This invocation at midnight, this meditation and this ecstasy  
Are valueless if they are not protectors of your ego."

Iqbal, while criticising Persian fatalism or fatalistic resignation to the will of God, offers a synthesis of resignation to the will of God and desire for bold action. As a living example of this combination, Iqbal refers to the life of the Holy Prophet who believed in resignation to the will of God and at the same time was a man of strong action. Discussing the question of inner experience in his fifth lecture entitled "The Spirit of Islam", Iqbal brings out the difference between the prophetic and mystic types of consciousness, saying: "The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of 'Unitary experience'; and even when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The Prophet's return is creative. He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to controlling the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world of ideas. For the mystic the repose of 'Unitary experience' is something final; for the Prophet it is the awakening within him of world-shaking psychological forces, calculated to completely transform the human world."

Iqbal's approach to genuine Sufism is closely related to his philosophy of Self and philosophy of action, so much so that the study of the one automatically leads to the study of the other. In so far as Iqbal's combination of resignation to the will of God and desire for bold action is concerned, he does not discriminate between a Muslim and a non-Muslim and significantly enough between a Muslim and a Hindu. For him resignation to the will of God coupled with bold action is the essence of Islamic Sufism; and resignation to the will of God, if it means a passive resignation and mere fatalism, is according to Iqbal un-Islamic. Judging from this standard while he refers to the teachings of Sheikh Mohy-ud-Din Ibn-i-Arab as un-Islamic, he describes the teachings of Lord Krishna as extremely close to the Islamic way of life. In the preface to the *Asrar-e-Khudi*, he writes: "In the intellectual history of mankind, Lord Krishna would always be remembered with esteem and regard as this great personality has examined in a very attractive manner the philosophic traditions of his country and nation, and brought out this reality that passivity does not mean renunciation of action, as action is inherent in human nature and forms the base of life. Renunciation, according to Lord Krishna, means that one should remain unconcerned with the results of action. After Lord Krishna, Shri Ramanuj followed the same path but

unfortunately Shri Shankaracharya's charming logic undid what Lord Krishna and Shri Ramanuj wanted to establish. Lord Krishna's nation was, thus, deprived of the fruits of this exposition of ancient philosophy.

"In West Asia, Islam brought a great message of Action, believing that 'Ego' is a self-created quality and can be immortalised through Action. But so far as observation on the theory of 'Ego' is concerned, there appears to be a strange resemblance between the intellectual history of Muslims and that of the Hindus. Here if Shankaracharya adopted a particular outlook regarding the *Gita*, Sheikh Mohy-ud-Din Ibn-i-Arab's exposition of the *Quran* was not much different from him. This exposition of the *Quran* greatly influenced the Muslim mind. Sheikh Akbar with his vast knowledge and learning made 'Panthéism', in a way, a part of Islamic thought. Ahadud Din Kirmani and Fakhruddin Iraqi were largely influenced by this way of thought. Gradually, most of the Persian poets came under its influence and the spell lasted till the fourteenth century."

Quite in accordance with this, he says in *Gulshan-e-Raz-e-Jadeed*:

"Less we talk about Shankar and Mansur, the better it is;  
Make a search for God through your own Self."

There are, however, a few quatrains in *Armaghan-e-Hejaz* which make Iqbal's stand a bit confused on the issue of Pantheism. Let me quote here just one or two:

"The world of mind is not the world of colour or smell  
In this there is neither high nor low nor palace nor streets  
Neither you find here earth, nor sky, nor four directions;  
Here there is nothing but God."

"They called you tulip when you appeared on the twig;  
How were you and what were you inside the twig?"

Some of Iqbal's critics and even admirers call it a contradiction in his attitude towards Pantheism. But a careful study of Iqbal's system of thought reveals that it is not a contradiction but a development. Here he reverts to his pre-1908 idea which he expressed in his poems entitled "Shamma", "Dil" and "Swami Ram Tirth". These quatrains, as already stated, occur in *Armaghan-e-Hejaz*, which is the poet's last gift to humanity. As for this great work, it must be stated that it was undertaken not for a speculative but for a practical end. The entire purpose of the book is to lift mankind from the state of wretchedness and to lead it to the state of blessedness. The chapter dedicated to mankind, therefore, provides a very pleasant insight into the heart of the poet, as it contains in a nutshell what has been expressed in the remaining chapters. This chapter opens with the couplet:

“Humanity means respect for Mankind  
Just realize the status of the human being.”

The fundamental idea embodied in these quatrains is that the human being is the noblest of all creations of the Almighty and the height of this nobility is that the human being must have respect and regard for fellow-beings and not look down upon them with contempt. Iqbal, in the quatrains on this subject, unveils the secrets which go a long way in bringing about an all-round development and progress of humanity. Here, he prays to God to make him taste the wine of love which would enable him to impart to the whole world a message of brotherhood and fraternity.

This sentiment of love and brotherhood which runs throughout Iqbal's poetry does not leave the subject of patriotism untouched. The following quatrains would give an idea of how painful he felt over the slavery of India:

“The world of Sun and Moon is a slave to mind;  
Every knot can be loosened by its wailings.  
Convey this message on my behalf to India  
A slave shuns slavery if the mind wakes up.”

Throughout his poetry Iqbal has hit out at Western Imperialism and this blow clothed in poetic expression is stronger still in the ‘Gift of Hejaz’. Describing Western Imperialism as an idol which must be thrown down the ‘arch of mind’, he says:

“You have bowed before Darius and Jamshed;  
The ignorant one, don't bring a bad name to Heram.  
Don't go to Western Imperialism for the fulfilment of your desire;  
Fell this idol down the arch of your mind.”

“You have dedicated yourself to European idols;  
Very unmanly, you have expired in the idol-house  
Your intellect is far away from your heart, your heart from  
warmth,  
As you have not tasted wine from the vine of ancestors.”

The ‘Gift’ is really divine for its sacred subject, wisdom, power and its beauty of expression. The idea that mankind is great reigns supreme throughout this ‘Armaghan’ which is a message beginning with hope and ending with hope. The last poem again deals with Iqbal's favourite subject—‘Greatness of Mankind’ in which the poet very courageously asks the Almighty:

“If I am the summum bonum (of life), then what is all this beyond  
me?  
What is the last limit of my ever-fresh tumults and uproars?”

Both in his poetry and prose, Iqbal has made frequent reference to the past, sometimes in the context of his concept of time and space and on some occasions in a nostalgic manner. These references start with the very first poem 'Himala' in the *Bang-e-Dara*, which ends with this stanza:

"O Himalayas! Relate to me some episodes of that period  
When you were the abode of forefathers of man.  
Relate to me the story of that simple life,  
Which was free from the stain of a rouge formality.  
O vision! Bring again before my eyes the same old mornings and  
evenings,  
O the movement of time, rush backward."

Poems entitled 'Bilad-e-Islamia' (Islamic Cities), 'Goristan-e-Shahi' (The Royal Graveyard), 'Shikwa' (Complaint), 'Shama Aur Shaair' (The Candle-stick and the Poet), 'Muslim', 'Jawab-e-Shikwa' (Reply to the Complaint), 'Saqi Nama' (Bacchanalian Verse) and many others are indicative of this trend. The question now arises: Is it due to his love for the past? The answer is "Yes"; but it is an incomplete answer. For a complete answer, we shall have to refer to one of his own lines: "I behold tomorrow in the mirror of yesterday." With his eyes on the past, he focuses his vision on the future. Even in his poems like 'Khizr-e-Rah' (Khizr, the Guide of my Path) and 'Tulu-e-Islam' (Rise of Islam) wherein he is enthralled by the past glory of Islam, he, in between the lines, is in communication with the future. His vision always encompasses a broad range of questions dealing with the development of human knowledge. His frequent references to the *Quran*, his main source of inspiration, are not references to a book thirteen hundred years old but "which emphasises deed rather than idea". It is this Book that informs him of "two other sources of knowledge—Nature and History" (in addition to the inner experience) "and it is by tapping these sources of knowledge that the spirit of Islam is seen at its best."

After Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Iqbal was the first Muslim intellectual in India to have realised the importance of modern science and Western philosophical thinking. Iqbal not only stressed the importance of modern scientific studies but also observed that according to the dictates of the *Quran*, it was a prerogative of man to conquer nature through scientific advancement. Iqbal makes a striking reference to "the promises of a complete subjugation by man whose duty is to reflect on the signs of God, and thus discover the means of realising his conquest of nature as an actual fact."

Notwithstanding his lashing out at the Western civilization at a number of places in his works, he has commended its achievements in the domain of science and modern knowledge. He says in *Javed Nama*:



"The power of the West comes not from lute and rebeck,  
 Not from the dancing of the unveiled girls,  
 Not from the magic of tulip-cheeked enchantresses,  
 Not from naked legs and bobbed hair;  
 Its solidity springs not from irreligion,  
 Its glory derives not from the Latin script.  
 The power of the West comes from science and technology,  
 And with that selfsame flame its lamp is bright.  
 Wisdom derives not from the cut and trim of clothes;  
 The turban is no impediment to science and technology:  
 For science and technology, elegant young sprig,  
 Brains are necessary, not European clothes;  
 On this road only keen sight is required,  
 What is needed is not this or that kind of hat.  
 If you have a nimble intellect, that is sufficient;  
 If you have a perceptive mind, that is sufficient."

(Translation : A.J. Arberry)

And, again in the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*: "The only course open to us is to approach modern knowledge with a respectful but independent attitude and to appreciate the teachings of Islam in the light of that knowledge, even though we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us." Iqbal traces this modern approach to knowledge to the *Quran* which "sees signs of the ultimate Reality in the 'Sun', the 'Moon', the 'lengthening of the shadows', the 'alternation of day and night', 'the variety of human colour and tongues', the 'alternation of' the days of successes and reverses of people'—in fact, in the whole of nature as revealed to the sense-perception of man. And man's duty is to reflect on these signs and not to pass these by 'as if he is deaf and blind' for he 'who does not see these signs in this life will remain blind to the realities of the life to come.'"

This is how Iqbal beckons a reader of the *Quran* to acquire modern knowledge and adopt a scientific outlook with a view to conquering nature as ordained by the Holy Book. According to him, Muslims of the earlier ages were aware of this secret of success. Therefore, they did not draw a line between spiritual progress and worldly progress. Spiritual progress and worldly progress, according to Iqbal, are the two aspects of the same issue. In order, therefore, to regain past glory, which unfortunately does not exist now for them, Iqbal admonishes the Muslims to follow again the path forsaken by them. Severely criticising the Muslim thinkers who in the beginning of their intellectual career had tried to understand the *Quran* as 'anti-classical', he argues that this attempt was foredoomed to failure.

On his return from Europe, after attending the Second Round Table

Conference in 1931, Iqbal had the opportunity of visiting the mosque of Cordova. Cordova, reduced to a small town now, was once a great centre of art, literature, culture and learning. In the words of L. Torres Balbas, "during the reign of Abdur-Rehman III, Cordova was the largest, wealthiest and most cultured city of the West. Her prestige was only to be compared with that of great Constantinople, at the time queen of the civilised world and heiress of the scientific, artistic and philosophic patrimony of Greece and the Hellenic East, as well as of Roman greatness. Her rival was legendary Abbaside Baghdad, the metropolis of the Muslim world, with which the Cordovese aspired to make their home town vie."

As Iqbal is aware of this background, his first sight of the mosque takes him back to the period which had produced this piece of art and architecture a thousand years ago. And in his imagination he finds himself face to face with the builders of this great mosque. In his words, these builders, designers, architects and craftsmen are those

"Whose observation and attention gave cultural training to East and West,

Whose intellect discerned the path in the darkness of Europe;  
Through whose blood Andalusians are even today  
Gay and full of friendly warmth, simple and bright-faced.  
Even today in this land gazelle's eyes are common,  
And arrows of their glances performing their magic even today."

The glorious past of the mosque leads Iqbal to direct communion with the future and addressing the mosque he says:

"In what valley, at what stage  
Is love's hardy caravan?  
The Germans have seen the tumult of the Reformation,  
Which has completely swept away the traces of old impression.  
Popes and their sanctity have since lost their importance.  
The delicate boat of Reason sets off on its perilous voyage.  
France has also witnessed the Revolution,  
Which overturned the world of the West.  
Italians, grown old by worshipping old images,  
Have regained their youth through delight of renovation."

These references to the renaissance in Germany, Martin Luther's movement, its confrontation with the Roman Catholic Church, the French Revolution and revivalism in Italy in the days of Mussolini, while unfolding before his eyes, chapter after chapter of man's revolutionary concepts and reorientation of prevalent ideology, suddenly come before him as a big question-mark and he says:

"The same commotion has now seized the soul of Muslim;  
It is a divine secret which words cannot explain.  
Let us see, what new portents spring from the ocean's depth,  
What colour this azure vault assumes."

Here Iqbal is in the grip of his questioning mind. The past glory of the Masjid-e-Qurtaba makes him more concerned about the future. The last couplet of this stanza is not a big question-mark only for Iqbal but for any imaginative modern mind interested in reorientation of religious thought in Islam. Obviously the couplet is a further elucidation of Iqbal's utterances in 1928 regarding the adoption of a respectful and independent attitude to modern knowledge "even though we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us".

Dr Mohammed Din Taseer, a close associate of Iqbal, writes in his introduction to *Aspects of Iqbal*: "In the later years, in practical politics, too, as always in his poetry, he remained above party politics and was a severe critic of the Congress, the Muslim Conference and the Muslim League." A diligent reader of Iqbal's poetry and prose would realise that Iqbal has an international outlook and only the permanent and the universal have a prominent place in his system of thought and not the narrow and parochial ephemeralities or political exigencies. His creative development and his emphasis on the brotherhood of man lead us to believe that Iqbal's concept of human unity was not theoretical but practical and real. In an illuminating article entitled 'Human Unity Concept Now a Reality', Dr Karan Singh says that the concept of human unity is as old as civilisation itself. In this connection, he refers to the *Rigveda* in which "we have a reference to Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam, the world as a family". Stressing his point Dr Karan Singh further says he is "sure that such references can be multiplied in the other scriptures that the human race has produced in its long and tortuous evolution on this planet". In this context, one is aptly reminded of the Holy *Quran*, a major source of inspiration for Iqbal who, like Aurobindo, can rightly be called a prophet of human unity. Iqbal rejects the old static view of the universe and propounds a dynamic view. This dynamic view, for Iqbal, forms the basis of the emotional system of unification which ultimately "recognises the worth of the individual as such, and rejects blood relationship as a base of human unity." In *Javed Nama* he, advising the younger generation through his son, Javed, says:

"To utter a bad word is a sin,  
Disbelievers and believers are all creations of Almighty.  
What is humanity? To respect a human being;  
Be aware of the dignity of a human being.  
A human being survives by mutual contacts;  
Put your foot on the path of friendship.

A man of love follows the path of God,  
 And is compassionate both to the infidels and faithfuls.  
 Encompass infidelity and faith in the expanse of your heart.  
 It is a matter of pity if the heart gets out of control.  
 Although the heart is a prisoner of the four elements,  
 The entire horizon is the horizon of the heart."

And, again in *Zarb-e-Kaleem*, a ray of the sun, while refusing to return to the sun as its task was still incomplete, says:

"Don't be disappointed with the East and don't neglect the West  
 Nature is beckoning you to convert every night into morning."

Iqbal's philosophy of human unity takes its source from his conception of individuality and uniqueness of man as emphasised by the *Quran*. According to Iqbal, the *Quran* has a definite view of man's destiny as a unity of life. This concept of unity of life embraces the entire human race, irrespective of caste, colour, creed or nationality. Discussing the issue, Iqbal attacks the "abstract conception of human unity" and says that the idea of human unity is "neither a concept of philosophy, nor a dream of poetry". In his words, "As a social movement, the aim of Islam was to make the idea (of human unity) a living factor in the Muslim's daily life and then silently and imperceptibly to carry it towards fuller fruition." Iqbal does not visualise human unity as divorced from human consciousness which, in his words, constitutes the centre of human personality. He bemoans the situation that this unity of human consciousness "never really became a point of interest in the history of Muslim thought". Attaching the highest importance to this issue and calling it an immense task, he urges modern Muslims "to rethink the whole system of Islam, without completely breaking with the past". Dilating on this point, he pays a glowing tribute to Syed Jamal-ud-Din Afghani and says: "If his indefatigable but divided energy could have devoted itself entirely to Islam as a system of human habit and conduct, the world of Islam, intellectually speaking, would have been on much more solid ground today." Here it would not be out of place to refer once again to Iqbal's attitude towards modern knowledge which, obviously, led him to reconstruct religious thought in Islam and, in the context of which, he says: "The only course open to us is to approach modern knowledge with a respectful but independent attitude and to appreciate the teachings of Islam in the light of that knowledge, even though we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us."

## A STUDY OF THE CONCEPTS OF TRANSFORMATION, LEADERSHIP AND FREEDOM IN THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF IQBAL

S. ALAM KHUNDMIRI

THIS paper intends to examine in a modest critical manner some of the basic ideas which govern the political philosophy of Iqbal. In a modest critical manner because, I believe a great poet-philosopher like Iqbal needs to be studied with humility, yet at the same time, with a critical attitude without which a study turns into a kind of apology, bordering on idolatrous worship. A serious thinker like Iqbal does not need and could never have asked posterity for such an approach.

Iqbal demands serious attention because his philosophic-poetic genius represents, on the one hand, a continuity of tradition and, on the other, an attempt to integrate it with contemporary world-thought with an intention to set the tradition moving in an upward direction. Iqbal is unique among the contemporaries of his culture as he combines tradition with modernity with an eye on futurity, which in his peculiar symbolism is named eternity. The concept of the immanence of future, as a directing energy or a trend which operates in the manner of 'Amr' (Command), is one of the leading ideas of Iqbal in his religio-philosophical reflection. In other words, Destiny operates as an immanent factor in the world of man.

To make the present discussion precise and meaningful, it is proposed to describe the philosophical presuppositions which also operate as Iqbal's primary vision of Reality. These presuppositions are, of course, related to the spiritual culture to which he belonged, yet it will be presumptuous to believe that the entire culture consciously participates in them. It will be more precise to say that Iqbal interpreted his culture and its future possibilities in the light of these presuppositions.

The important presuppositions of Iqbal's poetic philosophy, which in a direct and sometimes in an indirect manner govern his political thinking, are: (i) that Reality is spiritual and its life consists in its temporal

activity, on account of which all that is secular is sacred in the roots of its being, (ii) that the world of nature, i.e., the spatio-temporal order, and the world of man are continuous, the middle term being self or ego, (iii) that finite human ego is so far the highest instance of cosmic evolution, and that it is free, and (iv) that the direction of human history is the transformation of man into a more perfect being, the viceregent of God, being the actualisation of the original Trust. The last item transforms anthropology into theodophy, the ultimate aim or 'intention' of history being identified with the emergence of 'gaostic beings'. It also gives to history an eschatological dimension.

I call them presuppositions because Iqbal never worked them out in a rigorous philosophical manner, neither gave reasons, if reason is to be distinguished from analogy, as to why they should be regarded as true. They can more appropriately be regarded as mystico-poetic visions, or as elements of his utopic consciousness, immanent in his poetic creations and philosophic reflections. I have used the word utopic deliberately to distinguish it from utopia, an ideal construct or an ideal type. It is the presence of these elements that gives a mystic dimension even to Iqbal's political philosophy and eventually fails to relate it to the concrete problems of his contemporary age.

In the light of these presuppositions, it is proposed to discuss the following concepts:

Iqbal's idea of the transformation of the human world, the agents of this transformation or the problem of leadership, and the meaning of freedom in the world of man. The first had always been one of the dominant<sup>1</sup> concerns of Eastern spirituality to which the problem of human conduct had been related and which gives meaning and significance to political action. To an 'outsider' it might seem preposterous that they are termed as problems of political philosophy, but they acquire significance in the Eastern tradition which gives primary importance to spiritual salvation. Since Iqbal belongs more to the mystical tradition of Islam than to its politico-legal one, this observation acquires significance.

The Islamic mystic tradition, like all such traditions, gives priority to the vertical dimension of human personality, at the expense of his horizontal dimension comprising the social and political conditions of his existence and leaving them to historical contingency.

Iqbal's significance as a thinker lies in the fact that he realised the importance of the social and political conditions of existence in the scheme of spiritual perfection; recognised the existential tension and made a sincere, though unsuccessful, attempt to reconcile the two as complementary poles of human existence. Islamic religious tradition which, after the convergence of the Asharite theology and mystic illumination in the personality of Al-Ghazali, had become predominantly theocentric, was given an anthropocentric shift by Iqbal, by declaring that

Man is a co-worker with God. Since religious consciousness repels complete anthropocentrism, it leads to a tension between the two in Iqbal's religio-political consciousness, a tension which also becomes a source of tragic feeling in the last phase of Iqbal's poetry.

#### THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE HUMAN WORLD

Iqbal's attitude to this problem has to be viewed from two levels which also involves a certain tension between them. One is the fact of change and becoming which for Iqbal, in the tradition of the contemporary biological thought, has the status of a natural law governing the entire universe. It is the fundamental concept which makes the idea of transformation possible. It is to be noted here that Iqbal, like Kierkegaard, accepts change as a fact of the human world, having a religious and moral perspective before him. It was not the problem of change as it occurs or becomes as such with which he was concerned, but rather the problem of change as it occurs to one who is involved in becoming oneself and this process of becoming oneself, in turn, involves a distinction between what one is and what one ought to be. In other words, transformation involves the idea of 'not-yet', which is one of the recurring themes in Iqbal's poetry. The entire universe along with the world of man awaits at every moment of its life-process a stage which it has not yet arrived at. Iqbal sees even in twentieth-century science and particularly in the Einsteinian theory of the 'expanding universe' a powerful argument to support his view of perpetual growth, an instance which goes to show that he was not arguing in a rigorous philosophical manner but seeking analogies to make his point of view tenable. The idea of growth and expansion when combined with his presupposition that the universe is spiritual leads him to believe that it is becoming more and more spiritual or acquiring greater spiritual dimensions. It makes the transition to the ideal of human transformation not only possible but in a certain sense obligatory for man. Man must develop his personality for his ego by transcending the finite material conditions and the spatio-temporal relations, the essential components of his existence.<sup>2</sup> He believes, like Bergson that matter is a necessary hindrance to be overcome in the process of evolution and that it does not have an independent ontological status. Matter itself being a lower type of ego activity,<sup>3</sup> it offers resistance to the conscious activity of the higher ego which aspires for progressive expansion of consciousness leading to personal immortality. In one of his significant notes in *Stray Reflections*, he declared that personality being the dearest possession of man must be looked upon as the ultimate good which must work as a standard to test the worth of our actions. Needless to say that he was influenced by Nietzsche but, again, a case to prove that he had motives different from those of his 'masters'. The existence of the vital impulse makes spiritual transformation not only possible but

also serves as a necessary condition for this activity. It solves the riddle why Iqbal believes in the primacy of will over intellect; intellect or reason gives meaning to or seeks meaning in the past; it is will which does so to the future. Whereas the non-existing past acquires meaning through reason, the non-existing 'not-yet' gets it through will. The flux of time, an important notion of Iqbal, does nothing by itself. It is only through the mediating agency of will that transformation becomes possible. Reality of time serves as an essential precondition to make spiritual growth possible. In other words, the universe must be constituted in such a manner that time, however alogical, is its necessary component. Like Kierkegaard, Iqbal believes that existence, i.e., the mode of finite existence, is future-oriented, and the hall-mark of existence is the forward movement. If the Socratic maxim was 'know thyself' from within, the Iqbalian maxim is 'change thyself from within'. It is only in the process of changing oneself that one gets to know oneself: cognition follows the act of will. It has to be noted here that the nineteenth century offers two perspectives of human transformation: one is the Marxian perspective, shared by the later sociologists that man changes himself in the process of changing the world and also gets to know himself in the process of change. It is what Marx says, existence precedes consciousness. The other perspective, that of the existentialists and the vitalist religious thinkers, and shared by Iqbal, is the precedence of inner change over external institutional change. Iqbal calls the former, borrowing a term from Spengler, the intellectual way of making the world our own which consists in understanding the world in a causal manner, and the latter as the vital way of appropriating the universe, which according to him, is what the *Quran* calls *Iman*. This vital act too implies a necessity, but different from it. It is what Iqbal calls 'higher fatalism', without making clear what is meant by it.

The idea of *Iman* leads to the important notion that 'transformation is the acquisition of *Iman*. This vital act results in the complete appropriation of the cosmos or in the personality of the agent (*Momin*), the reverse of which is the absorption of the human personality in the material universe; in other words, the personality loses itself in the spatio-temporal order called serial time.

The phraseology reminds one of the authentic and inauthentic of Heidegger, the corresponding states being existentiality and facticity or fallenness.

It is important to note here that in our passion to make Iqbal 'contemporary', we may ignore the danger of giving these phrases a scientific orientation. This vital act is also called 'rebirth' in the *Javed Nama*.

This symbolism has a close relation to the prophetic symbolism of the 'splitting of the chest', an event which preceded the Ascension. Corresponding to this transformation on the level of the individual



personality is the ideal of the transformation of the human collectivity. This process of the transformation of humanity has to be preceded by what Iqbal calls 'Recons-Resurrection'.

"He from whose body the pure spirit has departed  
Cannot rise from the dust without a Reconstruction."

The word 'revolution' which occurs often in Iqbal's poetry has a certain resemblance to Marxian terminology, but it has also to be noted that Marx had secularised the Semitic archetypal symbolism of Recons-Resurrection in his revolutionary vision. This resemblance, although a deeper one, has not to be stretched too far. In the political philosophy of Marx, the process 'transformation' follows revolution, the destruction of the old forces of production and relations, whereas for Iqbal transformation alone guarantees a new social order, as it has once happened during the Prophetic mission.

This notion of transformation leads to another significant symbol of the 'new man', a passion common to the vitalistic philosophies of Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and also of Marx. Iqbal blends his vision of the 'new man' with the theosophic symbol of al-Inan-al-Kamil, with one important difference that for the Islamic theosophists, perfect man represents the essence of creation, logically preceding the creaturely order, whereas for Iqbal it seems to lie in future, so far as its collective manifestation is concerned, although its individual prototype lies in the personality of Mohammed. Evolutionary theory in this case too serves Iqbal's mystical and gnostic purposes. A corresponding idea is found in the current Christian theology, the passion to create the Kingdom of God here and now, by intervening in the process of history.

Is it a mere fortuitous event that while this notion looks exhilarating on the plane of the individual personality, it leads to depressing consequences on the socio-collective level, since it promotes a rather backward-looking revivalistic attitude? It is neither accidental nor a mere wrong interpretation of Iqbal by his revivalist following. This trend was, on the contrary, implied in his vision of the future, because the 'utopic' elements of his vision have a direct reference to the 'Golden Past' wherein lies the lost utopia, and it is this reference which makes his symbol of 'resurrection' dangerously meaningful. One radical element of his vision was, however, lost sight of by those who sought practical guidance from Iqbal, in spite of the Quranic injunction not to follow the poets, and that was his notion of 'continuous growths even after Resurrection. If Resurrection leads to growth on the individual psychic plane, it follows that the same ought to happen on the plane of collective life. This means that reference to past must lead to an evolution in future, which in turn implies that the real 'historical ideal' lies in the future and the point is that for Iqbal, the future is not unrelated to eternity, the plane of unrealised possibilities,

but a little reflection shows that this analogy is at best a poetic metaphor, since the spatio-temporal world, the stage of history, is different in its nature, from a possible world, the stage of spiritual growth after 'resurrection'.

One of the significant consequences of this notion of transformation, bearing a relevance to the contemporary human situation, consists in the approximation of the secular and the religious, as maintained by Iqbal, the difference between the two does not lie in the act itself but in the attitude of mind with which the agent does it. "It is the invisible mental background," according to Iqbal, "which ultimately determines its character. An act is temporal or profane if it is done in a spirit of detachment from the infinite complexities of life behind it: it is spiritual if it is inspired by that complexity." This approximation works effectively only on the ideal plane. The facts of political life are, however, such that unless the political act is performed by one who is completely transformed, a prophet for instance, the balance cannot be maintained. Since such moments are very rare in human history, the profane, as it tends to relax the tension of the agent, assumes the guise of the religious or the spiritual, the result being the psychoanalytic procedure of rationalization, which can be called the greatest danger to human civilization and also to spiritual life.

This observation leads us to the second problem of the agents of transformation or of leadership, one of the most crucial aspects of Iqbal's politico-philosophical vision. Since the later developments of a philosophic genius lie in his primary vision of reality, the question of Iqbal's early vision becomes significant. There is a strong evidence to prove that Iqbal 'perceived' Reality in its aspect of Power, and the tremendum overshadowed the fascinosa. The poetic creations belonging to the comparatively mature period also provide a testimony to this assumption. As early as 1910, he commented: "Power is more divine than truth. God is power, be ye then like your Father who is in heaven." He goes to the extent of declaring, "Power toucheth falsehood, and lo, it is transformed into truth." Nietzsche was, of course, a powerful influence, but the important psycho-biographical point is that Iqbal's perception was also responsible for drawing him towards Nietzsche. Power is one of the most recurring themes in the poetry of Iqbal. He makes a significant comment on the Gandhian movement:

"The penance of the saint could not break the spell of the Brahmin. The idea of absence of the staff leaves the mission of Moses unfulfilled."

The idea of a powerful personality may also be considered an archetypal symbol which arouses conscious admiration at certain critical moments of

history, and the nineteenth century seems to have provided a favourable cultural soil to this idea. It was not only Nietzsche, it was Marx too who accepted this notion and transformed it into a class; it is also implicit in the religious philosophy of Kierkegaard in the form of the authentic person who can take a decisive leap. Rousseau, with his idea of the noble savage, seems to have initiated this powerful romantic philosophic movement and it is on this account that some sort of 'neo-primitivism' in some form or other persisted as an essential component of the contemporary radical political philosophy. In India, too, the literature of the nineteenth century, in Bengal and Maharashtra, eulogised power, which inspired militant nationalism.

Iqbal, too, believed that a great personality alone could revitalize a dying social organism by the revelation of a new ideal. While Marx saw such new ideals imminent in the current historical situation which can be grasped in the process of social action, to Nietzsche the discernment of these ideals is the result of an inner vital contemplative act possessing an annihilating quality. Iqbal shares this belief with Nietzsche, with the difference that the discovery of new ideals is an outcome of a mystical experience when it "tends to overflow its boundaries, and seeks opportunities of redirecting or refashioning the forces of collective life." In this experience, according to him, "the finite centre of life sinks into his own infinite depths only to spring up again, with fresh vigour to destroy the old, and to disclose the new directions of life." The reference here is to the Prophet's experience, but it is to be noted that the Prophet, for Iqbal, is more a model for humanity than one who merely belonged to one particular moment of past history of mankind. In Bergsonian language, the higher ideal must incarnate in a privileged person who becomes an example. Iqbal had a glimpse of the later Bergsonian idea in his earlier poetic symbol of the 'free man' who has to be a model for the 'Bondsman', an idea which was implicit in Bergson's Time and Free Will.

It is the 'free man' alone who can initiate a new social order and restructure the existing institutions, Iqbal believed. He has a strong belief that 'Self-concentrated individuals are the only effective power to counteract the forces of decay and such individuals alone reveal the depths of life. It is only through them that new standards are disclosed in the life of which we begin to see that our environment is not wholly inviolable and requires revision. It is upon such self-concentrated individuals that the title of 'Man of Faith' is conferred. He is also called *Qualandar*, the archetypal symbol, whose important attribute is voluntary poverty. It is the privilege of such persons to enjoy 'pure duration' through their intuitive power and have a glimpse of the Eternal. The inference is clear that only those who have 'discovered' the nature of Reality can bear the burden of changing the world. They alone are those who carry the Trust.

This notion too works quite neatly on the ideal plane but the question

remains unanswered as to how they can be induced to act as agents of change. Iqbal faces the same difficulty which was once faced by Plato and since Iqbal's passion to transform the existing reality is so strong and his faith in powerful persons so unshakeable, that he had to create certain myths. The unfulfilled mission of Islam was one such myth and to perceive it as real, he endows this sort of spiritual greatness on such historical persons as Nadir Shah and Abdali, because they unified the Iranians and the Afghans. He could tell his western counterparts that we too had our Bismarcks and Mazzinis. In his heavenly journey, Abdali is recognised as:

"The leader of all the martyrs of love  
 Glory of India, China, Turkey and Syria  
 Whose name is more resplendent than the sun and the moon,  
 The dust of whose grave is more living than I and you."

A serious question arises here, as to how one can judge the authenticity of such great men who are supposed to be the guardians of human destiny. Iqbal offers the pragmatic test. He can believe that it works satisfactorily when it is applied to a Prophetic personality.

*But can it work as effectively in relation to Nadir Shahs and Abdalis?* It is a question which Iqbal never asked or answered. History is a poor judge to tell us who was and who was not a false Prophet, since historical judgements are never completely free from subjective preferences and secondly all pragmatic tests have a reference to historical time which makes it difficult for a judge to look at this question from the perspective of eternity, as eternity alone changes history into simultaneity and, therefore, historical judgements involving a reference to value remain ambiguous.

Coming to the problem of freedom, one may feel tempted to ask if freedom and power, as embodied in a powerful personality like Nadir Shah or Abdali can go together. The answer is both yes and no. If the word freedom is used in the sense in which it is used in ordinary language, the answer will be a simple no, because the freedom of the powerful person puts limits on and tends to negate the freedom of the rest. The answer is yes, since power cannot be achieved without the possibility of freedom in the universe. A little reflection reveals that the situation, however, is not so simple, and since the terms, power and freedom, carry some ambiguity, the intention of the speaker has got to be studied. It becomes much more imperative when the speaker happens to be a poet also.

Undoubtedly, Iqbal had a great passion for both power and freedom. His selection of characters in this context in *Javed Nama* indicates that there was a shift in the meaning of the word 'Sultan'. In the beginning of the poem, he meant spiritual power and at the penultimate stage absolute

political power was meant. The other word used by him for power so often in his poetry is *Qushiri*, as opposed and complementary to *Dilbari*. The term *Khudi* itself carries both the qualities of power and of freedom, and hence it has not to be confused with the term *Atman* or simple *Nafs*. The simple subject 'I' acquires egohood when it is free and powerful, and acquires them through Love or *Ishq*, which is a vital force. Since the vital force is the mediating term, good becomes identical with the vital force and consequently freedom loses its ethical content and becomes synonymous with freedom to acquire power which means it cannot be shared. Bergson and Iqbal present an interesting parallel as Bergson's open morality transcends precepts, depends upon models, on lives which are sources of inspiration, on experiences not amenable to discursive expression, so is Iqbal's notion of freedom. It can be 'enjoyed' by a powerful Ego, but cannot be shared among unequal 'citizens'. It is on account of this combination of power and freedom that Iqbal has reservations about democracy, although he charges Nietzsche with advocating an aristocratic model. Iqbal is sincere in his charge against Nietzsche as he has a different model in mind and that is the Prophetic model; nonetheless the relationship between a prophet and the people can only be of command and obedience; hence Iqbal's insistence on obedience having a moral value.

Had it been a stray instance, it could have been ignored, but since it is one of the recurrent themes, it has to be regarded as a dominant passion of Iqbal. Passion for power creates the pathos of 'obedience', an ecstatic joy in surrendering one's own freedom without coercion. This ecstatic joy produces the 'politics of ecstasy' if instead of enjoying it in an inward manner, which is the true function of poetry, it becomes a guide for action also. One speaks of Iqbal and Sri Aurobindo as cures for the contemporary dehumanisation caused by the scientific culture, but it is not to be forgotten that this anxiety against this phenomenon of dehumanised culture might produce some sort of neo-primitivism, which instead of humanising our behaviour makes it more irrational, hence ecstatic, giving rise to a 'culture of ecstasy'. The danger is there. It vindicates the Quranic maxim that poets are not to be followed, they might take us to hell. Not only good intentions, sweet voices also pave the way to hell. Such voices are to be enjoyed, contemplated upon, but are not to be taken too seriously, if they go against the sweeter common sense.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Martin Buber has also made this distinction in his *Paths in Utopia* (1958). A utopia is an ideal construct based on clear philosophical notions to serve as guides in a purposeful action for social change. Utopia, on the contrary, designates a brief

in the actual possibility of creation or actual existence of a society free from all evil and greed and social contradictions (See Edmund de Kadt, *Catholic Radicals in Brazil*, p. 54, OUP, 1970.) In the case of Iqbal, it means the prophetic age in the past and the future resurgence of Islam.

<sup>2</sup>*Javed Nama*. Reference to the last lines of Zurvan's speech.

<sup>3</sup>*Iqbal Lectures*—Lecture IV. Stray references, edited by Javed Iqbal, p. 19, Lahore, 1961.

## EXISTENTIALIST ELEMENTS IN IQBAL'S THOUGHT

WAHEED AKHTAR

*"It is the misfortune of our age that it has too much knowledge, that it has forgotten what it means to exist."*

*Kierkegaard<sup>1</sup>*

IQBAL'S diagnosis of the sickness of modern civilization is not different from that of Kierkegaard. He is critical of the contemporary body of knowledge because of its incapability to teach how to live. In the *Javed Nama* (The Pilgrimage of Eternity), the Indian disciple, in his anguish to learn how to manage life, asks his spiritual preceptor:

"My thought has scaled the heavens but I remain lowly and miserable on earth. I cannot make my way in the world; I stumble at every step. Why am I incapable of managing my worldly affairs? Why is the spiritually wise a fool in worldly matters?"<sup>2</sup>

Kierkegaard's scientifically wise and Iqbal's spiritually wise are both at a loss and have forgotten to exist as human beings. Dostoevsky summarised this situation in these words:

"Leave us without books and we shall be lost and in confusion at once. We shall not know what to join onto, what to cling to, what to love and what to hate, what to respect and what to despise. We are oppressed at being men—men with a real individual body and blood. We are ashamed of it, we think it as a disgrace and try to continue to be some sort of impossible generalised man."<sup>3</sup>

This is the predicament of modern man. Immensity of knowledge has made man insignificant in his own eyes. He has drifted from himself in the

ever-widening stream of his own intellectual gains. In the gigantic machinery of technocracy and bureaucracy, he has become an infinitesimal part, replaceable any time on the slightest show of unadjustability with the whole. Dostoevsky's 'generalised man' is multiplying to the point of population-explosion, but the real man, whom Rumi sought among demons and beasts with a lantern in his hand, is not to be found.<sup>4</sup> Existentialist thinkers tried to search and rehabilitate the real man in their own way, and Iqbal aimed at fulfilling the same task in his own way. Concern for man is the meeting-ground for the existentialists and Iqbal.

Existentialism is not in the strict sense a system of philosophy but an approach to the study of man. This philosophical movement is man-oriented and man-centred. The western philosophical tradition treated man as an essence and a concept. The eastern religions regarded man's individuality as an obstacle in his spiritual ascent. The West concerned itself with outer reality, nature, and the East's concern was God, the ultimate reality. Man had never been the main subject of study in either West or East. 'The generalised man', with which philosophy had been dealing, was not an existing individual of flesh and bone. Existentialism, for the first time in Western philosophy, revolted against the essentialistic approach to the study of man. There are both theists and atheists among existentialists, but both of them agree that all religion and philosophy is for man and should have concern with evolving a proper theory of man. Kierkegaard's concern for man is from the religious view-point, while the contemporary existentialists are chiefly concerned with man's existence in the world. But it does not mean that Kierkegaard's religiosity ignored the worldly aspect of man's existence. He used to say that his was a Socratic Task—Know Thyself. He tried to overcome a 'dissolute pantheistic contempt for the individual, characteristic depravity of his age'. He was aware that it was not possible to construct an existential system. Existence does not follow any kind of logical ontology. For Iqbal, too, existence is a continuous process, not a system. Some later existentialists, for instance, Sartre, made an attempt logically to build up an existentialist ontology. Iqbal also made an effort to reconstruct the Islamic thought-system logically. His philosophy like existentialist ontology is based upon a theory of man. Both the existentialists and Iqbal regard human existence as an open reality. Logical systems reduce all reality to certain fixed principles and hence consider man as a finished reality, having a fixed nature, definable in terms of reason. Iqbal agrees with the existentialists that the traditional philosophy has failed to grasp the very reality of human existence because of its intellectualistic analytical approach. Man is unanalysable, unpredictable and free, always an open possibility. It may be pointed out that even sciences in their attempt to determine human nature and behaviour regard man as fully determined by certain physiological, psychological, social and historical laws. The existentialists reject all deterministic con-



cepts of man. Iqbal refutes Bergson's causally determined future, Nietzsche's eternal recurrence and Marxian theory of historical determinism, because all these concepts ultimately reduce human reality to certain laws of nature and history.

Both the theistic and atheistic versions of existentialist philosophy maintain that man is never complete. Karl Jaspers says,

"Man is incomplete, he cannot be completed and his future is never sealed. There is no total man, and there never will be one."<sup>5</sup>

J.P. Sartre holds:

"There is no human nature which can be taken as foundational . . . Man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only in so far as he realises himself; he is, therefore, nothing else but the sum of his actions, nothing else but what his life is."<sup>6</sup>

At the end of his book *Existentialism and Humanism*, Sartre asserts:

"What man needs is to find himself again and to understand that nothing can save him from himself, not even a valid proof of the existence of God."<sup>7</sup>

Theist Iqbal seems to agree with atheist Sartre when he says:

"Take this message from me to the Sufis:  
Ye are seeking God through the subtleties of thought;  
I shall serve as a slave the man who worships himself  
And who sees God in the light of his own personality."<sup>8</sup>

Iqbal holds that man is the goal of life's caravan. He is self-contained, a centre of activity, creative and self-evolving. In defiance of God, Iqbal's man is destined to be a rival creator, addressing 'the best of all creators':

"Thou didst create the night and I made the lamp.  
Thou didst create clay and I made the cup.  
Thou didst create the deserts, mountains and forests.  
I produced the orchards, gardens and groves;  
It is I who turn stone into a mirror,  
And it is I who turn poison into an antidote!"<sup>9</sup>

Iqbal and the existentialists emphasise two essential attributes of man—freedom and creativity. This similarity of views is not accidental, but is

indicative of a fundamental affinity in Iqbalian and existentialist philosophies.

Existentialism, as compared to analytical philosophy, is regarded by the academic philosophers as literary philosophy. In recent times philosophy, under the influence of science, has tended to become more and more technical in approach and limited in scope. System-building has been discarded as a futile exercise. Idealism is on the wane. Absolutism, essentialism and rationalism have lost ground in the face of severe attacks from various quarters, e.g., pragmatism, dialectical materialism, Bergsonianism, realism, positivism and analytical philosophy. The existentialist movement joined hands with these schools in rejecting the classical philosophy. It is the only contemporary movement which has a metaphysical basis. The problem of methodology is important for this movement, but it is the only recent philosophy that goes beyond it. It owes its origin to the writings of Kierkegaard (nineteenth century), but came into prominence during World War II. It provided an ideology to the French resistance movement against Nazi occupation. It is considered the intellectual as well as the artistic expression of the disillusioned post-war generations of the West. Life is absurd but it is to be lived. The existentialist movement points out the roots of meaninglessness in the one-sided development of Western knowledge and culture, in growing industrialisation, tyranny of the machine and politico-ideological determinism. This philosophy, on the one hand, rejects rationalism, or to be more precise, its modern form, intellectualism, and it revolts, on the other hand, against all attempts to mystify reality. Existentialism is a revolt that emerged from within Western culture, which has culminated in the alienation of man from faith, nature and himself. It is the process of dehumanisation in the capitalist industrial society, which has made nature, society and life meaningless. Existentialism is a quest for meaning in absurdity, an attempt to provide a secure ground for changing values. According to existentialists, it is human existence which brings freedom in the strictly deterministic world and therefore can make it meaningful. Kierkegaard was compelled to encounter the depravity of the dissolute pantheistic contempt for the individual. Modern existentialists meet the challenge of the super-imposed 'unity of all being' thrust upon man from the socio-economic vested interests. Pantheism in religion and philosophy drowned man's right to individuality in the ocean of the all-embracing Absolute Ego, while pan-scientism of modern times deprived man of his right to be treated as an individual, distinct and different from the faceless crowd. The emphasis on the individual is the natural reaction against collectivisation of humanity.

Iqbal faced the same problem on different levels. He was fully aware of the consequences of the West's suicidal race for power. He intuitively could see before witnessing the horrors of World War II that Europe was on the path of a rushing enormous flood, waiting to be swallowed up by it.

"Your civilisation is going to commit suicide with its own dagger,  
The nest built on a frail bough is bound to be a transitory abode."<sup>10</sup>

...  
"Like a ripe fruit Europe is to fall."

...  
"For the West, gods are the glittering metals.  
This knowledge, this science, this art, this statecraft  
Suck the blood of man while preaching equality."

...  
"The science on which the sages of the West pride themselves  
Is nothing but a sword in the blood-stained hands of rapacity.  
No magic formula of politics can strengthen a civilisation  
Which rests on the shifting sands of capitalism."<sup>11</sup>

(Lenin: *The Song of Angels and the Injunction of God*)

Highlighting the absurdity of this situation Lenin asks:

"Where is the man whose God Thou art?"

Though Iqbal never used the term alienation, yet he, in his poetry, raised the problem of twofold alienation—God alienated from man and man alienated from God. In one of his early poems 'Shikwa' (The Complaint), Iqbal had already raised the same issue: Why is man alienated from God? In 'The Answer to Complaint', God's reply seems to be not satisfactory, because alienation is not God's problem, it is exclusively a human problem. Nevertheless, Iqbal could suggest a way to delineation. Iqbal's later poetry succeeds admirably in overcoming alienation in his concept of ego. He encountered the problem of alienation on both social and religious levels. Thus, Iqbal combined together Kierkegaard's religious problem with the social problem of the contemporary existentialists. Christianity treated worldly life as evil having its origin in the fall of man, while Iqbal, true to Muslim faith, considered it an opportunity to unfold man's total possibilities and develop all his potentialities. It was, for him, man's freedom and creativity, that urged him to leave the inert static life of heaven, devoid of all passions and activities. Hence social life is not opposed to religious life, but is an integral part of it. Social and religious experiences form the totality of human existence. It is due to this approach that Iqbal could meet the challenge of social meaninglessness and religious alienation simultaneously on the level of existential experience.

Iqbal also like Kierkegaard had the bitter experience of the depravity of the pantheistic contempt for the individual in the form of the sickening influence of the passive type of Sufism owing its allegiance to the doctrine of 'the unity of being' and its stress on annihilation of the self. Sheikh Ahmad of Sirhind, whom Iqbal adored, had refuted the Sufi concept of the identity of man with God by emphasising the separateness of human

existence and strengthening the need for retaining man's individuality. He asserted that man, even after his highest spiritual attainment, remains man and does not become one with God. In the preservation and assertion of individuality lies the path of man's salvation. Mohammad, according to 'Kalema' is first of all a man and afterwards God's prophet. The *Quran* asks the Prophet to declare 'I am a man like you.' The doctrine of the unity of reflection or apparentism regarded the vision of unity as an illusion. Iqbal tried to re-emphasise the concept of the separate status of human existence in order to awaken in Muslims a sense of individuality:

"Art thou a mere particle of dust?  
Tighten the knot of thy ego;  
Hold fast to thy tiny being  
How glorious to burnish one's ego  
And to test its lustre in the presence of the sun  
Re-chisel then thine ancient frame  
And build a new being;  
Such being is real;  
Or else thy ego is a mere ring of smoke."<sup>12</sup>

(*Javed Nama*)

Man evolves his own world, creates his own values. If the present world renders no meaning to human existence, it is to be destroyed and reshaped:

"Smash the world into pieces if it does not suit thee,  
And bring forth another world from the depths of thy being.  
It is irritating for a free man to live in a world made by others."<sup>13</sup>

Iqbal holds:

"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."<sup>14</sup>

Finitude is not a misfortune. Islam does not teach complete liberation from finitude.<sup>15</sup> Man is the trustee of a free personality accepted at his peril.<sup>16</sup> Freedom is man's own choice. He is neither condemned to be free, as Sartre believes, nor does he receive freedom as a gift from transcendence, as Jaspers holds. Jaspers says that man is not self-made and again our freedom is not due to ourselves. We receive ourselves from transcendence. God speaks only through freedom.<sup>17</sup> Iqbal agrees that God speaks through freedom. He does not regard a slave's prayer as genuine, because a slave is not free to communicate with God. Prayer is the means

to attain immortality, to overcome finitude by realising the infinite possibilities of human ego. Only a free being can transcend the space-time limits. Freedom means self-transcendence, to be what a man is not at present. It is creativity. On this point, Iqbal may differ from Jaspers to proclaim that man is self-made. Iqbal has translated in verse Ibne Arabi's idea of self-determination or rather self-creation. Ibne Arabi holds that what man demanded from God was given to him. It is man, therefore, who chose individuality and freedom. One who believes in fatalism is one who calls the burning flame in his soul merely a ring of smoke.<sup>18</sup>

Iqbal holds that being is always individual, there is no universal being. By being he means the life of ego. He ascribes individuality even to the particles of matter by saying that every atom is a candidate for greatness. He in a sense believes in a kind of panpsychism. Heidegger in his analysis of being differentiates being (*Sein*) as a general category from a being (particular being). He calls human being *Da Sein*, a particular being, which is ontological, having consciousness of his being. Other beings have no consciousness. They are mere tools and their being is justified by their 'handiness' to human existence. Thereness, i.e., consciousness of being in the world, is the mode of human existence. Sartre in his analysis of being distinguishes between being-in-itself and being-for-itself. The latter is human existence, grounded in nothingness. Nothingness is 'not'. It is freedom. Human existence is grounded in freedom and freedom comes into the static, rigid, deterministic universe of being with man. Iqbal sees the universe as a process which is evolutionary and purposive. The world is neither static nor rigid. He, under the influence of James Jeans and Eddington, is inclined to ascribe freedom even to the constituent particles of an atom. Iqbal agrees with Heidegger and Sartre that freedom in the sense of free creative activity is the mode of human existence. The world and all the beings are tools for man. It is man who gives them meaning and purpose. To say that life is absurd is another way of saying that the old meaning of life has become irrelevant to us and that we have to make it meaningful in our own way. Iqbal, like the existentialists, accepted this challenge and discovered new meaning in life and universe with reference to man. He holds that every individual has to discover the meaning of life in his own experience. The believer is not the reader of others' revelations. The Book (*Quran*), i.e., the meaning of life, is revealed to every individual, provided he is ready to receive it.<sup>19</sup> Revelation is a continuous process, which does not mean passive reception of the external reality, but means internally creating it from moment to moment. Existential experience is not an analytical but a creative, synthesizing and unitive experience.

"The final act is not an intellectual act but a vital act which deepens the whole being of the Ego and sharpens his will with the creative assurance that the world is not something to be merely seen or known

through concepts but something to be made and remade by continuous action. It is a moment of great bliss and also a moment of the greatest trial for the ego."<sup>20</sup>

It must be pointed out that Iqbal never used the term 'existential' in the specific sense which it acquired after the advent of Existentialism. He was not acquainted with this movement. The first books of Heidegger and Jaspers were published just after the end of World War I. English translations of these books were not made available till the end of World War II. Some scholars say that Iqbal knew German and he might have studied Heidegger and Jaspers in the original, but there is neither any reference in his writings to this effect, nor is there any evidence by his close associates that he ever referred to existentialism in his conversation. He had given up study because of the loss of sight before 1935.<sup>21</sup> Kierkegaard remained an obscure figure in the history of philosophy for a long time and it would be far-fetched to infer from certain similarities between the ideas of Kierkegaard and Iqbal that Iqbal was in any way influenced by Kierkegaard. He was perhaps not at all aware of the contribution of the Danish philosopher to modern thought in general and the philosophy of religion in particular. Nietzsche is considered a forerunner of contemporary existentialist philosophy. Bergson's philosophy has some fundamental affinities with existentialism. Iqbal's thought is influenced by both of them. Hence at the most it can be said that he was indirectly influenced by the trends which later culminated in Existentialist philosophy. Iqbal must be credited with anticipating certain existentialist principles in his own way. A number of mystics and creative writers may be called existentialists in a general sense, because all authentic creative experience is existential. We can trace the elements of existentialist philosophy in the writings of St. Augustine, Ibne Arabi, Rumi, Dostoevsky, Unamunu, Kafka, Hafiz, Mir and Ghalib.

Existentialism as a philosophical movement has specific characteristics, but as a trend of human thought in a wider sense, it has been always present in literature and mystic philosophy. All literature is concerned with man, the individual. Some philosophies, too, like Buddha's concern for human suffering, regarded the problems of human existence as a proper subject of study. Among Muslim mystics, Ibne Arabi, Rumi, Algili, Saadi, Hafiz and Dard developed a theory of man, which greatly influenced Persian and Urdu poetry. This influence, through Bedil and Ghalib, culminated in Iqbal's poetry. The humanistic tradition of Sufism advocated not only the dignity of man but also the divinity of man. Iqbal inherited this tradition and transformed it into a radically new and dynamic concept of man through his theory of ego.

Iqbal's stress on the affirmation and assertion of the individuality of man is similar to the existentialist emphasis on the individual as a crea-

tive and free being. In his view, religion, science, society, politics, economics, art and culture are expressions of the affirmation of ego. All these are created by man to assert, retain and develop his individuality. Man concretises his inner experience in these forms:

"Inner experience is the ego at work. We appreciate the ego itself in the act of perceiving, judging and willing. The life of ego is a kind of tension caused by the ego invading the environment and environment invading the ego. The ego does not stand outside this arena of mutual invasion. It is present in it as a directive energy and is formed and disciplined by its own experience."<sup>22</sup>

In these few sentences, Iqbal has comprehensively defined what is called existential experience. His definition of ego-activity embraces in its fold Heidegger's concepts of *Da Sein*, handiness of being and thereness and Sartre's concept of Being-for-itself and creativity on the one hand and Kierkegaard's subjectivity and religious experience on the other. From Iqbal's writings, some of the basic existentialist theses may be logically inferred:

- (a) Existence precedes essence. Hence existence is the supreme object of inquiry. Existence in general signifies a peculiarly human mode of being.
- (b) Intellectualism, a product of essentialism, fails to understand the real nature of existence, and therefore should be rejected.
- (c) Existence is actualistic. It never 'is' but freely creates it. It is the same as temporality.
- (d) Man is pure subjectivity in a creative sense. It means that man creates himself freely, and is his freedom.
- (e) Subjectivity does not mean that man is shut up within him; it rather means that man is an incomplete and open reality. There is a special connection between men which is denoted by Heidegger's 'togetherness', Jaspers' 'communication' and Marcel's 'thou'.
- (f) There is no distinction between subject and object.

Bochensky enumerates the above-mentioned theses as common features of existentialism,<sup>23</sup> all of which are inferable from Iqbal's concept of ego-activity.

Iqbal holds that the Platonic tradition of philosophy negating the physical world as illusion is contrary to the Islamic belief in the reality of the world. He has severely criticised Plato in his writings particularly in his poem 'Secrets of the Self.'<sup>24</sup> The Western classical philosophy upto Hegel represents the essentialistic interpretation of reality. Iqbal asserts that Muslim thought fixes its gaze on the concrete, the finite.

Hence all enquiry must begin with the concrete.<sup>25</sup> It means that existence is prior to thought or essence.

Iqbal rejects intellectualism, dubbing it as responsible for creating a breach between existence and thought. Reason or intellect is insufficient in matters of higher unitive experience of ego, which is a mystic experience. In the first chapter of the *Reconstruction* entitled 'Knowledge and Religious Experience', he described the following characteristics of this experience:

1. Mystic experience is immediate.
2. It is an unanalysable whole.
3. It is a state of intimate association with a unique otherself.
4. It cannot be communicated.
5. The mystic's intimate association with the Eternal does not mean a complete break with the normal levels of experience.<sup>26</sup>

The Iqbalian concept of mystic experience is not much different from existential experience. He states that mystic experience causes a temporary break from normal levels of experience, but it enables the mystic and the prophet to communicate more effectively. The immediacy of this experience leads to an intimate knowledge of the 'otherness' of the Infinite Self and a sense of 'togetherness' with other human selves. This experience is unanalysable and, therefore, incommunicable. Heidegger maintains that existential understanding does not necessarily take the form of statement, but it is the ground of the realisation of one's situation, understanding and discourse.<sup>27</sup> Iqbal holds that only a few individuals are capable of communicating their inner experience effectively. Prophets are distinguished from mystics because of this power of communication. But every individual can attain this stage through developing his possibilities of ego. Iqbal, like the existentialists, the pragmatists and the Marxists, advocates the unity of thought and action. This unity is attainable through ego-activity. Intellect cannot effect such unity because it is by its very nature divisive, not unitive. It gives knowledge, but no power. Knowledge without power is useless. The source of power is self-realisation—realisation of potentialities of ego's creativity and freedom. By realising ego's potentialities and translating them into action, the individual comes nearer to God. Iqbal is convinced that with the perfection of ego, man comes nearer to God by assimilating divine attributes. He is not absorbed in the divine, but absorbs divine attributes in himself. As the divine knowledge is a continuous creative activity, ego's knowledge is also an unfailing creative activity. 'Not yet' of man is unceasing pursuit. When this pursuit meets with success, man can say 'I am'. Religious experience consists in the creation of divine attributes in man. This experience finds expression in assertions like 'I am the truth'



or 'ego is the truth' (an-al-haque), 'I am time' and 'I am the speaking *Quran*'.<sup>28</sup> Kierkegaard's dictum 'subjectivity is truth' finds deeper meanings in these phrases. Existential subjectivity in Iqbal's concept of 'ego' is transformed into creative activity. Iqbal attributes divinity to ego.

Iqbal fully exploited Bergson's critique of intellect in his works. He was not aware that Kierkegaard's criticism of the intellect paved the way for Bergson's anti-intellectualism. Bergson's 'intuition' is a self-conscious instinct, capable of immediate knowledge of the 'unanalysable whole'. In his philosophy, time is a creative force, the activity of *elan vital*. Intuition is capable of apprehending directly the nature of time, but it is not creative in itself. The Existentialists regard man himself as 'pure subjectivity' and not as the manifestation of a broader (cosmic) life-process in the way that Bergson does.<sup>29</sup> They consider it in a creative sense. Kierkegaard says "only in subjectivity is there decisiveness". His subjectivism is primarily concerned with the problem, 'what am I to do with myself?' For him an individual's existence is the only primary truth and reality. Subjective deepening dynamically relates man to God.<sup>30</sup> Sartre says:

"Subjectivism is to be understood in two senses. Subjectivism means, on the one hand, the freedom of the individual subject, and on the other, that man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity."<sup>31</sup>

Hence existential subjectivity is wider than Bergson's intuition and closer to Iqbal's concept of ego-experience. Sartre's atheism sees in God curtailment of human freedom. Iqbal saves human freedom in spite of God. Bergson regards 'self' as a product of time and therefore his scheme of evolution accepts a kind of determinism. Iqbal holds that 'ego' precedes time, which actually emanates from ego-activity. Here again he saves freedom from all types of determinism. The ego is a source of time-activity. It is also capable of absorbing both the divine 'act of creation' (*Amr*) and the divine directive activity (*Khalq*).<sup>32</sup>

Iqbal's 'subjectivism' is more dynamic and broader than existential subjectivity. Existential experience, for Kierkegaard, causes despair in moments of crisis. He receives the 'highest call' in fear and trembling, which is overcome by 'existential leap to faith'.<sup>33</sup> God for him is a 'life-necessity'.<sup>34</sup> It is obvious that Kierkegaard's faith does not arise from subjectivity, but is rather a pragmatic necessity. For Jaspers existential experience is 'an awareness of the brittleness of being', for Heidegger it is 'propulsion towards death', for Sartre a general 'nausea'.<sup>35</sup> Iqbal's interpretation of existential experience is more positive, that is why his philosophy neither ends in pessimism of modern existentialists nor results in the loss of faith.

Kierkegaard divides existence into three stages; aesthetic, moral and religious.<sup>36</sup> The aesthetic stage may be called 'unauthentic', while the

real subject is the ethically existing subject. He says that "the only reality that exists for an existing individual is his own ethical reality".<sup>37</sup> There is a conflict between the ethical and the religious stages, which causes a crisis, fear and trembling. Iqbal holds that there are three stages in the life of ego: obedience, self-control and divine viceregency.<sup>38</sup> The first two stages represent the ethical level of experience. The aesthetic stage is not mentioned in the 'secrets of the self' because, according to Iqbal, man has left it behind in heaven—a primitive state of instinctive appetite.<sup>39</sup> He agrees with Kierkegaard that worldly life is ethical life—conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and disobedience.<sup>40</sup> In Iqbal's view, earthly life is man's rise from inactivity, passive obedience, and the static state of bliss to a life of desire, activity and tension. It is man's urge to live as a free individual that exiled him from heaven. Self-control does not mean abstention from life-activities; but means unfolding of the ego's possibilities in a directive purposive activity. Iqbal distinguishes between 'slave-morality' and 'freeman's morality'. The real morality is open, creates its values, does not stick to the traditional 'norms'. Man creates his own values. There arises no conflict between the ethical and the religious, no fear and trembling at 'the highest call of duty'. Iqbal's ideal man (*Momin*) faces the call like Husain, the martyr. Martyrdom means immortality, eternal life. It is not the end of life but assertion of life.

"Life offers a scope for ego-activity, and death is the first test of the synthetic activity of the ego."<sup>41</sup>

Resurrection is a universal phenomenon of life. Neither death nor bliss represents suspension of ego-activity. Heidegger holds that human existence is neither completed nor simply eliminated at death. Death is a possibility of being, and indeed the most unique, unrelated, and unover-takeable of these possibilities. The very being of human existence is being-unto-death.<sup>42</sup> Iqbal agrees with Heidegger that flight from death is the 'feeling away' of human existence into the world of the determined day-to-day-being.

Iqbal being true to Islamic teaching regards worldly life as an ethical stage. There is no opposition between the truly ethical and genuine religious experience. All human activities are forms of prayer. Religious experience is not confined to a particular stage, it rather embraces the whole life of the ego. All the social activities and biological needs contribute to the development and education of ego. All search for knowledge is a form of prayer.<sup>43</sup> He does not confine knowledge to religious teachings, but includes acquisition of scientific knowledge too in man's yearning to respond to reality. "Prayer is an expression of man's inner yearning for a response in the awful silence of the universe. It is a unique pro-

cess of discovery whereby the searching ego affirms itself in the very moment of self-negation, and thus discovers its own worth and justification as a dynamic factor in the life of the universe."<sup>44</sup> Sartre regards knowledge as a negation of 'what is', because it brings 'nothing' to 'being'. It follows that everything which coheres with knowledge is purely human. Even the world is purely human.<sup>45</sup> Knowledge is being of nothing, affirmation of negation. It is therefore not merely a cognitive process but a creative process. Iqbal regards knowledge as a form of prayer. In it life of the ego is affirmed in its very negation. The object of prayer is not God, but man himself. Man cannot become God, but he can become a man in the real sense. In this way a believer can realise God. Iqbal criticises institutionalised religion because it fails to inspire and motivate the individual to realise his possibilities fully. Worship does not mean complete surrender to the divine will, but the creation of divine attributes in man. In order to attain this goal, man has to overcome Iblis on the one hand, and has to confront God on the other. The highest religious experience is prophetic experience, which every believer should try to attain. It may not be unjustified to infer that the goal of prayer is not God but man himself. This approach represents the most thorough humanistic existentialism. Sartre's existentialism is labelled humanistic because he saves man's freedom at the cost of God. Iqbal's existentialism is humanistic despite his faith in God, because God in his world-view does not deprive man of his freedom but rather guarantees it.

Freedom is the highest value in existentialism. It is the value of all values. Flight from freedom leads to inauthenticity, which is the source of all evil.<sup>46</sup> Heidegger calls flight from death inauthenticity. In this state man escapes responsibility, i.e., he gives up his right to exist as a free being. Sartre says that freedom reveals itself in dread. This results in the inauthenticity of existence. Authentic existence is moral and inauthentic existence is immoral. Deep analysis of Iqbal's concept of freedom, as elaborated in his prose and poetry may justifiably lead to the conclusion that in his philosophy freedom is the source of all values. The life of ego is possible in freedom only. He maintains that there are only ego-sustaining and ego-dissolving acts.<sup>47</sup> Freedom sustains the ego. Man's first act of disobedience to God, which caused his expulsion from heaven, was an act of freedom meant to sustain the ego. Escape from freedom is an ego-dissolving act that negates future. When a man gives up his freedom, he falls from the level of human existence. He is flung down to inauthenticity. Iqbal in his poems calls all the acts of the slave devoid of morality—even his prayer is not authentic, because it negates the freedom of the ego, it is not a bold yearning for a response in the awful silence of the universe. A slave's prayers deepen and thicken this silence. To accept slavery and to remain content with this state is the death of ego. Iqbal has forcefully treated this theme in many of his remarkably original

poems such as *Bandagi Nama*, *Javed Nama*, *Alam-e-Barzakh*, *Asrar* and *Rumuz*. On the one hand God refuses to respond to the prostrations of the slaves,<sup>48</sup> and, on the other, the earth refuses to accept the dead body of a slave.<sup>49</sup> Freedom is the highest religious, social, moral and political value. So much emphasis on freedom in Iqbal is basically due to his keen desire to awaken the Indians, and the East as a whole, in revolt against Imperialism. He gave philosophical orientation and religious value to a historic necessity of freedom. No philosopher, before Iqbal, gave the highest position to freedom in the hierarchy of values. Freedom occupies a similar place in the existentialist philosophy, particularly in Sartre's philosophy. But Iqbal's concept of freedom is far more comprehensive than all the existentialist notions of freedom. For Iqbal freedom is not a value or mode of human existence, it is the very life of the ego.

Existentialism aims at resolving the old dichotomies of philosophy, viz., opposition between reason and unreason, mind and matter, ego and non-ego, thought and action, finite and the infinite, freedom and determinism, science and religion. Iqbal's philosophy of ego is an attempt to resolve and overcome all such dichotomies. Ego activity unifies reason and intuition, thought and action, mind and matter, ego and non-ego. In his philosophy religion does not exclude science, and finitude does not curtail the possibility of attaining immortality. Love, a substitute term for existential experience, works as the unitive creative factor. Love is not only a source of knowledge but also the creative activity of the self. It is, therefore, not correct to regard it as synonymous with Bergson's intuition—it is more than that. It is existential experience, free, creative, self-transcending and capable of transcending space-time. It is subjectivity which creates, sustains, directs and controls objective reality and its evolution. It objectifies the subject and subjectifies the object. The knowledge, the knower and the known are synthesised in an unanalysable whole in love.

Iqbal's philosophy reconciles existentialism with a radical new idealism. He made an attempt to reconstruct religious thought in Islam from the existentialist viewpoint before the advent of the new existentialist philosophy of religion. It would not be justifiable to regard Iqbal as an existentialist in the technical sense of the term. But it would not be unjustifiable to study and analyse his thought from the existentialist viewpoint. Iqbal combined together the religious insight of theistic existentialism with the social and historical awareness of humanistic existentialism.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Kierkegaard: Quoted in *Existentialism* by Harper (Harvard Univ. Press, 1948), p. 45.
- <sup>2</sup>Cf. *Introduction to the Thought of Iqbal* by Luce Claude Maitre. Translated by Mulla A.M. Dar (Feroz Sons, Karachi), p. 21.
- <sup>3</sup>Cf. *Existentialism* by Harper, p. 44.
- <sup>4</sup>Cf. *Introduction to the Thought of Iqbal* by L.C. Maitre.
- <sup>5</sup>Karl Jaspers: *Existentialism and Humanism*.
- <sup>6</sup>J.P. Sartre: *Existentialism and Humanism*.
- <sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup>Cf. *Introduction to the Thought of Iqbal* by L.C. Maitre, p. 7.
- <sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12.
- <sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
- <sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 43.
- <sup>12</sup>*Ibid.* p. 5.
- <sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13.
- <sup>14</sup>Iqbal: *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 109-110.
- <sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.
- <sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 95.
- <sup>17</sup>Jaspers: *Existentialism and Humanism*.
- <sup>18</sup>تقدیر و مآخوذ از ادبی و ادبی تریب کلیم
- <sup>19</sup>Iqbal: *Reconstruction*, p. 180.
- <sup>20</sup>Cf. *Introduction to the Thought of Iqbal* by L.C. Maitre, p. 8.
- <sup>21</sup>عزیزین عربی و ملا صدیقی کی سمیت میں  
(مکتبہ اقبال، لاہور) مشہور ملفوظات۔ مرتبہ  
عمر، احمد رضا علی، نرائن دت سنگھ، علی اہل اس۔
- <sup>22</sup>*Reconstruction*, p. 102.
- <sup>23</sup>Bochensky: *Contemporary European Philosophy* (Univ. of California Press, 1956), p. 158.
- <sup>24</sup>Iqbal: *Secrets of the Self* (Translated by Nicholson), pp. 56-59.
- <sup>25</sup>*Reconstruction*, p. 131.
- <sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 18-23.
- <sup>27</sup>Bochensky: *Contemporary European Philosophy*, pp. 164-165.
- <sup>28</sup>*Reconstruction*, p. 109.
- <sup>29</sup>Bochensky: *Contemporary European Philosophy*, p. 159.
- <sup>30</sup>Postscript: Quoted in *Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy* by D.M. Dutta (The Univ. of Calcutta, 2nd Edition, 1961), pp. 515-517.
- <sup>31</sup>Sartre: *Existentialism and Humanism*.
- <sup>32</sup>*Reconstruction*, p. 103.
- <sup>33</sup>Kierkegaard: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 350-364.
- <sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 179 (footnote).
- <sup>35</sup>Bochensky: *Contemporary European Philosophy*, p. 159.
- <sup>36</sup>Kierkegaard: *Three Stages on the Way of Life*.
- <sup>37</sup>Kierkegaard: *Postscript*, p. 226.
- <sup>38</sup>Iqbal: *Secrets of the Self*, pp. 72-84.
- <sup>39</sup>*Reconstruction*, p. 85.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>42</sup>Bochensky: *Contemporary European Philosophy*, p. 167.

<sup>43</sup>*Reconstruction*, p. 92.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>45</sup>Bochensky: *Contemporary European Philosophy*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>46</sup>Olson: *Introduction to Existentialism* (Dover Publications, New York, 1962), Chapter on Freedom: pp. 100-133; Chapter on Authenticity: pp. 134-161.

<sup>47</sup>*Reconstruction*, p. 119.

<sup>48</sup>Iqbal: *Mysteries of Selflessness* (Translated by A.J. Arberry).

<sup>49</sup>

ارمغانِ حجازِ کُنیتِ اقبال، عالمِ برزخ ص ۹۰۔

## A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF IQBAL'S "RECONSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN ISLAM"

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

### I.

**D**R. IQBAL is a celebrated poet-philosopher of the Indian sub-continent. Though he wrote in classical—and at times romantic—diction, he was not a poet in the classical sense. Erotic subjects do not find prominence in his poetry. Annemarie Schimmel rightly points out, "However, the comparatively small number of poetical symbols he used, and the untiring repetition of one and the same basic idea throughout a period of nearly 30 years (and) further, the complete absence of any personal allusion to erotic subjects make him indeed more an exponent of prophetic thought than a poet in the classical sense. Whilst even the poetry of Maulana Rumi is filled with the intense glow of his personal attachment to his spiritual beloved, Shamsuddin, and later Husamaddin Chelebi, Iqbal is concerned only with his doctrine of Self and his strife for the new life of Islam in India." (*Gabriel's Wing*, p. 70). Moreover, Iqbal was opposed to fine arts in general, and poetry in particular, being used for purposes other than life-building. He writes in 'New Era', "All human art must be subordinated to this final purpose (i.e., life), and the value of everything must be determined in reference to its life-yielding capacity. The highest art is that which awakens our dormant will-force to enable us to face the trials of life successfully. All those sciences and arts which bring drowsiness and make us shut our eyes to reality around, on the mastery of which alone life depends, are a message of decay and death. Art is that which awakens and breathes life into us, not the one which makes us drowsy. The dogma of art for art's sake is a clever invention of decadence to cheat us out of life and power." ("Iqbal and Fine Arts" in *Jahan-e-Iqbal* by Abdur Rehman Tariq, pp. 280-81 and also A. Schimmel,

op. cit. p. 62). Similarly, Iqbal expresses himself to be in full agreement with the *Quran* in condemnation of poetical *art qua art* and with the sayings of the Prophet who had characterised the greatest artist among the pre-Islamic poets, Imru'l-Qais, as the leader of people towards hell.

As in Iqbal's view, the main purpose of art and philosophy is to inspire reconstruction of life around, he greatly values those artists and poets who fulfil this purpose. Thus he says in *Javed Nama* :

"The nature of a poet is entirely searching,  
He is the creator and cherisher of wishes:  
The poet is like the heart in the breast of the nation,  
A nation without a poet is like a heap of clay."

Then again, he says :

"If the object of poetry is to make men,  
then poetry is the heir of prophecy." \* (*Javed Nama*-365)

We, therefore, see that prophecy is central to Iqbal's works, whether in prose or poetry. Art and philosophy, according to him, must be subordinated to the central task of recreating and rebuilding our world. Such an art, purposeful, inspiring and blood-warming, is not possible without burning desire and without pouring blood of the heart into it. Thus he says in *Bal-e-Jibril* :

"The miracle of art is the result of heart-blood.  
A drop of heart-blood makes the stone a heart,  
From heart-blood are sound and burning and joy and melody."

And we read in *Zarb-e-Kalim* :

"From the blood of the architect are constructed  
The Tavern of Hafiz and the idol-temple of Bihzad."

Here it is interesting to note that from Iqbal's point of view, the art of Hafiz and Bihzad was decadent and moribund and he has denounced them too but here he is using them as symbols of highest achievement in the field of art. Moreover, like any other artist, it is not difficult to find contradictions and ambiguities in Iqbal's writings. W.C. Smith and others have pointed out these contradictions and inconsistencies in Iqbal's thought-system.

## II

IQBAL, as we know, was committed to Islamic fundamentalism. Islam, he seemed to believe, was an ideal which, if fully realised, should suffice for



humanity to live in harmony and free from evils arising out of modern capitalism, imperialism, etc. But he saw Muslims all around in a miserable plight. Politically they were defeated and dominated by the West. Their religion was encumbered with medieval dogmas and rituals. The purity and simplicity of early Islam was lost. Iqbal was deeply moved by the miserable plight of the Muslims who were once the masters of this world. He wrote 'The Complaint' (*shikwa*) which, when recited in a gathering of Muslims, moved his audience to tears. Iqbal had a burning desire to right this wrong. His outpourings, whether in the form of poetry, prose or letters, are enough to convince us of this. Numerous verses can be quoted in support of this. That is why he wanted to use his poetry as a vehicle of expressing his ideas which, he earnestly believed, were capable of transforming the world of Islam from its present state of decadence into a new, dynamic world recapturing its past glory. In such a crisis-ridden period, poetry, or any other form of art, could not be used to satisfy the pleasure instincts. Art cannot be trifled with for pleasurable and playful ends. It must be used for creating a new world for Muslims. As Freud maintained, the sexual instinct must be partially starved to sublimate energy for creating civilization even if man pays a price by way of neurosis. So did Iqbal. The pleasure principle must be subordinated to the work principle. The sword and dagger must take precedence over singing and dancing. It is interesting to note that the Quranic pronouncements or the Prophet's traditions about poetry also belong to a period of difficulties for Muslims. In Mecca, Muslims faced powerful enemies all around. Their energies were needed for spreading and consolidating Islam and later, immediately after the death of the Prophet, these were needed for conquering and supplanting external enemies. Hence they could not be frittered away in pleasurable occupations. The prophet, therefore, as pointed out above, called Imru'l-qais the poet who wrote such poetry as leader of the people towards hell. At that stage of history such poetry would have been life-denying rather than life-affirming for Muslims. When Iqbal lived in India, it was again a period of crisis for the Muslims in particular and all other peoples of Asia in general. Their energies were required for the struggle against the Western imperialist powers who had subjugated them. Their energies were also required for the reconstruction of their nations. Art for them could not just become an instrument of instinctual gratification. Such gratification had to be postponed till such time as they could afford it at a future date. In other words, and to use Freudian terminology, the pleasure-principle will have to be sacrificed to the work-principle. In our own time, we see that in the Soviet Union and Communist China, which are busy building socialist societies, art is being used for purposive construction even though there is an implied risk of turning art into propaganda. Thus we see the rationale in Iqbal advocating a purposive approach to creative art.

## III

HERE, in this paper, we shall not be very much concerned with Iqbal's poetry as such. Iqbal used both poetry and prose to convey his ideas and ideals. Also, much has been written about his poetry and poetic art. His prose writings have not attracted much-needed attention. Iqbal, as we know, was deeply concerned with the fate of Muslims in the modern world. He was pained to see Muslims caught in a deep crisis all over the world. They had lost their past glory. Not only that, they were reduced to a state of slavery, political as well as economic. Their religion, as he saw it, was encumbered with un-Islamic dogmas under alien influences through the medieval ages. Mysticism, with its elaborate system of rituals, and philosophy of self-denial and self-mortification, he thought, had done great harm to them. He, therefore, thought it necessary to do something about it. Being an idealist (M.T. Stepanyants, the Soviet scholar, describes him as an 'objective idealist' in her book *Pakistan: Philosophy and Sociology*), Iqbal ascribed the Muslims' decline to their misinterpretation of Islam or accepting ideas which were fundamentally contradictory to those of Islam in the garb of Islam. In keeping with this idealistic interpretation of history, he thought that mysticism with its life-denying philosophy which itself was a product of a decadent, moribund society, was the real cause of the Muslims' sad plight and therefore, with all vehemence, he propounded his own concept of 'Self' (*Khudi*). Not so much social revolution, he seems to have thought, as the development of one's self can be a real boon to society. (It does not, however, mean that he was opposed to social change. I am only indicating his priority. If a superman is produced by developing this self fully, he may have thought, such a superman can become instrumental in bringing about social change. Revolution, for him, begins at the top, though unlike Nietzsche, he does not hold the masses in contempt.) Thus denouncing traditional mysticism, he says in *Zarb-e-Kalim*:

"Your Islam is perhaps something different,  
because for you *faqr* and mockery are one,  
The passivity of the ascetic is repugnant to the spirit of *faqr*,  
For the *faqr* boat is completely a cataclysm."

Iqbal was not opposed to *tasawwuf*, *per se*, as some people think. He was opposed to the decadent form of mysticism as he found it around him and to the Persian influences and the emanationist trends incorporated into it through Greek sources. Thus he writes in a letter to Hafiz Muhammad Aslam Jairajpuri: "Pirzadah Muzaffaruddin did not understand my real intent at all. If *tasawwuf* (mysticism) means sincerity of action (and this is what it meant in the earlier centuries of Islam), then

no Muslim should object to it. Yes, when *tasawwuf* tends to become philosophy and, under non-Arabian (*‘ajami*) influences, involves itself in hair-splitting discussions about the system of our universe and the existence of God, then my soul revolts against it. . .” (*Iqbal Nama*), Vol. I, compiled by Shaikh Ataullah, pp. 53-54). Though Iqbal’s overall approach was that of an idealist, at times he tended to adopt the materialist approach too. Thus in a letter to Sirajuddin Pal dated 19th July 1916, he writes: “This is surprising that the entire mystic poetry was created during the period of political decline of Muslims and it ought to be so. If the community which loses its strength as it happened with the Muslims after the Mongol invasion, its very point of view changes. For its weakness becomes something beautiful and graceful and renunciation brings satisfaction. Nations try to hide their indolence and inactivity and their defeat in the struggle for existence behind this facade of renunciation. Take the Indian Muslims, for example. The highest achievement of their literary genius ended with elegies of Lucknow.” (*Ibid*, Vol. I, pp. 44-45).

Iqbal had a great desire to reinterpret Islam. For long, he was seized of this idea. He was against imitation and believed that a person who wished to develop his ‘self’ ought to carve out his own path. He expressed this through poetry as well as through his statements, speeches, letters, etc. In a significant quatrain, he says:

“Take thou thine axe, and excavate thy path,  
To go another’s road is cruel hard;  
If by thy labour something rare is wrought,  
Though it be sin, it hath its own reward.”

Also, in a letter written to Suleiman Nadvi in 1926, he says: “My intention is to decide Islamic affairs in the light of modern jurisprudence, not in a slavish manner (he was against imitating Western ways) but in a critical way. Before this, too, Muslims have dealt with their beliefs in this fashion. Greek philosophy was once thought to be the culmination of human knowledge. But when Muslims developed critical faculty, they confronted Greek philosophy with its own weapons. In our age also, it is necessary to do so.” (*Iqbal Nama*, *ibid*. Vol. I, p. 147). Iqbal set about to do this necessary task and he was eminently suited to do it with his knowledge of Western philosophy. M.T. Stepanyants says: “Furthermore, he was familiar with Western philosophy and science and knew how to present the ideas of religious modernism with theoretical persuasion. His desire to bring the teachings of Islam closer to Western philosophy and the findings of modern science echoed the mood of the younger generation of the national bourgeoisie and intellectuals, who wanted to cast off the burden of the old dogmas and adopt new ideals (*Pakistan: Philosophy*

and *Sociology*, p. 27). He made a systematic attempt in this direction when he was requested to deliver lectures by the Madras Muslim Association and delivered at Madras, Hyderabad, and Aligarh. He says in the preface to these lectures, "I have tried to meet, even though partially, this urgent demand by attempting to reconstruct Muslim religious philosophy with due regard to the philosophical tradition of Islam and the more recent development in the various domains of human knowledge." (Iqbal, *Lectures*, VI).

On the theoretical level, Iqbal had a very broad concept of religion. In his lecture, he approvingly quotes Prof. Whitehead's definition of religion as "a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended." (*L*, p. 2)<sup>1</sup>. Iqbal then remarks, "No one would hazard action on the basis of a doubtful principle of conduct. Indeed, in view of its function, religion stands in greater need of a rational foundation of its ultimate principles than even the dogmas of science." However, it does not mean that Iqbal concedes the upper hand to reason or philosophy. For him, religion has its own exclusive domain and philosophy cannot sit in judgement over it. Religion has its own inner logic and is to be judged by its own principles. He, therefore, says, "But to rationalise faith is not to admit the superiority of philosophy over religion. Philosophy, no doubt, has jurisdiction to judge religion, but what is to be judged is of such a nature that it will not submit to the jurisdiction of philosophy except on its own terms." (*L*, p. 2). This approach is deceptively rational and it is because of this approach, that despite high-sounding phrases like reconstruction, creative reinterpretation of religion, etc., Iqbal, in the ultimate analysis, tends to be conservative and opposed to any real change, as we shall see later.

Again, it is for this reason that Iqbal holds Ghazali in very high esteem and, in fact, calls him the Kant of Islam. Ghazali (d. 1111 A.D.) was first attracted by Greek philosophy in his search for the truth but later on rejected it in favour of religion. He even wrote a book *Tahafat-ul-Falasifa* refuting the arguments of Greek philosophers. Iqbal thus says, "It cannot, however, be denied that Ghazali's mission was almost apostolic like that of Kant in Germany of the eighteenth century. In Germany, rationalism appeared as an ally of religion, but she soon realized that the dogmatic side of religion was incapable of demonstration. The only course open to her was to eliminate dogma from the sacred record. With the elimination of dogma came the utilitarian view of morality, and thus rationalism cleared the region of unbelief. Such was the state of theological thought in Germany when Kant appeared. His *Critique of Pure Reason* revealed the limitations of human reason and reduced the whole work of the rationalists to a heap of ruins. And justly has he been described as God's greatest gift to his country.

Thus, whosoever subordinates reason to intuition or even mystic experience attracts Iqbal's respect and veneration. According to Iqbal, Ghazali essentially played the same role in the world of Islam and "broke the back of that proud but shallow rationalism which moved in the same direction as pre-Kantian rationalism in Germany. Ghazali did even more than that. He reaffirmed the possibility of knowledge of God which Kant had denied." Thus he says, "Kant, consistently with his principles, could not affirm the possibility of a knowledge of God. Ghazali, finding no hope in analytic thought, moved to mystic experience, and there found an independent content for religion. In this way he succeeded in securing for religion the right to exist independent of science and metaphysics." (*L*, p. 5).

Thus, for finding this independent content for religion in mystical experience, Iqbal holds Ghazali in very high esteem. For Iqbal, knowledge of truth cannot be acquired through mental concepts or through the process of ratiocination. Such knowledge is inadequate and incomplete. The knowledge of higher truth can only be had through intuition, momentary vision or mystical experience. This higher knowledge, according to him, cannot be pinned down within any spatio-temporal frame as it is ever transcendental. Any knowledge falling within the space-time frame is bound to be partial or sectional. Thus, giving an example of a knowledge yielded by sense-data within this frame, he says, "When I experience the table before me, innumerable data of experience merge into the single experience of the table. Out of this wealth of data, I select those that fall into a certain order of space and time and round them off in reference to the table. In the mystic state, however vivid and rich it may be, thought is reduced to a minimum and such an analysis is not possible." Then he further continues, "The mystic state brings us into contact with the total passage of Reality in which all the diverse stimuli merge into one another and form a single unanalysable unity in which the ordinary distinction of subject and object does not exist."

He even considers mystic experience as objective in a way: "The mystic state is a moment of intimate association with a unique Other self, transcending, encompassing, and momentarily suppressing the private personality of the subject experience. Considering its content, the mystic state is highly objective and cannot be regarded as a mere retirement into the mists of pure subjectivity." (*L*, p. 19). It may be a surprise to those who are fascinated by the charming poetry of Iqbal that he who never tires of talking of change and revolution and even waxes eloquent on this subject in his poetry has very unhistorical and non-dynamic conception about the higher truth which he takes off the domain of space and time. The intuitional or mystic knowledge, as it is beyond space and time, is supra-historical and consequently would not reflect any social, political or economic changes taking place in the human organisational

structure. Iqbal, it seems, agrees with a sufi who is reported to have said that God-consciousness begins where intellect ceases to operate.

In view of this static concept of truth, Iqbal's concern with the theories of time assumes importance. The serial time which involves change is not acceptable to him. He says in clear words, "*personally, I am inclined to think that time is an essential element in Reality. But real time is not serial time* (italics mine) to which the distinction of past, present and future is essential; it is pure duration, i.e., change without succession (a strange and baffling concept indeed), which MacTaggart's argument does not touch. Serial time is pure duration pulverized by thought—a kind of device by which Reality exposes its ceaseless creative activity to quantitative measurement. . ." (L, p. 58). Thus we see that in order to get rid of physical time which is nothing but a measurement of movement of astral bodies, he invents (rather borrows) the myth of 'pure duration' or an 'eternal now'. It is nothing more than a charming but mystical fiction to soothe a troubled mind in quest of eternity and ethereal permanency. In his various poems, too, he has, with poetical charm, expressed his ideas about space-time which would hardly stand any scientific scrutiny (Well, he does not want to apply one, as any scientific view, according to him, is partial). In one of his poems, he says:

"Intellect is instrument of thread-wearers (i.e., unbelievers),  
Neither there is time, nor space *la ilaha illallah*"  
(i.e., there is no god but God.)

Thus believing in space-time is being an unbeliever or being deceived by the intellect. God is final truth who needs neither time nor space. Iqbal is against the serial nature of time, as it creates difficulty in comprehending the essential being of God. He says: "It is clear that if we look at time from a purely objective point of view, serious difficulties arise; for we cannot apply atomic (i.e., serialised) time to God and conceive him as a life in the making, as Professor Alexander appears to have done in his Lectures on Space, Time and Deity. Later Muslim theologians fully realised these difficulties." Then he goes on to quote some eminent Muslim thinkers and poets like Mulla Jalal-ud-Din Dawani, Iraqi and others and discusses their concepts of time and then says: "Rising higher and higher in the scale of immaterial beings, we reach Divine time—time which is absolutely free from the quality of passage, and consequently does not admit of divisibility, sequence and change. It is above eternity; it has neither beginning nor end. The eye of God sees all the visibles, and His ear hears all the audibles in one indivisible act of perception." (L, p. 75). Thus we see that Iqbal, in order to rationalise his *a priori* notion of God and His qualities, invents a fiction of pure duration. In his mathnavi, *Asrar-e-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self), under the sub-title 'Time Is Sword', he

again denounces divisibility of time and asks his reader not to be a prisoner of day and night. He even says that real time is not due to the revolving of the sun. Time is eternal, the sun is not. The mystery of time can be understood only by plunging into one's heart.

As in his poetry, Iqbal is inconsistent even while expounding his philosophical ideas in his lectures. On the one hand, in his quest for eternity, he denies the reality of serial time which implies change and impermanence and, on the other hand, he decries any theory which advocates determinism of any sort or even mechanical repetition. He has, for this reason, rejected Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence. "It is", he says, "only a more rigid kind of mechanism, based not on an ascertained fact but only on a working hypothesis of science. Nor does Nietzsche seriously grapple with the question of time. He takes it objectively and regards it merely as an infinite series of events returning to itself over and over again. Now time, regarded as a perpetual circular movement, makes immortality absolutely intolerable." (L, p. 115). Thus we see that for Iqbal even immortality is not acceptable if it means mere repetition without creative change. He is attracted towards Bergson by his theory of a free and creative vital impulse but rejects his view that this *elan vital* is arbitrary, undirected and unilluminated. He says, "Again, in Bergson's view, the forward rush of the vital impulse in its creative freedom is unilluminated by the light of an immediate or remote purpose. It is not aiming at a result; it is wholly arbitrary, undirected, chaotic, and unforeseeable in its behaviour." (L, p. 52) Iqbal naturally rejects any suggestion of non-purposive creativity. He believes in the teleological approach. Such a universe cannot be created without any purpose. However, he is also aware of Bergson's criticism of the teleological universe which makes time unreal and reduces activities to mere mechanical repetition. But he stands his ground and explains away his teleological approach: "There is, however, another sense of teleology. From our conscious experience, we see that to live is to shape and change ends and purposes and to be governed by them. Mental life is teleological in the sense that, while there is no far-off distant goal towards which we are moving, there is a progressive formation of fresh ends, purposes, and ideal scales of value as the process of life grows and expands. We become by ceasing to be what we are." (L, p. 54).

Iqbal, in order to get away from the difficulty in accepting the teleological approach pointed out by Bergson, concedes full freedom to the human agent. He is even given the right to form fresh ends (To be fair to Iqbal, he has even expounded these ideas in his poetry too) but does it not contradict his stand on divine purpose? If every agent is allowed to form fresh ends, what becomes of the divine purpose in guiding the destiny of this universe? Does it not mean a cosmic disorder if different purposes clash with one another? Further irony is that where-

as Iqbal accepts the teleological approach in respect of our cosmos, he blandly rejects historical materialism as deterministic and hence impairing the freedom of the human agent. Perhaps he had, as he often accuses others in respect of Islam, too superficial a view of it. He took historical materialism in a supra-historical sense which makes things "inevitable". Iqbal is caught in a trap and tries to find his way out by reconciling two contradictory concepts of divine predestination, as implied by teleology with unrestrained freedom and creativity of the human agent.

Iqbal is opposed to the very spirit of Greek philosophy as its basis is intellection and speculative thought as opposed to the concrete spirit of the *Quran*. He severely criticises all those who interpreted the *Quran* in the light of Greek philosophy. Thus he says, "Not realising that the spirit of the *Quran* was essentially anti-classical and putting full confidence in Greek thinkers, their first impulse was to understand the *Quran* in the light of Greek philosophy. In view of the concrete spirit of the *Quran*, and the speculative nature of Greek philosophy which enjoyed theory and was neglectful of fact, this attempt was foredoomed to failure. And it is what follows their failure that brings out the real spirit of the culture of Islam, and lays the foundation of modern culture in some of its most important aspects." (*L*, p. 128). Here, too, Iqbal is taking a highly idealistic position. He ignores the material foundations of the spirit of any culture, be it Greek or Islamic. It is a well known fact that Islam originated in Mecca and later on developed further in Medina. Both these cities, though advanced compared to the nomadic culture of desert Arabs, were quite primitive when compared to the Hellenic or Persian cities. And a student of history knows that sophisticated thought with emphasis on intellection cannot develop in a primitive culture. Neither can a primitive culture produce deeper spiritual experiences with emphasis on inner probings. Very primitive communities of course resort to magical rites in order to control natural forces. The desert community with very scarce means at its disposal can hardly develop any sophisticated culture or speculative thought. It tends to be extrovert and direct observation of nature is the only means of obtaining knowledge. The *Quran* was addressed, apart from the people of Mecca and Medina, to the desert Arabs. It, therefore, emphasised knowledge through sense-perception, i.e., through direct observation.

The people of Mecca, on the other hand, indulged in commerce and had a large dependent petty bourgeois stratum of small traders and artisans. Such a class of petty bourgeoisie, as Max Weber—that eminent sociologist of religion—draws our attention to, has the main characteristics of developing practical rationalism as against the intellectual class whose main characteristic is theoretical rationalism. Needless to say, such a class of intellectuals is born in a society which has an advanced cultural base. So the *Quran's* whole emphasis remained on practical



rationalism and knowledge through sense-perception. However, after the outward expansion of Islam due to foreign conquests, new forces were released which transformed the original base of Islam. It now came in touch with the advanced Hellenic as well as Sassanid civilizations which had already achieved high excellence in the intellectual field. The Arabs, although belonging to the ruling race, due to their national tradition, did not show much interest, at least initially, in the pursuit of higher learning. The Persians, on the other hand, were adept in the pursuit of higher knowledge, had long traditions of philosophy, and other intellectual sciences and, what is more important to note, wanted to excel the Arabs in this field, as in the depth of their inner being they resented the political supremacy of the Arabs, whom they considered inferior to themselves (This resentment was actually expressed through a literary movement called the *Shu'u-biyah* movement which swept the Islamic empire in the eighth and ninth centuries). And the Persians did excel the Arabs.

Thus we see that most of the Muslim intellectuals were drawn from Persia who had an advanced culture and were already used to speculative thought. Naturally, they saw Islam in the same light and so the whole emphasis shifted from sense-perception to intellection and inner probings in the form of mystical experiences. The Arabs could not help this process as they lacked skill in theorising and speculation. They may have understood the *Quran* in the direct sense but as the intellectual departments were controlled by non-Arabs, it was their business to interpret it in various ways. Enough surplus was now available in society (contrast this with near scarcity conditions existing during the Prophet's time) to sustain this class of intellectuals with their excellence in theoretical rationalism. Also, this surplus enabled experts to translate Greek books into Arabic and Persian and these translations opened the flood-gates of new knowledge. Thus with the transformation of this social base, the whole structure of Islam was transformed, giving rise to various new disciplines which did not exist in the earlier Islamic society. The new spirit which Iqbal bemoans was, in fact, a manifestation of historical change. Going back to the original Quranic spirit which was essentially a manifestation of primitive conditions in Arabian society was historically impossible, as the process of history could not be reversed. Therefore, I maintain that Iqbal's criticism of the subsequent Quranic interpretation was idealistic and betrayed his ignorance (deliberate or otherwise) of historical and material forces. Similarly, his overall view of Islam tends to be idealistic. He felt that Islam was the only religion which had abolished all distinctions among human beings based on caste, colour, race, creed, etc. and had given perfect equality to all. He again ignores the fact that the Meccan situation in the earlier phase of Islam favoured such an ideology but the later historical developments completely relegated these teachings of

Islam to an obscure corner. Within 30 years of the death of the Prophet, a bloody civil war broke out and soon Arabs were pitted against non-Arabs (and Arabs themselves were divided into tribes ranged against one another). Kufa was the centre of Persian *mawalis* (clients) who resented Arab domination and took part in various heterodox and dissident religio-political movements with a view to overthrowing the ruling dynasties.

Moreover, the Islamic revolution had benefited the city Arabs the most. The Bedouins (i.e., nomadic Arabs), who were used to natural freedom of the desert and tribal democracy, deeply resented the domination of these city Arabs through a vast bureaucratic state machine created by them and soon they also rebelled. They seceded from the army of Ali and were called *Khawarij* (i.e., seceders or deserters). They drew their strength from the Bedouin soldiery and from time to time the Islamic state saw many violent insurrections by them. Needless to say, the Bedouins' attempt to shatter the state machine and to re-create the tribal democracy of the desert Arabs failed, as the historical forces favoured them earlier rather than later. Similarly, the Persian *mawalis* generally favoured Shiite heterodoxy as they were not necessarily against the state machine but against its domination by the Arabs. (The Persian *mawalis* were, by and large, city-dwellers and already used to a vast bureaucratic state machine in Persia for a long time.) Thus what ultimately matters is the historical condition and socio-economic forces rather than an ideal. Iqbal never adequately understood this. In our own time we have seen that Communist internationalism remains a mere dream as still the historical forces have not created conditions for it to become a reality and we find the socialist states divided into national states with antagonistic or non-antagonistic contradictions between them. Iqbal always believed that if Islamic teachings were implemented sincerely, everything would fall into place. He did not reckon with the fact that this would remain a mere dream until the whole socio-economic structure of the world changed. The Muslim states themselves are divided into nation-states and some of them are one another's sworn enemies. Also, despite Islamic ideals, there is hardly any Muslim state where human rights are fully respected. Again, the reason is actual material conditions.

In the fifth lecture of this series entitled "The Spirit of Muslim Culture", Dr Iqbal maintains that the spirit of Muslim culture is inherently dynamic. "Thus, all lines of Muslim thought converge on a dynamic conception of the universe. This view is further reinforced by Ibn-i-Mas-Kawaih's theory of life as an evolutionary movement, and Ibn-i-Khaldun's view of history." (L, p. 138) In the case of Ibn-i-Khaldun, he goes even to the extent of maintaining that he was a unique product of the spirit of Islamic culture (a strange position to maintain for one who rejects historical determinism). Thus he says, "All that I mean to say is that, consider-

ing the direction in which the culture of Islam had unfolded itself, only a Muslim could have viewed history as a continuous collective movement, a real inevitable development in time." (L, p. 141). It is really strange that an opponent of determinism in any form (he spurns historical materialism on the same ground) should talk of inevitability when it comes to the spirit of Islamic culture. Iqbal's position that dynamism was inherent in Islam again ignores the material basis of the society of his day. Like the city states of Greece, the surplus in Islamic society mainly came from flourishing trade (and only to a lesser extent from the exploitation of rural peasantry) and such a society which was based on the movement of men and material was bound to be more dynamic than a closed feudal society. Later on, in other countries, when Muslim states were established on the basis of feudalism, deriving its power mainly from the landed gentry, it turned out to be as much static and decadent as any other society could be. Medieval India and Persia are its examples. There was no question of dynamism being inherent and inevitable in Islam. Ideology ceases to be alive once the social and economic base changes.

In the sixth lecture, Iqbal emphasises the principle of *ijtihad*, i.e., creative interpretation in Islam, which, he thinks, is the principle of movement in the structure of Islam. His beginning is really impressive: "But eternal principles when they are understood to exclude all possibilities of change which, according to the *Quran*, is one of the greatest 'signs' of God, tend to immobilize what is essentially mobile in its nature. The failure of Europe in political and social sciences illustrates the former principle, the immobility of Islam during the last 500 years (what happened to its inherent dynamism?) illustrates the latter. What, then, is the principle of movement in the nature of Islam? This is known as *Ijtihad*." (L, p. 148) He illustrates and elaborates this principle of *ijtihad* through prophetic traditions, the *Quran*, etc. Theoretically, he even concedes that "a false reverence for past history and its artificial resurrection constitute no remedy for a people's decay". "The verdict of history", as a modern writer has happily put it, "is that worn-out ideas have never risen to power among a people who have worn them out." He then goes on to take stock of the changes brought about in the legal structure of Islam and even admires these changes and says: "Passing on to Turkey, we find that the idea of *Ijtihad*, reinforced and broadened by modern philosophical ideas, has long been working in the religious and political thought of the Turkish nation. This is clear from Halim Sabit's new theory of Mohammedan Law, grounded on modern sociological concepts. If the renaissance of Islam is a fact, and I believe it is a fact, we too one day, like the Turks, will have to re-evaluate our intellectual inheritance." Further, he hastens to add, "And if we cannot make any original contribution to the general thought of Islam, we may, by *healthy conservative criticism*, serve at least

as a check on the rapid movement of liberalism in the world of Islam." (L, p. 153).

In fact, Iqbal was too conservative (as we come to know from his private letters written to many friends, specially Maulana Sulaiman Nadvi and others wherein he shows excessive concern in upholding even some subsidiary aspects of Islamic jurisprudence like the details of law in inheritance, divorce, etc. In one of his letters he even writes that the Nadwatul-Ulama, an Islamic Seminary in U.P., is of far more significance than the Aligarh Muslim University) to undertake any real re-structuring of religious thought. His only real concern was to check the liberal and permissive trends among the Muslim intelligentsia. Adopting an over-cautious attitude, he says, "... but it must also be admitted that the appearance of liberal ideas in Islam constitutes also the most critical moment in the history of Islam. Liberalism has a tendency to act as a force of disintegration and the race-idea, which appears to be working in modern Islam with greater force than ever, may ultimately wipe off the broad human outlook which Muslim people have imbibed from their religion. Further, our religious and political reformers in their zeal for liberalism may overstep the proper limits of reform in the absence of a check on their youthful fervour." A very strange thing to say indeed for a poet-thinker who tells us in his poetry:

"Take thou thine axe, and excavate thy path,  
To go another's road is cruel hard;  
If by thy labour something rare is wrought,  
Though it be sin, it hath its own reward."

It may be all right for the poetry, but in real life, Iqbal was not prepared to commit the sin of carving out a new path. He shuddered at his own free thinking.

#### NOTE

<sup>1</sup>L refers to Iqbal's six lectures called *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 163.

## IQBAL AND THE PRICE OF A PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

WARIS ALAVI

SOMEHOW or other, the business of criticism has become for me not a very commendable self-indulgence of settling my somewhat disorderly accounts, both with critics and creative writers. And I think that the language in which one is accustomed to write is a better medium to carry out these nefarious transactions than the language which one uses only for polite conversation. One knows the feel of the words of one's own language, and the kind of feeling or ill-feeling it is likely to cause. It is easier to establish a dialogue, if not rapport, with the audience when one is sure that one is talking to people who are familiar with one's writings as well as with the writings of the poet one is talking about or around, as the case may be. In my own language, I know the ways of stating impolite things in polite language and the means of saying what should have been better left unsaid. Hence in Urdu I feel properly equipped to pursue the brink of war policy with self-assurance. In any other language I feel apprehensive about offering hazardous opinions, for they may change the dialogue into controversy, which I don't mind, and transform the controversy into open warfare, which I do mind. I shall not mind getting out of this place with my head mangled, if I am sure that it is still on my shoulders.

While writing about a poet of one's own language in any other language, it is natural for the critic to wax eloquent rather than be derogatory. Iconoclasm seems decent when it is practised in one's own temple and in the presence of one's own people, rather than among alien tribes who are not in a position to judge what the idol means to his worshippers, and why a few brazen heads have ceased to worship him as the others are doing. To explain one's reasons is to explain one's feel-

ings, for unlike the philosopher, the abode of the poet is in the deep recesses of one's emotional and imaginative being. To explain why one has to cease to feel about the poet the way others feel or the way one used to feel once is to face the difficult task of formulating one's feelings into intellectual arguments. And to do this one needs the immediate contact of the poetry, one needs to have it constantly in the mind's eye to verify one's feeling and support one's argument. Of course, I can use translations, but in translation the poet is not what he is in the original. The other course left open is to do what the critics of Iqbal have done—to work havoc with him by picking up the idea from the poem and discussing it as if the idea was the poem. Lyrical poets are safe from such ravages and indeed, it is easier to enjoy them, "for they engage the hearts of the readers, and entertain them with the softness of love without perplexing their minds with nice speculations of philosophy", to borrow a phrase from Dryden. Lyrical poetry is either good or it is not good. You sing it, or you do not sing it, and there the matter ends. This instantaneous and universal response, philosophical or reflective poetry is usually not fortunate enough to produce. Either the philosophy is repulsive or puerile and repels the reader, or the poetry is dull and insipid and bores him to death. A happy fusion of the two is very rare, so rare that its appearance is nothing less than a miracle. I think that Goethe succeeded in effecting this fusion, and so did Iqbal, but not in his more ambitious works in Persian. Can we regard Iqbal as a sage as Eliot did Goethe in his remarkable article, "Goethe—the sage"? I think not. I tried to work out the parallels but failed to see in Iqbal the quality of mind and spirit so lucidly defined by Eliot which is essential to make a poet universally acceptable. I do not mean that Iqbal is not a great poet, but the quality of his greatness is not the same as that of Goethe, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton or Wordsworth.

Mostly the critics of Iqbal have thriven on his Persian works, because there the philosophy is self-evident. I think it is futile to talk about the relationship of ideas to poetry in connection with Iqbal. Where the two have fused together, the miracle of poetry has happened; where they have failed to do so, no body of criticism can make us enthusiastic about them, for the idea that has failed to survive in poetry, cannot survive in criticism. Moreover, in good poetry, the ideas are so vitally connected with the whole fabric of poetry, that to disentangle them and to submit them to the ruthless lacerations of rational and logical analysis is positively an obnoxious critical practice. When separated from its poetic structure, the idea becomes vincible, whether it is the Satanism of Baudelaire, the Islamism of Iqbal, or the Socialism of Progressive writers. Unfortunately, this is what both the admirers and the derogators of Iqbal have done. Other than his poetry, Iqbal has achieved another miracle—the transformation into literary critics of that vast multitude of mediocre

writers who, in different circumstances, would have written articles on the glories of Islam in the weekly papers, or would have become Perfect Men.

The more one reads about Iqbal, the less readable he becomes. Iqbal is the most overworked subject of Urdu literature but I think that most of the work should not have been undertaken, and if undertaken should not have been published, and if published, now needs complete demolition, so that the atmosphere is purified of those prejudices which the too narrow and sectarian interpretations of the poet's works have generated. This pretentious criticism consists of nothing but long dull discourses on Islam and self, interspersed here and there with lines from the poet. It is based on the wrong presumption that the justification and the rationalization of the poet's philosophical thoughts constitute the establishment of his poetic merits. All the same, I do agree that the appraisal of the poetic merits does not preclude the evaluation of the thematic qualities of the poet. But the critics have avoided this kind of evaluation to no avail. Their time-honoured practice has been to accept Iqbal's way of looking at things as right because it was Islamic. Rationalization is the inevitable result.

I shall take the risk of sounding pontifical and even blunt, to make my approach clear at the very start. I think that it was a very erroneous decision on the part of Iqbal, which resulted in fatal consequences for his poetry, to write in Persian instead of in Urdu. Not only is his Persian poetry inferior to his Urdu poetry in poetic quality and range of sensibility but it is chiefly responsible for his image, so absurdly exploited by his admirers, of a thinker and an Islamic poet. In his Persian poetry, Iqbal is blatantly didactic. The philosopher has won the game and the poet is completely vanquished. His romantic sensibility, his sensitiveness to the phenomenological world around, his existential exuberance and his rebellious joy and revolutionary zeal, which gave us our richest legacy, his Urdu poetry, are subdued in his Persian works by the narrow concerns of a sectarian leader.

It is said that Iqbal wanted to disseminate his message to that wide Islamic world, and so he chose Persian for his poetic medium. Whether his message came to be disseminated in the Islamic world, and what influence he exercised over the religions and political thought of Islamic countries, are interesting questions, but lie beyond my sphere which is a narrow one of literary criticism. However, I would respect, if not accept, the argument that in certain critical moments of history, the destinies of nations are more important than their arts, and if a poet sacrifices his art for more praiseworthy national ideals and objectives, it is not to be regretted. It is a controversial problem and I shall leave it here with the passing remark that we must also see whether the sacrifice of the art has helped the national cause, and whether the destiny of a nation would have been different if the artist had decided not to make his sacrifice.

But I would like to judge Iqbal's decision purely on literary grounds. Now Yeats has said in his comment on Tagore, "Nobody can write with music and style in a language not learnt in childhood, and since then the language of his thought." And this is what Eliot has to say in this matter:

"And the poet is the least abstract of men, because he is the most bound by his own language: He cannot even afford to know another language equally well, because it is, for the poet, a life-time's work to explore the resources of his own."

Now we are not in a position, being far removed from the mainstream of Persian language, to be the competent judges of the nuances of poetic style. The Persians are better placed than we are to evaluate the stylistic merits of Persian poetry of Indian poets. In spite of the compliments of Bahar, Saeed Nafisi and a few others, mostly due to political reasons, one measure of Iran's indifference to Iqbal is his continued absence from practically every anthology of Persian verse. It may be either due to the chauvinistic arrogance or geographical limits usually observed in the preparation of such books. Yet my doubt remains, that had the poetry of Iqbal been as powerful in Persian as it is in Urdu, it would have taken Iran by storm.

Now let me hazard a conjecture as to why Iqbal chose to write in Persian, and how it affected his creative activity. Iqbal was well-versed in Persian right from his early days, but during his stay in Europe, he read Persian poetry and prose very exhaustively for the preparation of his doctoral thesis. Now Persian is a language very rich in traditional poetic diction. For centuries this diction has not changed and remained static. Moreover, there are languages which yield very easily to versification and Persian is one of them. For an Indian who knows classical Persian, it is easier and even safer to versify in Persian than in Urdu. Easier, for he will be pursuing the already moulded traditional mode of expression and will be saved from the trouble of reshaping and recasting his native language for poetic expression. Safer, because none would be there to judge the quality of his poetry from the quality of his language. During the very creative act, the poet is aware, if he is writing in his own language, whether he is exploiting the full resources of the language or not. In Persian one is so vincible as to be devoured by the traditional diction, yielding one's ideas and emotions passively to be absorbed by it. My impression is that for Iqbal, Persian versification came very easily, and there seems to be no effort to say new things in new ways. In Urdu he has said things never said before in style never seen before. Can we make the same remark, with any confidence, about his Persian style? Can we identify his point of departure from conventional idiom and diction?



It is surprising, indeed, that till he wrote in Urdu, he never assumed the role of a teacher. His Urdu poetry is that of an inquiring and revealing mind till the end. Like a true genius, he was able to strike a happy balance between didacticism and aestheticism, which in Persian is resolved in favour of the former. In Urdu he never wrote any long poem in the narrative Mathnawi style, with a philosophical content and pedagogical aim. Even his comparatively longer poems are lyrical in nature. In Urdu he wrote also some humorous verses, usually ignored by more solemn critics, which treatment they don't deserve, for they are witty and very well written. Without this sense of humour, later incorporated in irony and satire, which gave beauty to many of his poems of political and social protest, he could not have written that masterpiece of irony 'The Council of Iqbals.' All these elements are missing in his Persian poetry.

I wonder, wouldn't have Iqbal felt, if he had attempted *Asrar* in Urdu, that the poetry was drooping like a wilted flower? How would he, who never tolerated cold fire even for punishment, have reacted to the sapping didactic verses? After the poetry of *Khizr-e-Rah*, *Tulu-e-Islam* and *Saqinama*, would he have continued to write in the insipid, jejune style of a low emotional temperature? I doubt it. The poet in him would have won. He would have instantly realized that to write poetry of social awakening and philosophical wisdom for the people of his time, he would have to explore other forms of poetic expression rather than the ones so thoroughly exhausted by his mighty predecessors like Attar, Rumi, Sinai, Nizami, and Khushro. Auden in his essay on Lawrence, says: "A genuine work of art remains an example of what being genuine means, so that it can stimulate later artists to be genuine in their turn. Stimulate, not compel, if a playwright in the twentieth century chooses to write a play in Shakespearian blank verse, the fault is his, not Shakespeare's. Those who are afraid of first-hand experience would find means of avoiding it if all the arts of the past were destroyed."

It is not surprising that the classics stimulated Iqbal to write in their vein, but his own works have failed to stimulate the later generations, a fact that undermines the quality of their genuineness. Iqbal was not afraid of a first-hand experience, but what he failed to realize was that the ancient modes of expression also brought with them the strong colours of sensibility to express in which they were formulated. This is one reason why no modern poetry is possible in older forms.

Instead of achieving a new style and a new form, Iqbal rested content on borrowing it from the rich traditional store-house of Persian poetic diction. The incessant and hard struggle to express the inexpressible enables the poet to explore fully the phonetic and semantic strains of words. To explore the meaning of the word is also a way to explore the range and quality of one's emotional and imaginative being. Language being the most recalcitrant medium of expression, the very act of harness-

ing it is also the act of letting loose the dark and mysterious forces of the creative instinct, and bringing into the sphere of enlightened consciousness the obscure areas of one's sensibility.

The narrative style of Mathnawi was so profoundly exhausted by the high metaphysical efforts of the past Persian masters that Iqbal hardly realizes his lyrical and passionate experiences through that medium. Instead, he attempts to organize his philosophical meditations in poetic terms.

However, if comparison is unavoidable, we might match the artistic aspects of Iqbal with the qualities of the sufistic Mathnawi writers of the past. When we do this, we find out that in his longer Mathnawis, he reflects, contemplates, sermonises, harangues, admonishes, exhorts, counsels, narrates parables, illustrates his arguments; in short, does everything that a preacher does, and does nothing that a poet is supposed to do. In Urdu poetry, the Pegasus soars high, but in his Persian verse it is harnessed to a pedagogical cart.

Not that I doubt the genuineness and greatness of Iqbal's philosophical mind. He brought what was best from the Western philosophy to the rich legacy of Eastern thought. Here, I must heartily recognise that but for his magnificent ideas and the philosophically trained mind in which they were cultivated, Iqbal's poetry could not have achieved the great historical and artistic significance which it bears to this day. My love and reverence for the man and his mind is no less than that of any ardent admirer of Iqbal. What I am proposing to do here is not the analysis of this mind, which has been largely undertaken by a host of worthy critics, but a sincere survey of his performance in the realm of poetry.

I have mentioned before that the quality of Iqbal's greatness is not the same as is observed in many other poets of equal stature. Well, comparison with Shakespeare would be futile, for no poet could traverse the vast avenues of human existence and its terrestrial and cosmic expanses as the great genius, the bard of Stratford, did. But, we might venture to hold some other poets for the purpose of comparison.

Iqbal is as sensitive to Nature as Wordsworth, even pantheistic at times, but his Nature poems being the earlier attempts of a growing mind, are too engraved with fanciful conceits to reach the imaginative heights of Nature poems. In his earlier poetry, his mind is open to the world of Nature, but in his duration he does not seem to be quite able to discover the proper mode of expression for the different moods and beauties of the natural world around him. There is too much of artistic description, not enough ecstasy. The diction, the cadence, and the rhythm of the verse do not throb with the pulse of Nature. By the time he wrote his later poetry, with dominant intellectual concerns, Iqbal had become regrettably alienated from Nature. The damage done to his poetry was twofold. Firstly, we are deprived of the Nature poems we rightly expect from a poet in

whom we have glimpsed such a sensitiveness to Nature's mysteries, and, secondly, we are left with his later poetry which became narrower in the range of imagery. This certainly does not mean that his intellectual poetry became abstract, or less imaginative and figurative and therefore more mental and mundane. Iqbal had the power to work miracles of poetic expression in the limited range of conventional symbols and symbolic images that he had inherited from classical poetry. His performance is always on a grand scale, which is manifest in his vast thematic plans and the sweeping span of his imagination. And, most of the time he accomplished perfectly whatever he proposed to do, which is a sure sign of his greatness. In his most accomplished achievements, there is no indication of anything left unfinished, or not finished elegantly. However, what I wished to point out is that he had the power to work greater miracles if he had allowed his poetic muse to explore wider areas of sensibility and the natural as well as the human world around him.

One might take, for instance, his religious poetry. It is not religious in the narrow sense of the word. It is the poetry of religious spirit rather than of religious ideas. Iqbal is more concerned with the spirit of Islam rather than with the theology of Islam. Now, this is the mark of all great poetry, which originates from the religious sensibility. But I do not think that Iqbal's religious poetry is characteristically superior to his other kinds of poetry. We do not find in his works *hamd* or *naat* generically evocative enough to become a part of our religious consciousness.

When our great poets do not create devotional poetry of a high order, usually, the vacuum is filled by the crude compositions of lesser minds, full of macabre fantasies and naive sentiments, with which we are already familiar through Qawwalis. Moreover, Iqbal's religious sensibility is not that of a visionary poet like Blake or Yeats, nor of genius engaged in the mystical development of the human sensibility such as Wordsworth or Rimbaud, nor of a clairvoyant tracing the cosmic evolution of man's world like Rilke or Eliot. Iqbal has not written any poetry of the type which is best described by the term, "literature of the expansion of consciousness". His pragmatic concern for his religion denied him the magnificent encounter with the mysterious Universe around us. He is undoubtedly aware of it more than any other poet, as his metaphysical contemplation leads him to probe the transcendental and existential problems. But the probing, while transmuted into words, does not operate at the level of any personal, esoteric experience. It simply issues as a dazzling but unoriented idea. In his pantheistic Nature poems and in his rapturous descriptions of existential flux of human life in which his poetry abounds, he almost verges on the visionary spirit. But Iqbal seems to be afraid of the spirit's untrammelled adventure into the mysterious universe. Perhaps, the spirit may encounter truths not agreeable to conventional religion; and, definitely, his concern with the spirit of religion

is greater than the spirit of Man absorbed in a free inquiry into his cosmic possibilities. Iqbal is not a man to rest content with the formal observances of religious duties. His strictures on the mere observances of the conventions and ceremonies of religion are very bitter. He has written profusely about the world of the heart as compared to that of the mind. Yet, he would not allow his heart to enter the world of free spiritual quest. He wants to make the spiritual inquiry subordinate to the truths of a revealed religion. I can understand his dilemma and I appreciate his concern for religion. However, what I want to show is that, due to this peculiar position we have a kind of excited religiosity that threatens to be propaganda for religion in his poetry, but not the spiritual vision and experiences on which the religions and religious poetry of a mystical nature are founded. He has transcendental imagination and metaphysical stare, and sensitiveness towards the mysteries of the universe and existence. But ultimately he seems to have turned this stare away to the more immediate problems of keeping religious sensibility alive in a world rapaciously gravitated to materialism. At least, in his poetry, the bargain for religion was the price of the spirit's adventures. In spite of this his creative insight was fraught with spiritual conflicts and turmoils, which makes his poetry great and brings him into sharp contrast with the poetry that merely harangues the people to come into the religious fold. A poet of spiritual concerns is different from a preacher. Iqbal combined both but wherever the preacher dominates, his poetry suffers, although we cannot overlook those splendid moments in his poetry, when his celestial imagination liberates his creative spirit chained to his racial concerns. It still remains good poetry, but becomes limited in its appeal and range.

When we compare Iqbal's religious poetry with that of the English metaphysical poets, Donne, Herbert and others, we at once realize why Iqbal failed to create religious poetry of high order. He failed because he worked in conventional forms which were overtilled and yielded easily to the outpourings of emotions in the polished poetic diction that he had inherited from great Persian poets. Like Western (English) metaphysical poets, his poetry does not evolve any complex poetic designs, which are the product of the dialectics, of very sophisticated religious sentiments. Compare such verses of Iqbal which, for instance, maintain that when death comes to a *momin*, there is a smile on his lips, to the Holy Sonnets of Donne and Herbert's poems on the themes of the relevance of death to man and you will find out how artistically complacent Iqbal can be with mere ideas and their bald expression. Much is written on the concepts of life and death in Iqbal, but where is a poet like Donne or Herbert who builds up in vivid images a whole metaphysical argument against death, or which shows you how religion salvages one from the fear of death? The Rubayats in *Armughan-e-Hejaz* expressing his feeling of love and ardent devotion towards the Prophet Mohammed are similarly not

the example of any major poetic achievement. I think Rubayi is too narrow a genre to be a satisfactory vehicle for the lyrical expression of the intense devotional sentiments of a very personal nature. Or perhaps Iqbal deliberately tried to tone down his emotions. If this is so, I don't know why he should have done this; this was the moment of the ecstasy of love and raptures of spiritual passions which could have developed into a great edifice. Moreover, Iqbal's emotions of love and devotion are so intermingled with his usual anxious musings on the plight of Muslims, that, actually, he seems to be writing his usual kind of poetry, and not a poetry of a very personal nature. Of course, one can interpret the national concern as a great virtue in a poet, that even in his devotional poetry he is more concerned for his people than for his own self. This moral advantage I am ready to grant to Iqbal ungrudgingly, because his deep love for the Prophet as well as his deep concern for the *ummat* has been a matter of cultural significance. But cannot one interpret the above fact in another context by saying that Iqbal could not reorganize his personal feeling of ardent love for the Prophet into an equally ardent poetic emotion? Instead he has tried to compensate the low temperature of this emotion by his public concerns.

I like devotional poetry for it gives expression to the perennial feeling of a finite being to seek his fulfilment and permanence in an Infinite Being. Of course, the symbolism, the myths, imagery, along with the idea of the person, are necessarily derived from the religious beliefs and tradition of the poet. From them, the emotion emanates and through them the emotion is realized in poetry. That is how George Herbert works. The framework of his poetry is full of symbols, signs, imagery and they combine together to embody his emotional state. Iqbal could have used a galaxy of objects from the landscapes of Arabia and the Islamic world to make his sentiments of love more concrete. On the contrary, here his entire emotional energy seems to have petered out through diffused and insubstantial modes of imagery.

But when Iqbal sings of man's relationship to God, a subject very dear to his heart and of prime importance to the full appreciation of his poetry, we have in his Urdu and Persian ghazals a poetry of highest lyrical perfection, cosmic in dimension, dialectical in spirit, dramatic in form—comparable only to whatever is supreme in the literature of East and West. A very remarkable feature of this poetry is that it is not Divinity but Man which is central to its spirit; not the justification of the ways of God to man, but the sublime expression of man's destiny in Cosmos. It defines not only man's predicament in the terrifying magnitude of an indifferent Universe, but also delineates his perennial and heroic struggle to make an existential choice, and to realize his Self, his place and his role in Cosmos. In a proud and dignified tone, at times verging on arrogance, man asserts his human Self, and accepts the challenge to

create a world of his own in which he can realize the semi-divine forces of his material and spiritual Self. The rich legacy of sufistic poetry is elevated by Iqbal from the plain of amorous dalliance to the ephemeral drama between man and God, throbbing with the upsurge of sophisticated emotions, and scintillating with the brilliance of a philosophically cultivated mind. Not only social and moral concerns, but Iqbal leaves even religiosity far behind to capture the spectacular process of Man crossing the static bounds of being to enter the transcendental course of becoming and realizing the creative potentialities of his nature. It is highly imperative to notice that the songs singing the glory of man are cosmic in spirit, and their too mundane an interpretation might result in misjudging Iqbal. For to play this cosmic drama on a social stage may entail the risk of making his songs sound too blown up for the ridiculous creature that man is. Without taking into consideration the tragic and cosmic dimensions of man's identity, he cannot be defined in literature in his social contexts. Against the panorama of the Universe, Man, as defined by Iqbal, is heroic, transcendental, and master of his destiny, a challenge to and a disturbance in the scheme of things; but also glowing with the fiery desire to attain his ultimate development and fulfilment in the Infinite Being.

I don't believe that Iqbal's narrative poems, in spite of their reflective character, are poetically impressive enough to bring out this aspect of the man-God relationship, with the same depth and vehemence. I would say that it is difficult to enjoy this poetry even as a kind of good reflective poetry, for it lacks both epigrammatic precision and witty expression without which a philosophical idea will dwindle into a dull musing, and will not have the merit of intellectual sharpness. Such an idea with blurred meditative contours can never acquire the wide appeal of a proverbial statement or an aphorism. Iqbal's philosophical poetry is so burdened with illustrative symbolic imagery and emotional overtures that his force of thought ultimately dissolves in the gushes of sentiment. In this poetry, Iqbal comes out as a poet of a strong religious cast of mind and deep concern for the plight of his community. During the critical eras of a nation's moral decadence, such poets always appear on the national scene and strive to bring the people out of their spiritual sloth and social degradation. Their poetry naturally becomes the poetry of religious idealism, moral appeal and national awakening. It is usually good and does good to the people. But its artistic qualities remain subdued, for the inspired spirit of the poet is stifled by the moralist in him. However, even a religious idealist and a moralist could produce a great poetic work if he happened to strike the right literary mode of expression as a proper vehicle for his thoughts, as is evident from the poems of Saadi and Langland, to quote only two names for the present. Saadi had Mathnawi and Langland alle-

gory, and both these modes appropriately and powerfully conveyed their ideas.

What happens to a poet when he does not have a proper form to work in can be seen from the failure of *Javed Nama*, considered by all as Iqbal's masterpiece. I maintain that it is a failure because the poem does not perform what it promises to do. Of course, we all know that it does not promise a kind of joy ride in a celestial omnibus. The days of romantic, phantasmagoria and chimeric imagination are over. The imaginative worlds of Shelley, Keats, and Coleridge cannot be revived. No two opinions about that. But I would like to know, how the adoption of a medieval allegorical form is to be justified, if along with that the poet has an ingrained disregard for other associated elements of romantic imagination. Well, at least this much can be said about romanticism that it forged new avenues for the later symbolic, surrealist and modern poetry, and enabled the poets to discover new forms, which served to define a world and a man, who was so changed as to have become intractable for poetry. Perhaps Iqbal made no effort to be familiar with these experiments. The lop-sided structuring of *Javed Nama* shows Iqbal's imperfect dealings with a peculiar romantic form.

In *Javed Nama* he took the idea from Dante without his spirit and worked it out. The poem has no such aspects of any form or design. It is neither allegorical nor supernatural, nor epic. Actually Iqbal seems to have no clear idea as to why he was undertaking the course of heavenly ascension. There is no inevitability or propriety in design, and consequently in the speeches of the persons he meets in the heavenly regions. We don't know why he meets the persons he meets, and why they talk to him the way they do. Iqbal never determines the character, the speech, and the dramatic position of any of these personalities with any precision. It is clear, that actually Iqbal is talking through the mouths of these persons and he does not make anybody speak the language of his heart. And the talk centres around the same thing that he has been talking throughout his poetry. Surely, we deserved to be reprimanded on our adolescent wistfulness to have desired to traverse through heavenly spaces. But, imagine the idea of taking us on the celestial expedition only to be illuminated with the profundities that could have been very well communicated to us even on a railway journey!

## IQBAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

G. P. POLINSKAYA

ONE of the greatest poets and thinkers of the Indian sub-continent, Mohammad Iqbal, ardently exposed the evils of social oppression and social injustice. The important part of social motives in his works was time and again discussed in the writings of Soviet, Indian and Pakistani authors. Iqbal was among the progressive ranks of his time. The distinguished feature of his works was an active, dynamic man. In his public and philosophic writings as well as in his poems, Iqbal did not merely grieve over injustice but zealously called for a revolutionary transformation of life. He was one of those Indian patriots who thought over the ways of developing his Motherland after it threw away the colonial yoke. He tried to formulate and define his social ideals, no matter how utopian they may appear to some people.

First and foremost in elaborating his ideas of social change, Iqbal proceeded from the actual condition, that is, from the liberation of his country from colonial hegemony. During the first period of his creative life, Iqbal, like many other spokesmen of Muslim intelligentsia, saw the attainment of freedom as a distant perspective. For him freedom formed part and parcel of the moral and religious development of the human personality. Without this, according to Iqbal, it was neither possible to attain freedom nor to make use of it.

The end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries saw social upheavals caused by the advent of imperialism. The ideas of moral perfection as an integral part of the search for social ideals played an important part in the philosophy of many outstanding thinkers. Among them were Bertrand Russell in Britain, Leo Tolstoy in Russia, Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhi in India and others. It should be stressed, however, that Iqbal was among the Indian patriots who considered the rousing



of social consciousness to be necessary for the realisation of social justice.

The meaning of Iqbal's poem addressed to the students of the Aligarh Muslim University is characteristic of his poems written during the first decade of this century. In this poem, Iqbal held that a person who loved his motherland must dedicate all his life to the struggle for the liberation of his country.

"People are sending many messages:  
Mine is different  
When one loves the fatherland  
One's words have a different ring."

The formation of Iqbal's social ideals was greatly influenced by the Great October Socialist Revolution. It is during that period that he developed his views on social justice. He rejected every form of oppression. He was opposed to all kinds of exploitation of the peoples of the East by Europe, of peasants by landlords, of workers by capitalists. Iqbal's writings were saturated by a deep belief in the creative abilities of the common people. He believed that the future depended upon the working classes. The poet did his best to arouse political consciousness in his compatriots to foster their aspiration for freedom. However, earlier his appeal had been mostly to the intelligentsia, while after the October Revolution in Russia, he addressed both the intelligentsia and the toiling masses, exhorting them to unite. At that very time, he created a poetical image of the stonemason (*kuhkan*) who acted as his spokesman:

"Let us give new regulations to the magicians and their temples,  
Let us overturn the foundations of strong old taverns."

The poet compared a leader who dissociated himself from the people to a twig broken away from the tree. He wrote:

"Hold on the tree, the ever living trunk  
And believe your spring, your great people."

Iqbal wrote in his letter to Mohammad Ali Jinnah: "Personally, I believe, that a political organisation which gives no promise of improving the lot of the average Muslim cannot attract our masses."

Iqbal did not fail to see the mass upheaval of the national liberation movement in the colonial East which was inspired by the ideas of the Russian Revolution. The collection of his poems, *Payam-e-Mashriq*, published in 1923, was dedicated to Amanullah Khan, ruler of Afghanistan, one of the first independent nations of that time. Iqbal considered the victorious struggle of Afghanistan for political independence to be a prelude to the emancipation of other oppressed nations. Iqbal expressed his opinion in the preface to his book. He wrote that the East, the Colonial

east, had awakened.

Addressing the Western countries, he wrote in his poem, 'Payam-e-Mashriq', that the time when imperialism would be done away with and slaves set free was not a long way off.

At the same time, Iqbal was aware of the obstructions to the way to freedom.

He was concerned over the lack of unity among the Indian people who waged the struggle against foreign rule. He never visualised that unity as the harmony of the interests of landlords and peasants, capitalists and workers. On the contrary, he always derided attempts to proclaim such harmony. Any attempts to divert the poor from the struggle for the right by promise of happiness in the other world were sarcastically criticised by Iqbal. Iqbal inquired indignantly what right a capitalist had to swallow up the result of a worker's labour and a landlord to suck the blood of the peasant. One will fail to find in Iqbal's writings the call to submit to social injustice. On the contrary, he time and again exhorted people to launch a united struggle against both foreign rule and the exploiting classes within Indian society. According to him, linguistic and religious animosity obstructed the just fight of the people against oppression of any kind. Iqbal stressed the fact that such animosity was spread and used by vested interests to serve their own ends. In his poem, 'Capital and Labour', he wrote about it.

Thus Iqbal understood the urgent need to overcome racial, national and religious limitations. This awareness was never abandoned by him. He stood by it even at the time when he became one of the prominent ideological leaders of 'Muslim nationalism' and a movement for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. He was an opponent of imperialist exploitation and social injustice. Till the very end of his life, Iqbal ranked among the progressive thinkers of his time.

Iqbal maintained that only revolutionary change could bring down the old world. He created a magnificent poetical image of Revolution and treated it from the philosophical and political standpoints. Iqbal was one of the first among Indian patriots to realise the significance of the great October Socialist Revolution in Russia for the liberation movement. He realised the ideas of Socialism. He welcomed the Revolution. He considered it to be the social upheaval that led to the collapse of the old world and the transfer of power from kings and oppressors to the common people.

"Now is the time for establishing a new order,  
Let us wipe the heart's slate clean and begin everything anew  
The imperial crown is tarnished, it has been cast away,  
Kuhkan came with a chipping hammer in his hands and demanded  
For himself the estate of Parvaiz."

He welcomed the new era, the era of working people, when crowns were siezed from the rulers and a *Kuhkan* took over state power. Iqbal considered workers to be a new political force that was capable of doing away with social evils.

The poet welcomed the necessity of the collapse of the 'old decayed world.' He glorified the rise of social consciousness and people's union for the sake of the implementation of social and moral ideals. He wrote in his poem, 'Inquilab':

"The hearts are throbbing with a yearning for revolution.  
Perhaps the days of the old world are numbered."

However, his understanding of the ways which would lead to social changes was vague. It was bound to his ideas of the reconstruction of Islam. He approved of the October Revolution but at the same time saw the difference in the various types of revolutions. In Iqbal's view, the Russian revolutionary methods were not appropriate for colonial India, as he felt that social reformation should be a result of moral perfection. Iqbal's treatment of revolution cannot be properly understood unless his views on the immediate conditions of the Revolution are taken into account. He believed that those transformations should be based on traditional, moral values, religious values coming first. The core of his philosophy was the thesis of moral development of the human personality. This affected his understanding of the Revolution. Iqbal rejected certain methods of the Revolution because he was concerned over its atheistic nature. He was bothered neither by the character of the working people's power nor by the profoundness of socio-economic transformations. For him a spiritual impetus of the Revolution was of primary importance. He deemed that to be in accordance with the true essence of Islam. According to Iqbal, reformation in the West preceded revolutions. Similarly, in the East, the reconstruction of Islam should precede revolutionary changes.

All this constituted the basis of Iqbal's teaching of the reconstruction of Islam. His theory developed the ideas of Waliullah and other Muslim Ulema who were opposed to fanaticism. Iqbal separated them. The Ulemas' stand was to interpret religion in keeping with the spirit of every age. Iqbal's doctrine of the actual Man-doer was an integral part of his philosophy. Iqbal treated the human personality as that of being capable of changing the social environment, whose existence was estimated in terms of its usefulness to society. This doctrine of his developed further certain ideas of Syed Ahmad Khan and some other enlighteners of the last decade of the nineteenth century. Iqbal stressed the idea of the reconstruction of Islam being utilised for the implementation of social change for the translation of his ideals of social justice into reality. Many poetic compositions presented this idea of his, the philosophical poem *Javed*

*Nama* being a notable example.

In his search for religious and moral ways to achieve revolutionary changes, he did not always oppose evolutionary methods as against revolutionary ones. According to the logic of his argument, evolutionary changes growing out of the principles of reformed Islam in the long run would result in revolutionary shifts. The very path, in his opinion, should bring an ideal social environment which is opposed to capitalism as well as irreligious socialism.

Iqbal's concept of social justice is represented fully in his teaching of the Ideal State. His social Utopia was just an attempt to co-join instinctive social endeavour to the reformed dogmas of Islam. That teaching anticipated in many respects contemporary theories of Muslim socialism mooted by certain representatives of the Muslim middle class in developing countries.

Khalifa Abdul Haki, an outstanding Muslim ideologist, and some other disciples of Iqbal characterise his social Utopia as "Muslim Socialism" based on the concept that "Islam and Socialism supplement each other".

The question how much Iqbal's social philosophy approached socialism has claimed the attention of many scholars of different trends. Wilfred C. Smith, one of the most prominent scholars on the role of Islam in Indian social thought, wrote that "if Iqbal were made the dictator of a Muslim state, he would first make it a socialist state". Nevertheless, Smith as well as Hafiz Malik and some other scholars have noted the difference of Iqbal's social philosophy from socialism.

These once again show that Iqbal's social Utopia bore signs of duality. These views of Iqbal revealed his attempts to embody his social Utopia in keeping with his religious outlook. Iqbal agreed to social changes as long as they, from his point of view, were in conformity with the reconstruction of the main dogmas of Islam. Iqbal wrote in one of his letters to Ghulam Saiddain: "As for socialism, Islam itself is a kind of socialism from which the Muslim society has so far not derived any benefit."

Sometimes Iqbal did not consider the Ideal State to be the result of a revolution. In a letter to Jinnah, he wrote: "For Islam the acceptance of social democracy in some suitable form is not a revolution but a return to the original purity of Islam."

In some cases, Iqbal viewed the call to the revolution when he propagated the creation of the Ideal State based on the Quranic dogmas of justice. "The *Quran* is not only a book, it is a message of evolution... its teachings provide guidance to man in every age in accordance with his needs, requirements and altered conditions of life."

Iqbal's teaching of the State was an expression of many humanistic, progressive principles. Although he did not understand genuine scientific

socialism, his socio-economic views were anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and of an anti-monopoly nature. Speaking of the real essence of the *Quran* being embodied in the Ideal State, Iqbal stressed: "The *Quran* is a message of death for the capitalist and of succour for the destitute. It forbids accumulation of capital, usury and speculation. It abolishes Feudalism in all its forms, because, according to its principles, land is God's estate, Man's status is merely that of a trustee or lessee who can only seek livelihood from land."

The political system of Iqbal's Islamic State also embraces the ideals of socialism. He opposed Western democracy which, according to him, was absolutely unacceptable to the people of Hindustan. All works by Iqbal contain a severe criticism of Western democracy. He qualified this democracy as "a demon of autocracy" under the guise of "the Queen of Freedom."

In opposition to Western democracy, the Ideal State was an "anti-monarch, anti-monopoly state."

Though speaking of a Muslim Ideal State, Iqbal came out against theocracy as such, as well as against the domination of mullahs and Ulema in running the state.

His comprehension of democracy included the acknowledgement of the supreme power of God and the rule of elected deputies of people as God's representatives on earth. In accordance with his concept of the elective character of a state power and the people's involvement in governing the State, Iqbal saw Muslim institutions as *shura* and *ijma*. He deemed them to be the best implementation of the Republican form of rule.

The basis of Iqbal's teaching on the Ideal State and his conception of social justice was his treatment of the principle of *tauchida*, equality before God, and law treated them as proper instruction of material and social wealth and solidarity of Muslims in the struggle for their rights and all round emancipation. He paid special attention to the safeguarding of Muslim women's rights.

## NATURE IN IQBAL'S POETRY

ZAHIDA ZAIDI

IT IS perhaps difficult to reconstruct a systematic and well defined philosophy of Nature from Iqbal's poetry, as has been attempted—more or less successfully—in the case of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Emerson, Whitman and other romantic poets. But it is quite possible to trace influences of different philosophical systems ranging from Naturalism, Pantheism, Mysticism, Transcendentalism, to Unityism and Theism in Iqbal's treatment of Nature.

There is an element of Naturalism in a number of Iqbal's early poems like "Ek Aarzo", "Abr-e-Kohsar", "Aftab", etc. and can be seen clearly in such lines as:

"A delicious harmony in the song of birds  
Lovely symphony in the noise of spring  
Rows of green plants on either side  
Reflected in the mirror of the stream  
The green grass sleeping in the lap of the earth  
The stream winding and sparkling through the bushes  
So beautiful is the mountain scenery  
The waves of the river, too, rise up to see."

(*Ek Aarzo*)

Or in these lines from a famous lyric:

"The poppy candles have illuminated the mountains and the valleys,  
The voice of the nightingale urges me to sing.  
The flowers are the fairies, arranged in rows,  
Dressed in crimson, violet, blue and yellow robes.

A dew pearl is left on the flower petal by the morning breeze  
The early sun rays, its brilliance increase."

In these lines the poet's delighted imagination seems to be celebrating nature for its own sake.

On the other hand, it is also possible to underline pantheistic elements in Iqbal's early poetry. It can be in such couplets as:

"What is awake in Man is also there, though in deep slumber  
In the trees, flowers, stones, sparks, animals and birds."

Or, in these lines from an early poem, "Chand":

"What you are looking for in the silent assembly of stars,  
Is perhaps hidden in the noisy active world,  
Upright in the cypress, sleeping in the grass:  
Singing in the nightingale, silent in the bud  
Come! I'll show you his brilliant face  
In the mirror of the stream, in crystal ornament of dew."

There is also an element of mystic thought in Iqbal's poetry which can be seen in such couplets as:

"The world of Nature is Beauty's limitless spring  
A flood of Beauty is each drop, if only the eye could see."

Or, in these lines from "Zoq-o-Shoq":

"Life of passion and ecstasy—sunrise in the desert  
A flood of light has filled the sky and the earth  
The veil of being is torn, Eternal Beauty reveals itself  
The eye is dazzled but the soul is richly endowed."

There is also an element of Transcendentalism in such couplets as:

"The opening of the bud would be a message to me  
In a little goblet I would see the universe reflected;"

or, in these lines:

"No—No you cannot find it in the wonderland of learning  
The secret of Being and Non-being is revealed in a flower petal."

And the influence of unityism can be seen in such couplets as this:

“Love is the principle of each speck of dust in the garden of existence  
What is a flower, if not the loving union of colour and fragrance?”

And some people have even seen the expression of Romantic Primitivism in “Ek Arzoo” and in the last lines of “Himala”.

Such examples can be considerably multiplied, and thus the philosophical elements in Iqbal's treatment of Nature identified. But this is not likely to bring us any closer to the core of Iqbal's poetic achievement. Indeed it is more to the purpose to remember that even these extracts are much more than mere illustrations of certain philosophical trends in Iqbal's poetry.

In the same way, it is also possible to point out Iqbal's affinities with poets who were deeply involved in Nature, such as Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge, Whitman, Emerson, Tennyson and others. But it is not my purpose to trace influences and establish affinities and thus determine Iqbal's place in the galaxy of Nature poets. It is, rather, my purpose to show that Nature in Iqbal is neither an abstract system of thought, nor is it merely a back-drop or the sentimental preoccupation of a young poet with beautiful forms, colours and sounds, but quite integral to his entire poetic achievement. Iqbal's passionate involvement in Nature is, indeed, the chief source of his creative vitality and the foundation of his artistic perceptions and intuitions. It lends a rich texture to his poetry and flesh and blood to his philosophical ideas. It bears testimony to the experiential nature of his philosophy and intuitive character of his perceptions. It is also the formative principle in a large number of his poems.

It is customary to say that as a young poet Iqbal was deeply interested in Nature and his approach was either naturalistic or pantheistic, but later when he evolved his own philosophy and became an exponent of religious faith, his interest in Nature dwindled and his naturalistic and pantheistic preoccupations were wiped away by theistic considerations. To me it appears to be less than the truth. For although Iqbal seems to be more directly and somewhat exclusively preoccupied with Nature in his early poetry and more passionately involved in philosophical ideas in his later work, a closer look at his poetry reveals that both these aspects are organically related and interdependent. For the chief components of his philosophy, namely, Love, Self and Creative Dynamism, are foreshadowed in his early intuitions of Nature. Similarly, the later poetry, too, does not mark a clear drift from Nature, rather the intuitions and perceptions of early Nature poetry are crystallized here in felt thought and complex symbolic structures. A close look at some of his poems is likely to clarify these points and reveal to us the artistic and philosophical possibilities of Iqbal's involvement in Nature.



## II

"HIMALA", one of the earliest of Iqbal's poems, can be a good starting point for this study. Since here Iqbal appears to be quite exclusively preoccupied with Nature. But "Himala" is not just a naturalistic, pantheistic or patriotic poem. It is a sensitive exploration of the self and meaning of existence and a subtle interplay of complex moods and thoughtful reflections. There is the mood of joyful ecstasy expressed in such lines as:

"The young buds are swinging with joy and ecstasy of being in the cradle of the morning breeze."

"The stream comes singing from the mountain peaks  
Putting to shame the rivers of Kausar and Tasneem."

There is also a delighted playful mood in which the external images are transformed into playful conceits such as:

"See the cloud moving in ecstasy  
Flying joyfully like an unchained elephant."

"The crimson hue of sunset is trembling on the mountain-peaks  
This rouge looks lovely on this beautiful face."

"The stream at your foot in a liquid mirror  
Wiped by the soft scarf of the breeze."

But these playful conceits are not just ornamental poetic devices. They reveal intensity of perception, acuteness of observation and vitality of imagination and succeed in exploring several dimensions of experience.

Then there is a quiet reflective mood in which, as in Wordsworth's poetry, silence and solitude become a source of meaningful communication with the self:

"When lovely Night opens her long dark tresses  
The music of the spring fascinates the spirit;  
The trees are wrapped in thoughtful reflections  
And silence is more eloquent than words."

And then the Himalaya is not only beautiful, it is also sublime. Its grandeur and sublimity fill the poet with wonder, admiration and awe and give spur to the flights of his imagination. The Himalaya is a "book of verse" of which the first line is the sky—its peaks converse with stars. The sky bends down to kiss his forehead. "The ice turban" on his head is the symbol of his greatness, and so on.

There is also a social and political perspective and a patriotic sentiment. The Himalaya is not just a mountain, it is the protective wall of this

great country and her guardian spirit. But above all, the Himalaya is a symbol of permanence and timelessness. There is no trace of time on its face. It is perpetually young in the midst of rotating nights and days.

It seems to have conquered time by being a silent observer of flux and historical change. The primitive age is but a moment in its past. This aspect of the object of contemplation ("Himala") inspires the poet to explore the time dimension, to know his past—the roots of his identity:

"Oh tell me a story of those days  
When for the first time you became the abode of our ancestors."

Thus, seen in their proper perspective, the last lines of the poem are neither an expression of Romantic Primitivism nor the idle desire of the poet to reverse the tide of history, but an exploration of the time dimension which the contemplation of "Himala" has made possible.

Thus by the time we come to the end of the poem, the object of contemplation has not only been internalized but with its help the poet has explored several dimensions of experience and a wide range of sensibilities, and it has broadened the poet's (and our) intellectual and imaginative horizon. In its poetic technique and framework, "Himala" brings to mind Shelley's famous poem "To a Skylark". But in my opinion "Himala" is a greater poem since in it, the poet makes a completer and more imaginative surrender to the object of contemplation and consequently its insights are more authentic and universal.

### III

"HIMALA" has a surprising vitality of imagination and acuteness of perception. The intensity of involvement, acuteness of perception and vitality of imagination impregnate its images with immense possibilities of meaning. The artistic and symbolic possibilities of some of these images are not fully utilized within the framework of this poem but they have been revealed to the poet and he uses and develops them later with greater depth and artistic force. For instance, the image of the mountain-stream

"The stream comes singing, from the mountain-peaks  
Putting to shame the rivers of Kausar and Tasneem  
Holding a mirror to lovely Nature  
Now avoiding the stones, now striking against them,"

is repeated and further developed in *Falsafa-e-Gham* (The Philosophy of Suffering), where it becomes a potent symbol:

"The stream comes singing from the mountain heights  
 Teaching music to the flying birds,  
 Its mirror, crystal clear, like a houri's face—  
 Falls on the rocks and breaks into fragments.  
 No more a stream now, but a galaxy of water stars,  
 Showers of lovely pearls, fragments of broken mercury  
 A world of restless drops, separated and dispersed.  
 But this separation is a prelude to their union  
 Only a few steps further—and lo!  
 The liquid silver stream so gracefully flows."

Here the mountain-stream is a symbol of life and death and of the essential permanence of existence, in which the poet has been able to embody a complex vision. Indeed, we may say that the transformation of this intensely conceived image into a symbol is a means for him of mastering his passion and suffering. This symbol is used again with even greater imaginative force in the *Saqi Nama* where it embodies a profound vision of life and projects a vision of the immense possibilities of the creative force in existence:

"Lo! the mountain spring comes leaping  
 Stumbling, dancing, recoiling, creeping,  
 Gushing, slipping, recovering, finding  
 Its course through a hundred turnings,  
 If stopped, it can break the stony rocks  
 And rush through the heart of mountains  
 See! see oh lovely Saqi, poppylike  
 It sings, it spells the message of life."

Thus this symbol of the stream or the mountain-spring which is a means of exploring several dimensions of experience and projecting a complex vision of life becomes a recurring symbol in Iqbal's poetry culminating in the beautiful Persian poem "Jue Aab":

"See the stream flowing in ecstasy,  
 Unique in itself and indifferent to everything."

Thus, we see that in Iqbal's poetry, complex thought and vision owe their birth to an intense preoccupation with and a loving contemplation of Nature. And this is what gives them the force and flexibility of felt thought. This characteristic can be seen in a simple way in an early poem "Jugnu" (The Glow-worm). The poem opens in a simple way:

"Is it the brilliance of the glow-worm in the garden  
 Or a candle lighted in the assembly of flowers?"

And then the poet's wonder, curiosity and admiration give spur to his imagination and he weaves a network of images and metaphors around this basic perception. His imagination explores the natural world to find a parallel:

"Is it a flying star from heaven  
Or a moonbeam, come alive?  
Or a jewel fallen from Diana's robe  
Or a piece of Sun's brilliant attire  
The chiaroscuro of the little moon is perfect  
It shines, is eclipsed and is revealed again in its fullness."

And also the human world:

"Or is it the ambassador of Day in Night's dominion  
Was obscure at home, but shines in a distant land?"

And now from this intense preoccupation with the particular, the poet passes on to the exploration of the general phenomenon:

"Nature endowed each one with unique loveliness,  
The moth was taught to burn and the glow-worm made to shine,  
The speechless birds could sing sweet songs,  
The eloquent flower was asked to be silent,  
The excellence of sunset was in its decline.  
But that fairy was made brilliant and allowed to live for a while  
Morning was made lovely like a charming bride,  
Dressed in red robes and decked with dew pearls white."

It is difficult to decide what delights us most in this description—the charm and uniqueness of individual images, the vitality of the dramatic imagination or the joyful celebration of life—the affirmative principle—creating a sense of harmony in this colourful feast of diversity? It is this experience of harmony and joy that leads us quite naturally into the philosophical vision of the next stanza and into a spontaneous acceptance of the idea of unity in diversity:

"Eternal Beauty is reflected in everything  
It is speech in Man and fragrance in the flower,  
The style of speech is misleading, otherwise  
The song is fragrance of the nightingale, the fragrance the song of  
the bud.  
The secret of unity is hidden in diversity  
Fragrance, brilliance, colours are essentially one."

At this stage, it is not difficult to share this vision as it is based on our own emotional and aesthetic response. But even now Iqbal has a surprise for us:

"Why this much ado about little differences  
When the core of everything is Eternal Silence?"

The words 'Eternal Silence' leave us spell-bound, opening new vistas of experience and reflection. But the rich and concrete experience of the poem has prepared us for this profound and elusive experience of which the language is silence.

Thus we see that in Iqbal, as in Wordsworth, the spiritual dimension and the visionary element are a culmination of a rich sensuous and imaginative experience.

#### IV

ANOTHER quality that we notice in "Jugnu" and to a greater degree in "Himala" is a happy blend of the human spirit with Nature. Nature is humanized and endowed with human qualities and passions, but the human spirit too rises to mingle with the moods and appearances of Nature. This happy union of man and Nature can be seen more clearly in "On the Banks of the Ravi", where the awareness of separate identity is obliterated in the spontaneity of participation. The evening is calm and silent and the Ravi flows harmoniously creating soft music. The poet is standing on the banks of the Ravi but does not know where he is. This ecstasy and sense of harmony has a religious connotation. The world appears to him like a holy shrine and the movement of the waves in the river an invitation to bow his head in prayer. In this highly creative mood, the poet contemplates the landscape translating it into colourful dramatic imagery—the old sky is holding a wine cup in his trembling hands and the robes of the Evening are soaked in red wine. The swift-footed caravan of colour and light is moving towards Non-Being. And then, the individual features of the landscape merge into a perfect harmony, even the spirals of the royal palace adding to the grandeur of solitude. The boat moving on the surface of water—now hiding, now reappearing within the span of vision—is no longer a boat but a symbol of Life, which might be lost in the darkness of death but is imperishable in its essence. This poem brings to mind Keats's famous sonnet on Death, particularly its last lines:

"Then on the shore of the wide world I stand alone, and think  
Till Fame and Love to nothingness do sink."

The insights of this early poem, arrived at by a loving contemplation of Nature foreshadow Iqbal's preoccupations in his more mature poetry. This idea of the imperishable essence of existence is further developed in the *Saqi Nama* and "In Memory of my Late Mother". Here too Nature provides the texture and symbolic framework for these insights. In these poems the idea of the continuity of existence is enriched by a perception of its striving for perfection. In "In Memory of my Late Mother", the working of this creative force is projected through the image of a bubble on the surface of water which is constantly created and repeatedly destroyed by the air:

"The bubble on the surface of water is a heavenly sight  
The air breaks the restless waves to create this image  
And hides it again in the depths of waves  
How thoughtlessly it destroys its own creation!"

And this leads the poet to speculate that Nature destroys its creation in order to create a more perfect image:

"Nature is perhaps burning with desire,  
Searching for greater loveliness and perfection."

Thus we see that the perceptions and intuitions of the early poems arrived at by a spontaneous involvement in Nature are developed, enriched and embodied in more effective symbols in later poetry.

Coming back to "Kinare Ravi", we notice that it exhibits some significant aspects of Iqbal's involvement in Nature. It has a perfect blend of the subjective and objective dimensions of experience, a vivid physical scene is translated here into a symbolic landscape and the idea emerges as a culmination of vivid sensations, acute perceptions and intense involvement, and so it has the quality of felt thought.

This synthesis of subjective and objective dimensions of experience can be seen also in another early poem "Mauje Durya" (The Wave in the River), where Nature is humanized and presented in a dramatic mode. In the wave of the river, Iqbal seems to have found an objective correlative for the restlessness of the human soul. The wave is a symbol that embodies human passions and aspirations. The wave in the river is restless and this for 'her' is the essence of existence. She craves for the moon and breaks her head against the shore. She feels confined in the narrow limits of the river and longs for her destination—the limitless sea. This, in an oblique way, dramatizes the restlessness of the human spirit and its cravings for transcendence. And in these perceptions and intuitions, Iqbal's concept of the Self (*Khudi*) and its immense potential is foreshadowed. The last lines of the poem:

"I am tired of the narrow confining limits of the river,  
My restless spirit longs for union with the vast sea,"

bring to mind such references to the self as:

"The self is a sea with no limits  
You would be lost if you took it to be a river,"

or

"The self loves solitude, yet is impatient to reveal itself  
It is an ocean enclosed in a drop of water,"

or

"Plunge in the self, this is life's great secret  
Reject the shore, rush forward and become limitless."

Thus we see that through a passionate and thoughtful contemplation of Nature, the poet arrives at insights and intuitions that provide a basis for his central philosophical thought.

## V

THIS restlessness and striving for perfection become a recurring theme in Iqbal's poetry and he hears many sympathetic echoes in the world of Nature. The rivulets long for the river and the river for the sea. The waves in the sea burn for the moon and the moon longs for the star. And it seems Eternal Beauty, too, is burning to reveal itself *Koshish-e-Natamam* (Continuous Striving). The moon fascinates the poet since, like him, he, too, is a restless soul and a wanderer. The silence of the moon appears to be an echo of the silence in the depths of his soul (The Moon). But this identification is disturbed by the awareness of the essential difference between man and Nature. He tells the moon:

"Even so there is a world of difference between you and me  
You do not possess a heart and cannot suffer.  
You are all light, no doubt, and I all darkness  
But you are a thousand miles away from the light of consciousness."

In this way, the poet realizes that his passions and consciousness put him apart from the world of Nature which seems to be united in a bond of love and mutual interdependence. This, too, becomes a recurring theme in Iqbal's poetry and he plays many variations on this theme. Sometimes addressing the red rose, he complains that he does not possess a heart and cannot suffer like man. Sometimes his passions and consciousness give him a sense of superiority and he tells the sun that his indifference to the world is not a sign of greatness and he is not equal to even a speck of dust under man's feet since he has beauty but no awareness of his brilliance.

This theme is quite directly and exclusively presented in "Man and Nature". Here Man is fascinated with the incomparable beauty and rich variety of Nature and wishes to participate in this colourful feast but finds himself depressed and enveloped in darkness. But Nature explains to him the secret of his superiority over her, which consists in the fact that while Nature is illuminated from without, Man is illumined from within. In other words, Man possesses consciousness and is the potential conqueror of Nature. However, this poem, in spite of its colourful dramatic imagery, is a weak poem. Not only because Nature here is confused with landscape, but also because the idea does not emerge from a deeply realized experience but hangs loosely about the poem and seems to be superimposed on a contrived situation.

But Nature is not always so "helpful" and "frank" as in "Man and Nature". It often seems to be indifferent to the search and sufferings of Man. This is the theme of a short poem, "Man" and the famous Persian poem "Tanhai" (Loneliness). In the earlier poem Nature seems to be deeply involved in the joyful drama of union while Man stands alone. The waves dance joyfully in the river, the river moves passionately to the sea, the cloud is carried on the wings of air. Even the pious early riser, sun, relaxes in the evening, and drinks the crimson wine of sunset in the privacy of the western mountains. Everything is intoxicated with the wine of Being and is impatient to reveal itself but none understands the sufferings of Man. Man's days and nights are truly bitter and lonely.

"Insan" (Man) is a beautiful poem, but here, too, the idea of man's loneliness hangs loosely, somewhat marring the effect of its vivid dramatic presentation. In the same way, the contrived framework lends a certain degree of self-consciousness to the Persian poem, "Tanhai". The idea of man's loneliness is clearly grasped but does not become a deep pulsating experience.

## VI

IN striking contrast to these poems, in which the idea of Man's separation from Nature is emphasised and advanced either as a measure of his superiority or as a cause of his loneliness, "Lala-e-Sehra" (The Desert Poppy) is an authentic and profoundly moving poem. "Lala-e-Sehra" too, projects man's loneliness, but here it is not a consciously conceived idea but a profound existential experience, revealing obscure dimensions of human existence, and terrifying in its profundity:

"Oh this blue sky-dome—this utter loneliness!  
This desert is terrifying in its desolation.  
You are a lost traveller and so am I.  
Where is your destination—oh Desert Poppy?"



The Desert Poppy is a complex symbol, projecting Man's anguish, burning and existential experience of loneliness. It unfolds multiple layers of meaning, arrived at through a loving contemplation of the symbol. The lonely, passionate flower, like the poet, seems to have immense and glorious possibilities of self-expression for which the world appears to be too narrow and uncongenial:

"No prophet walks these valleys and mountains, otherwise  
You are a Senai flame and so am I."

There are, of course, differences between the poet and the lonely Desert Poppy since the flower is an expression of the unconscious vitality and the poet an embodiment of unique consciousness, and yet a meaningful communication is possible:

"Why did you sprout from the branch? Why did I break away from it?  
An urge to grow in you, a taste for uniqueness in me."

Man, no doubt, is a dynamic actor in the drama of existence, while the sun and the stars are merely spectators. Even so he falls short of the perfect balance and beauty of the Desert Poppy, and wishes to be like him—a living embodiment of silence, suffering ecstasy and beauty—a symbol of existence itself. The poem ends on a prayer.

The "Desert Poppy" which appears to be a series of reflections, is indeed a profoundly moving poem, exploring obscure and elusive dimensions of human experience and thus intensifying and enhancing our sense of life. It is artistically perfect and authentic, since in it the poet makes a complete surrender to the object of contemplation, which unfolds to him the meaning and possibilities of existence. In other words, the poet's insights are experiential and intuitive.

## VII

COMING back to the artistic inadequacy of the poems mentioned earlier ("Man and Nature", "The Man" and "Loneliness"), it seems to me that to some extent it is due to the fact that the idea of Man's loneliness resulting from his separation from Nature is somewhat alien to Iqbal's central philosophical preoccupations. The overwhelming impression of Iqbal's poetry is a loving relationship between Man and Nature. Nature seems to hold the secret of Man's creative vitality, being itself an embodiment of growth, vitality and creative dynamism and also because it offers to man immense possibilities of self-realization. In a beautiful poem, "Rooh-e-Arazi Adam ka Istaqbal Karti Hai" (The spirit of the Earth lovingly welcomes Man) after his fall from Heaven, laying bare its

treasures of beauty and inviting Man to see his reflection in the mirror of time:

"Open your eyes and see the earth, the space and the sky.  
See the sun rising from the east.  
For you are these clouds and these showers:  
For you the blue dome of the sky and silent spaces  
For you the mountains, the deserts and the breezes.  
Earlier you observed the beauty of the angels.  
Now see your own loveliness in the mirror of days."

("The Spirit of the Earth Welcomes Adam")

Nature fascinates the poet since it unfolds before him a drama of growth, creative vitality and self-renewal—a striving for perfection. It is through the contemplation of Nature in its diverse and colourful manifestations that he comes to feel that, even in the darkness of death, the flame of life is burning:

"The seed is sleepless under the ground  
And restless for growth.  
The flame of life hidden in this grain  
Burning to reveal and increase itself,  
Comes out of its grave as a flower  
Receiving the garments of existence from Death."

("In Memory of my Late Mother")

And thus Nature becomes a symbol of man's ability to conquer death by means of his creative vitality and spiritual force. Nature, in short, becomes an objective correlative for the poet's passionate subjectivity. It also unfolds before him a feast of joy and harmony and a drama of romance and union. Thus it provides a sensuous and experiential basis for his concept of Love which came to have a spiritual connotation in Iqbal's later poetry. Iqbal's account of Nature abounds in the imagery of love, marriage, romance and sexual union. The image of the bride is a recurring image in Iqbal's Nature poetry. Here are a few examples of this romantic and sexual imagery:

"Just before parting, the Sun picked up  
The poppy flowers from the horizon bowl  
And threw them playfully to the dark-robed Evening.  
Nature took off all her silver ornaments, and  
Sunset decked her with jewellery of gold.  
The Dark Beauty arrived in the chariot of silence  
Her bridal pearls sparkling on her lovely dress,"

and:

"When the sun paints the Evening bride with vermillion  
The flowers are dressed in crimson robes with golden tinge,"

and:

"Morning was made lovely like a charming bride  
Dressed in red robes and decked with dew pearls white,"

"When Morning shows his beautiful face  
The Bud lays open her golden breasts,"

and:

"And then the sleeping gardens, hills, and streams  
Awake and embrace their lovely bride—Life."

This romantic and erotic presentation of Nature not only emphasizes its loveliness and creative vitality, but also, obliquely, projects the experience of human love in its more sensuous, physical and romantic aspects. The experience which is later sublimated in the concept of spiritual love is seen here in its delicately emotional and aesthetic form. Such examples can be easily multiplied and in the light of this kind of poetry, the objection that Iqbal's poetry is devoid of human love appears to be weak and futile. The experience of human love is here, in its uniqueness and impassioned variety.

It may be noted in passing that such pictures also abound in dramatic imagination. Iqbal's poetry has often been praised for its dramatic quality, and I think some of the best examples of this dramatic impulse can be found in his treatment of Nature. This no doubt bears testimony to his skill in the use of personification and pathetic fallacy. But it is more important to remember that Iqbal is able to transform the natural world into human drama, because here he is concerned with the more sensuous, emotional and imaginative aspects of existence and is least burdened with abstract thought.

## VIII

IN short, Iqbal's involvement in Nature is a profound, complex and highly imaginative experience, which through a series of intuitive perceptions enables him to establish a meaningful relationship with himself and with the universe. This relationship consists of a two-way process—on the one hand in a loving surrender to the objects of contemplation, and on the other hand in a mingling of his own passionate subjectivity with the external world. By this process, the images of Nature are suffused with feelings and charged with values, and are transformed into symbols which become a means of reaching out to new areas of meaning and projecting

delicate nuances of experience. These symbols, like true poetic symbols, do not represent fixed ideas but have several layers of meaning and possibilities of interpretation. Their precise meaning is revealed in their context, under the glow of the surrounding areas of images and rhythmic patterns. Thus the images of Nature like the sea, the desert, the rivers, the waterfalls, the waves, the sky, the clouds, the mountains and the mountain-streams, the flowers, branches, trees, gardens, birds, the dew, the breeze, the sun, the moon, the stars, morning, evening, night, sunset and spring are charged with values and impregnated with meaning and come to have a symbolic significance. Through these symbolic images, Iqbal is able to project complex ideas and elusive vision in concrete and sensuous terms. Thus Nature becomes a formative principle in a number of his poems, including some of his ideological, visionary and philosophical poems, like *Saqi Nama*, *Tulo-e-Islam*, *Shama-o-Shair*, *Zoq-o-Shoq* and to some extent *Masjid-e-Qurtaba* and *Khizr-e-Rah*. In these poems Nature provides either a symbolic landscape projecting or announcing the theme of the poem or an intricate structure of symbols and images embodying the total experience of the poem and its central vision, in vivid and concrete nature imagery.

*Tulo-e-Islam* opens with a symbolic description of the morning which announces its theme of renewal and awakening in the world of Islam:

"Slow twinkling of the stars is a prelude to the morning bright  
The age of sleep is over, the sun is now in sight  
The gardens, the nests and the branches burn with passions great  
The destiny of mercury is to move and not to wait,"

and ends with an impassioned celebration of spring, which sums up its vision:

"Come Saqi! the nightingales in the branches sing  
And from the heights comes melodiously the mountain spring  
The clouds have fixed their tents in vales and plains  
The spring has come and beloved, too, and peace now reigns."

In *Shama-o-Shair*, too, the entire vision of the poem is summed up in a passionate and rich description of the morning and spring which have a symbolic significance:

"The sky shall dress, mirror like, in the brilliance of the day  
With mercury feet the darkness shall walk away  
So melodious will be the breeze of the spring,  
The sleeping fragrance shall wake and the buds begin to sing."

The passionate vision is felt to be essentially beyond the reach of words and the poet admits that speech cannot express what the eye sees.

Similarly, *Zoq-o-Shoq* begins with a symbolic description of the morning which embodies its mystic vision of love and its immense powers and possibilities:

"Life of passion and ecstasy—sunrise in the desert  
A flood of light has filled the sky and the earth  
The veil of Being is torn, Eternal Beauty reveals itself  
The eye is dazzled but the soul is richly endowed."

On the other hand, in *Masjid-e-Qurtaba* a profound exploration of Love, Time, creative dynamism, passion and faith and art, which is a symbol of the conquest of time, is summed up in a visionary rendering of nature:

"The cloud is immersed in sunset hue in the vale and hills  
The sun has left behind heaps of *badakhshan* rubies  
The song of the peasant girl is simple and deep  
The boat of feeling is carried by the flood of youth  
Oh flowing Kabir on thy bank the poet dreams  
Of ages gone by and the days unborn."

Here, too, the poet is conscious of the fact that his vision is beyond the reach of words and, if revealed in its nakedness, would be unbearable for the West.

*Saqi Nama* begins with a delicate and imaginative description of spring which provides a symbolic background and creates an emotional atmosphere for the unfolding of vision:

"The caravan of spring has pitched its tents.

.....

Lily, narcissus and roses have come.  
And poppy—the eternal martyr—shrouded in red.  
The world is hidden in the veil of colours  
Blood rushes through the veins of stones  
Blue is the sky and intoxicating the air  
The birds cannot stay in their nests."

Nature not only lends a symbolic landscape to *Saqi Nama* but is the active formative principle in the poem. The vision of life, death and the renewal of existence as well as the vision of the creative dynamism of self and its immense possibilities is embodied in a network of images and symbols borrowed from Nature. The dynamic symbolic structure of the poem is supported by the images of mountains, deserts, the garden, the spring

and the mountain-stream. Of these, the mountain-stream is the central symbol—a symbol of life's thrilling and challenging course, its creative vitality and dynamic possibilities. The poem abounds in the images of light and darkness, heights and depths, movement and growth, colour and fragrance, heaviness and lightness, flight and flow. These images lend flesh and blood to its elusive and profound vision, and make the poem a lived experience rather than a conceptual statement. Its vision and conceptual core, buried deep, shine through its images and are contained entirely in the symbolic framework. In this poem, too, the poet is conscious of the fact that he has entered the realm where words fail and flesh cannot endure:

"The torch of life blazes in my breast  
But the limits of speech say "Stop",  
If I were to soar higher by a hair's breadth  
The excess of light would burn my wings."

Talking of poetic drama, T.S. Eliot says:

"It is ultimately the function of art . . . to bring us to a condition of serenity, stillness and reconciliation, and then leave us, as Virgil left Dante, to proceed towards a region where that guide can avail us no further." (*Poetry & Drama*)

In his major poems, Iqbal brings us very close to that realm of experience where words fail but passion and vision can still guide us. And it is through the magic of his poetry that we are able to share these elusive and profound experiences and vision. And in this magical drama Nature has played no mean role.

To sum up, an examination of Nature in Iqbal's poetry brings us very close to the central core of his poetic achievement since it reveals to us the most vital, permanent and endearing qualities of his poetry. The rich texture of Iqbal's poetry, its dramatic quality, lyrical impulse as well as its philosophical perceptions owe a great deal to Iqbal's involvement in Nature. Or we may say that his lyrical impulse, dramatic imagination, philosophical depth and his deep involvement in Nature are all different dimensions of his rich and profound creative talent.

*Note:* All translations from Iqbal in this paper are by the author.

## RESEARCH INTO IQBAL'S LIFE AND WORKS IN THE SOVIET UNION

A. S. SUKHOCHEV

SOVIET Indologists have amassed considerable experience during the last few decades in the study of the classical and modern literature of the Indian subcontinent's people. They also achieved notable success in their research into Muhammad Iqbal's poetical and philosophical legacy, in the translations of his poetry into the languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union. In this quest, they began with an initial probe into Iqbal's poetry, and then gradually expanded the range of the investigated problems. Deepening their knowledge of the poet's creative work, they studied him in the context of his numerous ties with the traditions of Hindi and Farsi literatures and his place in the world literary process. Whereas, at first, Iqbal's poetry was best known in the Central Asian republics, where there was no obvious language barrier obstructing understanding, the great poet's works today can be found in many languages of the Soviet Union.

The considerable popularity of other Asian poets in the Soviet Union and, in particular, such Persian language poets of India as Mirza Bedil, Amir Khusro Dehlevi, Mirza Ghalib, and others prepared the ground for an understanding and spreading of Iqbal's poetry in the Soviet Union and, above all, in the territory of the Central Asian republics.

The entire history of Soviet research into Iqbal's creative work can be divided conventionally into two periods in accordance with the nature of the tasks each period was faced with. The two stages are not separated from each other; in some instances, they coincide in time; one and the same work frequently contains elements which make it possible to relate it to both the first and second stages.

The main goal of the first stage was the initial acquaintance of a comparatively broad range of readers with samples of Iqbal's poetry and

the basic landmarks of his life. Iqbal is first mentioned in Russian Oriental Studies in A. Y. Krymsky's book, *The History of Persia, Its Literature and Dervish Theosophy* (1912). Krymsky expresses a high opinion of Iqbal's doctoral thesis, "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia". Iqbal is frequently mentioned in Academician A.P. Barannikov's works, which were brought out in the thirties. But a truly broad acquaintance with Iqbal's creative work commenced in the mid-fifties, when many newspapers, journals and literary collections began to carry Iqbal's most famous poems and the first articles on his life and work.

The earliest translations of Iqbal's poetry into Russian, to our knowledge, were printed in the "Literaturnaya Gazeta" in May 1956—two poems from Iqbal's book *Payam-e-Mashriq* (Message of the East), which were translated by Nikolai Glebov and Sergei Severtsev. These were followed by numerous translations in the journal "Inostrannaya Literatura" (Foreign Literature), the newspaper "Pravda Vostoka" (*Truth of the East*), in the *Vostochny Almanakh* (Eastern Almanac) and in the journal "Azia-i-Afrika Segodnya" (Asia and Africa Today).

In 1956 Moscow's "Khudozhestvennaya Literatura" (Belles Lettres) Publishers put out the book "The Poems by Indian Poets," which contained poetical translations of 43 of Iqbal's poems from his books *Asrar-e-Khudi*, *Payam-e-Mashriq*, *Bang-e-Dara*, *Javed Nama* and others done by Sergei Severtsev, G. Kots, N. Pavlovich, V. Sergeyev, Y. Alexandrov and N. Glazkov. Included among these poems were such well-known works of Iqbal as "Hindustan Hamara" (Our India), "Shama-o-Parwana" (The Candle and the Moth), "Aftab" (The Sun), "Naya Shawala" (The New Temple), "Shama-o-Shair" (The Lamp and the Poet), "Tipu Sultan ki Vas'iyat" (Tipu Sultan's Will) etc. Despite the imperfections of some of the translations (the poet translators did not know Urdu and Farsi and did their poetical translations from word-for-word translations made by N. Glebov, an eminent Urdu literature scholar); this large section nonetheless gave readers an idea of Iqbal as a humanist, a poet whose creative works reflected the most vital problems the Indian people were faced with during the up-swing of India's national liberation struggle. The profoundly scientific explanatory notes to the poems by N. Glebov and the introductory article by Professor Y. Chelyshev defined Iqbal's place in the system of South Asian literature, his innovations, and his ties with the preceding traditions of India's Farsi and Urdu literatures.

The first articles on Iqbal's creative work appeared in 1958. The palm in research into the poet's outlook and nature of his poetry goes to Mirshakar, a people's poet of Tajikistan, and Nikolai Anikeyev, an eminent philosopher.

In June 1958 the journal, "Sovetskoye Vostokovedeniye" (Soviet Oriental Studies) carried an article by N. Anikeyev, titled "Muhammad Iqbal's Socio-Political Views". Almost simultaneously the journal "Voprosy



Filosofii" (Questions of Philosophy) printed his article "The Problem of the Individual in Iqbal's Philosophy". The same year the journal "Vestnik Istории Mirovoi Kultury" (World Culture History Bulletin) carried an article by N. Anikeyev and S.M. Kedrina titled "Muhammad Iqbal—A Champion of Man". In their article the authors pointed out: "Iqbal's poetical and philosophical legacy is cherished by all progressive mankind for its lofty ideals of humanism, justice, peace among peoples of different nations, religions and colours, its faith in the boundless creative potential of man, the futurespace conqueror. . . its passionate condemnation of everything that debases human dignity. Iqbal's call for action, for life, for struggle challenged passivity, the spirit of non-resistance, inertia, and roused people from age-long spiritual and political lethargy."

Finally, 1959 saw the release of a small book by N. Anikeyev, *Outstanding Thinker and Poet Muhammad Iqbal*, a general essay on the poet's life and creative work. Characterizing the poet's outlook, the author noted that Iqbal's writings centred on man, the human individual, whose interests Iqbal considered to be of primary importance in determining all spiritual values in general.

The appearance of a large number of translations and articles by N. Anikeyev and other researchers towards the close of the 'fifties marked the completion of the period of initial acquaintance with the great poet's works, and at the same time ushered in the second stage, a profound study of the basic problems Iqbal's works dealt with. N. Anikeyev's above-mentioned article, "The Problem of the Individual in Iqbal's Philosophy", already marked a turn to research into the fundamental problem in Iqbal's writings.

A big collection of Iqbal's poems *Bang-e-Dara* (The Tinkle of the Caravan Bell) was brought out in 1964. It contained poems from Iqbal's books *Bang-e-Dara*, *Payam-e-Mashriq*, *Bal-e-Jibril* and *Zarb-e-Kalim*—all in all 117 poems, including poems that had never been translated before, such as "Himala", "Kinar-e Ravi" ("On the Ravi Bank"), "Tulaba-e-Aligarh Kalej ke Nam" (To the Aligarh College Students), "Rat aur Shair" ("Night and the Poet"), "Sarmaya aur Mehnat" ("Capital and Labour"), "Farishte Adam ko Jannat se Rukhsat Karte Hein" ("Angels See Adam Out of Paradise"), "The Tale About the Diamond and Coal", etc.

The compiler of this book, Valentin Anisov, who also did the word-for-word translations from Urdu and Farsi, managed to show in this comparatively small collection the diversity of Iqbal's poetical talent, its humane essence and philosophical depth. The introductory article by Professor L. Polonskaya and the explanatory notes by Natalya Prigarina, who had just commenced her study of Iqbal's poetry, introduce the reader to the involved reality in which the poet lived and worked, to the system of his poetical traditions, help the reader perceive more clearly Iqbal's services to his people and his contribution to world culture.

The mid-sixties saw the publication of N. Prigarina's first articles. She is today a prominent Soviet scholar of Iqbal's creative writing. Her best known works, in which she makes a profound analysis of the various aspects of Iqbal's poetry, are *An Introduction to the Poem Asrar-e-Khudi* (1964), *Humanism in Muhammad Iqbal's Philosophical Lyrics* (1965), 'Istilahat al-shaura' in *Iqbal's Poetry* (1968), and her thesis *Features of Muhammad Iqbal's Philosophical Lyrics* (1967). The year 1972 saw her article "Ghalib and Iqbal: An Attempt at a Comparative Study of Styles". The same year N. Prigarina had her monograph "Muhammad Iqbal's Poetry" published. The latter contained a detailed analysis of Iqbal's books *Bang-e-Dara*, *Asrar-e-Khudi* and *Payam-e-Mashriq*. In her monograph Prigarina examines Iqbal's creative writings from 1900 to 1924. A study is thus made of Iqbal's early works, and his evolution is consistently traced throughout almost a quarter century. Though this study does not cover Iqbal's most mature poetry, it nevertheless lays down a definite premise for an analysis of the latter in the future.

N. Prigarina approaches the study of Iqbal's basic poetical and philosophical ideas in the context of his poetry, dwelling on the ties and sequence in which his creative ideas emerged and found their poetical embodiment. This affords a more distinct idea of the evolution of the poet's mind and creative work, the logic of his talent's development.

Considerable attention is devoted to an analysis of Iqbal's poetry in Urdu in the book *Urdu Literature* (1967) by N. Glebov and A. Sukhochev, and to Iqbal's poetry in Persian in Gazanfar Aliev's book *India's Literature in Persian* (1968).

Soviet scholars are devoting a great deal of attention not only to Iqbal's poetry, but also to his socio-political activity, his philosophical works, his contribution to the development of modern culture. These questions are dealt with in articles in the *Big Soviet Encyclopaedia*, in the *Philosophical Encyclopaedia* and the *Concise Literary Encyclopaedia*, in Professor L. Polonskaya's book *Muslim Trends in India's and Pakistan's Social Thinking* (1963) which incorporates a special chapter, "Muhammad Iqbal, Acknowledged Leader of Muslim Intellectuals", and in M.T. Stepanyants' book *Pakistan's Philosophy and Sociology* (1967). Arguing with those researchers who look upon Iqbal only as a spokesman of the ideas of Muslim nationalism, L. Polonskaya writes: "as in the case of other representatives of the radical intellectuals of that time, Iqbal's passion for these ideas was a manifestation of his anti-imperialist leanings which were impelled by the offensive of the imperialist powers against the Muslim countries in Asia". Dwelling upon Iqbal's views regarding the structure of future society, Professor L. Polonskaya arrives at the conclusion that Iqbal "held that such a society should be based on social justice and equality, but according to him this called for moral perfection and religion, and not socio-economic transformations".

Along with translations into Russian and studies published in Russian in Moscow, Orientalists in the republics of the Soviet East are doing much work, translating, popularizing and studying Iqbal's legacy. Thus, a book of Iqbal's poetry was brought out in Tajikistan way back in 1958. It was compiled by Mirshakar, a prominent Tajik poet. The book was reprinted several times with additions. Thus, the 1966 edition contained 120 poems. The brilliant introductory article affords a good idea of the great Eastern poet's creative development. Another collection of Iqbal's poems, with an introductory article by Dr. Qamar Rais, came out in the Uzbek language in Tashkent. In that same city S. Yuldashev wrote a thesis and had several of his articles on Iqbal's philosophical views published.

In Tajikistan, Abdullodzhon Gaffarov is successfully devoting himself to a study of Iqbal's works in the Persian language. A number of his articles have come out on various aspects of Iqbal's creative work and his ties with India's Persian-language poets of the late nineteenth century.

Particular attention should be paid to the nature of Iqbal studies in Tajikistan. The Tajik men of letters and readers perceive Iqbal's poetry in Persian as an integral part of the centuries-old and very rich Persian-Tajik cultural traditions. There is no language barrier here which might impede a sensing of the genuine aroma of a strange people's poetry, even when there are good translations available. Tajik orientalists consider it their task to make a study of and explain to their readers the specificity of Iqbal's poetry, a specificity engendered by Indian life and customs, the life and traditions of a people that gave birth to this poet.

The occasion of the poet's birth centenary was an additional incentive to the profound study of Iqbal. Lately deceased Academician Bobodzhan G. Gafurov, an outstanding Soviet scientist and Orientalist, did a lot to organise further research into Iqbal's creative work. Several interesting studies, which were commenced under his direct guidance, should be completed in the near future. Included are new collections of articles on Iqbal which are being prepared in Moscow and Tashkent, new works in Tajikistan, a big collection of new translations of Iqbal's works in Russia, which is coming out in Moscow (compiled by N. Prigarina), and translations into other languages of the Soviet Union. Academician B. Gafurov initiated a number of scientific conferences which were devoted to Iqbal, many publications in newspapers and magazines, radio broadcasts and other anniversary undertakings which considerably popularized the poet's writings. It was Academician B. Gafurov who launched research into Iqbal's legacy from positions of Marxist literary studies and Marxist philosophy. And it was he who initiated the setting up of a committee for the celebration of the poet's birth centenary.

This last year before the anniversary has seen the completion of N. Prigarina's monograph, *The Poetics of Muhammad Iqbal's Creative Endeavour*. It contains an analysis of those works of Iqbal which are

most difficult for the researcher, such as *Rumuz-e-Bekhudi* ("Allegory of Renunciation"), *Khizr-e-Rah* ("Khizr, the Conductor"), *Tulu-e-Islam* ("The Rise of Islam"), and Iqbal's book of lyrics *Zubur-e-Ajam* ("Persian Psalms"). In her analysis, Prigarina concentrates on the poetics of these works, their figurative pattern, the composition and structure of the poems, on Iqbal's mastery and the role the preceding poetical tradition played in the shaping of Iqbal as a poet. The strong religious colouring of *Rumuz-e-Bekhudi*, the numerous references to the *Quran*, to classical Persian poetry make perception difficult not only for the ordinary reader, but even for the well-informed researcher (at any rate, in the case of the European reader), who has to make his way through the numerous labyrinths of sophisticated metaphoric constructions, symbolics and subtle poetical images. All the more credit thus goes to Prigarina who succeeded in surmounting all those difficulties and offered the reader her own interpretation of Iqbal's works, disclosing their connection with the epoch that inspired their creator.

In her analysis of the poems in *Khizr-e-Rah* and *Tulu-e-Islam*, Prigarina shows that Iqbal tried to find artistic means for the solution of the social and political problems about which he had spoken till then rather didactically and directly. The didactical approach is already completely overcome in *Tulu-e-Islami*. The poem's world is no longer presented as an abstract structure of philosophical terms, but as a springtime garden, a garden filled with the bloom and aroma of flowers, the twitter of birds and the greenery of trees. However, the awakening of the flower garden, the blooming of buds and the chirping of birds is an undisguised metaphor of the East, the East which is awakening from its lethargy and mustering its strength. The theme of the East, the peoples of the East, and their opposition to capitalism and imperialism here take on a colourful and graphic form.

The more distinctly to bring out the original nature of Iqbal's creative individuality, N. Prigarina devoted one of the most interesting parts of her work to a comparison of Mirza Ghalib's and Muhammad Iqbal's styles. "Comparing Ghalib and Iqbal," she writes, "one can say that the latter, having taken over some of Ghalib's ideas, raised and abstracted them from everything that was too concrete, elevating them to the rank of a philosophical conception. Iqbal developed the idea of the personality, individuality, which was just outlined in Ghalib's poetry."

Mention should also be made of another work on Iqbal which Soviet Orientalists are at present engaged in. It is a collection of articles which will this year be completed by the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The themes of the articles cover a vast and diverse area. Some of the articles are ready, the rest will be completed in the near future. It may be of interest to list some of them to show what a wide range of problems they deal with.

An analysis of Iqbal's philosophical and socio-political views is made in several articles, including N. Anikeyev's article "Iqbal's Theory of Cognition", L. Polonskaya's "Iqbal's Outlook", and Professor Y. Gankovsky's article, "Iqbal, the Politician". A number of articles are of a methodological nature; they dwell on questions which are of importance not only for the study of Iqbal's creative work, but for a study of even broader processes. These are "Iqbal and Classical Persian-Tajik Poetry" by Academician M.S. Asimov, and "Iqbal's Poetry and the World Literary Process" by Professor Y. Chelyshev. There are articles which dwell on as yet insufficiently explored aspects of Iqbal's creative work and the literary experiences of his contemporaries. Of considerable interest in this respect, to our mind, are A. Ionova's article "Iqbal and the Malayan World", Bekhruz's article "Iqbal and Afghanistan", A. Gafarov's "India's Persian Language Poets, Iqbal's Contemporaries", Sh. Pulatova's "Iqbal's *Bandagi-Nama* and His Views on Art", N. Glebov's "Iqbal and Akbar Allahabadi" (from the history of India's literary life of the early 20th century), A. Dekhtyar's "Iqbal and Dante" (the poetics of space and time in Iqbal's *Javed Nama*), A. Sukhochev's "An Appraisal of Iqbal by India's and Pakistan's Progressive Writers", F. Rozovsky's article "Muhammad Iqbal's Poem 'A Fellow-Believer's Complaint'", etc.

The completion of the above collection as well as the studies that are under way in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will considerably extend our knowledge of this great Indian poet's creative work and life, will help us view in a new light many phenomena of the modern literatures in a number of Eastern countries and, above all, Urdu and Farsi literatures.

Carefully studying works on Iqbal by their colleagues in India, Pakistan and other countries of the East, Soviet Indologists are popularizing them in the Soviet Union, commenting on them in articles and reviews in the Soviet press, drawing on the achievements scored in works which appeared in connection with the approaching centenary.

The great Russian writer Maxim Gorky once referred to literature as the artistic study of man. Loyal to Gorky's behests and sharing his views regarding literature's main content, we hold that it is necessary to concentrate even more on the study of the concept of Man in Iqbal's creative work. Man in his different manifestations is sure to be present in every literary work. Certain facets of the poet himself and the hero of his works are reflected, and the image of the reader is bound to be invisibly present, for thanks to this presence, every epoch places an interpretation of its own on one and the same artistic work. That is why a study of Iqbal's concept of man holds great promise.

The scope and scale of translation and research in the study of Iqbal's legacy show that in the Soviet Union Iqbal is looked upon as one of the most outstanding poets of world literature, that not a single work on

world literature can nowadays be complete without a substantial essay on this poet's writings. Realization of the global significance of Mohammad Iqbal's legacy makes us undertake with greater attention and vigour research into his works, the translation and publication of many of his poems which have not yet been translated into the languages of the Soviet Union.

## IQBAL : "SIRRUL-FIRAQ"

ZOE ANSARI

**I**QBAL's hypersensitive mind was patterned on the Odyssey of spiritual and metaphysical quest. His poetic career spanning four decades was basically influenced by the following:

1. Post-1857 Muslim Panjab and Kashmir
2. Indian cultural renaissance and the freedom movement
3. Post-Bismarck Germany and classical German Philosophy
4. The European culture with all its positive and negative aspects.

The influence of Islam and Sufi thought on Iqbal should be studied in the wider context of these determining factors. Iqbal inherited the Sufi tradition and adherence to Islamic orthodoxy from his neo-Muslim Kashmiri lineage. He had greater predilection for pragmatism than for the esoterics of Islam and set out to re-examine certain value systems current in Muslim society. His thought-process moulded the minds of succeeding generations and left its impact on socio-political events in the history of the Indian sub-continent.

During the span of the last fifty-three years, two generations have come into being since the publication of *Bang-e-Dara*. The first generation was partly responsible for the partition of India and the second, i.e., ours, is facing its aftermath. Today we are better placed to re-appraise Iqbal's thought-process with the same detachment with which Iqbal was able to revalue Islamic ethos and Muslim polity in the perspective of his time.

In 1907, Iqbal conversationally confessed to his dual personality: "I am two personalities in one, the outer is practical and the inner self is the dreamer, philosopher and mystic." (Atiya Begum).

This should make matters easier for his critics as it gives an insight

into the genius of Iqbal and the two aspects of his writings can be reconciled.

According to Prof. Salim Chishti, who learnt at his feet, Iqbal was a monist, *Wafudi*. Khalifa Abdul Haki concludes that Iqbal considered Ibn-ul-Arabi's pantheism as misleading, dangerous and detrimental to the original tenets of Islam. Maikash Akbarabadi infers that Iqbal's poetry culminated in pantheistic Sufism towards the last phase of his career. One cannot but accept the apparently conflicting interpretations supplied by clues from Iqbal's own works.

Yet Iqbal's works are not a bundle of contradictions. These are the phases of his intellectual genesis. The evidence is discernible in his own usage of the words *Gusastan* (alienation) and *Paiwastan* (alignment/involvement) in his life and letters. In a letter to Khwaja Hasan Nizami (1915), he states: "I think *Gusastan* is real Islam, while *Paiwastan* is monasticism or mysticism, i.e., non-Arab. The earlier theologians of Islam had come to the same conclusion.

"You have conferred upon me the title of *Sirr-ul-Wisal* (one who discerns the meaning of unison). I prefer to be called *Sirr-ul-Firaq* (one who discerns the meaning of separatism). Significantly enough, Iqbal makes *Iblis* the magnificent symbol of alienation, rebellion, separation and self-assertion. Hence he emphasises his preference for pro-alienation characters over the pro-alignment ones in literature. He divides Mujaddid-e-Sani and not Ibne-Arabi. He likes Rumi but not Iraqi, Ghazali but not Alkindi or Farabi. Hafiz, notwithstanding its sweet melodies, was repugnant to him. He is an admirer of Bedil, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Consequently, he carries forward the elements of Shah Waliullah and later Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.

Separation and alienation are Iqbal's forte which urge him to a deeper quest. He regrets Persian mysticism as reflected in the decadent Sufi institutions of Panjab and Kashmir. He is apprehensive of the Hindi revivalist approach in the National Liberation Movement and cultural renaissance in the country as manifested in the Vedantic regeneration of Swami Ram Tirath and Vivekananda. He was pained to see young Indian intelligentsia overawed by Western glamour and political supremacy. Therefore, he spurned the hypocrisy of Western democracy and nationalism. His abhorrence of Western values was motivated by its possible pernicious impact on the Indian mind. He was against European imperialism as well as what he called the Godlessness of revolutionary socialism. He refused blind *Tagleed*, rationalism and logic which made the *status quo* acceptable. This attitude of *Gusastan* or alienation dates back to 1907-08 and culminates in this after his historical presidential address at the Allahabad session of the All India Muslim League in December, 1930.

Islam began as a political missionary religion and evolved a code of life within its fast expanding and powerful dominions. The early Sufis gave



Islam its cultural dimension. They were indifferent to the rigid laws of orthodoxy and materialistic acquisitions. In fact, they had opted out of an establishment based on exploitation. Iqbal was born and brought up in a household steeped in Sufi lore. In college, he studied the English romantics, Western philosophy and Arabic literature. Persian literature he had already learnt at home. During his student days, Lahore and Amritsar had become the focal points of nationalists and political movements in the region. His early poems reveal these influences. However, the most profound and dominant influence during his college days was of his mentor Prof. Arnold, the British scholar. On the eve of his departure for England, Iqbal went to the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia for prayer. He set sail for England and reached Cambridge. His voyage to Germany began with the introduction and influence of his English Professors, who were scholars of dialectics of Hegel and afterwards he went to Germany for his Ph.D. He was deeply impressed by the youthful *elan vital* optimism and energetic optimism of the Teutonic race. He realised the marked contrast of his own passive Sufi tradition to zestful Anglo-Saxon attitudes. The magnitude of British hypocrisy in world politics especially towards colonies was not lost upon him. He assimilated Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche and Goethe. Iqbal, during his brief sojourn of less than a year in Germany, imbibed the spirit of Munich and Heidelberg so profoundly as to acquire proficiency in German within three months.

The cardinal points of his thesis seem to be:

1. Sufism had been deeply influenced by Neo-Platonism, Agnosticism, Christian and Buddhist monasticism and Manichean dualism, which is detrimental to the dynamic nature of Muslim polity.
2. The Muatazalite rationalism and its dialectical method were against the orthodox tenet of pure classical Islam.
3. Persian heresies and movements were, in fact, manifestations of Iranian nationalism, a form of protest against Arab domination, and were Aryan in character. During the early days of the Abbaside Caliphate, the nationalist movement and the new influence had an adverse effect on the religion and morality of Muslim intelligentsia. Iqbal presented his thesis in 1907 and received his doctorate from Munich. During his three and a half years abroad, the decline of Turkey in Europe revealed to him the political decadence of Islamic Muslim power.

When he first arrived in Europe, he was a follower of the Spanish Sufi Mohinuddin Ibnul Arabi (1146-1240 A.D.) and Unity of Being (*wahdat-ul-wajud*). After his return to India, his philosophical views underwent a radical change. In Europe he had already turned against the geographical concepts of nationalism which had assumed the form of European Imperialism. The fact that militant nationalism could serve as an effective weapon for subject races and regions in liberating them from foreign subjugation eluded the grasp of Iqbal.

*Asrar-e-Khudi*, the first-born of his new thinking, was published in 1915. Thus Shelley and Byron gave way to Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. Almaniac for him became a bridge which linked Eastern thought with Western pragmatism. While crossing this bridge, he discarded certain legacies of the past. Thus began his journey from *Paiwastan* to *Gusastan*. This was followed by *Shikwa*, *Shama aur Shair*, these are neither the elegies of a glorious past nor do they betray pathos; instead they carry a passionate urge for revival and regeneration.

With the publication of *Asrar-e-Khudi*, Iqbal transcended the confines of poesy and emerged as the messenger of an integrated thought system. Nevertheless, the doctrine of selfhood which he preached in *Masnawi* contained not the ingredients of *Shan-e-Jamali* (Grace and Beauty) to the extent of that of *Shan-e-Jalali* (Power and Glory). Grace and Beauty are extremely profound and mysterious manifestations of involvement. In his *Stray Reflections*, Iqbal says that in Christianity God is Love, in Islam it is Power and Majesty and Power is more divine than Truth. God is Power, therefore, you should be like your heavenly Father. In Hinduism, this has its parallel in the Shaivite cult—Shaktipriya. Selfhood is fortified by Love or the urge to achieve your goal even at the cost of your life. Material and mental dependence saps the vitality of selfhood (*Khudi*). Thus *Khudi* becomes the criterion of good and evil. *Khudi* helps in the development of individual character. Neo-Platonism which influenced Islamic philosophy and literature is the way of the sheep. He exhorts his people to shun the *Ajami* (Non-Arab *Tasawwuf* soaked in neo-Platonism) and revert to pristine, austere and original Islam of the desert of Arabia.

In *Rumooz-e-Bekhudi* (Secrets of Selflessness) Iqbal declares that during the present state of decay and degeneration, conservatism, blind adherence to medieval doctrines of theology is safer than venturing forth on the uncharted fields of reorientation or *Ijtihad* which is likely to create fissiparous tendencies and disturb the unity of faith among *Millat*. One should therefore view Iqbal's stress on the ideas of unity and achievement of power in the perspective of the years 1908-17. The Arya Samajist movement in the Panjab; political struggle of the Muslims of Kashmir; the break-up of the Turkish Empire, Tilak's introduction of the Ganapati Festival in Maharashtra as a wing of the struggle for freedom; the terrorist movement of Bengal; the Tagorean cultural renaissance of Bengal; the gradual displacement of Urdu by Hindi in North India; and the effects of World War I. One can understand Iqbal's reaction to these trends and movements from his Urdu and Persian verses of the period. This is the period when Iqbal preferred the Persian language as the more suitable medium of expression for his ideas. It can be explained by his intention to address the elite and the intelligentsia and reach the common masses through them at home and abroad. The subtlety of his intricate and involved metaphor is designed to appeal to the more enlightened

section of his audience. This is how a qualitative change in content ultimately determines the final form.

The Soviet communist scholar, Mme Gordon Polonskaya says religious motivation in philosophical ideas and socio-political ideas was not characteristic of the ideology of Muslim nationalism alone. To some extent, it was also a trait of other nationalist trends in the social thought of the rising bourgeois society of the colonial East. His was a way of reacting to colonial oppression, since in the eyes of the colonial peoples, religion was a symbol of past independence, a guarantee of the possibility and the necessity of preserving their own distinctive path of development. In India where the ideology of Muslim nationalism was the ideology of a religious and cultural minority, it inevitably harboured from the very beginning the seeds of political separatism. (*Ideology of Muslim Nationalism*, p. 114)

According to Iqbal, the concept of geographically limited nationalism does not clash with the concept of Islam. The problem arises only in countries with a Muslim minority. The world political events nearer home further strengthened Iqbal's conviction that the attitude of alienation *Gusastan* and self-assertion is the *sina qua non* of the rehabilitation of Islamic values in India, a country of Muslim minority. His long and powerful poems of the period (1922-24) *Khizr-e-Rah* and *Tulu-e-Islam* bear testimony to his contemplations at that time. It is at this juncture that he proclaims the need for *Ijtehad* and wishes to reform the orthodox concepts of theology in Islam to conform to the needs of the changing times, so that the Muslims are not led astray by the secular non-conformist movements and Western ideas of nationalism in their zest for modernisation, resulting in the disruption of the eternal verities of their faith. Iqbal's line of thought is amply corroborated by Dr Radhakrishnan in combating the onslaught of Marxist materialism and existentialism. In his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1926-28), Iqbal writes that in an era of the decline of free thinking, Liberalism can lead to greater anarchy. During revival and resurgence, Liberalism in thought is necessary. He opines that the awakening of the East and the Islamic world are interlinked with the freedom movement of India, that European capitalism and imperialism would eventually destroy Western civilisation. But the light of knowledge and art combined with Oriental vision would create new human relationships. India with her spirituality, communal harmony and the national movement shall emerge as the world leader. He also states that Sufism was not merely inertia and inaction. It was a reaction to the sophistry and theological hair-splitting disputes of dogma. Sufi thought and spiritual discipline are still soul-refreshing and invigorating when he comes to the conclusion that reassessment and compilation and re-editing of religious doctrine and dogma are of momentous importance. In 1928 Ashraf Thanvi preached the idea of an Islamic government based on the Shariat. In 1929, the Indian National Congress demanded

complete freedom without waiting for the final decision of the Muslim minority. In 1930, Gandhiji started his non-cooperation movement. During the same year, Iqbal presented his famous address at the Allahabad session of the Muslim League. Once on his way to London, he even stated that every Indian province should be given dominion status. In 1932, *en route* to England, he told Dr Qazi Abdul Hamid, his shipmate, "I do want that Islamic civilization should have a region of its own and that region can only be in the north-west of India. But I do not mean that that particular region should not be a part of India. I am a great believer in a federation. In fact, I want the Muslims to guard the freedom of India. I cannot understand that if the Muslims in North India would feel themselves free, why won't they protect that freedom themselves? The Hindus want to introduce joint electorates in Punjab. The Muslims fear that this step would turn their slight majority into a minority. The situation can only be solved by attaching the smaller provinces to Punjab and this would make the Muslims 60% in that province and they would get rid of their fear of becoming a minority." By 1932, Iqbal had completed the edifice of his *Gosastan* and found himself at the dead end of the *cul-de-sac*. On his way back to India from the Third Round Table Conference, he reviewed the international political situation in its changed context. He attended the World Muslim Conference in Palestine. His brief sojourn through Spain and the emergence of Turkey, Iran and Egypt as independent national states, the sweeping tide of nationalism in the Eastern countries and the awakening of non-Arab youth led him to revise his rigid attitude towards Sufism. His homage to Hallaj and Sinai in later years is an indicator. The inner eye of the poet could visualise India's independence in the immediate future. The poet hails the rising of the East and its humanistic values which in consonance with Western scientific achievements may add a new dimension to civilisation. Aajam the culprit in Iqbal's mind has played a vital role and historical purpose in the flowering of Islam. Primarily Aajam was a revolt against the rigidity of dogma, the oppressive attitude of the monarchy and against the insidious combination of both. All races in their phased development have to pass from a militantly offensive stage to an established order. At this stage of development, the attitude of alienation and aloofness is steadily replaced by that of assimilation and alignment. Rejection makes way for reception by the logic of evolutionary forces and a thirst for one's own enrichment. It is through this process that alien ideas and fissiparous tendencies penetrate into the mainstream and get assimilated, thereby sublimating the erstwhile hostile elements of the original organism. This is the gist of Aajam's historical and cultural role.

It is highly debatable to concede that Sufi poetry with its passivity and self-abnegation was the direct corollary to the demoralised and degenerated Muslim polity following the devastation of the Muslim insti-

tutions by Mongolian onslaughts. All the important Sufi orders had been established long before Chengis Khan mustered his armies. While Muslim power was at its zenith in the East and the West, Sufi culture attained its pinnacle concurrently. It was during the palmy days of Muslim dominance in the two hemispheres that the fine arts and finest interaction of cultures took place and different shades of *tasawwuf* originated and gained circulation; intellectual pursuits and intuitive visions flourished in the same era side by side. There is no greater proof of dynamism of *Paiwastan* in its receptive potential. As for the Indian context, Mongol and Tatar invasions did not disturb the basic fabric of society. India remained a bastion throughout the devastation brought about by the forces of the Mongols; it was at this juncture that the four major *silsilas* (Sufi orders) were spreading from West to East and North to South. The Islamic concept of equality and fraternity could not possibly have come into existence between the tyrannical ruler and the oppressed peoples but for the *Paiwastan* attitude of Sufism in India. It was this institution that was a causative factor in the emergence and early growth of national languages and literature in India. Such creative forces do not reside at the core of decadence. Iqbal perhaps resolved this contradiction by giving vent to his agony and ecstasy in his last works, *Javed Nama* and *Pasche Bayad*.

## THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN IQBAL'S POETRY

PRABHAKAR MACHWE

A man and a woman are one.  
A man and a woman and a blackbird are one.  
I do not know which to prefer,  
The beauty of inflections  
Or the beauty of innuendoes  
The blackbird whistling  
Or just after.

WALLACE STEVENS

Woman reveals the finite, man strives towards the infinite. Because woman reveals the finite, she is the deepest part of man's life; like the root, she plays a quiet hidden part in life. That is why I detest this loathsome talk about the emancipation of woman.

KIERKEGAARD

Humanity binds men together in fraternity;  
So keep your feet fixed on the path of amity.  
The man of love, who sees men with God's eye,  
Loves heathen and believer equally.  
Give both of them a warm place in your heart,  
Woe to the heart, if heart from heart should part.  
The heart, a captive in a frame of clay,  
Has this world under its immortal sway.  
Among the Muslims you will seek in vain,  
The faith, the ecstasy of days bygone.  
The scholars are without Quran's lore;  
The Sufis, long-haired beasts and nothing more.

The frenzy at the saint's tombs is a fraud,  
Show me a single man who is drunk with God.

*Javed Nama*

**I**QBAL offered a prayer in the Mosque of Cordova in Spain, while returning from the London Round Table Conference; and wrote a poem on the cruelties of time and immortality of love. It contains these lines:

"Love, the well-spring of life;  
Love, on which death has no claim  
Love that can know no end,  
Stranger too then—and—now."

*Masjid-e-Qirtavah: Bal-e-Jibril*

For a poet love defies time. And indeed as Shakespeare said, 'Love is no Time's fool.' But the problem for the philosopher Iqbal was different. Was not Love the 'duration', from which time and space ensued? It is the duration which is real, time and space are mere derivations. Love is the real experience of pure duration. In the life of love, pure continuity is observable, as it is not confined merely to the 'present' and the 'here'. This creative process of art and love gives rise to history and heroes and acts of martyrdom.

But love also involves innumerable obstacles. Was it not described by Ghalib and Jigar as 'an incurable pain' and 'an ocean of fire'? In *Javed Nama*, Iqbal puts the words in the mouth of Hallaj to the effect, "Do learn to hold a fire beneath your feet."

"The ascetic is a stranger in this world  
The lover is a stranger in this world."

In his poem "Zabur-e-Ajam," first published in June 1927, Iqbal said:

"Do not speak of Shankara and Mansur!  
Search for God always in the way of the Ego!  
Be lost in thyself in order to realize the Ego!  
Say "*Ana'l-Haqq*" and become the *Siddiq* of the Ego!"

The earlier poem "Temple of Love" was interpreted by E.M. Forster as Temple of India. Forster wrote in 1920: "The glory of the courtyard from Mecca shall inhabit that temple; the image on its shrine shall be gold, inscribed Hindustan, shall wear both the Brahman thread and the Muslim rosary, and the Muezzin shall call worshippers to pray upon a horn."

From this vision of the universal 'Religion of Man' (Tagore) to the last bitter days of Iqbal when he wrote in a letter to Jinnah on 28th May, 1937:

"Also, the insertion of Jawaharlal's socialism into the body-politic of Hinduism is likely to cause much bloodshed among the Hindus themselves. The issue between social democracy and Brahmanism is not dissimilar to the one between Brahmanism and Buddhism. Whether the fate of socialism will be the same as the fate of Buddhism in India, I cannot say."

A noted Hindu, who turned a neo-Buddhist, Dr B. R. Ambedkar, said in another context, "Hinduism and democracy cannot go together."

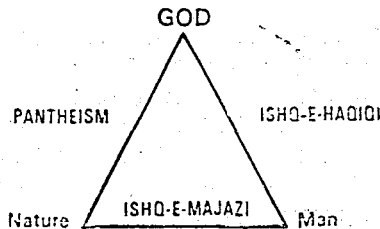
So the concept of universal love and humanism on the one hand and the bitter realization of one's fate as an artist of a neglected, alienated soul on the other tormented Iqbal.

In nineteenth-century Europe, particularly Germany, where Iqbal passed his impressionable, formative years, there were two schools of thought about love predominant amongst classicists and romantics. On the one hand, there was the new myth-making surrounding woman, which raised her to a Goddess, a Mother Supreme, a Demeter. The other was the Baudelairean image of a harlot and artist, both being like wandering Jews. Baudelaire's comparison of the harlot with an artist and God, bordering on blasphemy referred to his deep sympathy for the self-sacrifice for humanity which is constantly rejected—the Messiah is nailed to the Cross, the artist is derided and the harlot despised. Both the artist and the harlot are self-exiled. "The artist", said Fernow, "is only accepted on sufferance; like the Jews, he has no civic rights. The academies are his ghet-toes." This is exactly what ultimately made Nietzsche a misogynist, a woman-hater:

"Thy guest is a woman; don't forget thy whip."

Yet Schlegel defined friendship as "partial love and love as universal friendship". Iqbal read his Goethe and also his Emerson deeply. Novalis had said, "Man is more mineral, woman more vegetable."

Hellenism and the Hindu reconciled this triangle of Love by equating Man and Nature (Purusha—Prakriti) or denying the world of Nature as *Maya*. Iqbal did not accept this position.





As Iqbal discarded all differences between man and man, any class-differences between 'Mahmud and Ayaz', he also did not like neo-scientists like Sir Syed Ahmed whom people nicknamed as 'Naturi'. He was against the clean-shaven males and the females without 'purdah' or 'burqa'. He knew that capitalism was like a *madari*, a monkey-wallah or juggler. He also knew that "money-lending", "landlordism", "imperialism" are all three names of the same thing. Yet the deep spiritual urge in him could not turn him into an atheist of the type of Nietzsche, whom he called a 'Hallaj without a gibbet'.

In *Bal-e-Jibril*, Iqbal wrote many verses praising the love of God:

"Love is Gabriel's wing, Love is Muhammad's strong heart,  
Love is the envoy of God, Love the utterance of God.

Even our mortal clay, touched by Love's ecstasy glows;  
Love is new pressed wine, Love's the goblet of kings,

Love the priest of the shrine, Love the commander of hosts,  
Love the son of the road, counting a thousand homes.

Love is the plectrum that draws music from life's taut strings,  
Love is the warmth of life, Love is the radiance of life."

(*Poems from Iqbal*. Translation : V.G. Kiernan)

Added to the Love of Man as equivalent to Love of God was patriotism *Hubb-ul-vatan*, *hubb-ul-Imam*. In *Naya Shivala*, Iqbal had the utopian romantic idealist wishful thinking.

This universal brotherhood which he had also preached in "Tarana-e-Hind" that "Religion does not teach any mutual animosity amongst people", was also one aspect of love.

In a poem addressed to a child in the form of blessings, Iqbal said:

"Let me have love for the light of knowledge."

With Iqbal's growing maturity, alienation also haunted him. In his poem *Tasvir-e-Dard*, he became an introvert and asked the question: You have been getting infatuated at the graces of beautiful persons. But have you seen in the same mirror your own grace?

So in the same poem, he refers to the desert of love as an alien forest and compares it with one's own land, which is a jungle, a cage, a nest and a garden, all rolled into one.

So love, for him, is such a destination which is both a destination and a desert. He realized the healing as well as the highwayman-like nature of love.

In his poem "Poet", he refers to *Zabt-e-Paigham-e-Muhabbat* and when he is restless and struck with anxiety, he tells his pangs to the shining stars. Nature for him is always the silent and sympathetic listener. *Ek Arzu* is a poem of that kind of nostalgia for Nature.

The most significant poem of Iqbal about love is *Ilm-o-Ishq*. I am tempted to quote a rough translation, which cannot bring out all the nuances of the original, compact verse:

#### LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE

"Knowledge told me that Love is madness  
 Love told me that knowledge is calculation  
 O slave of calculation, do not be a bookworm  
 Love is directness head to foot  
 Knowledge is a veil head to foot.  
 This universe is moved by the warmth of love  
 Knowledge is only a special position, Love is the vision of God  
 Love is the happiness and peace, Love is life and death  
 Knowledge is the open question  
 Love is the hidden answer  
 Love creates the miracle of the kingdom of faith and virtue  
 The crowned kings and lords are the ordinary slaves of love  
 Love is the dweller and the dwelling  
 Love is the earth and time  
 Love is all trust from head to foot  
 And that trust too bound to win  
 In the Holy Book of Love the joy of destination is sin  
 The devastating storms are right, but reaching (testing) the shore is wrong  
 Lightning in love is all right, but any gain in love is improper  
 Knowledge is the son of the Book  
 Love is the mother of the Book."

Many other references to Love, of different kinds and degrees, are noted down by me in Iqbal's poems. A few couplets are as follows:

"Love does not die with the death of the beloved.  
 It remains in the form of pain in the soul, but never disappears".

\* \* \* \*

"Those who walked, went away,  
 Those who halted a bit were crushed  
 The end of this slow movement is beauty  
 The beginning is love, the excess is beauty".

\* \* \* \*

"Love is in a veil, Beauty also is under a veil  
 Either you become unveiled or unveil me".

"I want the excess of Love  
Look at my naivete, what do I want?"

At many places Iqbal, like a Vedantin, calls all that appears is Poe-like, 'a dream within a dream' (whatever you see is not what seems) or compares man with 'the boatman, the waves, the boat, the shore' and 'the great Lover Qais, the great beloved Laila, the desert and veiled seat on the camel'. For Iqbal, not unlike Nietzsche, 'Man is the way, the wayfarer, the leader and the destination'.

"You could find out your lover in a crowded gathering  
Your eyes were vigilant even under intoxication".

"Love has turned me into an unfathomable ocean.  
This self-awareness may not become my shore".

One could only understand this much that distance is the death of heart.

"Love is thy limit, love is my limit  
Because you are also incomplete, I am also incomplete".

These stray cullings from Iqbal's verses are a random sample of his attitude towards the phenomenon of love: the worldly love, the love for Nature, the love between the lover and the beloved, divine love and the love for one's own land.

I would like to quote here three passages from his private letters to Atiya Begum Faizee to give a glimpse of his attitude towards his family and this country. These excerpts will throw light on the formative period of his personality as a poet, patriot and philosopher.

In the letter dated 9th April 1909, Iqbal wrote:

"My dear Miss Faizee,

"Yes, I refused the Aligarh Chair of Philosophy and a few days ago I refused to accept the Lahore Government College Chair of History. I do *not* wish to enter any service. My object is to run away from this country as soon as possible. You know the reason. I owe a sort of moral debt to my brother which detains me. My life is extremely miserable. They force my wife upon me—I have written to my father that he had no right to arrange my marriage especially when I had refused to enter into any alliance of that sort. I am quite willing to support her, but I am not prepared to make my life miserable by keeping her with me. As a human being, I have a right to happiness—if society, or nature deny that to me, I defy both. The only cure is that I should leave this wretched country for ever, or take refuge in liquor which makes suicide easier. These dead barren leaves of books cannot yield happiness; I have sufficient fire in my soul to burn them up and all social conventions as well. A good God created

all this, you will say. May be. The facts of this life, however, tend to be a different conclusion. It is intellectually easier to believe in an eternal omnipotent Devil rather than a good God. Please excuse me for these utterances, I do not want sympathy. I wanted only to disburden my soul. You know all about me, and for this reason I have ventured to give expression to my feelings."

This is from the letter dated 17th July 1909:

"I live a straightforward honest life; my heart is in perfect union with my tongue. People respect and admire hypocrisy. If hypocrisy brings me fame, respect and admiration, I would rather die unknown and unlamented. Let the many-headed monster of public give their dross of respect to others who act and live in accordance with their false ideals of religion and morality. I cannot stoop to respect their conventions who suppress the innate freedom of man's mind. Byron, Goethe and Shelley were not respected by their contemporaries—and though I am far inferior to them in poetic power, I am proud that I am in their company in this respect.

"... The world cannot worship me. I would not be worshipped; since my nature is such that I cannot become an object of worship—so deeply is ingrained in me the instinct of a worshipper. But if the innermost thoughts of my soul are ever revealed to the public, if what lies concealed in my heart is ever expressed—then, I am sure, the world will worship me some day after my death. They will forget my sins, and give me the tribute of a tear."

And in another letter from Lahore dated 7th April 1910:

"Where did I speak of the Nizam's recognition as an honour? You know I do not care for all these things. I do not wish to become known as a poet, though unfortunately people know me in this capacity. Only the other day I received a letter from an Italian Baroness at Naples asking me to send her a few of my poems with an English translation. But I feel no enthusiasm about poetry. . . what do I care for a native ruler's recognition when I receive recognition from persons of culture in foreign lands?"

Iqbal had even in his later days a deep inner conflict when he admonished himself critically:

"Iqbal is a great preacher,  
he entices minds with his talks.  
He has become a conqueror in speech,  
But could not become a victor in action."

That a great poet always feels this unfulfilment can be seen by comparing Iqbal with other patriotic and epoch-making poets of the twen-

tieth century, in other Indian languages, like Kazi Nazrul Islam in Bengali, Suryakant Tripathi "Nirala" in Hindi or Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in Marathi. All these three 'revolutionary' poets were also composers of great and passionate love-poems: love for religion, love for motherland, love for suffering humanity not excluded. In all these three cases, as Jigar Muradabadi put it:

"This little word 'Love' is a small story in itself, when it contracts, it is the heart of the lover, when it expands, it is the whole age!"

Chitta Ranjan Das, the patriot and poet of Bengal, had described Love as a sharp sword, which is 'drinking blood from my being day and night'.

In the same line, Kazi Nazrul Islam wrote his exquisite lyrics of love and ghazals in Bengali. The same poet who wrote 'Sur-Saki' wrote 'Agni bina'. Love and rebellion were two sides of the same medal.

So with "Nirala". He started from disillusionment with conventional religion and its rigidities. He abuses in bitterest terms his Kanyakubja community in the elegy to his daughter Saroj. He makes great fun of false heroes in politics. He throws his sympathies to the down-trodden, the peasants and workers. One can see echoes from Iqbal who advises people to burn all those fields, from which the hardworking peasant does not get any grain. Both "Nirala" and Iqbal end with mystic atonement with God.

"Dinkar", another Hindi poet, started his career in *Renuka* and *Hunkar*, as a socialist and fire-eating rebel. He ended with *Parashuram Ki Prateeksha* and *Hare Ko Hari Nam*. He has frankly admitted his debt to Iqbal and Tagore. The strong world-changing mission of the poet's rebellious spirit, the Collective Ego invoked by these poets is a matter for a detailed study by some students of comparative literature. The nationalist poetry of the twenties and thirties is full of this comparison of the present state of the nation with the past, and an invocation to build the future by returning to the 'sources', 'roots' or basic values.

This was the only way left for the Indian poet in bondage to pit spiritual values against material prosperity and prospects put forward like a carrot before the starving millions by a foreign imperialist-capitalist power. The best example of such invocation to past glory is seen in the work of the Marathi poet V. D. Savarkar. Though he is described by political commentators as a Hindu nationalist of the militant kind, his poetry gives many glimpses into his earlier desire to reform Hinduism, to clean it of the sin of untouchability, to make it broader and more liberal. But everywhere in Savarkar, there is the invocation to the Mother-Goddess, before whose altar the poet wishes to offer the lotus of his head. Self-sacrifice, martyrdom and utter submission to the desire to be free is

what one finds in all these poets. The same strain could be seen in the Tamil poet Subramanya Bharati and the Malayalam poet Vallathol. Their poetry infused the spirit of patriotism in generations of young hearts.

Yet after deeper analysis, one finds that all these poets suffered in their heart of hearts a deep wound, a secret smart, at not having been able to do what they would have liked to do. Unrequited personal love, ever unfulfilled emotion to become actually a martyr in the cause of that section of suffering humanity which they represented. They all had a prophetic vein. Iqbal said:

“What the eye perceives cannot be faithfully interpreted by lips  
I wonder what mighty changes will take place in the world?”

Tagore said in *Sadhana*: “Essentially man is not a slave either of himself or of the world, but he is a lover. His freedom of fulfilment is in love, which is another name for perfect comprehension.”

A seventeenth-century mystic from Silesia, Angelus Silesius, wrote about the ‘dot’ and ‘circle’ with which I wish to conclude this paper:

“I know not what I am, and what I know am not:  
A thing and not a thing, a circle and a dot  
I am as large as God, and He as small as I  
I cannot lower be; He cannot be more high.”

## THE IDEAL MAN OF THE ORIENT IN IQBAL'S POETRY

M.A. ESLAMI NADUSHAN

WHAT sort of world did Iqbal desire and who could be "The Ideal Man" according to him? These are the questions that arise in the reader's mind when he goes through the poems of Iqbal. Iqbal's Ideal Man is a secular character. He is traditional as well as modern, he is mystic and at the same time pragmatic, believing in action. In addition, he must be a powerful and dynamic man. Iqbal was constantly in pursuit of an Eastern world which had no trace of the Western world or culture. The Ideal Man of this world is very much a modern Man, but Iqbal expected him to be aware of *Asrar-e-Khudi* — the secret of his own self or ego, the man who could be fully aware and confident of his powerful inner self. Iqbal expected him to comprehend life in its right perspective through his self-realisation, *Khud agahi*.

Somehow it appears that in spite of having such a desire, Iqbal himself did not have much hope for the evolution of such a society. That is why searching for such an Ideal Man, he sometimes sounds optimistic and sometimes pessimistic too, depending on his moods and circumstances. On the one hand, he feels that the East is awakening gradually but on the other hand the indifference, ignorance and idleness on the part of men around him disappoint him greatly. Some sharp contrasts such as hope and frustration, extreme joy and absolute misery can be seen side by side throughout his poetry.

As the awakening of the East, according to him, was timed with its admiration for the Western industrial civilisation, Iqbal was worried and anxious. This state of his mind led him to base his poetic thinking on the following two factors: Fervour and Self-realisation.

### *Fervour*

Like many other mystics of the East such as Rumi, Iqbal believed that improvement of society was possible only if the individuals were inclined to improve their own selves. But an individual could not improve, unless he gave way to fervour and action within his self. This is the reason why Iqbal's thoughts are full of fervour and they call for certain action.

### *Self-realisation*

One cannot give way to fervour within oneself unless one is fully aware of one's own self. He has to realise his own self. But what does self-realisation mean? From what Iqbal has said, it appears according to him that self-realisation means "estimating the inner force existing in one's own self and channelising it properly".

The Eastern world's attraction and inclination towards the Western civilisation can prove quite disastrous, according to the poet. The only solution to curb the increasing influence of the West on the East is to make the East independent and self-confident.

Though quite modern in his approach, the poet finds his source of inspiration in Old Islamic culture and mysticism.

"One should know one's own self, in order to know God," quotes Holy Hadith. There is a vast interpretation of this Hadith in our literature which has influenced Iqbal. It is perhaps for this reason that Iqbal has always talked of "self-realisation" in an assertive tone.

The following are the keys to Iqbal's idea of self-realisation:

- (1) The person should be intuitive and depend on the heart rather than be inquisitive and be led away by reasoning.
- (2) Therefore he should be uninfluenced by the Western culture and civilisation.
- (3) He should be self-restrained and free from all bondage.
- (4) He should be serious and painstaking.
- (5) He should be completely transformed.
- (6) He should be individualistic and at the same time connected with society, searching for fulfilment in the people.
- (7) He should be a true and devout Muslim.

These desired qualifications show such a sharp contrast within themselves that one wonders what type of Man can be formed to forge such an Ideal Society.

And some more questions come to mind:

If individuals are connected with society, how can they escape from its influence in order to be transformed? Since the sense of fervour is provoked by an external process, how can it occur if it is not motivated



by an external action, which means, by favourable circumstances?

Another pertinent question is:

How can we forget the time element? Can age-old, classical mysticism meet with all the requirements of the modern world?

Is it possible for anyone today to dismiss his knowledge, reasoning and judgement in favour of old mysticism?

The involvement of the only religion—Islam—too can be questioned. In our world, we are more in need of a world-wide culture which will bring people together and not divide them.

Therefore, I conclude that the most important part and the most lasting aspect of Iqbal's poetry is his praise of fervour and dynamism, which have inspired him to write some beautiful and flaming verses and now fill us with warmth and hope.

## KASHMIR AND KASHMIRIS IN IQBAL'S VERSE

P. N. PUSHP

IQBAL was proud of the fact that his ancestors had originally belonged to Kashmir; and he gratefully described himself as a Kashmiri. In fact, his reference to Kashmir as his original homeland is almost nostalgic:

“Pearl has gone away from Eden,  
Ruby from Yemen;  
And musk, the deer musk, has gone  
from Khotan far away;  
So have we left Kashmir and come over to Hindustan:  
Away from flower-beds  
the nightingale has built a nest.”

This very homesickness, probably, impelled him to boast of his Brahmin lineage “fully aware of the mysteries of Rome and Tabriz”, a living model of composite culture. Though his “heart was from sacred Hijaz” and his “voice from Shiraz”, his body was “of the clay from the soil of Kashmir, the Paradise”. Years earlier he had described himself as “a nightingale held in thrall by the delightful garden” called Kashmir; and his poetic fancy had visualised it as “ancestral property inherited from Adam”.

The fascination for Kashmir by and by deepened into Iqbal's solicitude for Kashmir as well as Kashmiris, so much so, that it often found expression in his early journalistic verse. The outpourings of his nostalgic indignation as carried by the *Kashmir Magazine* of Lahore, in a way, reflected not only his personal reaction, but also the very heartbeat of the Kashmiri people frightened into submissive silence by high-handed usurpers. One of the most moving instances of this solicitude appeared

in the following *rubaii*:

*"panja-e-zulm-o-jahaalat ne buraa haal kiyaa,  
ban ke miqraaz hamen bepar-o-behaal kiyaa;  
tor us dast-e-jafaakesh ko yaarab jis ne  
rooh-e-aazaadi-e-kashmir ko paamaal kiyaa."*

This *rubaii* does not record a passive morbid sigh but registers a vehement protest against the high-handedness that had crushed the Kashmiris' spirit of freedom. (That the *rubaii* suffers from faulty diction because it juxtaposes *dast-e-jafaakesh* and *paamaal*, is beside the point.) Let us, therefore, go a little deeper into the implications of the content. The poet does not consider himself a mere bystander, but clearly talks in the first person plural: *banke miqraaz hamen bepar-o-behaal kiyaa*; "the clutches of tyranny and ignorance have clipped *our* wings and pinions, like a pair of scissors." The least the poet could do in such a dire situation was to invoke the just intervention of the Almighty to shatter such a cruel hand; and this he does in such a manner that the dormant indignation of the mute sufferer is also awakened.

The Kashmiri of those days was, no doubt, in the clutches of tyranny as well as ignorance, and suffered all the dehumanising indignities a soulless diarchy could inflict. Iqbal has tellingly described this predicament of a Kashmiri in the metaphor of "a bird bereft of wings and pinions", utterly unable to take off. He did not silently accept this state of affairs as a dole of destiny or a mysterious dispensation of a transcendental divinity, but viewed it as a social phenomenon brought about by anti-social, even sinister, elements.

This insight of Iqbal into the socio-political genesis of the Kashmir situation becomes all the more clear from his anonymous as well as signed write-ups in the various issues of the *Kashmir Magazine*. Even in a note contributed under the pseudonym of Abu Zafar, he made it a point to remind the reader that he was a Kashmiri. Those days he was the General Secretary of the Anjuman-e-Kashmiri Musalmaanaan-e-Lahore, and through the columns of the *Kashmir Magazine*, he would urge his fellow Kashmiris to shed apathy and rise to the occasion. He wanted them to "give up despondence and despair, presenting positive proof of confidence and wakefulness". He had advised them to organise branches of the Anjuman and the Kashmiri Majlis in their respective circles and centres. In one of his *rubaiis* he called upon the Kashmiris to consolidate and integrate themselves "like the letters (k, sh, m, and r) of the word Kashmir"; for, as he emphasized, "the pearl of purpose lies concealed in the oyster of brotherhood", and it is by brotherhood alone that "a nation rises in the estimation of others".

You can easily imagine the joy of Iqbal when he saw the Kashmiris

falling in at such a centre and feeling like joining hands. This is how he reacted to such a sight:

"The stars have assembled in the firmament;  
The pearls have united into a string;  
Wonderful is, indeed, this meet of friends;  
Far away from the land have we combined."

It pained him to see that "what was once looked upon as *Iran-e-Saghir* (Junior Iran) should now be subject, helpless and humbled". Nevertheless, he assured them that "a searing sigh emerges from the bosom of the world, the moment a man of truth is overawed by the emperor and the train". How tragic:

"Fie upon this nation, noble, dexterous, intelligent.  
O Omnipotent Lord, where, after all, is the day of just dispensation?"

The anguish poured out by the poet in the Bayaaz of Lolaabi (included in the *Armughaan-e-Hejaaz*), under the assumed pen-name of Mullazada Zaigham Lolaabi, is no leisurely outpouring of a romantic temper, but a spontaneous outburst of intense involvement. Ever since his visit (unfortunately, the only one) to Kashmir in June 1921, the poet had been closely watching the developments in the forlorn land. It was also during this brief stay of his in Kashmir that he had a first-hand idea of what nature had ungrudgingly given to the lovely land, and also what man had made of it. The mountain scenery, the riverscape and the sunset glow here brought him "face to face with God", as he put it. He was simply enthralled by the shimmering mountain-tops, racing watercourses, leaping cascades, ecstatic fountains, melancholy poppies, languishing narcissuses, floral felicity of the Nishat, the haunting grandeur of the Shalimar and the lush verdure of lawns and meadows. Having heartily enjoyed such a feast of fragrance, sound and colour, he invited others also to this rare treat of vibrant verdure, rippling rivulets, cascading watercourses and sparkling dust:

"Encamp in Kashmir, behold the hills, hillocks and dales;  
Behold verdure in every bed, and poppies all along;  
Waves and waves of vernal breeze, and birds and birds around;  
Yonder still the hilly track of water frisks about;  
Overcoming obstacle, surging and crawling low,  
Coursing, leaping, jumping, sliding, eddying all the way;  
Dashing forward, ever forward, despite turn and twist."

The beautiful piece appropriately ends with a word to the Saqi:

"Lo and hark, O bright Saqi,  
The message of the stream."

The racing watercourses of Lolab had initiated the poet into the dynamics of change, of ever-changing freshness of time and tide, of tune and temper. How could soul-stirring tunes emerge from loose strings? No plectrum could draw out a tune as long as the strings were not properly tightened up. Iqbal was sharp enough to detect that "the mullah's eye was without the luminosity of understanding, and the Sufi's cup held wine that gave no kick". The Kashmiri community had too long gone without a dedicated life whose clarion call "at dawn could wake up dormant hearts". As long as such a dedicated soul did not appear on the horizon of Kashmir, the unsuspecting people of the land would fall willing victims to fatalistic trash and humbug. Hence the need to protect them from depredations by mullahs and Sufis puffed up with misconceived notions of monastic mysticism running amuck. Iqbal's tirade against these mystery-mongers masquerading as perfect saints was, therefore, not just a moody fall-out of incurable allergy or a fitful harangue of chronic prejudice, but the natural outcome of an objective system of thinking. In this connection, Iqbal had already formulated his thoughts with considerable precision in his philosophical writings, particularly in his lecture on the Human Ego, His Freedom and Individuality (Lecture IV of the Series: *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*). Even in his *Asraar* and *Ramooz*, he had sufficiently made it clear that he had no soft corner for the mullah and the Sufi who hindered people's awareness of the self. The sharp wit and pungent invective generally accompanying the poet's reference to these falsifiers of religion are, therefore, just an index to his concern for Kashmiris falling into the clutches of monastic mysticism and fatalistic surrender. He naturally wanted them to be delivered from the onslaughts of this un-Islamic practice and tried to drive home to them the valiant ways of Shabbir. He also warned them against the machinations of enslaving overlords, too subtle to be comprehended by the docile slave. And what was slavery other than "abject death in life"? The Kashmiri's spirit was in the throes of slavish convention, and only an awareness of the self could rid him (the Kashmiri) of this ailment. The monastic outlook could only bring about pessimistic woes and worries, a sure sign of senile decadence. What a pity both religion and literature in Kashmir should smack of it!

Diagnosing, thus, the malady of Kashmir and Kashmiris of the day, Iqbal tellingly characterised bureaucracy (under the aegis of capitalistic overlordship) as a lovely sculpture "looking as soft as glass, but having a heart of stone". Only repeated blows could smash a sculpture like that. Was it not, therefore, tragic that even the few truly pious seekers were sitting aloof, unconcerned and unperturbed? Could the poet take them

for granted? Should he not impress upon their minds the need to be freely alive and kicking? For, according to him:

"Self-control, self-respect and the symphony of *an al haq*  
(I'm the Truth)  
Are, no doubt, goals for a seeker, provided he is free;  
Enslaved, this *hama oost* (all is He) of his  
Becomes his death and grave and good riddance."

"The wealth of a freeman", he reminds them, "consists in the illumined heart and a warm spirit", while the only wealth of a bondsman is "the tearful eye". It was precisely this sort of dehumanising dependence on imbecile tears that, according to Iqbal, had been the bane of Kashmiris. He wondered why the Kashmiri remained uninspired even by his glorious past. He was, however, sure:

"The ashes that embosom embers of the chinaar,  
Shall they cool off such magnificent ashes?  
No, never."

He could not but ask:

"Concealed from the eye of Time will lie  
The Wullar's precious pearls, unique, how long?"

and

"When will the founts well up from the Himalayas,  
Is in the mind of Khizar, upon the Wullar-bank?"

This deep involvement of Iqbal with Kashmir and Kashmiris and solitude for the suffering masses, as revealed in stray verses, is very much there even in his epic masterpiece, the *Javed Nama*. In fact, even in its transcendental setting, the poet has a special word on Kashmir and also for Kashmiris. In the context of his meeting with Syed Ali Hamdani (popularly known in Kashmir as Shah-e-Hamdan), he recounts through the lips of Zindarood the real predicament of the Kashmiri:

"Who has slipped from self-awareness into apathy;  
In his own domain he is a foreigner;  
The earning of his hand, alas, is owned by other hands;  
The fish from his rivulet, hooked by anglers' alien baits.  
Slavery has worked out the death of all his aspirations;  
The fire that pervaded the veins of his is out."

Having reported such a grim predicament of the Kashmiris, the poet deems it necessary to sound a cheering note also; and hence the assurance held out through Ghani Kashmiri, "the Kashmiri is sure to wake up soon from his ageless apathy", for:

"The heart in his breast is not yet dead;  
The embers are alive beneath the ice;  
Surely will the community wake up from graveyard dust,  
As soon as they hear the doomsday clarion call aloud."

Against the background of his gruesome predicament and the soothing assurance, the *Javed Nama* presents the past glory of Kashmir in the personalities of Shah-e-Hamdan and Ghani Kashmiri, underlining thereby the new urges and signs of awakening, particularly in terms of the initiative taken by the "live-hearted Brahmin-born" of Kashmir. Commending the greatness of Shah-e-Hamdan, the poet especially refers to the "good done by him to the Kashmiris". The saint was not merely a pious old Dervesh, or a counsellor to the Sultans, but also a sincere well-wisher of Kashmir, who made the land the *Iran-e-Saghir* (Junior Iran) by contributing to its social, economic, literary, spiritual and cultural enrichment. As a footnote to Ghani Kashmiri's acute sense of self-respect, the poet incorporates an anecdote recording the strange phenomenon that, while indoors, Ghani Kashmiri would bolt the doors and windows of his house, he would throw these open as and when he stepped out (of the house). The *Payam-e-Mashriq* also contains a poem on this great Persian poet of Kashmir, who had deeply impressed Iqbal.

Anyway, while lamenting the sad lot of the Valley of Kashmir, Iqbal pays a tribute to the vital role played by the Kashmiri emigrants in bringing about an awakening in the subcontinent. His interrogation, in this regard, is compact of positive assertion:

"Who infused into Hind the spirit of freedom?  
Who verily gave the prey the hunter's vehement urge?  
It was the live-hearted Brahmin-born,  
Whose ruddy faces put to blush the red poppy;  
Sharp-sighted, they the seasoned, hardworking;  
Their eye unnerves the foreign usurper.  
They're from the dust our hems are holding fast;  
The firmament that gave these luminaries is our Kashmir."

"Our Kashmir", that is how Iqbal refers to the land, with ardent love and genuine pride. Is it not all the more tragic, therefore, that this very Kashmir, in spite of having indicated new directions in the Indian subcontinent's socio-political development should still have been wallowing

in the mud of political subjection? And had not this very Kashmir been sold to the Dogra chief? How could Iqbal tolerate this humiliating betrayal of a whole people? The mere recollection of the sinister deal would make his heart bleed. Hence his importunate plea to the morning breeze to voice a national grievance regarding this callous treatment of the Kashmiris:

"O gentle breeze, pass you by Geneva,  
Convey from us to the League of Nations this:  
They've sold off crop, waterway, garden all;  
A nation sold; how cheap a bargain, ah!"

The Kashmir sold away had once been the birth-place of valiant conquerors like the Sultan Shehabud Din:

"A time was when Kashmir broke through arrays,  
Then was it valiant, tough and full of vitality;  
For ages did the flower blossom forth and fade away:  
But a second Shahabud Din we have not yet produced."

Similarly, the purity of Kashmir's natural setting reminded Iqbal of women like Lal Ded, Habba Khatun and Arnimal, who have made a mark in the cultural heritage of Kashmir:

"The daughter of a Brahmin, the poppy-faced, the flower-complexioned;  
Cast a glance on these and, then, look at thyself."

Another masterpiece Iqbal is believed to have composed in the Nishat Bagh of Kashmir is his *Saqi Nama*; and herein also the glaring contrast between Nature's bounty and Kashmir's penury is presented in telling context:

"No glance that does not encircle a poppy or a rose;  
No breeze that does not circumambulate a meadow green;  
How sweet the symphony, how lovely notes that come  
From sylvan solitudes of shaded groves galore;  
What shouldn't I here look for, in this garden  
Except *sharaab, kabaab, rabaab* and love?"

Soon after, however, the poet's exuberance takes a pensive turn and pauses for a moment, thinking again of the social, moral, mental and spiritual ailments that have plagued the Kashmiri's life. What a pity that

"A Kashmiri, at peace with servitude,



Chisels an idol even out of a tomb-stone piece;  
No lofty thought informs his timid mind;  
Unaware of ego, ashamed of self.  
The master is ensilked by his effort,  
Himself he dons a covering threadbare;  
No widening vista is there in his eye,  
No restless heart is beating in his breast."

In his Urdu verse also, the poet has pitied the Kashmiri artisan for tamely submitting to his exploiters:

"Here he goes naked in winter frost,  
Whose artistry enshawls the moneyed guy."

Thus we find Iqbal deeply concerned with the future of Kashmir, and despite his emphasis on pan-Islamic perspective and universal outlook cutting across all distinctions of caste, colour and nationality, he reserved a special corner of concern for Kashmiris. It was, in fact, the *saqi* within him that he called upon to

"Sprinkle just a drop out of thy wine on the Kashmiri  
So that the old ashes of his ignite a fresh ember."

## THE SOUND STRUCTURE OF IQBAL'S URDU POETRY

GOPI CHAND NARANG

**D**R. Mohammad Iqbal was not only a thinker, but also one of the greatest poets of the Indian sub-continent and ranks with Ghalib and Tagore. With his recurrent theme of the strengthening of individual ego, the infinite potentiality of man in shaping his own destiny, and the destiny of the universe; and with his emphasis on the universal approach for the quest of the Perfect Man, harmoniously uniting all man's creative faculties, Iqbal's poetry cannot be confined to one language or one country. His poetry pulsates with his abounding love for social reform, and is marked by his deeply realised anti-imperialist stance, and his burning desire for the eradication of colonialism from the countries of Asia and Africa. As a deeply inspired poet with a mission to accomplish, Iqbal's poetic art needs no emphasis. There are many aspects to it. One of the main is the sound structure of Iqbal's poetic art, through which, coupled with some other features, he casts a spell, and which, because of the high degree of his inspiration and his special semantic urge, has acquired a mysteriously unique quality, not shared by any other Urdu poet.

It could be argued that the use of sounds in poetry is neither always deliberate nor conscious. The inspiration, the core of the poem, the idea, the feeling, or the choice of words, even his rhythmic speech, all of them have their own compulsions. Hence a poet is not absolutely free to pick or reject all or some sounds. Still the use of language by a poet, or the frequency of certain phonetic features in the diction of a poet, reveals certain preferences or choices which lead to the heart of some of the mysteries of his creative art. It is admitted on all hands that Iqbal has a peculiar musicality, and a unique resonant quality which stuns and at the same time fascinates, and which is not met with in any other Urdu poet. Iqbal's

admirers usually acknowledge this quality of his verse, but they hardly venture to fathom the depths of the secrets of this aspect of Iqbal's creative art.

It is obvious that sounds have no meaning. The operation of meaning by and large starts from the morphological level, and it completes itself at the hierarchy of the syntactic level, or in a unit of discourse. But it cannot be denied that sounds create an impression or mood contributory to the semantic atmosphere of the poem in general. This means that at the highest level of creativity, the use of certain sounds leaves an impression on the mind of the reader or intensifies the denotations and connotations of the words used. Iqbal's beautiful little poem "An Evening on the Bank of River Neckar, Heidelberg" is a case in point :

*"Khāmosh haī chāndnī qamar kī  
Shākhēn haīn khāmosh har shajar kī  
Vādī ke navā farosh khāmosh  
Kuhsar ke sabzposh khāmosh  
Fītrat behosh ho gaī hai  
Āghosh men shab ke so gaī hai  
Kuch aisā sukūt kā fusūn hai  
Neckar kā kharām bhī sukūn hai  
Tāron kā khāmosh kārvān hai  
Ye qāfla be dīrā ravān hai  
Khāmosh haīn koh-o-dasht-o-daryā  
Qudrat hai murāqbe maīn goyā  
Ai dīl tū bhī khāmosh ho jā  
Āghosh men gham ko le ke so jā !"*

The immediate impact of this poem is the feeling of lonesomeness and solitariness. It can be easily seen that this feeling has been created and intensified by the repetitive use of the sounds of s, sh, x and f, which have occurred thirtyfive times in this short poem of seven couplets.

The frequency of a particular set of sounds many times is deeply reflective of a poet's creative personality. For instance, Mir Taqi Mir's melancholy and pensive mood cannot be conveyed by sounds used by Ghalib for his iconoclastic and non-conformist defiant attitude. Similarly, Iqbal's dynamism, his emphasis on man's capacity to shape his destiny, and his conceptual framework of the Perfect Man call for a sound structure packed with power, and which could convey a certain degree of heat and energy to the reader. The majestic vibrance, grandeur and flow of Iqbal's poetic diction generally create an impression as if a huge mysterious flower were unfolding its petals in the vast openness of the cosmos. Iqbal's voice touches the heart, lifts the soul and carries away the reader in a single sweep. It is sharp, compact, tight and at the same time so

melodious as if a spring were bubbling forth in a lush green valley, or enchanting notes were flowing from the tight strings of a sarod. However, while trying to reach the secrets of this unique combination of energy and melody, one has to ignore couplets like:

“*shaktī bhī shāntī bhī bhagton ke geet men hai*  
*dhartī ke bāsiyon kī mukti pareet men hai*”

since they form only one aspect of Iqbal's diction, and do not represent the whole or core of his style. To grasp the code of Iqbal's sound structure, one must keep in mind the whole range of Iqbal's poetry, or at least his long representative poems, like *Masjid-e-Qartabah*, *Zauq-o-Shauq*, *Khizr-e-Rah* and *Saqi Nama*.

A thorough analytical study of *Masjid-e-Qartabah* undertaken by the present writer revealed that Iqbal's semantic and morphological urges lead him to an unprecedented excessive use of spirant sounds like f, s, sh, z, zh, x and gh. These coupled with the continuants, l and r, form the core of Iqbal's phonetic code through which he creates his characteristic spell. It must be remarked that the Urdu language is twice as much rich in stop sounds, but their use in no way forms a characteristic of Iqbal's poetic diction. Of the stops, eight aspirates, i.e., ph, bh, th, dh, ch, jh, kh and gh plus six retroflexes, i.e., ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṛ and ṛh totalling fourteen sounds are indicative of Urdu's Indo-Aryan base, or its Prakritic foundations. But the majority of the spirants, i.e., f, z, sh, x and gh denote the Persio-Arabic influences. It is through the interplay and blending of these Persio-Arabic and Prakritic elements that the Urdu language acquires its synthetic character. A strikingly interesting feature of Iqbal's poetry is that though it uses the Persio-Arabic spirants excessively, it neither violates nor disturbs the natural fibre of the Urdu language. To explain this paradoxical usage, a further enquiry into other aspects of Iqbal's sound structure is necessary.

Iqbal is very frugal in his use of aspirates and retroflexes. In *Masjid-e-Qartabah's* sixty-four couplets, these have occurred only thirty-nine times, as compared to nine hundred thirty-one occurrences of spirant sounds, a ratio of one to twenty-four. The hypothesis so derived was further tested by an analysis of *Zauq-o-Shauq* and *Khizr-e-Rah*, two other long poetic masterpieces of Iqbal. The results fully confirmed the earlier findings. A look at *Saqi Nama*, *Tulu-e-Islam*, *Shua-e-Ummid* and *Iblis ki Majlis-e-Shura* further establishes that Iqbal uses retroflexes and aspirates only when it is absolutely necessary or unavoidable because of the rhyme scheme or verbal usage. It will be recalled that Urdu's verbal system is almost entirely Prakritic, and it is on this level that the retroflexes and aspirates occur freely, or in pronouns, particles and auxiliaries like *mujh*, *tujh*, *kutch*, *phir*, *bhī*, *tha*, *thī*. The average count of aspi-

rated and retroflex sounds in the poetry of Iqbal comes to *less than one* sound per couplet. Keeping in view the poetic conventions, stock similes and metaphors of Urdu, most of which are borrowed from the Semitic and Iranian traditions, a question could be raised that the occurrence of aspirates and retroflexes cannot be expected to be on the high side in Urdu poetic usage. But to find the natural usage of these sounds, one has to turn to Mir Taqi Mir, because none else can perhaps represent the "Urdueness" of the Urdu language better than the "God of Urdu Poesy". A random analysis for this purpose was undertaken, which revealed that the occurrence of these Prakritic sounds in the poetry of Mir Taqi Mir is *two* sounds per couplet. If this is taken as the mean average of the use of these sounds in Urdu poetic usage, then Iqbal scores very low, that is, *less than one* sound per couplet. But this characteristic of Iqbal's Urdu verse is shared by another great poet of Urdu, Mirza Ghalib. Perhaps this is because of the fact that both Ghalib and Iqbal are very fond of Arabic and Persian substantives. Still one cannot hasten to conclude that Iqbal's and Ghalib's sound structures are the same. Professor Masood Husain while discussing Ghalib's sound system has already warned that though "Ghalib's love of Persianised diction placed Urdu in the Iranian tulip gardens, still his poetry is lacking in musical quality, and at places leaves an impression of stridency." The reasons for this are not far to seek. The first line of demarcation between the sound patterns of Iqbal and Ghalib can be drawn between the use of the frontal sounds and backward sounds. Iqbal, as we have already noted, is fond of sounds f, s, z, sh, which are produced in the front of the mouth, and are sharp and compact. His stock terminology includes *shahin*, *shua*, *shola*, *shama*, *xudi*, *xuda*, *aql-o-ishq*, *soz-o-saz*, *momin*, *lala-e-sahra*, *chirag-e-lala*. Compared to this, Ghalib's contemplative mood is better conveyed by the sounds produced from the back of the mouth. His stock phrases like *dil-o-jigar*, *zaxm-e-jigar*, *davat-e-mizhgan*, *gham-gusari*, *marg-e-tamanna*, *rag-e-jan*, *rag-e-sang*, *sang-e-garan*, *gham-e-awargi* abound in sounds of j, g, gh, z and zh, which convey heaviness and diffusion.

But the basic difference between Ghalib's and Iqbal's sound structures lies in the use of vowels. Perhaps the lack of a high degree of musicality in Ghalib's verse and Iqbal's bewitching sound impact can be best explained by taking into consideration the differences in vowel usage in the two poets. It must be remarked that the vowel system of Urdu is the same as that of Hindi, and is one hundred per cent Prakritic. While speaking of the lack of vowel abundance in Ghalib's verse, one must keep in mind that Ghalib's art is oblique, he conceals more than what he reveals. His restrictions are the restrictions of the genre of ghazal where everything has to be created on the level of a miniature. Whereas Iqbal's generic possibilities are great, his moulds are huge, and his casts are big. His forms are narrative poems, long poems, and stanza poems of different

formations and also *Masnavis*. His art is direct. The tone and temper of his poetry warrant sermonisation, so he can take the liberty to use full verbal structures including pronouns and auxiliaries. In Ghalib's art, his semantic and stylistic compulsions squeeze out all such linguistic redundancies. This obviously has adversely affected the use of vowels, especially the long vowels, in Ghalib. Iqbal's poetry in this regard is as rich as Mir Taqi Mir's common core Urdu usage. The results of a thorough investigation in this regard revealed that as compared to an average of eleven vowel sounds per couplet in Ghalib, Mir and Iqbal use sixteen vowel sounds per couplet. However, it should be recalled, as already discussed, that Mir and Iqbal are poles apart in their consonantal usage. They are similar only when it comes to vowel usage. Now, at this stage, it is not difficult to answer the question regarding the high degree of musicality in Iqbal, since this quality is closely linked with nasalization, and nasalization occurs freely only where there is an abundance of long vowels. It is, therefore, this feature which renders both Mir and Iqbal phonetically more satisfying than any other poet of Urdu. But Iqbal's own variegated sound structure derives its uniqueness from the masterful blending of the Persio-Arabic spirant sounds with Prakritic simple and nasalized vowels. It is this quality which has given Iqbal's verse a compelling melodious tone, simultaneously with an abundance of dynamic power and energy. It is this sound structure which reverberates and echoes throughout the Urdu poetry of Iqbal, and at its creative zenith becomes, in the words of Iqbal, truly, *yazdangir*, a challenger to God, the Creator.

## CHUGHTAI AND IQBAL

ARIF RAHMAN CHUGHTAI

I DO not profess to be a scholar on Iqbal, but that does not mean that he has been absent from my personal life. For me he has been more of a feeling, a movement, an unknown force governing invisibly the mind and thoughts of our household. I heard of Iqbal long before I ever even understood him. This happened at many levels—firstly that I was a citizen of a country, which is a product of Iqbal's conception; secondly that I was a Moslem, and Iqbal was, to a great extent, instrumental in our reawakening consciousness in this region, and thirdly that I was the son of a Moslem renaissance painter, who was a friend and associate of the late poet and did visually into pictorial form, what Iqbal did with words, into the appearance of a new world depending on new ideas (appearance of a new world depends on new ideas). It is a worthy tribute to those two stalwarts of the history of this region, that whereas both are internationally honoured, one as a poet and the other as an artist, today we are here taking time to review their association with each other and its reciprocal effect on the development of their individual talents. The relation of Dr Mohammad Iqbal and Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman Chughtai must be studied in the context of developments of the region at the start of this century.

It all begins from Lahore, a city of centuries of culture behind it. After the initial grandeur of the Moghul Empire, the spiritual forces governing the Moslems of the region declined day by day, till their degradation in many senses became complete as ever. Slowly and slowly a culture which shaped a living nation found solace in a false pretension of life, giving birth to decay. In their rigidity these people even lost pride in most aspects of their life. In the face of repeated exploitation, particularly Western colonialism, only a few could save their face; others preferred

a silent death of all their aspirations. Times turned singers of life into embittered mourners; the nation throve on a past but with no future. It is easy to be romantic about those days, and console ourselves by reference to the "days of struggle". But there was nothing romantic then, as the stark naked reality stifled the dreams of a dreamy nation.

It was in those days that Dr Mohammad Iqbal was contributing in his own way. Although very much a professional in the legal field, his verses and thoughts were for sharing with others. He was not a poet of a kind isolated in his house, or an indulger in armchair thinking. His poetry had depth of Beauty and Power, instilling the concept of reawakening into the hearts of Muslims. At the functions of Anjuman Himayat Islam, Dr Iqbal used to recite his verses at the Sheranwala School, Barkat Ali Mohammedan Hall, Riwaq Hostel and Islamia College, all at Lahore. The gatherings used to be crowded with people, and the poet used to lead their sentiments by finding expression for them. And these were no ordinary recitations, for Iqbal used to sing his verses. It is recalled that the whole audience in the hall burst into tears when Iqbal recited the *Khizr-Rau* on the colonial destruction of the Ottoman Empire. It was to such gatherings that a proud Mimar of the ancient Mimar family of Lahore used to take his sons to hear the verses of Muslim affirmation in life.

The death of Mian Karim Baksh Mimar in 1913 was a virtual blow to the young Chughtai brothers. Gradually over the years they tried to establish themselves in a number of ways, mainly the two brothers, Abdur Rahman Chughtai as an artist and Abdullah as a student of history. In 1920 the young artist from Punjab established himself with an exhibition of his works at the Lahore Museum. After a lapse of many decades, a Muslim artist was establishing himself with Muslim themes, setting the basis for renaissance in Islamic art.

The young artist in search of motifs and aspirations towards perfection drifted over time. Some of the earliest paintings were on the verses of Dr Iqbal. In that direction, "Lamp and the Moon" and "Fame" may be regarded as the very first ventures on the poet. Some of these works were reproduced in such magazines as "The Modern Review" and "Saraswati". A painting of this period "Too Late" had the tomb inscription on it which was suggested by Dr Iqbal himself. This painting was much loved and bought by the Nawab of Bahawalpur for the Sadiqgarh Palace. The Nawab also had a painting (now with his son) on which Dr Iqbal had inscribed the correlated verse with his own hand. The culminating work on Iqbal of this period was "Asrar-e-Hayat", exhibited at the Lahore Museum in 1922, and as such reproduced in the "Narang-Khyal" in 1924, with notes by Imtiaz Ali Taj and a commentary by Mian Abdul Rafi. These works were creating food for thought all on their own.

One of the earliest publications to reproduce Chughtai's design on the cover of the first edition (published and priced at 4 as) of the *Khizr-Rau*,



was published by Munshi Tahir Din in 1922. On the back cover, it was announced that an illustrated edition would also be brought out, acknowledging the fact that Chughtai's illustrations on Iqbal had already won popularity to a certain extent.

In the 1920s, Chughtai was formally introduced to Iqbal by Maulvi Bashir Ahmad, son of Maulvi Ahmad Din. Although Chughtai had been more or less a silent spectator at the house of Iqbal inside Bhatti Gate, Lahore (belonging to Sheikh Gulab Din), this meeting at the Anarkali residence of the poet was marked by a lively discussion. Consequently, other discussions followed. One of them was on the painting relating to "Asrar-e-Hayat", printed in the "Narang-Khyal" in 1924. The painting had been exhibited at the Lahore Museum in 1922. Although the discussion was not conclusive, at least one thing Iqbal decided there and then, "I have written a new book entitled *Payam-e-Mashriq* and it is a rejoinder to Goethe, in it is a poem on the "Birth of Adam"; utilize your talents in attempts to illustrate it for publication." Chughtai did a number of sketches on this theme which were much appreciated by the poet. These sketches at present are the property of the Chughtai Museum Trust.

Chughtai wanted to do many things but finances were lacking for most of his programmes. It is conceivable that he wanted to publish that selection himself. But then in 1924, when Iqbal compiled his *Bang-e-Dara* (originally the cover was designed by Chughtai and the photograph used in it of Dr Iqbal was also taken by the artist) and offered it to the Chughtai brothers, they could not afford to offer it for publication. Maulvi Mumtaz Ali (father of Imtiaz and Hameed Ali) of Darul-Ishaat took over the rights. A copy was given to Chughtai by Dr Iqbal, duly signed and dated, now in the collection of the Chughtai Museum Trust.

Things were not smooth for Chughtai back home. Tragedy struck on the 27th of Ramzan in 1925, when Chughtai lost his mother. Dr Iqbal wrote a letter of condolence to the artist (in the collection of the National Museum, Karachi). Master Abdullah lived in the same household in Ludhiana where Iqbal was married for the third time. Frequent interchange of ideas, borrowing of books, lively discussions, feeding of pigeons marked the association of Chughtai and Iqbal.

One such meeting may be described to illustrate the context of the interaction. Whereas Chughtai gained immensely in his knowledge of literature, philosophy and other ideas, Iqbal was no less rich with Chughtai's ideas on art. Once Dr Iqbal incidentally asked Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman, how do you differentiate between the cultures of Arabia and Persia?" In a later statement Chughtai himself describes that for a moment he was taken aback by the question and was of opinion that only a renowned critic had the ability to answer it. However, his reply was subtle and sensitive, "The sword which started from Arabia as an instrument of enforcement—sturdy and straight, in its journey to Persia—

became a symbol of artistic expression full of aesthetics and fashionable decoration, ornamented, bejewelled and curved." Dr Iqbal was much pleased with this sensitively bold statement of the artist.

Dr Iqbal found new interest in the arts of the world and realized from his study, that "art when divorced from life becomes dull and insipid". In a letter to Master Abdullah, he wrote:

"The nations of Europe have a deep foundation of excellence in culture, but unfortunately their practice is opposite to it. It is, therefore, certain that such culture will be destroyed in the end."

Invariably Iqbal chose to study Indian art also. It was to Master Abdullah that he wrote on 7th September, 1926, with the request:

"If you have a printed version of paintings by Indian artists, then please lend such a selection to me for a day or two. I want to see it. If no such selection exists, then at least give me the name of some famous paintings, along with necessary commentary on them. I want to find out how the Indian artists are relating the subject of their paintings to the selection for exhibition of their works. I particularly need names of the paintings from the Bengal School. Besides if there is any book on critics and art criticism, include that also for my reference."

Master Abdullah did collect a number of books, including a complete set of the Chatterjee Picture Album, and presented it to the poet. That Iqbal invariably rejects most of what he sees can be understood from his verses on "Indian artists":

"Their fantasy, death-bed of love and passion;  
Their sunless minds the burial vaults of nations;  
In their idolatrous halls Death's portrait hangs,  
Their art, like a priest's soul, sickens of life;  
They hide from mortal eyes the heaven's high places,  
Their gift is drowsy spirit and itching flesh.  
Oh, India's painters, poets and story-tellers!  
The female sits astride their quivering nerves."

Only those artists can be qualified, says Iqbal:

"If your soul rot under slavery's blight,  
Your art an idolater's soulless rite;  
If sense of your own greatness sways you,  
Legions of men and Jinn obey you!"

Iqbal had already shunned many traditional ideas on art, as far back as 1916; in an article on the Prophet's criticism of contemporary Arabian poetry, published in the "New Era", he had written:

"The ultimate end of all human activity is life—glorious, powerful and exuberant. All human art is subordinated to this final purpose, and the value of everything must be determined in reference to its life-yielding capacity. The highest art is that which awakens our dormant will-force and nerves us to face the trials of life manfully. All that brings drowsiness and makes us shut our eyes to Reality around us, on the mastery of which alone life depends, is a message of decay and death. There should be no opium-eating in art. The dogma of art for art's sake is a clever invention of decadence to cheat us out of life and power."

Dr Iqbal was too critical of the subject of the artists of India to pay much heed to them. He had, however, recognized the exceptional merit of the art of Chughtai, Chughtai recognized the vulnerability of Iqbal to the dominance of the "female figure" in painting, and so created a new experimentation in the form of the immortal work, "The Story-teller". Chughtai had it framed and sent to the house of the poet by the hands of Master Abdullah. The painting evoked a lively discussion and on 24th February, 1927, Iqbal wrote to Master Abdullah:

"After you left I continued to think about the painting you have left with me, the one about which we discussed for so long. In my opinion, there is need to introduce the European element into it. Whenever Abdur Rahman comes again, I want to hold a detailed discussion with him." (National Museum, Karachi)

For many months the painting hung in the study of Dr Iqbal, and gradually it got hold of his imagination. Soon enough he wrote a verse on the inspiration of "The Story-teller."

"Look for the moment at the precious gem,  
The Tajagleam in the light of the moon,  
Its marble ripping like a flowing stream,  
Each ripple a wave of eternity.  
A man's love has expressed itself in it,  
Stringing the stones together with the thread  
Of his eyelashes as if they were pearls."

(*Bandagi-Nama*, translation by Hadi Hussain)

The artist in Chughtai made him busy with his own work too. Paint-

ings were being made and exhibitions held, far and wide. It was in those days, that at the suggestion of Dr Mohammed Din Taseer (a great friend of the artist) and Abdur Rahim (youngest brother of the artist), the idea of an illustrated edition of the poet Ghalib was formulated into completion. Dr Taseer did request Iqbal for an introduction to the book, which initially Iqbal dictated as:

“Chughtai has always appealed to me as a great lover of life. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he shuns to depict anaemic figures swooning away in morbid ecstasies, and portrays only virile types of men and women.”

(Foreword, Collection, Chughtai Museum Trust)

Consequently, it was agreed that Dr Iqbal should also take the opportunity to express in his foreword his specific views on painting and painters, and the same remains the sole document of Dr Iqbal on the subject. It was written on 21st July, 1928 and ran:

“I welcome *Muraqqa-e-Chughtai*, Ghalib's illustrated edition by Mr M.A. Rahman Chughtai, a unique enterprise in modern Indian painting and printing. I have tried to picture the soul-movement of the ideal artist in whom Love reveals itself as a unity of Beauty and Power. From this point of view, some of the more recent paintings of Mr Chughtai are indeed remarkable. There are, however, indications to show that the young artist of the Punjab is already on the way to feel his responsibility as an artist. He is only twenty-nine yet. What his art will become when he reaches the maturer age of forty, the future alone will disclose. Meanwhile all those who are interested in his work will keenly watch its forward movement.”

And on a general level in this foreword, Iqbal talks of the influence-value of art as merely compared to its pleasure-value and says:

“The spiritual health of a people largely depends on the kind of inspiration which their poets and artists receive. But inspiration is not a matter of choice. It is a gift, the character of which cannot be critically judged by the recipient before accepting it. The inspiration of a single decadent, if his art can lure his fellows to his song or picture, may prove more ruinous to a people than whole battalions of an Attila or a Chengiz. The artist who is a blessing to mankind defies life. The modern age seeks inspiration from Nature. But Nature simply ‘is’ and her function is mainly to obstruct our search for ‘Ought’, which the artist must discover within the depths of his own being.”

Whereas Iqbal contributed this foreword with his best wishes, Chughtai also did express his intentions in the preface and resolved to bring out very soon an illustrated edition of Dr Iqbal's *Zabur-e-Ajam*. The idea for a definitive edition of Iqbal was in the process of evolution.

The success of the edition of Ghalib was international. The press rightly said, "No other publication like this ever before in India". The critics hailed it as a new venture in Indian art. Chughtai's art was full of the vitality of life, and, as Iqbal wanted it, "engendered love" with its "expression of beauty". The receipt of the first edition was acknowledged by Iqbal.

"I have received a copy of *Muraqqa-e-Chughtai* that Abdur Rahman has sent to me. But this book is priceless in its present form. For this reason I want you to exchange it with a second edition of same."

(Letter, National Museum, Karachi)

It was in 1931 that Chughtai left for Europe to broaden his knowledge about the arts of the world. In the same year Dr Iqbal also went to London to attend the Round Table Conference. Master Abdullah was also there. Interactions in London were common. Those were the days when Dr Iqbal developed a nose infection and was treated by a doctor, who recommended a nurse. Chughtai's friend and guide, Elza Huiffner, volunteered to be a nurse to the poet and Dr Iqbal all too much appreciated her dedication, and had high esteem for German girls then on.

In 1933 Chughtai along with some of his friends decided to bring out an annual magazine by the name of "Karavan". Dr Taseer, Master Abdullah and Abdur Rahim, along with the artist went to Dr Iqbal to request an original Urdu piece for the magazine. Dr Iqbal conceded that he had not written in Urdu for a long time then, and till late at night all sat together, till inspiration came. The uniqueness of the event is that all shared the creative process of the poet, and that this creation was instrumental in bringing Iqbal back to Urdu verse. The poem included in *Baal-e-Jibril* runs :

"Methought my racing field lay under the skies,  
This plaything of water and clay, I regarded as my world;  
In full disgrace I stood on Resurrection's vast plain,  
I misthought the Lord of Judgement would keep my secret.  
The unveiling broke the spell of searching glances,  
I mistook this blue vault for Heaven.  
What I esteemed as the clarion call of the caravan,  
Was but the plaintive cry of a traveller, weary and forlorn.

The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, methought, would keep me company,  
 Fatigued, they dropped out in the twists and turns of space.  
 One leap by Love ended all the pother,  
 I fondly imagined, the earth and sky were boundless."

(*Baal-e-Jibril*, translation by C.J. S.A. Rahman)

The cultural achievements of Chughtai were being recognized far and wide. Whereas Iqbal had been knighted in 1922, Chughtai was nominated for knighthood in 1933. Due to certain pressures (not worth stating here), the title given was that of "Khan Bahadur", and its uniqueness was that it was only the fourth award for contribution to art and culture of the region. In 1937 Chughtai was again in Europe and Iqbal was inquisitive about him and enquired about his success in having exhibitions abroad. (Letter, National Museum, Karachi)

It is worthwhile noting that Iqbal regarded the *Javed Nama* as his masterpiece, and often expressed to others his dissatisfaction with most translations of it. He often expressed his desire to Chughtai of his wanting to do his own translation and publish it with illustrations by the artist. This desire was also expressed by him in a letter to Mr S.A. Vahid of Hyderabad (letter in his possession). On the last day of his life, Iqbal reaffirmed this to Chughtai. It was a strange scene at the house of Iqbal. Many people had gathered in the house and Iqbal was playing with his young daughter. The child scared of the surrounding was trying to run away and Iqbal would say again and again, "Not always will you get a chance to sit in your father's lap." It was a touching scene, well-remembered by those who were there. Iqbal also told Chughtai, "Wait and see Abdur Rahman, I will get well soon, and translate *Javed Nama*, and you will illustrate it, and the finished publication will be presented for the Nobel Prize and will win it." A death-wish unrealized by the poet in his lifetime.

The next day on 21st April 1938, Dr Allama Iqbal died. According to his own wishes, he was buried outside the Badashai Mosque in Hazuri Bagh, Lahore. Here was an immediate challenge for Chughtai. The Allama Iqbal Tomb Committee requested the artist to design the mausoleum of the poet. The design was restrained by the points enumerated by the Archaeological Department that it should not be higher than the wall of the mosque and should be without a ceiling-roof structure; open at the top. With these constraints, Chughtai submitted his designs. (A few are with Mian Amiruddin in Lahore; one in the Lahore Museum.) An immediate decision could not be taken and as a result the constraint of the mausoleum being open at the top was changed. All the designs submitted were sent by the Committee to Zain Yar Jang of Hyderabad, and after adding a new structure at the top, he finalized the design. The end result of the design is basically by Chughtai with the

modification of a roof structure at the top.

The death of Dr Allama Iqbal did not diminish the responsibility of the artist. After a devoted effort of decades, Chughtai finally completed a new selection of works on Iqbal. It was in 1968, on a quiet morning that Field Marshal Ayub Khan inaugurated the exhibition of these works and gave a cash award to Chughtai of Rs 2 lakhs. A title of Hilal-Imtiaz had already been given and Chughtai was undoubtedly recognized as the National Artist of Pakistan.

Much has been said about the book and much more will be said in future. Many foreign heads of State have already received it, including those of England, France, Germany, Canada and the United States of America. In 1972 it was presented by the Government of Pakistan to every Islamic head of State at the Islamic summit in Lahore.

*Amal-Chughtai* is about both Iqbal and Chughtai. It sacrifices none, but the end product is not an artist or a poet. It is a conglomeration of feelings and aspirations, the vision and words of those countless Moslems in history who have finally found expression, adaptation to a new time. As Iqbal said about Chughtai:

“He is an idealist by nature, and his attempts to resuscitate the past signify his dissatisfaction with the shortcomings of the present and a desire to build a better future, line by line with his ideal.”

Acknowledging the direction Islamic art was taking in the hands of Chughtai, and predicting like a seer what was to come, Iqbal also said:

“And in so far as the cultural history of Islam is concerned, it is my belief that, with the single exception of Architecture, the art of Islam (Music, Painting and even Poetry) is yet to be born.”

A belief affirmed by a leading critic at the World of Islam Festival in London in 1976. Writing in “The Times” London, he opined “Chughtai is the greatest Islamic artist of this century, in some respects excelling Behzad, the Rembrandt of the Arts of Islam.”

The art of Chughtai served the cause of Islam both for its aesthetic-value and as Iqbal would have it the influence-value. Like the verses of Iqbal, the paintings of Chughtai grow with time. You tend to see more and more, the longer you go on perceiving them. For himself Iqbal warned :

“When, to leave earth, I gathered what was mine,  
To have known me through and through was each man’s claim;  
But of this traveller none knew truly what he

Spoke, or to whom he spoke, or whence he came.”

Sensing the spirit, Chughtai himself once said about *Amal-Chughtai*:

“It took me twenty-five years to complete this work, it may take people another hundred years to understand it.”

Iqbal and Chughtai, equally, are not easy to understand. Each generation devises its own approach, places its own bias, looks at them with the limited spectacle of its own times. And yet both became legends in their own life-time.

When Iqbal saw the dreams of a nation, he also visualized the need for its cultural enrichment through the artist, contributing to the fullness and exuberance of life. Like Sarosh, the angel of optimism, Iqbal says:

“O wise ones! It is well to have a thirst for knowledge,  
But what is in art that faileth to grasp the reality of things.  
The object of all art is to attain the warmth of life immortal  
What availeth a spasm or two that vanish like a spark!  
Without a miracle nations cannot rise—  
What is art without the striking power of the Moses staff!”

And so through the art of Chughtai the ideas of Iqbal gained a pictorial form to be handed from generation to generation in spiritual truth. *Amal-Chughtai* was a befitting token of the artist M.A. Rahman Chughtai to his inspiration from and friendship with the poet Dr Mohammad Iqbal, whose centenary we observe here today.



### III





*rn down, destroy each ear of corn of the field,  
hich does not yield,  
the peasant his won sustenance.*



## AMIR KHUSRAU AND IQBAL

SYED SABAHUDDIN ABDUR RAHMAN

**I**N one of his poems, Iqbal, while paying respectful homage to Nizam'ud-Din Awliya, of Delhi, says :

“You are the master of India, your court is a big one; I must get something from this pearl-sprinkling court. Due to one of your glances, Khusrau became the sovereign of the realm of poetry; I must not go back empty-handed from your court.” (*Baqiyat-e-Iqbal*, First edition, pp. 79-83).

Iqbal refers to Khusrau again in *Bal-e-Jibreel* :

“The wars of Aibek (i.e. Qutubu-ud-Din Aibek of Delhi, d. 1210 A.D) and Ghori (Shahab-ud-Din Ghori, d. 1205 A.D.) are no longer there, but the songs of Khusrau are still fresh and sweet.”

Again in *Armughan-e-Hejaz*, he beseeches God :

“O God! bestow upon me the uproar of Rumi and the burning heart of Khusrau; give me the truthfulness and selflessness of Sinai.”

As a self-dedicated devotee of my institution Shibli Academy, Azamgarh, U.P., India, I have inherited the precious treasure of insurmountable love and respect for Amir Khusrau from the founder of the Academy, Maulana Shibli Noamani (d. 1914 A.D.) and equally great admiration and regard for Iqbal from its founder-secretary, Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (d. 1953 A.D.) who was my teacher. Also Maulana Shibli Noamani in his well-known book *Shir-ul-Ajam* writes of Khusrau after recounting his

many-sided achievements, that truly only two or three poets of Khusrau's calibre must have been born in Iran within a period of thousands of years; the Creator Himself may be truly proud of such a creation (pp. 132, 135, Shibli Academy Edition). My teacher Allama Syed Sulaiman Nadvi had unshakeable faith in what Iqbal wrote and thought and he made us believe that after a lapse of many centuries, Islam had discovered a peerless thinker in Iqbal. When Iqbal died, he paid him tribute in the editorial note of his monthly journal "Ma'rif" (May 1939) by writing that he was no longer in this world but his message would remain ever fresh and everlasting. He inspired his colleague Maulana Abdus Salam Nadvi to write *Iqbal-e-Kamil*, which is one of the best publications of our Academy. I am proud to say that Iqbal has been easily as well as thoroughly understood through this book specially in the universities of this sub-continent. Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi's pupil Maulana Shah Moinuddin Ahmad Nadvi (d. 1974 A.D.) wrote a learned article in "Ma'rif" (Jan. 1950) under the caption "Was Iqbal a Communist?" and he delivered an exhaustive lecture in Nadwat-ul-Ulema on the variegatedness of Iqbal's poetry. ("Ma'rif", Oct. 1971—Jan. 1972). The monthly journal of our Academy has published so many articles on Iqbal that if they are printed separately, they are likely to cover several volumes.

So far as I am concerned, I am one of those admirers of Iqbal who refuse to subscribe to the view that Iqbal borrowed his ideological philosophy from this or that European thinker, nor am I prepared to agree that he had a dislike for *tasawwuf*. He himself writes in one of his letters that he had in view the innovations and ingenuities of European philosophers but his ideology became just in accordance with the teachings of the Holy *Quran* (*Iqbal Nama*, p. 43). He did, of course, study Western thought, but it only created distrust in him which led him to withdraw from it. In everything European, he found only a polished exterior not likely to stand the test of time. He called Europe a valley lacking the fountain of life. He believed that the light of God was only capable of bestowing a durable lustre. He became intuitively an advocate of Islam not because of his personal religious prejudices, but because his deep conviction that it could conveniently present to the world a better social order and universally acceptable ideals of life and action, for it "seeks to ensure the harmonious development of the individual and the transformation of humanity". He found in the life of the Holy Prophet also all that dynamism which is likely to reconstruct the structure of the present materialistic environment; so his love throbbed in his bosom and the song of his admiration filled his silent thoughts. He refers incessantly to his anxiety not to depart from the path marked out by the Holy Prophet (peace be on him).

"Do not go outside the precinct of the teaching of Mustafa" (The Holy Prophet)

and he repeats it thus:

“Our vanity lies in the name of Mustafa.”

It is now being discussed that he was inspired by the Holy Prophet's vision of the ultimate ego. In his conception of time along with space, he was influenced by the Holy Prophet saying, “Do not vilify time, because time is God.”

After receiving inspiration from the Holy *Quran* and the Holy Prophet's tradition, he drank deep at the fountain of knowledge of his spiritual mentor Jalal-ud-Din Rumi from whom he learnt the mystery and formidable push of life, the glorious destiny of mankind, the dynamic conception of reason and intuition as well as the creative urge unfolding itself in the objective world.

Iqbal studied at the same time almost all the great thinkers of Islam. Ghazali's theory of knowledge, Avicenna's transcendental height of thought, Sinai's truthfulness and selflessness, Farabi's bewilderment of imagination, Shihab-ud-Din Suhrawardy's notion of existence, Al-Jilli's concept of darkness as the contour of singleness for the ego, Shah Waliullah's analytical approach to Islamic thought, Jamal-ud-Din Afghani's propagation of the creative nature of Islam and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's new orientation of the philosophy of Nature had their impact on Iqbal.

It is propagated that Iqbal condemned *tasawwuf*. In my opinion, his philosophy of *khudi* is itself a deluxe edition of Islamic *tasawwuf*. For in one of his letters, he writes that his philosophy of *Asrar-e-Khudi* has been adopted from the thinking and observations of Muslim Sufis and thinkers (*Iqbal Nama*, p. 43). He did, of course, denounce the unorthodox type of *tasawwuf*, polluted with what he calls Persian encrustation, but he has always been highly sensitive to those Sufis who made sterling contributions to the history of the spiritual and moral attainments of Islam. For example, he was impressed by the sanctified manliness of Fufail bin Ayad of Samarqand. He revelled in seeing unmasked the beauty of the piety and poverty of Junaid of Baghdad and Yazid of Bustan. He appreciated the unsundered life of Mansur Hallaj and all the flame of unborn fire which he had in his heart. He had an intense desire to get possession of the divine light of the conscience of Syed Ahmad Rifai of Iraq. He felt fascinated by the restlessness of the heart and forbearance of the agonised ecstasy of Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti of Ajmer. He discovered a new life in his heart-beats while visiting the tomb of Khwaja Nizam-ud-Din Awliya of Delhi. He knew the distinction between Prophethood and sainthood from Abdul Quddus of Gangoh. He visualised in the dirt of the mausoleum of Sheikh Mujaddid Alf Thani a horizon of spiritual light and illumination beneath the sky.

In his quest or rather in his intellectual expeditions to conquer the

realm of knowledge, Iqbal made an extensive and intensive study of all noted and illustrious thinkers, and sages and saints of Islam and tried to rediscover its precious heritage, which for some reason or other had remained either ignored or ill-elucidated or unexplained. In his powerful poems and marvellous *Mathnavis*, he tried to revitalise their ideas by synthesising them for the modern age.

In his search for the sages of Islam, he was enamoured also of the consuming flame of ardour and yearning which inspired Amir Khusrau of Delhi to compose verses of matchless beauty and excellence. Iqbal's great desire was to become the sovereign of the realm of poetry like Amir Khusrau, so he bowed low before the *naghmah* (glorious song) and *soz* (fiery passion) of this great and unrivalled poet of India.

The most favourite theme of both Amir Khusrau and Iqbal is love which is called in poetry *ishq*. It means vision, intuition, primeval urge, inner call of the heart, sublime and connative energy to discover one's immortal self. Iqbal was, of course, inspired in this ideology by Rumi. Khusrau also might have benefited from this sage of the world, although we have yet to adduce a definite proof for it. His ideology of *ishq* developed, however, doubtlessly under the guidance of his spiritual guide Khwaja Nizam-ud-Din Awliya and he presented it in an exhilarating tone and unique sense of pathos. It was, therefore, that Iqbal was quite naturally bewitched both by Khusrau's *soz* and *naghmah*.

Khusrau learnt from his spiritual master that the woe of a heart can turn a river into an arid desert (*Seir-ul-Awliya*, p. 483). Khusrau has conveyed his own similar experience in the following verse:

"The river has got dry due to the woe of my heart, so much so that one can never see it with one's own eyes."

Khwaja Nizam-ud-Din Awliya once remarked with a choked voice that if the antimony powder of love is anointed in the eyes, there will remain no *hijab* (veil) between the *fursh* (earth) and the *arsh* (sky) (*Seir-ul-Awliya*, p. 483). Khusrau was permeated with the same spiritualised sense of love which reigns supreme in the domain of his poetry. Khusrau did not indulge in forms of love like other conventional ghazal writers, but he nevertheless experienced its fiery ardour in his heart. Khwaja Nizam-ud-Din Awliya cherished his disciple's sublime sense of love by remarking, "When on the day of judgment God will ask what I have brought for Him from the earth, I will say the fire of divine love which burnt in the heart of the Turku'llah (Beloved of God, i.e., Khusrau)." (*Safinatu'l Awliya* by Dara Shikoh, p.160, *Tadhkira-i-Daulat Shah*, p. 239, *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, Vol. II, p. 403).



Khusrau exclaims in his verses:

"My heart got dishevelled in love and it went on growing still more dishevelled. My body has grown helpless when I lost my heart and it is still growing more helpless."

"Love has taken hold of my soul after which my tongue is in the grip of the throat."

"In this world there is a certain faith for every section of people, my religion is love and my motto is to live, ignoring everything of the world."

"O cup-bearer! Give me wine, my heart has been burnt from the flame of love and the smell of this roasted meat is spreading from door to door."

"The man, who has not the sense of love, is not a man but simply a stone. He who claims to be a man must bear the hardship of love."

"Love is obviously a sign of misfortune but for a lover it is a perennial source of good luck."

Khusrau in his other verses says that love is a fire, which keeps the soul burning; the pathos of love must remain predominant in a man's life; the soul must be a victim to love; the tongue must be mute and subdued in love; love must be overshadowed by sadness and sorrow; it must not expect any return; the climax of love is to be a Mansoor. It was this sort of love which kept Khusrau's heart burning:

"My heart is full of pain, which does not require any remedy."

"The physician is not aware of the treatment of the pain of my heart; nobody knows the harm of my wound which is in pieces."

"I am burnt by love; my heart is the breath of my breathing; fire shall sparkle out of this burnt thing."

It was this *Soz-e-Khusrau* which Iqbal wanted to be bestowed upon his heart by God. In one and the same breath he beseeched God to be invested with *Shoar-e-Rumi* and *Soz-e-Khusrau*. It means he gave equal importance to both of them. He got the uproar of Rumi's heart and so he got the *soz* of Khusrau also and he made the best use of it. For in

*Payam-e-Mashriq*, he says:

"The vein of the Muslim has grown agitated from the flame of my burning heart; tears come out of his eyes due to my restlessness."

He says again:

"I have oozed out fire from my agonised soul and I have transferred it to the heart of the East; the soil of the East is kindling like flame due to my bewailing. I have placed this flame in the body of the East like electricity."

His *soz* inspired him to have the same conception of *ishq* which Khusrau had, though he is more impressive, more cohesive, more scientific in his expression as well as in his elucidation. He had the advantage of being familiar with the variegated discussions of love by the idealists of both East and West.

Like Khusrau, Iqbal is also overwhelmed with the serenity and ecstasy of love, so he sang sweetly:

"The leaves and the tulips have in them the tinge of love, the constant effort on our part is itself involved in the misfortune of love; if the heart of this world is operated upon, you will find in it the blood shed by love; the rays of the sun of love rend asunder the sea, love is an eye to a fish and it enables it to see its way in the darkness of oceanic waters."

Iqbal developed his thesis of love by saying that the revolutions of the sky are due to the currents and cross-currents of love; this universe would freeze to death if there were no love; even inorganic matter shall fail to be changed into plants if there is no love; vegetation can also be deprived of self-consciousness in the absence of love.

He elucidates the phenomenon of love in his other verses by saying:

"Love is the law, the constitution of life, the real civilisation of religion and the religion of love; its outward appearance is fiery and full of flames, its inward is however the divine light of God of the Universe; religion does not get perfection without love; religion must be learnt in the company of lovers."

Like Khusrau, Iqbal has found the solace of *ishq* in his heart, so he says:

"O heart ! if you sit beside me, I shall feel happier in a blanket than

if kings were sitting beside me.”

According to Iqbal, the heart is the only place where God can be seen enthroned. Some of Iqbal's verses are metaphorically very akin to Khusrau's. For example, Khusrau says:

“Who can make reason a shield against love? If he does so, he tries to resist a mountain with a blade of grass.”

Iqbal writes:

“A mountain reduces itself to a blade of grass before love; the heart swims fast in it like a fish.”

Khusrau says:

“I am a poor slave of *ishq* (love), O wisdom! Be away from my head; this king, i.e., love, does not like to make you a partner in counsel.”

Iqbal writes:

“Love is a king, an evident proof; both the spheres are under its possession.”

Khusrau in eulogising love denounces *aql*, i.e. reason or wisdom or intellect, the conflict between *ishq* and *aql* has been under theoretical discussion for a very long time. Philosophers and scientists are great believers in intellectualism. According to them, the intellect reigns supreme over the universe. Philosophy and science are completely subservient to it. The Sufis are, however, believers in love. According to them, the mysteries of all realities are solved through love. Spiritual attainments have been brought forth not through intellect or reason. Prophets who have created great revolutions in the world have been solely inspired and led by *ishq*. The scope of the search for space and time gets limited if it is made through wisdom or reason.

Khusrau was a great sufi, so he gave love preference over wisdom. He says:

“I have a heart which is after love, wisdom is not meant for it.”

“Wisdom condemns me for being absorbed in love but a lover has no trust in what wisdom says.”

“When the heart is blessed with love, there is no room for wisdom,

in this special assembly, there is no place for strangers."

"I am happy with love after which I am bereft of wisdom and soul; strangers cannot be placated here."

"I have love; the heart has been robbed of me; all the ways and means of wisdom have also gone away."

Like Khusrau, Iqbal also denounces wisdom:

"Love is a prologue to eternity; wisdom is perishable but there is a perennial life for love."

"Wisdom is a betrayer, it assumes hundreds of disguises."

"Both wisdom and love proceed towards a destination; both are the leaders of a caravan; wisdom leads it with tricks; love however takes it on with ecstasy."

"The ruses of reason are worth seating, it poses to be the guide of a party but it has the intention of being a plunderer."

"Wisdom gets entangled in the labyrinth of cause and effect; love plays polo on the ground of action; wisdom gets investment from fear and doubt; love has inseparable dynamism in its determination and belief."

Iqbal believed that the secrets of realities can be known only through midnight bewailings and the overflow of tears in the early hours of dawn. Wisdom leads to doubt, scepticism and perplexity. Love leads, however, a man to a realm which is situated beyond the frontiers of the stars of the sky. With all his appreciation of love and denunciation of intellect, Iqbal differed from Khusrau when he preached an alliance between *ishq* and *aql*. Khusrau was a Sufi poet; so like other Sufis, he did not like to minimise *ishq* by making a compromise with *aql*. Iqbal was a philosopher-poet who lived in an age of manifold discoveries of science, so he had to surrender the ideology of *ishq* by saying that if there was communion between *ishq* and *aql*, a new dynamic world of creative forces may come into being.

"Wisdom becomes conscious of God if it mingles with love, love makes its foundation strong if it has in it the sense of reason; when love combines with reason, quite a new world comes into existence; arise, create a new world and combine love and reason."

Iqbal even in this compromise does not like to share the views that in presenting the reality, reason, i.e., wisdom, is the sole creative force. According to him, the intellect can be fruitful only if it submits to the fundamental and primary guidance and control of love.

“Wisdom without love is a satanic force, but if it has love in it, it is a divine power.”

Iqbal meets Khusrâu again in his sense of perfectability of manhood. Khusrâu wanted man to rise higher in the scale of human values, so he makes us believe that man is a lustrous pearl of eternity and he serves as an ornament for this earth.

“Man has been sanctified by passing through the nine chambers of the sky.”

“Man is the soul of the world; is a world himself; the world cannot sustain the significance of his existence.”

“Man is the king of both the spheres.”

“He is a key of the store-house of God. He has not been sent to this world for indulging in frolics.”

“The sky has been made out of the pearl of man’s obligations. He is a mirror in which God’s reflection is to be seen.”

In the end, Khusrâu says that if this mirror gets rusted, it is a great calamity for humanity.

Iqbal also had the same sense of perfectibility of man which is to be found in his various verses.

“The place of man is higher than the sky itself; the source of civilisation is in the veneration of man.”

“Man is the viceregent of God because he is the soul of the world; his existence is the shadow of God.”

“Man, where have you come from? The blue sky had opened its thousands of eyes of stars to see you coming.”

Iqbal says that God has lost man and He is seen revealed in everything of the Universe in order to find man.

He searches man in the beauty of tulips and narcissuses, in the breast

of birds, in the sweet smell of flowers, in the pretty colours of this or that thing, in the moon, in palaces, in vales and valleys. The pearl of life has been lost in the earthly body of man; so it is to be decided whether this world is man or God Himself.

Khusrau's vision of the perfectibility of man has been highly developed in Iqbal's reflections on the ascending note of personality, which according to him runs through the whole gamut of being until it attains its perfection in man. He says that when man realises all his possibilities, he becomes God. In his *Asrar-e-Khudi*, he has given a picture of an ideal society in which the perfect man is likely to attain maturity.

Khusrau wanted the Muslim to be a perfect man by treading the path of *tasawwuf*. Iqbal also had the same idea but he preached this in a manner which catered to modern taste. Iqbal wanted the Muslim to be a perfect man by proving himself to be the note of Raphael's trumpet for ailing humanity and this, according to him, he can do by conforming to the spirit of the Holy *Quran*, drawing vigour and vitality from the teachings of Islam and making no compromise with the perverted values of life.

Iqbal meets Khusrau again in his love for the Holy Prophet Mohammad. Both have unstinted love and unflinching admiration for him. Khusrau says :

"One cannot get a passage to the sky without walking in the footsteps of Mustafa."

He advocates also:

"If Sharah is not according to the teachings of the Prophet, it is simply a mischief."

Iqbal also says:

"Our world has been reconstructed from Prophethood; prophethood is our religion and our laws; we have learnt the religion of Nature from our Prophet; it is from him that we have kindled the torch on the path of righteousness; his significance is the investment of our nation; the unity of our nationhood is safeguarded by him."

Iqbal meets Khusrau again in singing a chorus of praise for India. In his extraordinary love for Delhi, Khusrau says that it is the garden of heaven, there is no city that can be compared to it in pomp and magnificence. Its name has captured the imagination of the people of Khutan, even Mecca shows its reverence by listening to its name and Medina has grown deaf after hearing its fame. (*Qiran-us-Sadain*, pp. 28-29). As

regards the flowers of India, he says that every flower of it is like the garden of paradise and if Syria or Rome were in possession of such a treasure, they would have trumpeted their glory all over the world. Khusrāu revelled in the charming grace, elegance, smartness and saltishness of the dark beauties of India also. (*Dawal Rani Khidr Khan*, pp. 129-133). In his mathnavi *Nuh-Sipihr*, he says that in India lie concealed wisdom and learned ideas beyond calculation. Here knowledge and learning are widespread. It is superior in its great achievements in the domain of mathematics and numerical systems and no music of any other country can surpass the music of India (*Nuh-Sipihr*, pp. 167-171).

Iqbal also once adored India and everything which belonged to it. He felt greatly delighted in describing the glory and greatness of India by saying that it was here that Chishti gave the message of truthfulness, it was here that Nanak sang the song of unity of God, it was here where the Tartars lived as its patriotic citizens, it was the land that attracted the people of Hijaz to settle here, it was this land which bewildered the Greeks, it was from here that learning and knowledge were propagated in the world, it was here where God could turn its soil into gold, it was here where Turks filled their skirts with diamonds, it was from here that the Prophet of Islam enjoyed the pleasant breezes in Arabia, it was here that Noah's ark laid its anchor; it was here that one could enjoy the bliss of paradise; it was here where gardens were to be envied even by heaven. Greeks and Romans had all lost their fame but the glories of India are still here. There are some reasons for it ("Tirana-e-Hindi", "Hindustani Bachchon Ka Geet" and "Ram").

Khusrāu in his protagonistism of his religion cannot be outrivalled by any of his co-religionists. With all his unblamable orthodoxy, he did not fail to appreciate what was good in the religion of his compatriots. He has made special mention of Hindu women dying willingly for their husbands and men for God or for their masters. He was so much struck by the sheer nobility underlying these acts of self-immolation that he suggested that if his religion permitted them, many of his co-religionists would die eagerly in that manner (*Nuh-Sipihr*, pp. 191-195).

Khusrāu also advised his co-religionists to study the spirit lying behind the Hindu worship of idols which according to him were simply the symbols of existence.

Iqbal also did not fail to pay due tributes to the sages of Hinduism and Sikhism. In admiring Ram, he says that India is proud of his devoted life and he was reckoned as a spiritual leader of India. Under his guidance, the evening of India was brighter than the morning. He was peerless in bravery, in sanctity of his character and nobility of love. He pays glowing tributes to Swami Ram Teerath by calling him *Gouhar-e-Nayaab* (a gem not to be found anywhere). He always admired Guru Nanak's preachings in which he relished his philosophy of the unity of

God. In *Javed Nama*, he introduces an Indian seer, whom he calls the friend of the world. He confesses that this Indian seer unravelled knotted secrets to him in his discourses (*Javed Nama*, pp. 35-41). He is impressed by the priceless songs of the Indian bard Bhartarihari who, according to him, was the king of the world of asceticism. He admired him as a poet who plucked the comeliest buds alone from the garden of his vision and wove fine fabrics with his unique thoughts (*Javed Nama*, pp. 197-200). In *Javed Nama*, he refers to Lord Buddha also whose teachings, according to him, were kind thoughts and brave deeds (pp. 48-49).

Iqbal aspired to be a sovereign of the realm of poetry like Khusrau but he did not become such a sovereign. He did not overtake the supple and crisp style and the splendidly imaginative figure of Khusrau's poetry nor in the wonderful exaltation of his rhythmic verses but he excels Khusrau in working a veritable revolution in the poetry of his age by introducing varied and hitherto unknown subjects in it. He outshines Khusrau also in revaluing the thoughts of Muslim thinkers in terms of newer knowledge in order to make them universal. In this he was a great success because he had an extraordinary amount of capacity to sing aloud what he wanted to say in a powerful and glorious voice.

This paper must not be regarded as an exhaustive treatise. It is meant simply to evoke interest in the comparative study of these two intellectual giants of this sub-continent.



## IQBAL AND MILTON

V. G. KIERNAN

*"For a long time I have been yearning to write in the manner of Milton (Paradise Lost, etc.)...I have been nurturing this wish for the past five or six years, but the pangs have never been so acute as now."*

—Iqbal, in a letter of March 11, 1903

IT was not to be expected that Milton's poetry would have much meaning for India. Shakespeare was a secular, humanist poet, Milton was lodged in the special Christian cosmos. If he had something to share with an Indian poet, this was likely to be a Muslim. Between Milton and Iqbal, two men so far apart in place and time, there are analogies as well as contrasts. They even studied at the same university. Milton lived during the first beginnings of a British presence in India, Iqbal shortly before its close. Milton thought of Asia as opulent and barbarous; his Satan enthroned in hell reminded him of Ormuz and India and 'the gorgeous East' rich in 'barbaric pearls and gold'.<sup>1</sup> Iqbal thought the same of imperialistic Europe. Milton was willing to admit that his own Britain had been primitive before its conquest by the Romans, who 'beat us into some civility', or civilization;<sup>2</sup> Iqbal was deeply convinced that the Arab conquests had a civilizing and uplifting character. Milton was for many years a student of Russia, or Muscovy, and thought its people the most miserable in Europe;<sup>3</sup> Iqbal applauded the overthrow by them of their oppressors in 1917.

Questions of affinity between the writers include the direct influence of one on the other, in this case evident if limited; and similarities of outlook, and of the historical situations underlying them. Milton and Iqbal belonged to societies not far removed from the Middle Ages, which persisted for two or three centuries longer in India. Indeed they might each

be said to have lived towards the end of a long-drawn twilight between medieval and modern; and breathed an atmosphere still laden with old romance and its marvels and strange adventures, of 'Charlemagne with all his peerage' or the Mughal chivalry, the *shah-sawar-e-Chughtai*, and Lapland witches dancing, Khizar wandering. Both loved exotic names of far-off lands and races. Very frequent with Iqbal is the image of snare, net, trap: his poetic world is one of secrets, mysteries, enchantments, as if he were another Sinbad looking back over hazards and hair-breadth escapades. There is something of the same kind in Milton's mask *Comus*.

Both twilights were ending in a Renaissance, in England's case derived from Italy but fertilised by native English developments, in that of India from England, but again it was an India stirring with fresh life of its own. Milton was fascinated by science as well as by the arts; it was only on occasional holidays that he thought it proper to

Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,<sup>4</sup>

and the altering shape of the solar system in his lifetime from Ptolemaic to Copernican enthralled him. Iqbal may not have tried much to master the science of his day for himself, but he wrote a poem in honour of Einstein; and in another "The Morning of Resurrection" in the same collection, he makes Adam, or mankind, boast of science and its achievements in the material universe.<sup>5</sup> He was often at his best in giving voice to this audacity of the human mind bent on dominion; here he might be compared with Marlowe and his Faustian heroes. Iqbal's gospel of 'Selfhood', the fullest possible development of the individual, had an affinity with the spirit of Belial's speech in the debate of the fallen angels in Book II of *Paradise Lost*, his clinging even in hell to this intellectual being,

Those thoughts that wander through eternity.

In "The Morning of Resurrection", however, Adam is appealing for divine forgiveness, on the ground that it was only by yielding to the world's seductions that he could learn to dominate the world. Science, after the Great War, when this was written, might well lie under suspicion, and for Iqbal it was often compromised by association with Western imperialism.

Early in life Iqbal was planning an imitation of *Paradise Lost*, and he also contemplated an epic poem on the tragedy of Kerbala on the lines of *Paradise Regained*.<sup>6</sup> His *Javed Nama* was in some measure an imitation of Dante (and of Dante's Arab precursor), but its voyaging among the planets might be compared with Satan's long journey from hell to Eden. Poets with a message to deliver to their age may require a long poem to

give them room, but long poems have been on the whole rare; very rare in much of Asia, including China and Japan, though somewhat less so in the Muslim region, as well as in Europe. Tennyson's 'short swallow-flights of song' may be called poetry's natural mode, reflecting the intermittent brevity of the poetic vision. Successful long poems have been exceedingly rare anywhere; Iqbal's attempts must be said to fall short of complete success. They require the very high temperature generated by history's exceptional periods of storm and stress, to fuse private and collective consciousness into a single whole. It was to such an epoch of revolutionary change that Milton belonged. He was born in 1608, just after the successful conclusion of the struggle of the Netherlands for independence from Spain and for religious freedom; he grew up amid the longest of European wars, and was thirty-four when the English revolution, or civil war, broke out. He looked on this as a free nation's resistance to Charles I's ambition, shared with rulers in other lands, to turn a 'regulated monarchy' into a 'Turkish tyranny'; and he threw himself into it heart and soul.

European progressives were recalling Milton as the French Revolution drew near. In Spain Jovellanos translated *Paradise Lost*, in France Mirabeau translated the *Areopagitica*, Milton's panegyric on free speech. When the Revolution came, it inspired the greatest long poem of the Romantic age in English, Wordsworth's *Prelude*; and Wordsworth owed very much to Milton, who had a special place for all that generation of poets. Iqbal belonged to another Romantic era, in another time of turmoil when a movement of emancipation in India was being led by the middle classes to which Iqbal, like Milton in England, belonged; a national and social awakening with, as everywhere in seventeenth-century Europe, a strong religious colouring. It was all the more natural for him to be influenced by European writers like Milton and the two great German Romantics, Goethe and Heine, because he lacked any literary and cultural tradition of his own that could help him to find his bearings in an unfamiliar age. The centuries of Persian-style versifying in India were very remote from what the country stood in need of now. Ghalib brought them to an end by turning the Mughal sunset into poetic lament, introverted and pessimistic; Iqbal was daring the hurricanes and earthquakes.

He saw imperialists, incarnations of the spirit of Nimrud as he called them, and dictators avid for conquest, bestriding his world as Milton saw royal despots. Both men were scholars, leading contemplative lives until the storms of their age drew them out to play their part on the political stage. Iqbal was confined for the most part to the petty stage of Panjab political faction; but both men had in view a far wider public than that of their own homeland, though the international audience which buoyed them up must have been a good deal swollen by

their imagination. In his second *Defence of the People of England* against the foreign propagandist Salmasius, Milton spoke of the wide interest aroused by the controversy, and declared that he felt himself to be addressing a whole attentive continent;<sup>8</sup> in a sonnet he speaks of his revolutionary writings,

Of which all Europe rings from side to side.<sup>9</sup>

When Iqbal wrote in Persian, he was addressing the entire 'East', by which he meant all the lands of Islam, and often persuaded himself that Persia and Arabia were listening to his words with bated breath.

One of Salmasius's offences was to belittle the parliamentary party in England as obscure plebeians; Milton rejoined that men of humble birth who have done noble deeds 'are not inferior to men of the noblest descent.'<sup>10</sup> This was a sentiment Iqbal could have echoed; likewise the dictum that 'poverty is not to be accounted a disgrace.'<sup>11</sup> But he would also have been ready to agree with one of Milton's less hopeful convictions: Aristotle and Cicero tell us that Asiatics are naturally servile, but few men anywhere 'are either desirous of liberty, or capable of using it'.<sup>12</sup> Iqbal might be against dictatorship, but in later years at any rate he professed no belief in democracy.<sup>13</sup> Like Milton he wanted to see the multitude shepherded by an elite of the intelligent and conscientious; and if Milton could put his faith in a Cromwell, Iqbal trusted at times to some far inferior leaders. There was a fundamental contradiction here between desire for progress and disbelief in the common man's will or ability to make progress.

Both poets were embedded in societies whose consciousness was still strongly tinged with religion, and neither could separate his politics from religion. It coloured their international outlook too, and Milton's sonnet on the Catholic persecution of the Vaudois in Italy may be compared with Iqbal's poem of protest against the Italian seizure of Tripoli.<sup>14</sup> Yet their views were in many ways iconoclastic. Each can very often be heard denouncing meaningless beliefs, outworn rituals, the quackeries of priestcraft. Milton calls on his readers to shake off 'those two detestable curses, slavery and superstition'; one of his examples is the fear of the 'Indian Catharist' (he must have been hearing something about Jains), of disturbing vermin on his own body.<sup>15</sup> He ridicules all timid reverence for ecclesiastical pronouncements of the musty past: antiquity is nothing but 'a carved giant terribly menacing to children and weaklings'.<sup>16</sup> Iqbal's innumerable diatribes against mullahs and their pedantry, ignorance, greed, intolerance, might be suitably capped by Milton's query — 'But wherefore spend we two such precious things as time and reason upon priests?'<sup>17</sup> More generally, Iqbal could have echoed Milton's complaint that when he 'did but prompt the age

to quit their clogs', or cast off the trammels of habit and custom, he was assailed by a noisy conservative chorus

Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, or dogs.<sup>18</sup>

This may be heavy wit, but neither poet was well endowed in the department of wit or humour.

Very much of what both understood by true religion was, in Iqbal's words, 'the reconstruction of religious thought'; this required a clearing away of accretions of metaphysical rubbish, as Milton wrote, from the simple lessons of Scripture.<sup>19</sup> Iqbal was fond of discovering ideas akin to Islam in the works of his favourite European authors, Goethe and Nietzsche among them,<sup>20</sup> and if he ever went into Milton's later religious speculations, he must have been struck by his drift towards unitarianism, and towards elimination of any professional clerical hierarchy. It may be hard to say what he would have made of Milton's remark that a Church relying on State power to uphold it is no better than Mohammedan.<sup>21</sup> It is conceivable that he would have endorsed Milton's spirited defence of plurality of wives, on the ground that it was practised by the patriarchs, even though Solomon must be admitted to have 'exceeded due bounds'.<sup>22</sup>

Milton and Iqbal were both preoccupied with the problem of evil, personified imaginatively in Satan. By a curiosity of language, the English word 'devil' and the Arabic name 'Iblis', habitually used by Iqbal, both appear to derive from the Greek word *diabolos*—slanderer or accuser—which translators used for the Satan of Hebrew scripture. It is an illustration of how the European and East-Asian or Semitic zones have always interacted, Greece and Hellenism serving as intermediaries. In the *Quran*, Iblis comes to be identified with *Sheitan*, a word said to be a Hellenized form of the Hebrew, coming through Ethiopic, and standing for a blend of Jewish demon and Arabian *jinn*.<sup>23</sup> Christianity thought of mankind as no sooner created than corrupted by this Archfiend; Islam, with a healthier cradle in the desert, and a more sanguine view of human nature, thought of Satan or Iblis procuring only his own downfall by his disobedience though subsequently he might be granted leave to subject men to temptation.

In the Christian legend followed by Milton, a hazy, fragmentary one until stamped with his epic genius, Satan is a far more terrific personage than in the Islamic account because his crime is no less than high treason, a design to overthrow God and usurp the throne. Iblis is guilty only of being the sole angel who refuses to pay homage to new-created Adam; a refusal which may well seem no more than celestial self-respect. Implicit in the story is a moral, in harmony with Iqbal's estimate of human capabilities, that men are, or may become, superior to the denizens of heaven.

'Bright angels are your warriors', yours to command, he tells mankind, in lines full of his habitual regret at how little its potentialities are being realised.<sup>24</sup>

Whatever Satan's origins, both poets conferred greatness on him. In the fantasy of the man in the street in Milton's day he was a big black man, patron of the old women who were always being arrested as witches. In *Paradise Lost* he is above all a tragic protagonist, such as Milton could scarcely have conceived if he had not come just after the galaxy of Elizabethan tragedies. Without these, too, the debate in hell after the expulsion of Satan's rebel host from heaven could not have been half so dramatic. All his readers have been puzzled by his so often appearing to be on the revolutionary side, in heavenly as well as English politics. He must have been giving expression, intentionally or otherwise, to many embitterments of his own life, private and public. When Mammon, in the course of the debate, advocates ignoble peace, and 'the popular vote' approves,<sup>25</sup> Milton's contempt for compromisers can be felt, his disgust at the failure of his countrymen to rise to the height of the great argument for which history had singled them out.

It is for revenge on God that Satan sets out to bring corruption into Eden. A Quranic Satan, owing his ruin to Adam's advent, which meant his own degradation, had good reason to seek revenge on him instead, though this motive does not stand out in Iqbal's diverse conceptions of him. Among these is an old and refined one of Satan and his tribe as beings who separate themselves from God because of being unable to bear the ecstasy of his presence.<sup>26</sup> In another passage, Iqbal urges us not to separate ourselves from the congregation, like Satan; and since he is writing here in his 'progressive' or socialistic vein, it is possible to take this as meaning that we ought to keep close to the *people*, the masses: only bad men turn their backs on the commonalty.<sup>27</sup>

But Iqbal himself was always keenly aware of being, in a different sense, a seceder, one who quitted the beaten track, the mechanical routine of his community's archaic mode of living and thinking. He was aware too of a duality in his own make-up, some of whose roots must have lain in his being at once drawn to and repelled by this community, and in the opposite currents of history that were dragging it forward and backward. He felt in all his fibres the urgent need for it, and all humanity, to grow, to advance, to learn its own strength through effort and strife. His eyes were often turned back to the pristine days of Arab expansion, as a golden age; but, quite unlike his fellow-countryman Gandhi, he had no wish to return to any stationary, vegetative past, where history would come to a dead end. Idealising the youthful spring-time of Islam and the dizzily rapid spread of Arab power, he was seeking to combine the religious ideal of a perfect society with his instinct for vigorous growth, perpetual adaptation to new horizons.

Ordinary Muslim life, as Iqbal knew it in his own day, was the reverse of this, static instead of stable, sunk in meaningless observances. Some external force was needed to galvanise it into activity: in Iblis, the tempter, he could lend this a poetic shape. Between poet and prince of darkness, the relationship must be an enigmatic one, as it was, in another way, with Milton. Blake might have said of Iqbal, as he said of Milton, that 'he was a true poet and of the devil's party without knowing it'. Iblis, that is, became a magnified representation of his own mission, as his people's gadfly, stirrer-up of novel thoughts and aspirations, derider of empty somnolent religiosity. He had something of a taste for depicting himself as a kind of outlaw, an Ishmael dogged by the reproaches of orthodox dullards and their dull spiritual guides, the blind leading the blind. In this light, he could claim kinship naturally enough with Iblis, imagined as a free spirit, adversary of all unquestioned creeds, all senseless regulation and repetition. Iqbal was applauded by many, comprehended by few; the Iblis he conjured up was another solitary, an exile confronting his shadowed destiny alone.

Thus in *Payam-e-Mashriq*, 'Message of the East', composed soon after the Great War and the Russian Revolution, and, as its preface makes it clear, very much under the sense they inspired of sweeping, headlong transformation, Iblis can be raised to the rank of presiding genius of change. He is the animating essence in everything, creating and destroying and awakening.<sup>28</sup> One may wonder whether Kali, goddess of his Brahmin ancestors, flitted through Iqbal's mind. Dionysus may have had some like role in the ancient world of Europe, first beginning to undergo the disruption and mutation which from then on were to be so much part and parcel of its history that it had no more need to concentrate them in one image. All disturbance of the rhythm of men's collective life has a questionable, abnormal, 'sinful' aspect, to those who resent it or suffer by it, and a fallen angel might well be its most faithful symbol. In some of these poems God may wear the opposite visage of a changeless power far above and beyond humanity, indifferent to lamentation or petition; heaven, with its God but no Devil, is an abode of tedious monotony.<sup>29</sup> As against this passionless perfection, Iblis can be Iqbal's champion of the Nietzschean 'human, all-too-human', pioneer of all mortal hope and endeavour, and with them no doubt all mortal error and despair.

In this portrayal of Iblis, the highest point comes in the dialogue in *Bal-e-Jibril*—'Gabriel's Wing'—between him and his former companion, Gabriel.<sup>30</sup> Iblis is still remembered on high, and his loss regretted, his repentance and return longed for. Clearly there is no thought of him in Gabriel's mind as pure evil, or beyond pardon. Rather, he wears a tragic dignity, torn between the memory of what he has lost and the impossibility of ever going back to it. The world of life and death, of tumult and exaltation, has intoxicated him, and in his own way he is convinced that

in plunging into it and urging it on he is the minister of a mysterious cosmic purpose, whereas the obedient angels are docile creatures good for nothing but chanting anthems. They are winged counterparts of Iqbal's goody-goody neighbours here below, conventionally pious worshippers in whom the fire of life has been smothered under cold ashes. He had a marked fondness for poems in dialogue; often, as here, they serve to express the converse of men's simple certainties, and the answer to the question posed is left hanging incalculably on the air. But Iqbal's meaning is clear enough: mankind to be worthy of itself must find its way forward, never content with any resting-place, and it can advance only by living dangerously.

"I have a certain amount of admiration for the devil", Iqbal wrote more prosaically. "By refusing to prostrate himself before Adam . . . he revealed a high sense of self-respect."<sup>31</sup> Iblis forfeits this title when, in one of the short poems, he seeks pardon on the ground that his sin was involuntary, necessitated by divine foreknowledge: God is indignant at his thus repudiating his own freedom of choice.<sup>32</sup> As to Adam, in a very interesting discussion of the myth of his fall Iqbal treats the *Quran's* version as an example of its practice of infusing new meanings into old mythic symbols. On his interpretation Adam was not sinking into moral corruption: it was the awakening of curiosity that made him venture on his first act of free will, and accordingly he could find forgiveness.<sup>33</sup> Among his descendants Faust is singled out as a free spirit, an assertion of human potentialities, in a poem where Rumi, conversing in paradise with Goethe, is delighted to hear of Faust's pact with Satan: it is what is wanted to revive and transform a worn-out world.<sup>34</sup> All this may seem far away from Milton. Yet his Adam and Eve, expelled from Eden, shed only a few 'natural tears' before setting out bravely on their way, with a whole world to explore.<sup>35</sup> It is as if to them their banishment is really a release (as it would have been to Milton) from a too cloistered inactive existence.

Direct convergence between Iqbal and Milton is visible above all in 'Satan's Parliament' (*Iblis ki Majlis-e-Shora*),<sup>36</sup> patterned on this work, though very different from the infernal council in *Paradise Lost*, and is the finest of Iqbal's longer short poems. Iqbal had no heritage of drama to draw on; his dialogue-poems, of which this one is the climax, were in one way a groping towards this missing element of Islamic literary tradition. True, the debate falls far short of its model in dramatic quality, though it approaches Milton in grandeur of language; the speakers are given no distinct characters, the place of meeting is undefined. Iblis is not lord of hell, but its destined captive, though his shutting up in it has been postponed to the end of the world. This poem is a later work, and may be called a far more pessimistic one. Earlier, Iqbal had paid tributes to Marx and Lenin, and could think of the revolution of 1917 as part of a divinely



sanctioned uprising against oppression. But since then fascism and imperialism had triumphed over socialism in Italy, China, Germany; and meanwhile Iqbal under pressure of India's widening communal divisions was being pushed towards, in some degree, a more conformist Muslim attitude. Marx is still counted on the side of light against darkness, but now he has a baffled, enfeebled look.

Milton's fallen angels are newly fallen, and all their thoughts are of how to renew their contest with God: man comes into them only incidentally. Iqbal's council meets ages later, in the 1930's, and its purpose is to perpetuate the reign of evil over men: heaven is only briefly alluded to in the opening lines about the long failure of its hopes for mankind. Milton's disputants have just suffered disaster, like the Titans in Keats' imitation of *Paradise Lost*, *Hyperion*. Iqbal's debaters are in full command of the affairs of earth, though some are perturbed by dangers which may threaten their power; and it was always with this world, not with any invisible realm, that Iqbal was passionately concerned. Satan now has regained far more of his old legendary office, as the adversary of mankind, instead of its summoner to adventure. He is no longer alone: he grows more imposing in one way, but less in another, by being like Milton's Satan a head of State, an acknowledged leader, instead of a lone wolf. He is a more towering figure than before, but he has no mission now to incite or compel men to learn to be free. Instead his whole object is to keep mankind submissive, enchained in a vicious circle of greed, violence, and bigotry. From a revolutionary he has turned into a reactionary; a crowned Machiavelli, a cynical calculator. It is a descent as steep, by a different route, as that of Milton's archangel. From being God's coadjutor, like Satan from being his armed antagonist, he has come to be no more than deceiver and seducer of the foolish.<sup>37</sup>

He dismisses his councillor's fear of socialism, which he assures them will always be outmatched by imperialism, his own sovereign invention. Imperialism was always the object of Iqbal's bitterest condemnation, a fraternity of peoples, his most ardent hope. It must be admitted that World War II, soon to break out—three years after his death—went far towards confirming his gloomy forecast. Iblis appears less a realist when he goes on to confess apprehensions of a menace from another quarter, from Islam, and in particular from its 'revolutionary' teaching that the rich are trustees for the poor. He tells his lieutenants to suffocate it by diligently fostering the things Iqbal has always deplored: the stupefying weight of dogma and prejudice, the lifeless cult of prayer-bead and scholastic hair-splitting.

Ironically, in terms of historical fact, the trusteeship doctrine was part of this lumber, or of religion as opium, the very obstacle to progress that Iqbal was attacking. It was the same old fallacy, not in any unique way Islamic, that Gandhi, socially the most unrevolutionary of leaders, was

preaching. Whether or not Iqbal really convinced himself that it could be an explosive force, his true mind was not on this. What he looked forward to, even if he could not draw up any plan for it, was a revitalised Islam which would launch out on new paths and go far beyond the letter of any old law in its high quest. Milton died a very unorthodox Christian; he and Iqbal, however firmly attached to the past, were both men in search of new beginnings, a human world redeemed.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>*Paradise Lost*, Book 2, lines 1 ff.
- <sup>2</sup>*The Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. J. A. St John (London, 1848), Vol. 5, pp. 197-8.
- <sup>3</sup>*Ib.*, Vol. 5, p. 402.
- <sup>4</sup>Sonnet XXI.
- <sup>5</sup>*Payam-e-Mashriq* (Lahore, 1923), pp. 239-40, 100 01; French translation by E. Meyerovitch and M. Aghena, *Message de l'Orient* (Paris, 1956), pp. 177, 90-1.
- <sup>6</sup>See S. A. Vahid, *Studies in Iqbal* (Lahore, 1967), pp. 24, 25; and the same author's essay 'Iqbal and Western Poets', in Hafeez Malik, ed., *Iqbal* (New York, 1971), pp. 352-7. Iqbal Singh points to an affinity between *Paradise Lost* and the *Javed Nama* of Iqbal: see *The Ardent Pilgrim, An Introduction to the Life and Work of Mohammed Iqbal* (London, 1951), p. 186.
- <sup>7</sup>*Prose Works*, Vol. 1, p. 394; Vol. II, p. 186.
- <sup>8</sup>*Ib.*, Vol. 1, p. 219.
- <sup>9</sup>Sonnet XXII.
- <sup>10</sup>*Prose Works*, Vol. 1, p. 16.
- <sup>11</sup>*Ib.*, Vol. V, p. 89.
- <sup>12</sup>*Ib.*, p. 32.
- <sup>13</sup>'As you know I am no believer in Democracy.' (Letter to Edward Thompson, 26 July 1934, in the possession of his friend's son, Dr E. P. Thompson.)
- <sup>14</sup>Sonnet XVIII; *Bang-e-Dara* ('The Call of the Road', Lahore, 1924), pp. 218-9; English translation in V. G. Kiernan, *Poems from Iqbal* (London, 1955), pp. 15-16.
- <sup>15</sup>*Prose Works*, Vol. IV, pp. 1-2; Vol. III, p. 325.
- <sup>16</sup>*Ib.*, Vol. III, p. 66.
- <sup>17</sup>*Ib.*, Vol. II, p. 196.
- <sup>18</sup>Sonnet XII.
- <sup>19</sup>*Prose Works*, Vol. IV, p. 289.
- <sup>20</sup>See *Payam-e-Mashriq*, pp. 151-2, 241 (French edn, pp. 123-4, 178-9).
- <sup>21</sup>*Prose Works*, Vol. IV, p. 458.
- <sup>22</sup>*Ib.*, Vol. IV, pp. 225ff., 237.
- <sup>23</sup>See *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, 'Satan'; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 'Shaitan', 'Iblis'.
- <sup>24</sup>*Bal-e-Jibril* ('Gabriel's Wing', Lahore, 1935), p. 78; Kiernan, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-1.
- <sup>25</sup>*Paradise Lost*, Book 2, lines 278 ff.
- <sup>26</sup>In *Javed Nama*; cf. Iqbal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
- <sup>27</sup>In *Asrar-e-Khudi*, the passage is so interpreted by Dr. G. R. Sabri-i-abrizi, in 'Individual and Society in Iqbal's Thinking', a paper read at the Iqbal Centenary gathering at Lahore in 1977 (p. 8).
- <sup>28</sup>*Payam-e-Mashriq*, pp. 97-8 (French edn, pp. 87-8).
- <sup>29</sup>*Ib.*, pp. 136-7 (Kiernan, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-5), 153 (French edn, pp. 124-5).

<sup>30</sup>*Bal-e-Jibril*, pp. 192-4 (Kiernan, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-3).

<sup>31</sup>*Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, ed. S. A. Vahid (Lahore, 1964), p. 42.

<sup>32</sup>*Zarb-e-Kalim* ('The Rod of Moses', 1936), p. 42 (Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 64).

<sup>33</sup>*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Oxford, 1934), pp. 77 ff.

<sup>34</sup>*Payam-e-Mashriq*, pp. 246-7 (French edn, p. 183).

<sup>35</sup>*Paradise Lost*, conclusion.

<sup>36</sup>*Armaghan-e-Hejaz* ('Gift of Hejaz', 1938), pp. 213-28 (Kiernan, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-85).

<sup>37</sup>This decline of Iblis is foreshadowed in a short poem in *Zarb-e-Kalim*, p. 148 (Kiernan, *op. cit.*, p. 74).

## IQBAL AND GOETHE

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL

THE first poem by Iqbal which I ever read was 'Meeting in Paradise,' that lovely scene in *Payam-e-Mashriq* in which the poet has a vision of Goethe and Rumi, his two spiritual leaders from the West and the East, respectively. As a German and lover of German poetry, I could not help being fascinated by the idea that a Muslim poet in India had understood that aspect of German literature which interested me most, and being an enthusiastic admirer of Maulana Rumi already during my student days, I became immediately interested in Iqbal's work; Nicholson's fine analysis of the *Payam-e-Mashriq* in *Islamica I* (1925) never ceased to inspire me. Thus, I found my way to Iqbal through Goethe and Rumi; but it was only many years later that I discovered how immense Goethe's influence on Iqbal had been.

It is well known that the young Indian Muslim was 'all for German knowledge', as Atiya Begum says in her description of the cheerful days in Heidelberg during the summer of 1907. But Iqbal must have loved Goethe already earlier; for in his poem on Mirza Ghalib, he visualizes him as the counterpart of Ghalib and sees him sleeping in the rose-garden of Weimar, while the Indian poet rests in desolate Delhi. Indeed, Goethe and Mirza Ghalib belong to the five important figures whom he enumerates in the *Stray Reflections* (1910) when speaking of the influences that were decisive for his development:

"I confess I owe a great deal to Hegel, Goethe, Mirza Ghalib, Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil and Wordsworth. The first two led me into the 'inside' of things. The third and fourth taught me how to remain oriental in spirit and expression after having assimilated foreign ideas, and the last saved me from atheism in my student days."

The first fruit of Iqbal's encounter with the German poet is the famous Urdu poem *Ek Sham*, written on the banks of the Neckar in Heidelberg when Iqbal was about thirty years old. *Ek Sham* is not only a fine nature-poem but rather an echo of Goethe's *Wanderers Nachtlid*, which the poet had composed in the romantic forests of Thuringia when he was of approximately the same age as Iqbal. The feeling of peace and of sweet restfulness which extends from the slumbering trees and dreaming hills into man's heart is almost identical in both poems.

It was in the first years after his return to Lahore that Iqbal gave expression to his great admiration for Goethe.

"It is not until I had realized the infinitude of Goethe's imagination that I discovered the narrow breadth of my own."

Thus he says with a formula which he repeated in poetical form years later in the dedicatory poem of the *Payam-e-Mashriq*, where he compared Goethe and himself to daggers, the German poet powerful and glittering in his activity, the Indo-Muslim poet still concealed in the scabbard, waiting to be drawn and to act in the world. And the juxtaposition of Germany's gardens and India's dead dust harks back to Iqbal's early lines on Ghalib and Goethe.

The work that impressed Iqbal most was not *Werther*, the youthful romantic novel by Goethe, but *Faust*, a book which he characterizes as the best expression of the German soul:

"... it reveals the spiritual ideals of the German nation ... not the book supposed to have been written by the Galilean fishermen."

For, the anatomy of the human mind, he held, could be studied with the philosophers and psychologists,

"but a real insight into human nature you can get from Goethe alone."

*Faust* becomes, for him, the symbol of humanity, as he states in an interesting comparison between Shakespeare and Goethe:

"Both Shakespeare and Goethe re-think the Divine thought of creation. There is, however, one important difference between them. The realist Englishman re-thinks the individual—the idealist German, the universal. His Faust is a seeming individual only. In reality, he is humanity individualized."

Therefore, he claims that *Faust*

“is nothing short of Divine worksmanship”.

Indeed, *Faust* is a drama which would appeal to anyone who believes in the constant development of the human personality. In the *West-Oestlicher Divan*, Goethe had expressed the view that personality and individuality were supposed by most people to be the highest bliss a human being could reach—

“Höchstes Glück der Erdenkinder  
sei nur die Persönlichkeit.”

It is difficult not to think of parallels with Iqbal's definition of *khudi*, a concept which I would rather translate as ‘individuality’ instead of using the slightly negative concept of Ego. Did he not see the greatest happiness of man in the development of his *khudi* to the highest possible point, so that it might be able to survive even the shock of physical death? Goethe's *Faust* depicts such a personality, a man who has to overcome innumerable temptations of life until he is finally saved. Faust makes his agreement with Mephisto, the Power of Evil, on condition that the devil should take his soul when he addresses the flighty moment with the words:

“Stay, you are so beautiful!”

“Werd' ich zum Augenblicke sagen:  
Verweile doch, du bist so schön! . . .”

That means: If man discovers one single moment in his life which is perfect in itself and does not incite him to further development, then he is lost to the devil. That was exactly Iqbal's view, for every moment of not-growing, of stopping on the way is equal to retrogression—an idea which was very common with the great Sufi leaders of old. Man is called to pass through ever new steps on the infinite ladder that leads towards God and, after reaching Him, to proceed into His infinite abysses. Thus, Iqbal could easily discover a similarity between the eternally striving Faust and his ideal man, the seeker of higher and higher levels of experience. We may assume that the personality of Faust may have been helpful in developing the germs of Iqbal's idea of man on his way towards perfection, which is rooted, on the other hand, in the teachings of Islamic mysticism. Does not Goethe claim in the final scene of *Faust* that salvation is available for those who spend their lives in constant endeavour?

"Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,  
den können wir erlösen!"

Yet, Iqbal certainly did not agree with the last sentences of the drama which claim that the eternally-feminine (das Ewig-Weibliche) is the power that attracts man to the higher spheres.

But *Faust* offered much more than the picture of man on his way through the spheres of life. It was the figure of Mephistopheles which particularly attracted Iqbal. In his thesis of 1907 ('The Development of Metaphysics in Persia'), the young philosopher had dwelt extensively upon the problem of evil in the various Oriental religions, and had devoted considerable space to the different solutions of this problem. His image of Iblis, as reflected in his poetry, is as many-sided as nature itself, ranging from unusual traditions in certain mystical currents about Iblis the lover to the Iblis of clay, the master of the European politicians. Goethe's Mephisto fits well into this picture. He is the spirit that always denies, and part of that power which always intends evil and creates good:

"... ein Teil von jener Kraft,  
die stets das Böse will und stets das Gute schafft. . ."

This description can be applied to Iqbal's Iblis, at least the Iblis that appears in the middle period of the poet's life and whose finest description is found in *Taskhīr-e-fīrat* in the *Payam-e-Mashriq*. Seducing Adam and luring him out of the peaceful meadows of Paradise, he confronts him with real life, which means with life as a constant struggle. By doing so, Iblis becomes instrumental in the growth of man's personality and his creativity, hence of human culture. It is Iblis who makes life colourful, and it is he who enables man to grow by fighting against him. His deepest secret wish is, according to Iqbal, to be overcome by the perfected man. Mephistopheles, as the active power that sets everything in motion in Faust's life, is a model of at least one aspect of Iqbal's Iblis; he is, in Goethe's words, "the companion who spurs man lest he become lazy and sleepy". And he is also the symbol of the cunning intellect, as Iqbal says with a quotation from Rumi's *Mathnawi* when he sees Rumi and Goethe in Paradise; and here he applies Jami's famous sentence about *Mathnawi* also to *Faust*: both Goethe and Rumi are no prophets but have a book!

However, not only the contents of *Faust* inspired Iqbal; he adapted also some formal aspects from this drama. Thus, the Prologue in Heaven and the Prologue on Earth in the *Javed Nama* are the poet's last visible tribute to Goethe, reminding the reader of the two prologues in *Faust*. He must indeed have known the tragedy very well and with all its details. Sayid Nazir Niazi has left us an interesting account of Iqbal's remarks

on Goethe's *Faust* and has shown that the poet, who is basically responsible for the great admiration Indo-Pakistani Muslims feel for Goethe, understood the German drama perhaps better than many a German reader. Sayed Nazir Niazi mentions that Iqbal was deeply interested in Dr Abid Husain's Urdu translation of *Faust*, and even was ready to offer his help for the translation of the second part of the drama:

"He observed that the second part was a little difficult as it contained numerous terms connected with astronomy and chemistry and also some references and allusions with which the people of the West were not familiar and which were properly understood only by Orientals. He said: 'During my stay in Germany, I had many an occasion to offer clarifications and explanations of these terms and usages and this used to leave a deep impression on my German audience. The fact is that Goethe possessed an enormous vision. It was his belief that—if one had not studied and examined the history of the past one thousand years, one could not claim to be cultured and refined. How was it possible, therefore, for every German to be familiar with all the usages and allusions that Goethe had culled from Oriental literature? To us these terms are words of daily use. I had no difficulty whatsoever in digesting these sections of *Faust*. The Germans really marvelled at the ease with which I explained these terms.' "

This is a revealing statement, and I can well imagine that it is correct. Goethe had indeed claimed in the *West-Oestlicher Divan*, that a person who could not take into account 3000 years of human history was bound to remain in the darkness, living from day to day without recognizing the great fabric of human thought and activity:

"Wer nicht von dreitausend Jahren  
sich weiss Rechenschaft zu geben,  
bleib im Dunkel unerfahren,  
mag von Tag zu Tage leben."

Iqbal would agree with him; for his own knowledge of history and philosophy was much deeper than that of most of his compatriots, and certainly also of many of the Europeans whom he happened to meet. It was out of this knowledge of history that his feeling of responsibility for his co-religionists in the subcontinent arose, as the Allahabad address clearly shows.

The image of Faust and Mephisto looms large in Iqbal's work, and is reflected in his ideal of the perfected man who has grown, thanks to his constant struggle with the lower potencies. But the influence of the *West-*



*Oestlicher Divan* should also not be underrated. Goethe composed his *Divan* after reading the translation of the *Divan* of Hafiz by the Austrian scholar, Joseph von Hammer, one of the most learned Orientalists and probably the most prolific writer of the early nineteenth century. Hammer's translation, published in 1812-13 in two slim volumes, is written in a kind of poetry without great poetical beauty. For Hammer was not as good a poet as he considered himself to be! Yet his introduction to the character of Persian poetry is excellent. He was the first to draw attention to many of Hafiz's images, to his whole style of speaking and to many details which had been overlooked by the first students of Persian poetry who had introduced Hafiz's verse to Europe in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Hammer's rather pedestrian translations did not fail to impress Goethe, who discovered in Hafiz a spiritual brother, yea, his 'twin-brother', as he says in one of his poems which was later excluded from publication. The aging German poet needed at that moment a new direction in life and poetry, a *hegira*, as he called it, and Hafiz's verse, explained by Hammer not as mystical but as concrete love poetry, reached him at a moment when he was ready for a new departure; its impact was enhanced by a tender love for a charming, poetically active lady, Marianna von Willemer, immortalized as Sulaika in the *West-Oestlicher Divan*. But it was not only the poetical beauty of the *West-Oestlicher Divan* which resulted from Goethe's interest in the Islamic East; the second, less known part of the book consists of the *Noten und Abhandlungen*, brief essays in which he discusses the various aspects of Persian and Arabic poetry, of politics, and religion. These prose pieces give us an amazing insight into the character of Muslim society and art, and Iqbal's remarks about the role of the poet and the Prophet are closely related to Goethe's relevant statements. Iqbal must have been acquainted with the *Noten und Abhandlungen*, as becomes clear from his remark about Goethe's relation with Rumi in the Urdu introduction of the *Payam-e-Mashriq*. Referring to Goethe's rather unfriendly remarks about Maulana Rumi, he writes:

"The philosophical concepts and ideas of Rumi seemed to him to be obscure. It appears, however, that he had not studied the works of Rumi with any profundity, for it is hardly conceivable that a man who admired Spinoza (a Dutch philosopher, who believed in pantheism) and who took up his pen in support of Bruno (a pantheistic philosopher of Italy) should not acknowledge the greatness of Rumi."

Goethe had read some of Rumi's poems in translation by Hammer and his Viennese colleagues, as they were published in the scholarly journal *Fundgruben des Orients*, as well as Hammer's long account of

Maulana Rumi in his fundamental study on Persian literature, the *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, which was published in 1818, when he was preparing the *Divan*. Neither Hammer's exuberant praise nor the numerous raw translations from the *Divan-e-Shams* nor the *Mathnawi* impressed Goethe, who saw in Rumi's mysticism a logical outcome of the confused political and economic situation after the Mongol onslaught in the thirteenth century. He then goes on to say:

"He has dealt with little stories, fairy-tales, legends, anecdotes, examples, problems in order to make understandable a mysterious doctrine which he himself does not properly know what it is."

That means, Goethe regarded Maulana Rumi as a representative of that kind of dangerous mystical speculations which Iqbal minded so much in the speculations of the Ibn Arabi school and in the poetry of Hafiz. . . Goethe probably took only little interest in the first congenial German verse-rendering of Rumi's ghazals, which appeared in 1819, the very year when his own *Divan* was published; these translations by the young orientalist Friedrich Rückert, however, were to influence Hegel's view of 'the excellent Rumi', which Iqbal quoted with approval in his thesis.

Iqbal's *Payam-e-Mashriq*, his answer to the *West-Oestlicher Divan*, is a unique homage to Goethe. Iqbal was well aware of the so-called oriental current in German literature, and gives a good account of the major names, without going into details; yet he has not stressed Rückert's unique role in this process and rather overrated the bourgeois and pretty insipid poems by Bodenstedt which became known as *Die Lieder des Mirza Schaffy* (The Songs of Mirza Shafi). However, the very fact that an Indian Muslim took pains to go through the history of the Oriental current and tried to evaluate the role of Goethe, his forerunners and his imitators is most important. He rightly places Goethe at the heart of this current which had been initiated in a certain way by J.G. Herder, who held with his teacher Hamann that "poetry was the mother tongue of the human race", and whose *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*, a collection of folk songs and popular ballads from all over the world opened the way for the Romantics' rediscovery of the past. Young Goethe had met Herder in Strasbourg where he was studying law; Iqbal too studied law in Cambridge; later, he invited him to join the circle of the Duke of Weimar, Karl August, which became one of the spiritual centres of Germany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Herder is largely responsible for kindling Goethe's interest in Eastern cultures, for he himself was very fond of Oriental poetry. He loved particularly Sa'di's *Gulistan* which was available in a German translation by Adam Olearius since 1653, but disliked the playfulness of Hafiz's poetry as it was offered

to the European public in first translations by Sir William Jones and others. Later, Herder turned to ancient Indian wisdom. In this field, however, Goethe did not follow him; Islamic culture was the only non-European culture that really fascinated him, and he never felt at ease with the many strangely shaped deities of the Hindu pantheon, as much as he admired Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*. Hence the German Romantic poets and the founder of Sanskrit philology, A.W. von Schlegel, accused him of being 'a new zealot of Allah' and of neglecting India, the home of everything beautiful . . .

Goethe's interest in Islam manifested itself when he was still in his twenties. Animated by Voltaire's critical-satirical drama *Le Fanatisme ou Mahomet le Prophete* ('Fanaticism of the Prophet Mohammad'), the young lawyer-poet decided to write a better drama about the Prophet of Islam. Oriental plots were quite common during those years, and the Prophet of Islam as well as the family of the Barmakides was not infrequently made subjects of more or less successful theatrical plays. In 1772 the first German translation of the *Quran* by J.F. Megerlein appeared, and Goethe, who had studied Sale's famous English translation, used this and other translations in European languages for inspiration. His drama was however never finished; only two pieces are preserved. One is the Song of Abraham, based on the Quranic account in Sura 6, 74-79, where Abraham is shown bowing to the stars, the moon, and the sun successively until he discovers the greatness of the Creator beyond all these luminous manifestations. It is the great description of Abraham the true monotheist which would have been dear to Iqbal's heart if he had known it; for Abraham the breaker of idols plays an important role in his own poetical imagery. The second poem is even more important; it was conceived as a dialogue between Ali and Fatima and only later modelled into a poem called *Mahomets Gesang*. Iqbal was deeply impressed by this hymn in which the prophetic activity is symbolized as a stream which, beginning from a small source, develops, carrying with it all the rivulets, brooks and rivers that ask his, the brother's, help, until he brings them back to the father, the divine ocean. Iqbal adapted this wonderful poem in a very free Persian version (as he himself writes in a footnote) as *Jū-ye āb*, 'The Stream', in the *Payam-e-Mashriq*. The image of the prophetic spirit as a river full of life has certainly inspired him to assume, in the *Javed Nama*, the pen-name of *Zindarud*, Living Stream, and thus to allude to his own activity which, derived from the prophetic stream, aims at carrying with him the souls of his compatriots and co-religionists back to the source of life, to God. This subtle point shows Goethe's influence even in a detail of the *Javed Nama*.

Another instance of fine understanding of Goethe's spirit is Iqbal's poem *Hūr o Shair*, Hour and Poet, in the *Payam-e-Mashriq*. This lively dialogue between the poet and the disappointed houri of Paradise goes

back, again, to a Goethean poem in the last part of the *West-Oestlicher Divan*, the Book of Paradise. In Goethe's poem man is shown as knocking at the doors of Paradise, and a houri opens to ask for his name. He answers: "Don't bother so much—I have been a human being, and that means to be a fighter"—

"Denn ich bin ein Mensch gewesen,  
und das heisst ein Kämpfer sein."

"That was Iqbal's ideal as well, and it is this man, who retorts to the blandishments of the lovely houri that he cannot rest even in Paradise, for life consists of *soz-e-natamām*, of unfulfilled burning and longing, and constant *jusfujū*, seeking and searching. Even the houris in Paradise are not more than a kind of trap meant to detain the pilgrim on his eternal journey. This idea was commonplace with the Sufi poets of old who advised their disciples never to care for the *hūr-u-qusūr*, the houris and castles promised to the faithful, but to continue their search for God Himself. Goethe and Iqbal have both drawn their inspiration from the same source, only with the difference that both do not speak of the mystic who aims at losing himself eventually in an inexpressible divine being but rather of the man who continues seeking and growing even after death; who experiences, as Iqbal says at the end of the *Javed Nama*, 'growth without diminishing'.

'Heaven is no holiday,' says Iqbal in the *Reconstruction* to point to this view, which has also been expressed by Goethe in one of his dialogues with his secretary Eckermann (February 4, 1829). Here, the aged German poet argues that the conviction of eternal continuation of life develops necessarily from the idea of activity, for if one works and strives until one's end, nature has to give the maturing spirit another outward form, another existence to keep it alive in activity. And Iqbal would say:

"Personal immortality is only an aspiration; you can have it if you make an effort to achieve it." (Introduction to the Secrets of the Self, XVI)

That lies behind the imagery of Poet and Houris.

And, one more point: Iqbal has sometimes been accused of using the names of Timur and Genghiz Khan, the great destructive forces in medieval Islamic history, as symbols for the overwhelming power of the true man. In one of his letters, he explains this usage:

"The appeal to Timur's spirit does not mean to quicken the *timuriyat* but its intention is to wake up the Turks of Central Asia. The allusion to Timur is simply a style of explanation, and it is not right

to think this allusion to be the real view of the poet (*Iqbalnama II*, 313, 1934)

But we should keep in mind Goethe's verse on Timur in the *West-Oestlicher Divan* in which the world conqueror addresses the softhearted and weak among the Muslims and particularly among the theologians and holds: 'If God had wanted me to be a worm, He would have created me as a worm'—

“Hätt' Allah mich gewollt als Wurm,  
so hätt er mich als Wurm erschaffen.”

Timur here stands for the man who has developed his innate faculties to their logical end, and can thus be taken as a model of powerful humanity. It seems possible that Iqbal had this verse in mind when speaking of Timur.

It would be wrong to restrict the relation between Iqbal and Goethe to such outward similarities. It is well known that the German poet, with his great and active interest in natural sciences, has often spoken of the law of life as a *systole* and *diastole*, the movement of extension and contraction, which can be symbolized in the act of breathing. As he says in the *West-Oestlicher Divan* with a verse adapted from Sa'di: breathing consists of two blessings, one in taking the air in, one in releasing it, and likewise man should be grateful if pressed by God and if released. For life consists of the interplay of these two movements. This is a good Sufi idea, for the constant oscillation between the states of *qabd* and *bast* was often explained by the mystical poets with this very image. Goethe was sure that the dialectic movement was necessary for the maintenance of life: there has to be a negative and a positive pole in order to make the current flow and to produce movement and life. Basically, his whole philosophy can be summed up in this theory of *systole* and *diastole*, as Grete Schaeder has lucidly shown in her book *Gott, Welt und Mensch. Drei Kapitel Goethescher Weltdeutung* (1949). Only this movement can lead nature, and man as part of nature, to higher levels; it is the movement of dying in order to become alive. Every act of sacrifice, if performed in the spirit of loving surrender, will bring forth new life on a higher level—that was the message the poet expressed most eloquently in the famous poem *Selige Sehnsucht*, Blessed Longing, from the *Divan*. The age-old image of the moth that casts itself into the flame in order to achieve eternal life—a fiery life indeed!—served him perfectly to express this mystery of *Stirb und werde*, 'Die and become'. The image, however, reached him through the poets of the East who had lovingly elaborated the story of the moth and the candle as it was found, for the first time, in Hallaj's *Kitāb aṭ-ṭawāsīn*. Iqbal, too, knows the secret of sacrificing the

lower potencies in order to achieve a higher level of life; and his philosophy dwells upon the same Hallajian idea, which had found its finest expression in the poetry of Maulana Rumi. Iqbal was a great admirer of Hallaj.

But contrary to the thousands of Sufi poets who saw in Hallaj the representative of all-pervading pantheism, Iqbal discovered, thanks to L. Massignon's research, the personal and dynamic character of Hallaj's piety, and makes him, in the *Javed Nama*, his own forerunner who once called sleeping people to wake up, and who 'brought resurrection to the dead'. The cross-relation of this statement to Goethe's *Stirb und werde* which relies, essentially, upon a Hallajian sentence, becomes clear and shows once more the affinity between Iqbal and Goethe.

The idea of polarity, again, is by no means alien to Iqbal; on the contrary, his poetry is permeated by pairs of contrasting qualities or attitudes. When he speaks of God he uses the old Sufi terminology of His *jamal* and *jadal*, the Eternal Beauty and the Eternal Power, which fall together in the Divine Essence. It is no accident that he finds the proof for his dynamic view of the divine essence more in Goethe's verse:

"The not yet of God means unfailing realization of the infinite creative possibilities of His being which retains its wholeness throughout the entire process"—

and that is explained by Goethe's lines:

"Und alles Drängen, alles Streben  
ist ew'ge Ruh in Gott dem Herrn."

(Lectures 60)

On the other hand, we find the idea of polarity in Iqbal's psychology as well: here, it is the succession of periods of *khalwa* and *jilwa*, of seclusion and manifestation, which forms the fabric of life. Man has to spend some time in loving seclusion with God in order to obtain strength which he, then, has to display in the world, acting as God's viceregent. And even the contrast of *ishq* and *ilm*, of love as the synthetic force and science as the analytical side of man's approach to the world can be seen in this category.

Finally, we may recall Goethe's remark in his autobiographical work *Dichtung und Wahrheit* where he holds that our wishes are basically anticipations of our capacities and messengers of our future actions, and that 'we feel a certain longing for that which our souls already possess'. Iqbal writes in the *Reconstruction* (p. 33):

"Purposes colour not only present states of consciousness but also reveal its future direction."

It would be possible to draw more parallels between Iqbal and Goethe; but it would be unfair to overlook the differences between the two poets. Goethe belonged to a different time, a different spiritual climate, and he never openly worked on the political scene, nor did he attempt to write philosophical works; his major interest, besides poetry and history, was natural science, a field in which he excelled and even made some discoveries. Iqbal has to be understood in the context of Indo-Muslim history as it had developed shortly before his birth and during his early years: the cry for freedom, the hope for an improvement of the social and political conditions of the Muslims is foremost in his mind and inspires his poetry. Goethe often received inspiration from the ladies whom he loved—his most beautiful and deepest verses are the fruits of love of and admiration for female beauty and spirituality. In Iqbal's work, we cannot find traces of this kind of love; he wrote his *Payam-e-Mashriq*, as far as we can see, without the inspiring force of a Marianna, as he composed the *Javed Nama* without a Beatrice.

As he did in the case of Maulana Rumi, his spiritual guide from the East, Iqbal took from the vast ocean of Goethe's work certain aspects which he admired and which he could fit into his own world view; he filtered, so to speak, rays of a certain wave-length out of the work of both great masters and put them to use in his own work. But the basic attitude of the two poets is similar, in spite of the differences of time and space: both believed in the synthetical power of love as the last principle in life, and both judged the truth of actions and words by their fruits. Iqbal has advocated the constant endeavour to produce more beautiful and useful results, and judges the worth of human endeavour, including that of a prophet's activity, in the practical results it produces, in the culture and the type of man that emerges therefrom. And here he is fully in harmony with Goethe who once claimed:

"Only what is fruitful is true"—

"Was fruchtbar ist, allein ist wahr."

## IQBAL AND WORDSWORTH

V. G. KIERNAN

IQBAL came early in life under the spell of the English Romantics: Wordsworth he admired most among them, and Browning was his favourite modern English poet.<sup>1</sup> He may have noticed an occasional Wordsworthian image drawn from India, like the comparison of fantastic masses of rock to

“Temples like those among the Hindoos,  
And mosques, and spires . . .”<sup>2</sup>

—or a Persian-sounding phrase like ‘mid the wreck of IS and WAS’<sup>3</sup>. Wordsworth essayed some oriental themes, but he was too English to be at home with such exotics, or with the cult of the Orient which from Goethe onwards formed part of the stream of Romantic literature in Europe. Like a great many English writers of the nineteenth century, he had connections of another sort with India. A cousin and a brother both commanded East Indiamen; in 1805, the latter went down with his ship. Many years later we find Wordsworth investing some of his modest savings in East India Company stock.<sup>4</sup>

Both these poets studied at Cambridge in 1787-90 and 1905-07. They belonged to adjoining colleges, sharers of the clock Wordsworth was to lift above time into immortality, which struck the hours

“Twice over with a male and female voice.”<sup>5</sup>

At the university he sought and won, as he confesses, little distinction.<sup>6</sup> He never aspired to an academic career; Iqbal soon abandoned one. They had in common a quality that Wordsworth, deeming it a virtue in an artist, was fond of calling ‘indolence’, what the man in the street calls laziness. Neither was fitted for any trademill of regular employment;



though there were times when Iqbal pined for a civil service post, or a seat on the bench, which fortunately he was not given. He suffered from financial worries of the same kind that harassed Wordsworth with gloomy thoughts about 'Mighty Poets in their misery dead'.<sup>7</sup> They both had families to support. Wordsworth won fame painfully slowly, and for many years his writings brought him scarcely any money. Iqbal's literary reputation sprouted far more quickly; in terms of hard cash, the difference was much smaller.

Their habits of life were opposite: one living in rustic seclusion, until old age and popularity brought him a procession of visitors and made him as garrulous as he had formerly been taciturn; the other in the midst of noisy Lahore, his door always open to callers of the most miscellaneous sort—"revolutionaries and spies, religious fanatics and atheists, traders and mystics, people of all professions and creeds . . ."<sup>8</sup> The one was a native of the hills, the other a townsman, but a lover of Kashmir who never forgot his Kashmiri (and Hindu) ancestry. Socially Lakeland represented the peasant proprietorship and rustic equality, surviving in a corner of England, which were at the roots of Wordsworth's radicalism and his dreams of national regeneration. Kashmir was the opposite, an epitome of oppression and servitude. Iqbal's Panjab, however, had an old rustic feeling, enshrined in much folk poetry, for human brotherhood and equal rights. It may be permissible to give this lingering sentiment, of which Iqbal was conscious, some credit for the migration of the spirit of Urdu poetry in his lifetime from its older home in the Gangetic valley and its feudal courts, to the simpler, more bucolic Panjab. In a not dissimilar manner, English poetry had removed before the end of the eighteenth century from London to the north country and Scotland. Burns, Wordsworth, Iqbal, all gave fresh expression, and universal meaning, to feelings of common folk.

Iqbal spent his first twenty years at Sialkot; he went to the Scottish Mission College there, and may have imbibed something of the rugged Scots self-reliance. Sialkot was close enough to the Himalayas for their grandeur to be imprinted on his mind, and attune it to Wordsworthian mountain raptures. Both poets clothed many of their thoughts about the human condition in images of Nature, and with Iqbal these were most 'natural' when memories of the peaks were running in his mind, like the stream cascading down from the heights in the opening lines of *Saqi-Nama*.<sup>9</sup> As a rule, he and Wordsworth were very far apart in their impressions of Nature. The older poet's picture is minutely realistic as well as imaginative, Iqbal is generalised, stylised. He writes of any flowers or any streams, Wordsworth of the violet and the lesser celandine, the River Duddon and the Greta.

Little as Wordsworth himself realised it, his accurate observation of plants and trees was paralleled by botanical progress in his epoch, one

facet of its many-sided progress. In Mughal India, whose culture long outlived it, nature was enclosed within the ornamental gardens of palaces where poets and other courtiers led their enclosed, protected, ornamental lives. Blossoms growing, water flowing, under human direction lent themselves to an artificial, if charming, set of literary conventions. Wordsworth's Nature, of which he remains the supreme poet, was an autonomous kingdom, terrific as well as benign, though capable of subtle influences on mankind. Iqbal's falcon may proclaim its freedom, but it does so in human accents, as his mouthpiece. He was still struggling to force his way out of the vast Eastern solipsism, the introversion of a society long stationary, but crumbling, now under pressures from outside.

Such a background reduces its inmates in their daily lives to absorption in getting their living, or 'bettering themselves', while in the sphere of collective consciousness it conjures up, by way of compensation, unreal fancies and figments. Iqbal was acutely aware of how life had been vitiated in India, in particular the Muslim India which concerned him most closely; it often seemed to him, as England sometimes seemed to Wordsworth, 'a fen of stagnant waters'.<sup>10</sup> His never-ceasing calls for sturdy individuality, 'selfhood' to be realised through action, sprang from his sense of the need for a break with the past. A clear highway could not be easy to find, and the strenuous activity he preached might appear at times to lack purpose. Its exemplars might be characters from history like Timur, Genghiz Khan, or Napoleon, figures as merely symbolic for Iqbal as his birds or fishes. Wordsworth lived at much closer quarters with one of these paragons, and anathematized in the same breath Timur, Genghiz, and 'the present barbarian Ravager of Europe'.<sup>11</sup>

Exalted by the perilous times they were conscious of belonging to, both poets—like Milton before them—hankered for themes on which they could compose works of epic proportions. It was the infatuation against which Goethe warned his aspiring young friend Eckermann.<sup>12</sup> Neither Wordsworth nor Iqbal had, or could have, ideas clear and mature enough for such an undertaking. Moreover, in western Europe by the eighteenth century, in India by the twentieth, the time, if there ever was a time, for full-length poems of didactic purpose had gone by. What remained possible was a *Prelude*, a *Don Juan*, or a *Eugene Onegin*, whereas in the *Aeneid*, or *Paradise Lost*, 'lessons' are dissolved in a dramatic narrative.

Wordsworth groped for years for a subject round which the sensations fermenting in his mind could crystallize. He pondered some themes merely romantic; of national heroes like Wallace or Gustavus Adolphus; of a solitary martyr to truth, or a solitary avenger of colonial injustice.<sup>13</sup> But all these designs seem lacking in firm substance. In the end he fell back on a plan of writing about the single individual he could feel really competent to unravel, himself and the record of his cutward life and inner development. An autobiography in verse was a startling novelty; it

could only be undertaken because the age was brimming with a heightened self-consciousness, a fresh awareness of the significance of the individual. Wordsworth never published *The Prelude*. It stands all the same as his masterpiece, whereas the laborious 'philosophical' poem he finally got written, *The Excursion*, was a failure.

Iqbal, too, went through years of searching in vain for a grand subject, and the solution he eventually found was quite close in essence, though not in form, to his forerunner's. He composed two lengthy philosophical poems about the human Self and its place in the universe. Poetically, they are unconvincing, but he went on to catch fragments or gleams of the same idea, far more vividly, in numberless short poems. He was making a valid new assertion of the supreme worth of the individual, at a moment when India in its turn was being led towards recognition of this by the spirit of the age. Perpetually writing of the Self, Iqbal was frequently in effect writing about himself, without an autobiographical framework; less realistically therefore than Wordsworth in *The Prelude*, far less egotistically than Byron in so many second-rate novelettes in verse. In this anonymity or self-concealment, he was a descendant of the long line of Indo-Persian poets who had to mask their emotions under stereotyped forms of expression, sighs of imaginary love, for instance. In his later long poem *Javed Nama*, written when his authority was fully established, and he had a political as well as a literary status, Iqbal felt able to emerge more openly. He has a guide in Rumi, the medieval religious poet whom he revered; but it is really Iqbal himself who is the protagonist.

A cult of the Self has been part of the entire 'bourgeois' epoch of history, in manifold guises including the sheer egotism recommended by Machiavelli. Shakespeare accompanied his maxim 'to thine own self be true' with the hopeful, perhaps over-hopeful, assumption that this will ensure honesty towards all our fellowmen as well. *The Prelude* may be the story of one man, but it is also the story of a whole epoch, a study of the individual's interactions with larger human destinies. Milton was seldom far from Wordsworth's political thoughts, and his lament over the relapse of France from revolutionary idealism into brutal aggression shares with *Paradise Lost* the tragic theme of temptation and corruption.

In the prologue to his youthful moralising poem 'Peter Bell', Wordsworth sets off in a balloon to travel among the stars, but after parting from his anxious friends, he resolves to return to earth, his true home, and dedicates himself to exploration not of remote wonders but of mankind and its 'humblest mirth and tears'. Iqbal too in *Javed Nama* embarks on a voyage through space. Instead of turning back, he lands on the moon and the planets; but far from renouncing earthly problems, he is confronting them with heightened vision in new settings. He, too, always recognised responsibilities along with rights, and was concerned not with the individual in selfish isolation (though a good many of his sayings,

taken by themselves, might suggest this) but with the individual as part of the social whole.

Each writer had the experience of living through a long war, whose influence on their thinking may be visible in a militant, occasionally even militarist, strain in some of their writings. In youth Wordsworth had a fancy for the army as a profession, and he could write of the carnage of battle as 'God's daughter',<sup>14</sup> while Islam was for Iqbal always a sword-bearing faith. More fundamentally, the experience strengthened their aspirations for peace on earth and international harmony, hopes not destined to fulfilment in their day. Wordsworth died in 1850, four years before the outbreak of another European conflict, Iqbal in 1938 one year before that of another world war. On his deathbed, gasping for breath, he talked about Hitler's seizure of Austria, and the curse of fascism.<sup>15</sup>

The opening of 'Wordsworth's war was heralded by the French Revolution, the close of Iqbal's by the Russian Revolution. In 1789 Wordsworth was still a very young man and all the more impressionable; and he was living in France while the sequel unfolded itself. Milton had been the chief apologist of England's revolution; Wordsworth, in *The Prelude* and in his pamphlet of 1793, was one of the most eloquent defenders of the French. He showed quite a realistic awareness of its darker sides, and also of their causes. Critics complained of its violence, he wrote, but old evils have to be attacked with their own weapons, and violence is unavoidable in 'a state of war between the oppressors and the oppressed'<sup>16</sup>—a class war, as Marx would call it. England's joining the reactionary league against France in 1793 he condemned as bitterly as any socialist of 1918 could condemn his country's part in the war of intervention against Bolshevik Russia.

Iqbal on the contrary as a young man had very unrevolutionary principles. Conspiracy or rebellion, he wrote in 1909, was forbidden by the *Quran* and Islamic teaching. "All methods of violent change in society are condemned"; any tyranny is less bad than the anarchy which must ensue from resistance to it.<sup>17</sup> The anarchy of the Great War shook these conservative notions, and although in 1917 Iqbal was a man of forty, its events stirred him profoundly. They lent fresh force to his perception of the world as an arena of strife and contradiction, movement and change, which not seldom gave his words a genuine dialectical quality.

Wordsworth was ready to hail the French Revolution so eagerly because the chief bent of his youthful radicalism was resentment against the ruling class, in an England dominated, like Iqbal's Panjab, by rich landowners. He deplored the submissiveness implanted in common people by their being "taught from infancy that we were born in a state of inferiority to our oppressors".<sup>18</sup> Even in 1808 he could think the people entitled to expect in its rulers "a more adequate reflection of its own wisdom and virtue".<sup>19</sup> In later life after his descent into conservatism, he

was still appealing to Milton, as a witness now against the people, or populace, no 'democrat' but a true aristocrat.<sup>20</sup> In such transformations, it must be added, private feelings always play a part. In early life Wordsworth had family grievances against a nobleman, which were later removed;<sup>21</sup> Iqbal had some grudge against the British for not giving him employment, which they made amends for by giving him a title. Both men had something to suffer from the insidious flattery of aristocratic patronage; Hazlitt must have had Wordsworth and Sir George Beaumont in mind when he wrote on this, in some of his most corrosively brilliant pages.<sup>22</sup>

Iqbal's opinion of democracy followed, in any case, a similar curve, though he was coming to think of the masses as stupid, rather than dangerous. Early on he dwelt on the 'absolute equality' of all Muslims. "There is no aristocracy in Islam."<sup>23</sup> In historical fact, of course, there had always been ruling classes in all Muslim lands. He believed that a real democracy had flourished at least in the first days of Islam, and he took his stand on this to refute Nietzsche's contempt for the common man. "Is the plebeian so absolutely hopeless?" he asked.<sup>24</sup> This was written in 1917, and may be supposed to owe something to the overthrow of the tsar. Later on, he came round more to Nietzsche's way of thinking, partly no doubt because political, as distinct from social, equality was so alien to Muslim tradition. To decide things by counting heads befitted asses better than men, he declared in one verse epigram.<sup>25</sup> He grew into an ardent hero-worshipper, in search of a man of destiny to take the helm; a superman he never found, either abroad or in India. Wordsworth, the Lakeland, had a different and healthier outlook in this respect, and did not lionise either French revolutionaries or English Tories.

For Iqbal, great men included thinkers as well as warriors and statesmen, and like the Nietzsche he from some points of view applauded, he was apt to overestimate very greatly the sway that thinkers, by themselves, could exert over the world. He does so, with his own teachings in mind, in *Javed Nama*. Approaching old age before he received public recognition, Wordsworth could not readily indulge in any such comfortable assurance; his turning away from the people must have owed much to its refusal to turn towards him. It may not be healthy for us, he declared sensibly, to rely too much on any mentor, however enlightened: our prime reliance must be on ourselves, even it may be in childhood.<sup>26</sup> This was a saying very much in the vein of Iqbal's doctrine of Self, but not easy to reconcile with his conviction of the primacy of the inspired individual, the Perfect Man of Sufi lore. He quoted a British philosopher's dictum that what the world stood in need of was new prophets like Carlyle or Ruskin, adding that evils like international conflict could be mastered only by some 'top-ranking personality'.<sup>27</sup>

For him the arch-evils were Muslim obscurantism and Western imperialism: the two going together, because the first had paved the way, by enfeebling the East, for the triumph of the second. His personal record may in some ways seem hard to square with anti-imperialist sentiments. Neither he nor Wordsworth, it must be admitted, was by temperament a man of action, as Milton was, a fact which his continual panegyrics of action must have helped him to conceal from himself. For long after leaving France, Wordsworth suffered from nightmare dreams of being arrested and sentenced to the guillotine;<sup>28</sup> he shrank from publishing his fiery tract of 1803;<sup>29</sup> after his seathing attack on the Convention of Cintra, concluded by the British generals in Portugal with the French in 1808, he had morbid fears of prosecution.<sup>30</sup> Iqbal had begun moreover by taking for granted, as most of his generation did, the beneficent role of the British in India, whose service he would have been so happy to enter. His sojourn in Cambridge seems to have confirmed this loyalty. Soon after his return during the agitation over Curzon's partition of Bengal, he complained that "an over-dose of Western ideas has taught people to criticise the existing Government with dangerous lack of historical perspective".<sup>31</sup>

It was not long before he was shocked by the Italian seizure of Tripoli from Turkey; and four years later Italy was Britain's ally against Turkey. Yet for a variety of reasons, some simpler to decipher than others, he was not drawn into any of the grand struggles in progress in his own country India, whether national or economic; not even the Khilafat movement at the end of the Great War, in spite of his Islamic sympathies and the fact that Muslim and Hindu were for once collaborating. It was in 1923 that he accepted a knighthood; Tagore had renounced his knighthood in 1919. Iqbal went on fulminating against imperialism, including French brutalities like those that had roused Wordsworth's wrath, and also—outside India—British misdeeds, in Palestine, for instance. He invented a tale about Satan enjoying ease and leisure after handing over his portfolio to the British imperialists. He looked back on Kitchner as their archetype, viewing him very much as Wordsworth did Napoleon.<sup>32</sup> As for the USSR, little information about it could reach him in India, and when in Europe in the early 1930's he did not visit it, as Tagore had lately done. In a 1933 statement, he censured not only "the menace of the atheistic materialism of Bolshevism, but what he took to be ill-treatment by Moscow, intent on growing cotton at the expense of foodcrop, of a Muslim Central Asia "seething with discontent".<sup>33</sup> In other words, he thought he saw here one case of Western imperialism at work.

Islam, by contrast, he convinced himself, sanctioned only defensive war, and winning of converts by persuasion, not force.<sup>34</sup> Here, again,

theory and historical fact were very far apart; and in the mood which the 1917 revolution helped to kindle in him, Iqbal was willing to recognise this and to regret the distortion of Islam's original social ideals by its victories in arms. As he said, the Muslim conquest of Persia was really a Persian conquest of Islam.<sup>35</sup> Later on, forgetting these words he looked at it through rose-coloured spectacles.<sup>36</sup> Partly this was discrepancy, not infrequent, between Iqbal writing cool prose and Iqbal writing heated verse: the reader may have to appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober. But he did come to think of the Arab annexations as part of a civilising mission, such as the British claimed for their own empire. It must be conjectured indeed that he derived his own concept in part from theirs; as a young man, its ideology was in the air he breathed. Too often he was ready to extend this indulgence to any later conquistadors styling themselves Muslims.

Wordsworth's boyhood saw the American revolt from Britain. When he condemned French expansion in Europe, he had no wish to see it supplanted by British. A strong army was necessary, he wrote in answer to a military publicist, but any suggestion of using it to subjugate other lands was repugnant; this should be done, if at all, solely "for the benefit of those unhappy nations".<sup>37</sup> Here was a very elastic exception, a plea regularly resorted to by empire-builders. Wordsworth appears to have felt little objection to the extension of British power in India which was going on at the same time as Napoleon's in Europe. His ambivalences are mirrored in some discordant comments on the Roman empire, his classical precedent as the Arabian was Iqbal's. In a late prose work he found the cause of Ireland's miseries in its 'imperfect conquest', and argued from history that "nations may be improved by foreign conquest", for example, by the Romans who "established a moral right to force their institutions upon other nations".<sup>38</sup> One of these institutions was slavery. In a late poem, 'The Pillar of Trajan', he extolled the great emperor and the grandeur of Rome, but instead of welcoming their seizures of other lands as an advance of civilization, he accused them of an ambition to enslave whole nations on their native soil.

In 1917-18 the downfall of age-old thrones and kingdoms could foretell for Iqbal the disappearance he looked forward to of all that was archaic and stultifying in his own society. The old order was being weighed in the balance and found wanting; what would or should take its place, he was understandably less clear about. He and Wordsworth, in the political and social thinking that was so much an integral part of their poetry, were both hampered by lack of a firmer grasp of social relations and realities. Retreating to Lakeland, with its remnant of free shepherds and cottagers, Wordsworth was looking back instead of forward. Iqbal, whose first book had been an Urdu treatise on political economy, with progressive ideas about workers' education and banning

of polygamy and child marriage, failed to follow them up in a practical way, and took refuge in his version of 'Islamic socialism', his idealised Muslim society of a bygone day, impossible to resurrect. Wordsworth ended by putting his trust in paternalistic landlords; Iqbal's daydream of the rich as trustees for poor was as little helpful.

Both cut themselves off from much new thinking by their reluctance to accept the foundations of the modern world, taking shape first in Britain, later in Asia, industrialism and its accompanying developments, technological and intellectual. Iqbal was born a quarter century after Wordsworth's death; allowing for the time-lag between West and East, they might be called contemporaries. Wordsworth was appalled by the spectacle of the grimy manufacturing town, of a famishing host of women and children imprisoned in its mills; Iqbal by the materialistic greed of capitalism. Each was right, but there was some defeatism in their attitude, their recoil from the machine, and a tendency to denigrate not merely some of the fruits of man's intellect, but intellect itself. Wordsworth was finding fault already in his 'Lyrical Ballad' days with the 'meddling intellect', and exclaiming 'Enough of Science'. In "A Poet's Epitaph", statesman, lawyer, scientist, are all called up in turn for rebuke, while a living poet, a secluded worshipper of Nature—William himself, in short—is singled out for commendation.

Iqbal's portrait of himself as an unworldly faqir, penniless but proud, was in like vein. It has been observed that his antithesis of Reason and Love was part of the tension built up in his mind by contact with Western knowledge, and the humiliating subjection to it of the Muslim world.<sup>39</sup> One of his ways of meeting this was his claim on behalf of the East of its still being able, unlike the West, to produce prophetic revelations—like his own. To set these against logic was a blunderbuss kind of argument. And when he derided 'the brainy graduate of high culture', morally and physically feeble,<sup>40</sup> he sounded remarkably like the brawny Britons who poured scorn on educated Indians; here again his attitude must have owed something to theirs. His favourite term, '*ishq*' or 'love', may seem to signify no more than emotionalism, as against intellection. Yet it often has a more positive meaning, equivalent to the 'life-force' which he derived in part from European concepts like Bergson's *elan vital*. And this Love, or 'Heart' as he also calls it, is the human feeling that binds men together, as well as animating each of them singly. In very similar fashion, 'Nature' meant for Wordsworth not hills and streams alone, but the human endowment or patrimony of an inner energy, an ever-moving, creative force, compared with which all the mind's constructions are limited and half-alien, and may divide man from man instead of linking them.

Wordsworth "saved me from atheism in my student days", Iqbal recorded in 1910.<sup>41</sup> Clearly this did not mean a restoration to blind



orthodoxy, which neither poet was ever likely to sink into. Wordsworth himself in youth was close to being an agnostic. He grew up in eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and even one of his most piously conservative sonnets ends by invoking Reason, side by side with Nature.<sup>42</sup> Both were concerned not with doctrinal trivialities or formalities, but with religion as a moral influence, as much on the community as on the individual. "I myself have little interest in theology", Iqbal told Nehru, late in life, in a letter about the Ahmadiyas and politics.<sup>43</sup> British ascendancy had after all given India some emancipation from mental shackles, and this was certainly a factor in his approval of it. Cambridge was a further liberation on this side, as 1917 was politically a decade later. The 'spiritual revolution' which, it has been said, rescued him from the old conception of religion as mystical passivity and other-worldliness,<sup>44</sup> came about there. Western philosophy fascinated him, and, as he did not conceal, gave a permanent bent to his mode of thinking, even about religion.<sup>45</sup> Only in terms of it could he attempt a 'reconstruction' of Islamic faith.

His lectures on this theme in 1928-29<sup>46</sup> open with the stirring pronouncement: "The *Quran* is a book which emphasizes 'deed' rather than 'idea'." He sees "the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the West", and does not dispute its need to learn from the West though discriminatingly.<sup>47</sup> He has much to say about modern science; and, eager to acquit Islam and its founder of any indifference to material reality, he makes large claims for the Muslim contribution to science in the past.<sup>48</sup> Altogether religion as he presents it is a dynamic, even revolutionary force. Here any comparison between him and Wordsworth is greatly in his favour. His predecessor came to religion in the years when he was losing confidence in human progress, and for him it represented something opposite, a social sedative, a preservative for an antiquated social order. In the weak sonnet "The prayers I make ..." written in 1805 when he was still capable of far higher things, he was already taking a humble, childlike tone of submission, far removed from the bold manliness of Iqbal. His effort in *The Excursion* at a rehabilitation of religious thought is, set beside Iqbal's, very ineffective indeed.

It is to be noted that Iqbal's lectures were delivered and published in English, to a Western-educated audience, and republished in England. Near his death, he was planning a long prose-poem in English, to be called *The Book of a Forgotten Prophet*, on the model of the Old Testament and Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*.<sup>49</sup> He must have had Tagore's successful English writings in mind; but it is not to be regretted that the project was left unfulfilled. For serious prose writing English was, through the accidents of history, the only adequate medium available to him, and he wrote it very competently, but no more. Wordsworth on the other hand was heir to a very rich growth of imaginative prose as well as poetry, and in some

of his own prose writings on political subjects—the *Convention of Cintra* is an instance—he could be as eloquent as Burke. Iqbal's humdrum political speeches cannot hold a candle to them.<sup>50</sup>

Partly again because of his historical situation, the shaping and moulding force of events, Wordsworth reached his poetical climax early, and fell off from it rapidly; Iqbal's genius went through no such spectacular rise and fall. But each found himself in later years in a world in many ways uncongenial to him, and moods of doubt and despondency impelled them to seek relief from isolation by closer ties, in the one case with a nation, in the other with a religious community, both firmly in the grip of conservatism. In Iqbal's day the nation was for Asia, as formerly at least for Europe, the way forward, the vehicle of progress. Valid as were many of his criticisms of it, by rejecting it and trying to soar above it to a supra-national union, held together by nothing more than religion, he condemned himself in effect to sink beneath it.

Neither of the two could be fully at ease in the company he got into. Wordsworth confessed to a streak of sympathy with Chartism, the working-class movement of the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>51</sup> Iqbal always kept a friendly regard for Nehru, who was socialist as well as nationalist; and while he berated socialist atheism, at times, he never condemned socialism itself, and was wont to say that if he ever became dictator of a Muslim State, his first act would be to make it a socialist State.<sup>52</sup> It can be said too that as time goes on a good part of their polemic against false 'progress', their anxiety to preserve some things worth preserving from the devastating onrush of industrialism, will come to be seen as 'conservationist' rather than conservative. Both had successors to carry forward what was most lasting in their ideals. One was Shelley. Another is Faiz, who has stood out as, like Shelley, both more 'romantic' and more revolutionary than his great forerunner.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>S.A. Vahid, *Studies in Iqbal* (Lahore, 1967), pp. 6-7, and 'Iqbal and Western Poets', in Hafeez Malik, ed., *Iqbal* (New York, 1971), p. 348.

<sup>2</sup>'Peter Bell' (1798), Part 2.

<sup>3</sup>Sonnet 'Malham Cove' (1818).

<sup>4</sup>G.H. Healey, *Wordsworth's Pocket Notebook* (New York, 1942), pp. 31, 50 ff.

<sup>5</sup>*The Prelude*, Book 3.

<sup>6</sup>*Ib.* On the mediocre academic life of the university at that time, see B.R. Schneider, *Wordsworth's Cambridge Education*, (Cambridge, 1957).

<sup>7</sup>'Resolution and Independence' (1802).

<sup>8</sup>M.D. Taseer, *Iqbal, the Universal Poet*, ed. Afzal Haq Qureshi (Lahore, 1977), p. 5. The author was a young friend of Iqbal's old age, and like him a post-graduate student at Cambridge.

<sup>9</sup>In *Bal-e-Jibril* ('Gabriel's Wing', 1935), pp. 166 ff.; translation in V.G. Kiernan,

*Poems from Iqbal* (London, 1955), pp. 46 ff.

<sup>10</sup>Sonnet to Milton (1802).

<sup>11</sup>*The Convention of Cintra* (1809), in *Prose Works*, ed. A.B. Grosart (London, 1876), Vol. 1, p. 115.

<sup>12</sup>*Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann* (Everyman edn., London, 1930), p p.7-9.

<sup>13</sup>Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth, A Biography*, Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1957), pp. 607 ff.

<sup>14</sup>'Thanksgiving Ode' (1816). Wordsworth finally deleted these lines, after resisting objectors for many years.

<sup>15</sup>Taseer, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup>*Apology for the French Revolution*, in *Prose Works*, Vol. 1, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup>*Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, ed. S.A. Vahid (Lahore, 1964), p. 49.

<sup>18</sup>*Prose Works*, Vol. 1, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup>*Ib.* p. 137.

<sup>20</sup>*Prose Works*, Vol. III, pp. 485 ff. Cf. V.G. Kiernan, 'Wordsworth and the People', in *Marxists on Literature, An Anthology*, ed. D. Craig (Harmondsworth, 1975), pp. 161 ff.

<sup>21</sup>See Moorman, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 157-8, 167-9, etc.

<sup>22</sup>*Collected Works of Hazlitt*, ed A.R. Waller and A. Glover, Vol. III (London, 1902), pp. 157 ff. There is an amusing fictional picture of a fashionable admirer of Iqbal in Aziz Ahmad's novel, *The Shore and the Wave* (trans. R. Russell, London, 1971), pp. 15-16.

<sup>23</sup>*Thoughts and Reflections*, p. 53.

<sup>24</sup>*Ib.*, pp. 83-4.

<sup>25</sup>*Zarb-e-Kalim* ('The Rod of Moses', 1936), p. 150.

<sup>26</sup>*Prose Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 324-5.

<sup>27</sup>Letter to R.A. Nicholson, cited in M. Siddiqi, *The Image of the West in Iqbal* (Lahore, 1956), pp. 113-4.

<sup>28</sup>*The Prelude*, Book 10.

<sup>29</sup>See G.M. Harper, *William Wordsworth* (1916), Vol. 1, pp. 213 ff.

<sup>30</sup>Moorman, Vol. 2 (Oxford, 1965), pp. 143-4.

<sup>31</sup>*Thoughts and Reflections*, p. 50; cf. pp. 45, 52, 54.

<sup>32</sup>See *Javed Nama* ('The Book of Eternity', 1932), section on the visit to Venus. There are translations in English verse by Shaikh Mahmud Ahmad (Lahore, 1961) and A.J. Arberry (London, 1966), and in French prose by E. Meyerovitch and Mohammad Mokri (Paris, 1961).

<sup>33</sup>*Thoughts and Reflections*, pp. 352-5.

<sup>34</sup>*Ib.*, p. 34.

<sup>35</sup>*Ib.*, pp. 82, 100.

<sup>36</sup>See *Javed Nama*, lines 3207-8; cf. V.G. Kiernan, 'Poetry and Politics: the *Javed Nama* of Iqbal', in *Bulletin of the British Association of Orientalists*, Vol. 9 (1977), pp. 39 ff.

<sup>37</sup>*Prose Works*, Vol. 1, p. 202.

<sup>38</sup>*Ib.*, p. 267.

<sup>39</sup>Siddiqi, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 ff., in an instructive section on 'The Conflict of Ishq and Reason in Iqbal'.

<sup>40</sup>*Thoughts and Reflections*, p. 42 (1909).

<sup>41</sup>Q.M. Haq and M.I. Waley, *Allama Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (London, 1977), p. 12.

<sup>42</sup>'Miscellaneous Sonnets', No. XXI. On Wordsworth's attitude to science, cf. E.C. Batho, *The Later Wordsworth* (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 22 ff., and H.L. Fausset, *The Lost Leader (A Study of Wordsworth)* (London, 1933), p. 206.

<sup>43</sup>*Thoughts and Reflections*, pp. 306-7.

<sup>44</sup>A.H. Kamali, 'The Heritage of Islamic Thought', in Hafeez Malik, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

<sup>45</sup>Taseer, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>46</sup>*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1930; enlarged edn, Oxford, 1934).

<sup>47</sup>*Ib.*, p. 7.

<sup>48</sup>*Ib.*, pp. 30 ff.; *Thoughts and Reflections*, pp. 147 ff.

<sup>49</sup>Taseer, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup>Cf. A.V. Dicey, *The Statesmanship of Wordsworth* (Oxford, 1917), p. 5. He gave England 'the wisest counsel expressed in the noblest language'.

<sup>51</sup>See e.g., Batho, *op. cit.*, pp. 45 ff.

<sup>52</sup>Taseer, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

## MOHAMMAD IQBAL—CLASSIC OF WORLD LITERATURE

(A typologic analysis of Iqbal's and Pushkin's Poetry)

Y. CHELYSHEV

**I**N connection with the preparations for Mohammad Iqbal's centenary, my old friend Ali Sardar Jafri asked me to try and compare Iqbal with Pushkin. I must admit, I first wanted to decline the request, because, on the face of it, it seemed impossible to find anything in common in the works and outlook of such different poets, poets in no way connected with each other, and belonging to quite different historical epochs and national cultures.

Scholars in different countries compare Iqbal with many poets, in both the East and the West: with Rumi and Hafiz, Dante and Milton, Ghalib and Goethe. Such comparisons frequently prove to be quite happy and convincing, since there exist some genetic ties between Iqbal's creative work and that of those poets. Iqbal frequently drew on their creative experience, striving to carry it over onto Indian soil. But all my efforts to discover the slightest mention of Pushkin's name in Iqbal's writings yielded a blank. I could only conclude that he knew very little about the great Russian poet. But the deeper I delved into the problem, the more fully I drank in the magic and music of Iqbal's and Pushkin's poetic lines, the more clearly I began to make out similar themes and motifs, finding more and more similarities in the poetical lines and thoughts of the Indian and Russian poets.

What could be the cause of these traits of similarity? Could it be an underlying unifying factor which induced a noticeable similarity of traits?

The evolution of humanity has amply demonstrated that the lack of direct ties and contacts between peoples does not affect the natural occurrence of social, historical and cultural development. Conditions both historical and socio-economic have parallels, no matter what and where their settings. These involve and encourage the human thought process, stimulating the development of artistic expression and therefore its expansion, establishing a suitable climate for man to grow and improve. It is therefore not surprising if a comparable nature in ideology and political enlightenment has a common origin and is therefore often quite comparable.

The works of Pushkin and Iqbal belong to the treasury of world literature.

When we say "world literature", we associate the term with quite a definite concept. As is known, the idea of "world literature" (allgemeine Weltliteratur) was first formulated by Goethe in the late twenties of the nineteenth century. According to the German poet, it was meant to overcome the confines of national narrow-mindedness, and embrace everything of great value, everything that had been created by all the peoples at all the stages of historical development. In the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1848), Marx and Engels theoretically formulated the concept of "world literature" as one of the important features in the formation of the new bourgeois society: "The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature."

Goethe in Germany and Pushkin in Russia were 'Universal poets' of the new age. They held forth and transformed various traditions of world literature. The main criteria of their creations as well as that of other world literary classicists are high artistic value, genuine people's spirit and the organic combination of national and international elements.

Naturally, these writers were quite different in their talent, knowledge and understanding of life, world outlook, artistic mannerism and national specifics.

Nevertheless, their creations took on the same social values and helped immeasurably in developing socially valuable aspects.

One way or another they give answers to those historical questions which arise epochally before worldwide humanity and consequently before world literature.

Genuine people's writers, regardless of their nationality, show life, and above all give recognition to the human being in the light of progressive social ideals of their age. They pay attention to the noble qualities of man and strongly oppose anything which hampers his life and perfection. This is why their creations touch deeply, not only their compatriots but also people of other countries, and play such an important role in the

cultural development of humanity and in man's struggle for a liberal society.

The national factor present in their creative work is organically combined with the international. This assumes great significance in the spiritual and cultural yearning of the people, it creates an atmosphere of reliance and mutual understanding, particularly the realm of preserving and strengthening peace on earth.

Due to certain historical causes and above all due to the colonial oppressions of the country, the literatures of the Indian people were delayed in their development.

Only by the end of the nineteenth century in India, to use Marx's and Engel's words, "national one-sidedness in the sphere of literary development and narrow-mindedness have become more impossible". The most fresh and living torrents of Indian literature speed forward into the common channel of world literature, enriching it by the greatest creations of the past, revived and reinterpreted in the new conditions.

Among the Indian writers who accumulated in their creative work the best achievements of world literature, who played a paramount role in ideal aesthetical renovations of Indian literature in a manner of speaking raise Indian literature to the level of world-wide recognition—we can rightly place next to Rabindranath Tagore the name of Mohammad Iqbal.

And here an analogy is visible between the meritorious work of Iqbal's writings of modern Urdu poetry and Pushkin who is rightly regarded as the founder of new Russian literature.

In this article I can but try to draw a broad outline of certain typologic parallels between the creative works of these two great poets. Not being able to dwell in detail on an analysis of all the different aspects of Pushkin's writings, as compared with Iqbal's, I shall cite conclusions and views of a number of authoritative Soviet Pushkin scholars.

#### THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN IQBAL'S AND PUSHKIN'S CREATIVE WORKS

The motivating force of Pushkin's entire creative work was "the need to perceive surrounding objective reality, a striving 'to depict' the distinguishing features and peculiarities of the contemporary man, the man that bore the stamp of his age."<sup>1</sup> For the first time ever in Russian poetry, Pushkin revealed man "in the full concreteness of his historic, national and social being."<sup>2</sup> Man's destiny in Pushkin's writings is inseparable from his people's destiny. "The defence of the individual in Russian literature was at the same time the defence of the people because the position of the individual reflected the position of the people in the given conditions of society. And Belinsky had discerned that in Pushkin's creative work."<sup>3</sup> Pushkin fought resolutely against the obsolete, detrimental and humiliating trends in Russian literature. At a time when

authoritarian dogmas and flesh-mortifying religious scholasticism reigned supreme, he affirmed the joy of earthly existence. His ideal was a free man, sure of his strength and might. He wrote that the entire world revolved round man, so surely man wouldn't stay motionless himself.

And further:

"... happy man, for life you live. . ."

"The didactic rationalism and normativeness of classicism's poetics. . . were cancelled out in Pushkin's poetry by the romantic recognition of the individual's right to attention towards his own person, and the romantic principle associated with the above, namely, the freedom of creativity, which afforded a possibility to step from the world of abstract literary categories and patterns into the world of living life."<sup>4</sup> However, Pushkin's romanticism was not an abstract—contemplative and passive one. As B. Meilakh emphasized, "...nothing was more alien to Pushkin than the romanticism of tranquillity, idealization of a departure from life, no matter what it was like."<sup>5</sup> Pushkin wrote:

"earthly life in illness, in poverty, in grief, in old age, in captivity. . . would be haven compared to what we expected beyond the grave".

One cannot help noticing features of similarity in Iqbal's and Pushkin's concepts of the individual. Like Pushkin, Iqbal strove to solve vital issues in a new way, he sought to penetrate into the complex relations between man and the world, to comprehend the course of society's development, civilization's progress, to affirm the social significance of such features and peculiarities in the characters of his contemporaries which the adherents of old literary traditions considered negative, not in keeping with moral, ethical and aesthetical norms. As in Pushkin's writings, the main theme in Iqbal's entire creative work was man and life. Like Pushkin, Iqbal preferred earthly life with all its joys and hardships to the fairy-tale paradise, where there was no strife and everything was at a standstill. He wrote:

"Hearts of lovers die in eternal paradise. There is no sorrowful song; no grief, no suffering friend there."

(*Payam-e-Mashriq*)

Like Pushkin, Iqbal sings praises of the eternally young, seething, wonderful life, and is thus at variance with religious orthodoxy. "He actually released man from the shackles of medieval Moslem morals, facing him with the accomplished fact of his personal responsibility to himself and to society,"<sup>6</sup> notes leading Soviet Iqbal scholar N. I. Prigarina.

The lofty civic consciousness of Iqbal's humanist quest lies, first of



all, in his striving to change human nature; and that of his fellow-countrymen, to begin with. "No new world can come into being unless human nature changes", Iqbal wrote in *Payam-e-Mashriq*. He sings praises of the strong, bold, energetic and active man who can change the world. In his poem "The Houri and the Poet", replying to the houri who stands at paradise's gates and asks him what he has done to deserve entry, the man says,

"I was a man in the world  
That means I was a fighter."

Like Pushkin, Iqbal holds that man is the world's most perfect creation. His man argues with God Himself, proving his might and boundless means in subjugating nature and changing the world.

Iqbal's conception of the ideal man differs fundamentally from the ideology, then widespread in India and other Eastern countries, of passivity, self-abnegation, and indifference to the surrounding world, an ideology that doomed people to meek submission to the colonizers, to resignation in the face of evil and coercion. As Meilakh puts it, "the affirmation of life, earthly joys as the main thing of value, despite the then dominating idea of bliss and happiness in the Beyond, comprises the fire and passion of Pushkin's...",<sup>7</sup> and we may with good reason add, Iqbal's poetry.

#### THE SOCIAL TREND OF PUSHKIN'S AND IQBAL'S POETRY

Iqbal's poetry with its lofty humanist ideals can be compared with Pushkin's writings which are permeated with lofty civic passion. Living under the conditions of tsarist despotism, Pushkin suffered deeply "... because of the estrangement of people and nations, because of history's tragic contradictions, which pitted the state against the individual and the people against despotism in unsolvable conflict," writes V. M. Markovich. "But a realization of all this is inseparable in Pushkin's views from the affirmation of another ideal—a united, integral, just, humane and harmoniously arranged life for all."<sup>8</sup> Like Pushkin, who saw man's disunity, the oneness of his development, of his spiritual life and his mind (V.M. Markovich), whose indignation was roused when he witnessed back-breaking and forced labour and the conditions of the feudal peasants who had no civil rights, Iqbal emphasized that "... there are no disinterested brotherly relations among people in the capitalist world of gain, and there cannot be any because of their very essence."<sup>9</sup>

Pushkin's poem "In the Country" swept the whole of Russia as a wrathful denunciation of serfdom, tearing to shreds the rural idyll whose praises the passive romantics were singing. With indignation, the Russian poet exclaims,

"Heartless and lawless here a race of masters thrives;  
Wielding a ruthless rod, it makes its own  
The peasant's toil, his chattels and his days."

However, Pushkin is not a hopeless pessimist. He has faith in the triumph of reason, truth and justice. At the end of the poem, the poet dreams of seeing a "free people", "a lovely dawn" that will finally rise over his fatherland.

Pushkin's patriotic lyrics are permeated with a joyous sense of the approach of the new era of people's power. In his poem "To Chaadayev", he seeks to fortify in his compatriots' hearts faith in liberation:

"Comrade, believe: joy's star will leap  
Upon our sight, a radiant token;  
Russia will rouse from her long sleep;  
And where autocracy lies broken,  
Our names shall yet be graven deep."

The names of those who fought selflessly for freedom and a better future for Russia, who longed to free the Russian working people. In his "Message to the Decembrists", Pushkin strove to plant hope in the hearts of those who had been condemned to penal servitude for participation in the rebellion of 1825.

"Then will the heavy fetters fall,  
The prison crumble; freedom's words  
Will greet you by the dungeon wall,  
Your brothers bear you swords."

And a hundred years after those fiery lines, the Indian poet hailed the revolution in Russia, the revolution his Russian brother-poet could only have dreamt of. In his poem "Khizr-e-Rah", Iqbal was one of the first in India to call upon the working people of the world to follow the example of the Revolution in Russia:

"Arise! A new world structure has emerged.  
Your era is beginning in the East and in the West."

Iqbal protests against all forms of oppression—economic, political, spiritual; he exposes the antihumanist nature of bourgeois society. As Tagore in his article "The Crisis of Civilization" has in mind "capitalism" when he uses the word "civilization", so Iqbal, while mercilessly exposing "European civilization", passes sentence on capitalism:

"There is no humaneness on West's sky,  
The are only rivers of blood, rivers of blood..." (Bal-e-Jibril).

and further:

"Unemployment, poverty, need, corruption—  
Does that not suffice for a listing of Western victories...?"

Like Pushkin, Iqbal is not a pessimist. Iqbal's poetry has much in common with Pushkin's patriotic lyrics and denunciatory fire, the latter's protest against injustice, the denigration of human dignity, faith in the revolution's purging power. Iqbal wrote:

"The rich make themselves pearls out of workers' blood.  
The greedy landlord's avarice ravages the peasants.  
Revolution! Revolution! I call on the revolution."

Scholars of Pushkin's and Iqbal's creative work point out that Russian poetry owes its lofty civic-mindedness and democratic aspirations to Pushkin, and Urdu poetry to Iqbal. "Iqbal", Nagendra, for instance, notes, "lent social purpose to Urdu poetry." In his time Gorky appealed to Soviet writers to learn from Pushkin—not in the narrow and formal sense, but to learn to understand the high vocation of a poet—a citizen, to feel boldly and think boldly. Like Pushkin in the conditions of tsarist autocracy had awakened patriotic and civic sentiments in the Russian public, so Iqbal sought to rouse his fellow-countrymen from the depression and demoralization that had been brought on by the colonial enslavement of India.

#### THE EAST-WEST SYNTHESIS IN PUSHKIN'S AND IQBAL'S WRITINGS

Scholars of Pushkin's creative writing frequently compare the great Russian poet with Goethe. It is also known that Iqbal is usually compared with Goethe. Goethe thus becomes a kind of connecting link between Iqbal and Pushkin. What attracted both the Russian and the Indian poet to Goethe's creative efforts was the latter's universalism, the human content of culture which he expressed, the joining of the best from Eastern and Western cultures into an integral whole, so characteristic of him. In the East Goethe "...searches for the sources of the humanist concept which intensifies esteem of man to idolization, and which universalizes human love in the philosophico-Hafiz sense of the word, defining it as the basis of our world and life. . . , of man's original moral purity . . . The supreme spiritual value . . . of the West. . . was for Goethe the concept of the free individual, a fighter against social evil and inhumanity."<sup>10</sup> According to Goethe, the humanist, artistic and moral categories of the East and West "...do not simply coexist, but are fused integrally into a single cultural, literary and artistic alloy. . . This marks the formation of a truly

integrated world culture."<sup>11</sup> It is this very West-East synthesis in Goethe's creative writing, opposed both to the colonialist ideas of Europocentrism and to Eastcentrist isolationism, and based on the human content of culture, which, according to I. S. Braginsky "...affords literary scholars grounds to search for its source and diverse forms of manifestation at different stages in the development of the world literary process. An expression of this synthesis is also characteristic of the creative work of other great writers, for instance, Byron, Pushkin and Rabindranath Tagore."<sup>12</sup> And Mohammad Iqbal's name can with good reason be added to this list.

Like Goethe, Pushkin managed to discern and generalize the progressive and the artistically significant in the culture of the East, and link what was of lasting ideological and aesthetic value in it with the best in Western culture into a single whole.

Features of West-East synthesis are also seen in Iqbal's creative work. This synthesis would have been impossible if Pushkin had not absorbed the East, like Iqbal absorbed the West. Eastern motifs are to be found in Pushkin's early works, just as Western motifs are found in Iqbal's early works. Just as Pushkin managed to penetrate deeply into the spirit of Eastern poetry and comprehend the East deeply, so Iqbal, in turning towards the West, perceived the deep-seated phenomena of Western culture, rather than its external features..

Again, just as Pushkin, on the eve of the Decembrist revolt, searched for examples of fiery spiritual fortitude and selfless struggle in Eastern motifs and images, embodied, for instance, in his poems "Imitating the Quran", so Iqbal fused progressive Western ideas into an integral whole with the best humanist elements of the East's cultural traditions. Iqbal "...insists it is the West that knows how to break the shackles of destiny...rouses to life the shadows of the West's great thinkers: Leo Tolstoi, Karl Marx, Hegel."<sup>13</sup> Like Goethe who collected in his *Divan* famous literary characters which he considered were associated with Eastern wisdom, so Iqbal in his poem "A Conversation Among the Dead" gives the floor to European thinkers, scientists and poets who compromise, to his mind, Europe's true face. Iqbal doesn't want that face to be distorted, so he strives to open people's eyes, to affirm the truth and expose evil. For instance, in his poem "A Message", Iqbal comes out in support of lofty humanism. One can't help recalling in this connection that Pushkin, in his "Imitating the Quran", also asserts the idea of the poet's progressive mission, and comes for truth, kindness and justice, against the faint-hearted. He appeals to the poet to take heart, despise deception, faithfully keep to the path of truth, love orphans, and preach his *Quran* to all trembling creatures.

Speaking of the East-West synthesis which characterizes Iqbal's outlook and creative work, comparing it with Goethe's and Pushkin's, I do

not at all seek to identify him with them. The same, I believe, can be said of Iqbal as I. S. Braginsky said of Pushkin: "Pushkin's West-East synthesis has certain features in common with Goethe's, but on the whole, it is inimitably individual: it is purely Pushkin's synthesis."<sup>14</sup> The fusing of Eastern and Western motifs is one of the vivid manifestations of the integral bonds that link the national and the international, both in the case of Pushkin and Iqbal.

#### IQBAL'S AND PUSHKIN'S ATTITUDE TO TRADITION

The problem of West-East synthesis is directly associated with Iqbal's and Pushkin's attitude to the classical heritage. Regarding this question, too, let us turn to the parallels that are usually drawn between the two poets and Goethe, namely, in the sense of Pushkin's and Goethe's propinquity. . . to 'ancient classicism' to the traditions of antiquity; can we accept, to my mind, the frequently drawn analogy between the creative works of these two national geniuses?"<sup>15</sup> Pushkin drew on all the experience of world literature that was accessible to him, synthesizing in his own writings many of the former's wonderful attainments. "Namely, in this respect, in the exceptional richness of synthesis, lies the individual distinctiveness of Pushkin's realism, and, at the same time, namely, this makes him the fountainhead of subsequent Russian literature,"<sup>16</sup> D. D. Blagoi notes.

I believe that what has here been said about Pushkin can to a certain extent be applied to Iqbal, too. A narrow national approach to the cultural heritage of people was as profoundly alien to Iqbal as to Pushkin. The classic heritage according to Iqbal was made up not only of the remarkable spiritual and artistic values of the past, which his fellow-countrymen had created, but also of the best that mankind had accumulated in the course of its cultural development. He called upon people to do away with racial, religious and communal contradictions, and sang praises of the unity of mankind.

"We are not Afghans, not Turks, not Tatars,  
We were born in a garden within a single ring.  
All differences among us are forbidden  
Because we're the shoots of a single spring."

(*Payam-e-Mashriq*)

Drawing inspiration from Rumi's and Hafiz's poetry, from Persian classical poetry as a whole, from the ideas and images of Islam, Iqbal at the same time did not view the Indian cultural legacy from religious-confessional positions. He drew on the spiritual and aesthetic treasures of both Moslem and Hindu origins. Many researchers of Iqbal's works point

out his broad humanist approach to India's cultural traditions, as, for instance, Dr. Prabhakar Machwe, who in his article "Concept of Man in Iqbal"<sup>17</sup> shows very well how Iqbal combines Sufistic and Vedantic ideas in his poetry into a single whole.

Like Pushkin, Iqbal displayed a creative attitude towards the cultural legacy, filling traditional images with new content, first of all utilizing those elements which were most in tune with the times. In this respect Iqbal's creative work, like that of Tagore, served to a certain extent as a reference point for those writers who laid the foundation of the new literature of India's people. For instance, the idea of continuous, eternally developing life: Iqbal at times, like Tagore, Nazrul Islam and Nirala, expressed through the image of a mountain stream that overcomes all obstacles in its path. "Some researchers associate Iqbal's use of the image of a mountain stream," N. I. Prigarina notes, "with a favourite motif of Goethe's poetry."<sup>18</sup> In his collection *Bang-e-Dara*, Iqbal writes, "the stream comes down from the mountain summit, singing songs."

Despite the considerable ideological and artistic distinction between Iqbal's and Pushkin's poetry, one can discern a certain connection between these lines of Iqbal's and Pushkin's where he says that the spring of youth, the fast and rebel spring, is boiling, racing, babbling a-glitter.

Like Pushkin who glorified the lofty sentiment of love, Iqbal considered love to be the principal essence of life, the quintessence of what was most splendid and great. "Follow in the steps of love, for only love knows its job to perfection," exclaims Iqbal. In his affirmation of love's all-conquering force, one can't help discerning the Sufistic interpretation of love as life's eternally flaming fire.

#### THE ROMANTIC AND REALIST IN IQBAL'S AND PUSHKIN'S CREATIONS

The subject of Iqbal's creative method is very complicated and not yet deeply probed. Since it is naturally quite impossible fully to substantiate and advance all the necessary arguments here in favour of my conclusions, I want but to note that, from our point of view, a complex interaction of romanticism and realism is in general characteristic of Iqbal's creative work, the works of many other Indian writers, and the entire new and latest Indian literature. In his appreciation of man's unity with the surrounding world, in his depiction of the individual entering into conflict with obsolete social conditions, in his interest in man's spiritual world, the spirit of the people, in his glorification of love as the essence of life, Iqbal comes out as a romanticist. D.D. Blagoi refers to romanticism's recognition of the individual's right to attention to himself, which was so characteristic of Pushkin.

However, Iqbal's romanticism has nothing in common with a passive contemplation of the world; it is pronouncedly active, and in its best

manifestations revolutionary. In this respect, it is also akin to Pushkin's romanticism. "Iqbal's tradition was not just humanist. . . It was revolutionary by nature. . . He was a poet of dynamism and vigour, not immobility and statics,"<sup>19</sup> A.A. Engineer correctly notes.

Iqbal's striving to penetrate deeply into life around him, to comprehend man's role in the contemporary world, and probe mankind's entire history, engendered realist tendencies in his creative work. In like manner, Pushkin managed to overcome "...the one-sided objectivism of the romanticists, and become a poet of actual life, life the way it really was, become a 'poet of reality',—his own, as is known, definition of himself."<sup>20</sup> D.D. Blagoi's pronouncement that one can discern in Pushkin's creative work "his need to comprehend surrounding objective reality—his striving to 'depict' the distinctive features and peculiarities of contemporary man, the man who bears the stamp of his age,"<sup>21</sup> can to a certain extent also be applied to Iqbal. It was precisely from that "need" that realist elements developed in Iqbal's creative work.

#### IQBAL'S POETRY, LIKE PUSHKIN'S, IN THE HEARTS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN

The greatness of Iqbal, as of Pushkin, lies in the fact that he managed to catch and express in remarkable poetical form the typical features of his countrymen's characters, probe deeply into their inner world. Like Pushkin in Russia, Iqbal became in his country a genuine people's poet, expressing his people's thoughts, feelings and emotional experiences. Reflecting man's exalted and noble character, Iqbal, like Pushkin, enhances the spiritual and moral development of his people. His poetical works have not and never will become obsolete. They affect the reader deeply, penetrate into the soul, rouse the emotions. "The works of genuine poets," Pushkin said, "stay fresh and eternally young." These words can with good reason be applied to Pushkin himself and to Iqbal.

"The force that made Pushkin so dear to us is the force of his verses, verses that accompanied us from childhood, and they have become so much a part of us that we frequently, even without noticing it, think of our native land and its nature, of love, of life with its joys and griefs in the terms and images of Pushkin's lyric poems,"<sup>22</sup> B. Meilakh notes.

Just like the Russian people have become attached to Pushkin's poetry heart and soul, so Iqbal's countrymen recall the poetry of their beloved poet at different times in life. One can frequently hear Iqbal's lines pronounced by his countrymen not only at mushairas and literary get-togethers, but in everyday life, as if seeking support in them, striving to express through them their own most cherished thoughts, feelings and moods. In this connection, it may be interesting to turn to Iqbal's contemporary and collaborator Prem Chand, a remarkable Indian writer, who knew well, assessed highly and loved Iqbal's poetry. In his book

about Prem Chand, *Prem Chand— a Soldier of the Pen*, Amrit Rai, the writer's son, points out that Prem Chand looked upon Iqbal's poetry as "a model of lofty, contemporary literature, a literature that determines the destiny of people."<sup>23</sup>

"Munshi loved Iqbal very much," writes Amrit Rai. "When he wanted to make his words more appreciative and meaningful, he inevitably turned to Iqbal."<sup>24</sup>

Most characteristic are fragments from Iqbal's poetry quoted in the book, which Prem Chand liked to cite, and which were in tune with his own thoughts and moods:

"My life is troubled, like the rough waves.  
But don't think I'm looking for a shore."

Prem Chand was greatly inspired by the idea of man's all-conquering power, so vividly and graphically expressed in Iqbal's poetry. Seeking to show that the concepts of youth, lofty ideals, courage and selflessness could be expressed through Iqbal's lines, Prem Chand wrote that in the desert of their madness, Jabrail was but an infinitesimal sacrifice and called upon courageous determination to lasso itself.

It is common knowledge that Iqbal took no direct part in the organisation and activities of the Progressive Writers' Association. However, his verses inspired many progressive Indian authors, served them as a kind of landmark in their creative work, in their national liberation struggle.

Speaking of the need for fundamental changes in literature, literature that should express the foremost ideas of the age, Prem Chand insisted that sentimental art was not needed. He said an art was needed which would speak of the sense of duty. Together with Iqbal, he maintained that the secrets of life should be sought in the fire, and that to relax in the sea was a disgrace to the river; that the joy of flight would not permit the poet to sit back in his nest, that he was now on a flower's stem, now on the river's bank.

#### TRADITIONS STEMMING FROM IQBAL AND PUSHKIN

"To write about Pushkin means to write about all of Russian literature," said V.G. Belinsky, the great Russian critic, more than a hundred years ago, emphasizing the poet's indissoluble ties with all Russian literature that had preceded him. Continuing this thought, B. Meilakh notes, "To write about Pushkin now means to write not only about his predecessors, but also about his continuers; about those who developed the eternally living traditions of Pushkin, who advanced as innovators along unexplored paths, but in the direction



which Pushkin had outlined."<sup>25</sup> Research into the traditions stemming from Pushkin not only in Russian, but also in our entire multinational Soviet literature has long become one of the major trends in Soviet literary studies. Our researchers strive to trace the development and enrichment of the basic principles of Pushkin's artistic system in the continued advance of the literature of our country's peoples. Soviet Pushkin scholars show that, alongside such outstanding Russian poets as Lermontov, Nekrasov, Mayakovsky—true continuers of Pushkin traditions who, adhering to life's command, hearkening closely to the voice of their age, disclosed man's inner world and revealed new potentials in Russian poetry, there were also imitators, poets who mechanically copied the content and form of Pushkin's poetry, and men of letters who distorted Pushkin's spirit, arbitrarily and tendentiously interpreting his creations and outlook.

What has been said here about the great Russian poet can with good reason be applied to Iqbal. The problem of Iqbal's traditions is at present acquiring increasing significance. We at times somehow fail clearly to perceive the full greatness of this or that author, our contemporary, and only after his decease, do we begin, with the lapse of time, fully to appreciate his merits. Historical perspective helps understand his place in literature, the part he played in its development. The longer the period since Iqbal's decease, the clearer and more tangible becomes his great contribution not only to the literatures in the languages of Urdu and Persian, but to the entire literature of the people of the Indian subcontinent, his influence upon the further development of the literary process, the creative efforts of many poets—his disciples and followers. The problem of the Iqbal traditions is thus now acquiring not only considerable theoretical significance, but is one of the vital issues in literary practice in the development of contemporary Indian literature on the whole. "We can't confine Iqbal's influence to its effect on Urdu poetry alone," A. A. Engineer rightly notes. This scholar of Iqbal's creative work has, to our mind, made a promising attempt to determine the content and character of Iqbal's traditions, to show their development in contemporary Urdu literature. I believe that this trend in Iqbal studies holds great promise, just as the problem of the study and development of Pushkin's occupies a major place in Soviet literary studies.

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While drawing parallels between the creative work of Iqbal and of Pushkin and finding a typological similarity between them, we, at the same time, do not at all mean to make any direct analogies between two such different poets. Iqbal's artistic world, like Pushkin's, is most distinctive, inimitable and individual, and in that, above all, lies its greatness.

At the same time, expressing the most progressive trends of his time, Iqbal had much in common with Pushkin, who was in his day faced with tasks and problems similar to those Iqbal had to deal with in his creative work.

The similarity between Iqbal and Pushkin lies also in the great popularity these poets gained in the contemporary world. Their creations have become part of the treasury of world literature, their works are being translated into numerous languages and coming out in large editions. They are known and appreciated in the distant corners of the globe, and are agitating people in different countries. That is what constitutes the power and undying glory of these great poets.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>D.D. Blagoi, "Pushkin's Realism as Correlated to Other Literary Trends and Artistic Methods" in the book *Realism and Its Correlation with Other Creative Methods*, M., 1962, pp. 116-117.

<sup>2</sup>B. Meilakh, *Questions of Literature and Aesthetics*, I., 1958, p. 228.

<sup>3</sup>V.V. Yermilov, "On Russian Literature's Humanist Traditions" in the book *Humanism and Contemporary Literature*, M., 1963, p. 113.

<sup>4</sup>D. D. Blagoi, above-quoted article, p. 133 (All above references here and further on in Russian)

<sup>5</sup>Above-quoted article by B. Meilakh, p. 230.

<sup>6</sup>N.I. Prigarina, *Mohammad Iqbal's Poetry*, M., 1972, p. 130.

<sup>7</sup>Above-quoted article by B. Meilakh, p. 230.

<sup>8</sup>*Literary Encyclopaedia*, M., 1971, Vol. 6, p. 455.

<sup>9</sup>N.P. Anikeyev, *Outstanding Thinker and Poet Muhammad Iqbal*, M., 1959, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup>I.S. Braginsky, *Problems of Oriental Studies*, M., 1974, p. 311.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, p. 311.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, p. 311.

<sup>13</sup>A quote from N.I. Prigarina's article, p. 150.

<sup>14</sup>I.S. Braginsky's article, p. 322.

<sup>15</sup>D.D. Blagoi's article, p. 115.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid, p. 141.

<sup>17</sup>Dr Prabhakar Machwe "Concept of Man in Iqbal" in the book, *A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Iqbal*, New Delhi, 1977.

<sup>18</sup>N.I. Prigarina's cited article, p. 94.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, pp. 47, 50.

<sup>20</sup>D.D. Blagoi's cited work, p. 115.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, pp. 116-117.

<sup>22</sup>B. Meilakh's above cited article, p. 225.

<sup>23</sup>Amritrai, *Prem Chand: Kalam ka Sipahi*, Allahabad, 1962, p. 178.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid, p. 620.

<sup>25</sup>B. Meilakh's above cited article, p. 225.

## BROWNING AND IQBAL

ISH KUMAR

As poets, Browning and Iqbal are poles apart. Browning is rough and rugged; Iqbal is polished and felicitous. Browning is obscure; Iqbal is crystal-clear. Browning vibrates with emotion and at times becomes incoherent with its stress. Iqbal is leisurely and elaborates his thought with hammer blows. Browning is original in his imagery which fits in with his theme. Iqbal is traditional, though he gives a refreshingly new significance to old worn-out metaphors. One is dramatic; the other is lyrical. One is deeply psychological; the other has no interest in "the incidents in the development of the soul".

All this is true, but there are surprising affinities between the two as thinkers. In fact, it is as thinkers that they sometimes claimed precedence. That has been the tragedy of many a great writer. Wordsworth killed many of his poems, because he wanted to be regarded "as a teacher or as nothing". "There is scarcely one of my poems," he said, "which does not aim to direct the attention to some moral sentiment." But the irony is that the poems that he wrote for that purpose have all been forgotten. One sometimes wonders that the author of the "Ode to Immortality" and "Tintern Abbey" wrote them. Even Matthew Arnold, one of the greatest Wordsworthians, said about him, "His poetry is the reality, his philosophy . . . is the illusion." Who knows that the same thing may be said about Browning and Iqbal too. "The most fatal error which a poet can possibly commit," said Macaulay, "is that of attempting to philosophise too much."

Both Browning and Iqbal were great poets in their younger days and did not allow their "purpose" to kill their poetry. As they grew, they began to think that they were prophets, with a message to deliver. Neither of them believed in art for art's sake. Elizabeth Browning said that

Robert would not listen even to a story for its own sake. Poetry fulfils its possibilities, he said, when the poet labours in the service of men. Andrea fails because he is immoral and infatuated. His work, he realises, though technically "faultless", is "soul-less" and cannot equal that of Raphael and Angelo because there burns a truer light of God in them.

"Their works drop groundward; but themselves, I know,  
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me."

Iqbal similarly believed that the arts

"If they fortify self, they are invigorating,  
Otherwise they are mere trickery and moonshine."

Again

"If the arts do not possess the virtue of building up self,  
Fie on painting, poetry and music."

In a speech in Afghanistan, he said :

"My doctrine is that art, whether it may be literature, painting or music, is the hand-maid of life and so I should call it instruction and not entertainment."

About his own work, he said:

"In poetry, my point of view has never been art for art's sake. I have no time to look to the niceties of art. My aim is only that my ideas should create revolution, that is all. With this in view, I try to express those ideas which I regard as beneficial. What wonder if the coming generations may not regard me as a poet, since art requires extreme labour, which it is not possible for me to expend at present?"

He was so categorical on the point that he repeated it a dozen times both in poetry and in prose. Both Browning and Iqbal sacrificed a great deal of their poetry at the altar of a greater deal of propaganda. From philosopher-poets, much to their ill-luck, they became poet-philosophers.

There is a great deal common in their thought. Both were great love poets. Browning, in fact, was the greatest love poet of England. Love was his religion almost. It was an all-inclusive passion, body, soul, heart and mind, all put together. Paracelsus sacrifices love and is doomed.

Sordello finds himself in an almost similar situation. For Browning love was the vital moment that came to a person only once in his life—the supreme experience for every human being. To ignore or refuse it was a sin and the cause of all human disaster. In *Dis Aliter Visum*, the man rejects that vital moment and the lady protests.

“The devil laughed at you in his sleeve!  
You knew not? That I well believe;  
Or you had saved two souls: nay, four.”

In *Too Late*, it is the woman (Edith) who fails; the man takes her “No” too readily and they go down. In *Inapprehensiveness*, in *Bifurcation*, in *Youth and Art*, in *The Statue and the Bust*, it is the same story over and over again. Browning himself caught his own vital moment and rescued Elizabeth Barrett from misery and death. Caponsachhi rescues Pompilia in *The Ring and the Book*. Caponsachhi, like Browning, stands for emotional rather than the so-called moral values. Browning found Victorian England in the grip of convention and propriety and wanted to shock its rigid complacency.

Iqbal's conception of love was grander still. In poetry, he was not much interested in physical passion.

“I have nothing to do with the street of the beloved;  
I have no weeping heart, no bitter grief”

“I have dialogue with Gabriel  
And not with the rival, the messenger or the gatekeeper.”

He was more interested in the philosophy than in the sentiment of love. He raised the connotation of *ishq* to a very high and comprehensive level. Used by him, the word denotes a force that provides the solution of all human problems. It embraces all the duties and functions of human life. It appears that he wanted a different word for his grand conception, since *ishq* had too narrow a connotation, but he accepted and exalted it. Aristotle had the same difficulty in more than one field. He expanded the concepts of Plato, both in ethics and aesthetics, imitation, justice, virtue etc., but had to stick to Plato's terms to be intelligible.

For Iqbal, love denoted a cosmic force responsible for all creation and evolution, like Bergson's life-force. The fundamental reality, the *summum bonum* of human life, for him, was *khudi* (self), but the force that conduced to its development was love.

“Through love, it (*khudi*) becomes more enduring,  
More alive, more burning, more shining.”

His concept of love became so comprehensive that it came to mean the basis of all good and great actions and the sum-total of all virtues. He repeated the idea so frequently and variously that it is impossible to do justice to it in a paper like this.

"The resonance of high and low in music is through love,  
Love is the fire and energy in different objects of earth,  
It is imbedded in the nerves and arteries of men  
Like the dampness of morning breeze in flowers."

He goes to the length of saying

"Love is that breath of Gabriel and of Mohammad  
It is God's prophet and His revelation."

Like Browning, Iqbal also believed in the emotional rather than the logical approach to life. In the eternal conflict between reason and emotion, both of them were wholly and unequivocally for emotion, for love (*ishq*) as opposed to intellect (*aql*).

"Intellect is too busy with criticism;  
base your actions on love."

Again,

"Love jumped into the fire of *Namrūd* fearlessly;  
Intellect is still amazed at the fun, safely on the terrace."

In one of his *rubais*, he says that one should go ahead of intellect, because it is mere street light and not the destination.

At another place, he contrasts the foxiness of intellect with the divine power of love.

In a simple poem, *aql-o-dil*, there is a dialogue between the head and the heart. When the head has grandiloquently expatiated on its achievements in the field of knowledge—how it guides humanity and reveals the secrets of the universe, the heart replies:

"All that you say is true, but just consider what I am. You understand the secret of life; I see it face to face. You are concerned with the exterior; I peep into the interior. If you reveal knowledge, I reveal divinity, you *seek* God, I *show* him. The acme of knowledge is restlessness; I am its remedy. You enlighten truth; I enlighten beauty."

Browning is quite as emphatic, though, unlike Iqbal's, his method is dramatic and not lyrical. His very first poem *Pauline* illustrates how

the witchcraft (Iqbal called it foxiness) of the brain degrades "the god" in man. The soul of the poet is imbued with the spirit of knowledge, with a principle of restlessness which, like Faust, would be all, have, see, know, taste, feel all. Ultimately he is terrified at his own shadow. He seeks refuge from the terror of his fancies with which he dare not struggle, in the screen of Pauline's love. Paracelsus is more akin to Faust. He is a man who eschews love and is consumed by a passion for intellectual knowledge. Opposed to him are Festus, Michael and, more particularly, Aprile, all of whom stand for love. Paracelsus meets Nietzschean failure and in the end raves like Lear. When he comes to his senses, he realises that love is more powerful than knowledge.

In *A Pillar at Sebzevah*, the sage instructs the pupil that love far outweighs knowledge.

"Wholly distrust thy knowledge then, and trust  
As wholly love allied to ignorance;  
There lies thy truth and safety."

Again,

"Knowledge means  
Ever renewed assurance by defeat  
That victory is somehow still to reach;  
But love is victory, the prize itself."

In *One Word More*, he says, "Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also."

Love conquers death, the all-conqueror—that is what both Browning and Iqbal believe. In a simple poem, *Ishq aur Maut*, Iqbal allegorically describes that when, in the beginning of creation, the angels were learning to fly, the Angel of Love came across the Angel of Death and asked that 'ugly creature' who he was and what he did. The latter replied rather boastfully that he tore the existence to tatters and extinguished the flame of life, but there was one entity (he of course meant love, without knowing to whom he was talking) which was more powerful. When the Angel of Love heard this, he smiled and the Angel of Death was reduced to ashes.

"The lightning of the smile fell on Death;  
How can darkness stay in light?  
When it saw immortality, it expired,  
Being death itself, it fell prey to Death."

In another poem, *Falsafa-e-Gham*, he says,

"If the death of the beloved meant the extinction of love, love would have died along with the beloved, but it does not, and lives in the soul as sorrow."

Browning has the same message in poem after poem—*One Word More, By the Fireside, Too Late, Prospice, Evelyn Hope, Bifurcation, Any Wife to Any Husband*. The lover has not even met Evelyn Hope before she dies, but he is certain that they will meet in the next life, since God "creates the love to reward the love." In *Bifurcation*, the woman sacrifices love to duty, but feels certain that heaven will repair the wrongs of the earth. She will get her love in the next world.

In *Any Wife to Any Husband*, the wife, while dying, feels that though she herself is sure to remain faithful even after death, her husband might falter, but no—

"Since mine thou wast, mine art and mine shall be,  
Faithful or faithless, sealing up the sum  
Or lavish of my treasure, thou must come  
Back to the heart's place here I keep for thee!"

Similarly, in *Prospice*, the lover defies death which, though it may separate the beloved from him temporarily, cannot kill love :

"Then a light, then thy breast,  
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,  
And with God be the rest!"

Both Browning and Iqbal regarded life as a struggle, constant and eternal, here and now:

"There may be Heaven: There must be Hell;  
Meanwhile we have our life here : we—all."

The real joy of life is struggle, with or without reward, better without than with it. Reward is not here but hereafter. It is "God's task to make the heavenly period perfect the earthen" ("Grammarian's Funeral"). In the same poem,

"Leave Now for dogs and apes!  
Man has Forever."

Failure is the success of life. It matures us. It gives us incentive. Achievement kills the zest for work, the zest of joy and vital living. "We



fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake." The real fault is not failure, but cowardice. Cowardice is worse than even vice:

"The sin I impute to each frustrate ghost  
Is the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,  
Though the end in sight was a vice, I say."

A man must have a strong personality. A daring criminal is better than a flabby or selfishly satisfied saint. Before asking whether a man is ethically good or bad, let us know if he is anything at all. Browning could not endure lethargy, indifference and torpid conventionalism. For neutrals ("the unlit lamp, and the ungirt loin") he felt unalterable contempt. Virtue must be positive; it must possess a conquering energy. In *The Statue and the Bust*, he condemns the Duke and his beloved who dwarf and wither their souls by pining for what they do not have the courage to grasp, by following prudence and conventionality. The "glory of failure" is with Browning a familiar and inexhaustible theme:

"Then welcome each rebuff,  
That turns each smoothness rough  
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!  
Be our joys three parts pain!  
Strive and hold cheap the strain;  
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe."

Aspiration, not achievement, is the goal of life and, in fact, divides us from the brute. It is not so much the work done that matters, as the purposes, thoughts, fancies that one fails to realise.

"What I aspired to be,  
And was not, comforts me."

"Thoughts hardly to be packed  
Into a narrower act,  
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;  
All I could never be,  
All, men ignored in me,  
This, I was worth to God, whose wh—"

It is worthier to aspire high and fail than .. and succeed.  
The Grammarian

"Ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success  
Found, or earth's failure."

"That low man goes on adding one to one,  
His hundred's soon hit:  
This high man aiming at a million,  
Misses a unit."

"Andrea del Sarto" is another poem of success in failure. "Faultless but soulless"—that is Andrea's art—a matter of technique where perfection can be easily achieved rather than of genius like Raphael's and Angelo's which must always remain imperfect.

In *Old Pictures in Florence*, Browning talks of the Greek art being perfect because it depicted bodies where perfection is achieved, as one can draw a perfect O. But in painting soul, one never reaches perfection. The function of art is

"to bring the invisible full into play!  
Let the visible go to the dogs—what matters?"

" 'Tis a life-long toil till our lump be leaven—  
The better! What's come to perfection perishes."

Failure is glorious when aspiration is infinite; success is fatal when there is no impulse to rise above the limitations of sense into the freedom of the spirit. Temporary success may inspire us, but it is failure alone that is thrilling—"Triumphant failure", as Dallas terms it.

"Rephan" is a very interesting poem. Rephan is a star where all is perfect—no change, no growth, no deficiency nor excess, no hope nor fear, no love nor hate.

"None felt distaste where better and worse  
Were in contrastable."

All were happy and serene where there was no wrong to right, no right to vindicate. Everything faultlessly exact." An inhabitant of such a paradise comes to this earth and sees the "difference in thing and thing" which turns his "soul's quietude into discontent". He learns

"to attain  
To the ..

He learns further that

"Wrong will prove right? who made shall mend  
In the higher sphere to which yearnings tend."

He loses all charm for the perfection of Rephan. Earth is a higher place.

"So wouldst thou strive, not rest?  
Burn and not smoulder, win by worth,  
Not rest content with a wealth that's dearth.  
Thou are past Rephan, thy place be earth!"

Browning is an irrepressible optimist. No amount of rebuff can discourage his "actors". "Fail I alone in word and deed?", asks the rejected love defiantly.

"What hand and brain went ever paired?  
What heart alike conceived and dared?  
What act proved all its thought had been?  
What will but felt the fleshly screen?"

("The Last Ride Together")

Another lover is certain of meeting in the life to come his dead beloved he has never talked to, never met. The third one asks,

"But what if I fail of my purpose here?  
It is but to keep the nerves at strain,  
To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall  
And baffled, get up and begin again."

"Rabbi Ben Ezra" is a poem of courageous old age. The mistakes and strivings of youth are essential for development. The aim and not the result is our real merit. The aim with all its failures leads to spiritual growth. The test is not what our work gets for us, but what it makes of us.

"youth

Should strive, through acts uncouth,  
Towards making, than repose on aught found made."

"All I could never be  
All, men ignored in me,  
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

Browning is never for hugging the shore, always for tasting the

saltsting of the buffeting waves. "La Saisiaz" as well as "Ferishta's Fancies" emphasises the significance of earthly pains and penalties for the development of the soul. There is joy in all effort, in all experience, whatever the reward. "Try to be Shakespeare; leave the rest to fate." (*"Bishop Brougham's Apology"*)

" 'tis not what man does that exalts him, but what man would do."

In the "Epilogue" to his last volume, he bids his friends not to pity him, but "strive and thrive!" Cry "Speed,—fight on, for ever There as here!"

Iqbal is no less emphatic, no less brave, no less optimistic. Quite often, he employs the same imagery. A Persian qit'ah in *Payam-e-Mashriq* runs

"Don't array your conference on the shore,  
because the tune of life there is soft.  
Jump into the river and struggle with its waves,  
for life eternal consists in struggle."

A little further he says '*Agar Khāhī hayāt andar Khatar Zi*' ("If you desire life, live among dangers").

"The heat of struggle makes life more vital  
And gives it wings and feathers."

In another verse, he says that those who swam underneath the stream remained buried in the stream, but those who were buffeted by the waves became jewels. Again, "Why worry if the children of Khalifa Usman are crushed by sorrow; thousands of stars bleed before the dawn appears. . . the heart gets insight only when it bleeds."

The danger-loving temperament, he says in another verse, does not like to stay in the garden where there is no hunter lying in wait.

"Rest and stay are optical illusions; every particle of this universe is in vibration. The caravan of existence never stops; every minute it has fresh eagerness for manifestation. You think that life is a secret; it is nothing but the eagerness for flight. It has seen many ups and downs: it likes journey better than destination. Journey is the beauty and the music of life; journey is reality; rest is fiction."

Further on, he says that in this world of passion and anguish, separation is better than meeting. Meeting is the death of desire; separa-

tion is the joy of seeking.

One of his Persian poems, *Hur-o-Shair*, reminds us of Browning's "Rephan".

"What should I do that my temperament is not fitted for rest? I have a heart that is restless like the breeze in the garden. When my eye rests on one beautiful object, my heart hankers after a more beautiful one. When I get the flame, I seek the star; when I get the star, I seek the sun; I have no destination, for I die by rest. I seek that limit which has no limit, with an eye that is always restless and a heart that is always hopeful. The heart of the lovers dies in eternal paradise, for there is no cry of agony there, no sorrow and no comforter."

This is from *Bang-e-Darā*:

"Find out the secret of life from Khizr of auspicious gait. He will tell you that everything is alive by unsuccessful effort."

In another poem, he answers the question, what is life?

"Do not calculate it in terms of today and tomorrow; life is eternal, ever flowing, ever young. Find out the reality of life from Farhad; life is the stream of milk, the axe and the heavy stone. In the sea of life you are like a bubble; life is a test for you."

In one of his characteristically forceful poems, *Khizr-e-Rah*, Khizr, addressing the poet says, "Why are you amazed at my constant wanderings in the desert? This eternal seeking and struggle is the evidence of life. O home-loving youth, you have not known the march cry of the caravan or the carefree movement of the deer on the mounds of sand or the stay without shelter and provisions or the journey without mile-stones. The cup of life is strengthened by constant rotation; that alone, O Ignorant one, is the secret of life."

Like Browning, Iqbal also believes in the limitlessness of ideals.

"Do not get involved and shut up in this day and night. There are other times and spaces also for you."

"High courage is not satisfied even with a river; how long will you, O sluggard, be content like a bud with a mere dew-drop?"

"The goal of the Muslim is beyond this blue sky; and the stars are the dust of the path of your caravan."

How long, he says further in the same poem, will you be content to live among the garden birds in the trees? You have the power of the

mountain-falcon in your wings. Falcon (*shāhīn*), in fact, is the symbol of courage and bravery which has immense appeal for Iqbal as opposed to the cowardice of the pigeon. "O nightingale", he says, "sing a song so that the tender body of the pigeon may develop the heart of the falcon." "The falcon spends his time in the hills and the jungles; it is a disgrace for him to build nests." "The joy that there is in pouncing on a pigeon is not there in tasting its blood." "The dome of the royal palace is not the fitting place for your nest. You are a falcon; go and live in the rocks of the mountains."

In a poem entitled "Shāhīn," the falcon says: "I have washed my hands of this earth where the food consists of grain and water (*āb-o-dānah*). The solitude of the forest is more congenial to me, because I am ascetically inclined since eternity. In the forest there is no spring-breeze, nor the nightingale, nor flower-pickers, nor the disease of love-songs. It is befitting to escape the flirtations of the garden-dwellers. The young warrior's blood is exercised by the forest winds. I am not hungry for the dove or the pigeon, for the life of a falcon is that of a stoic. To swoop and pounce is merely an excuse of warming up the blood. This east and the west are the world for ducks; I have the limitless blue sky for my flight. I am a nomad among birds, for the falcon never builds a nest."

Iqbal's whole philosophy of Self (*Khudī*) is based on this message of hope, activity and struggle. In *Bāl-e-Jibrīl*, he defines *khudī* as the edge of a sword. "*Khudī* is the inner secret of life; it is the wakefulness of existence. . . it has eternity in front and eternity behind. It is always flowing in the stream of existence and facing the dangers of the waves. It ever follows new paths of exploration; its sight moves from object to object. Before it, the heaviest stone is light as air and the mountain becomes running sand under its blows. Journey is its beginning and its end. . . it does not bother about more or less, rise or fall, before or behind. It is bound with struggle since eternity and manifests itself in the body of man. . . Go ahead. Rend asunder the hard mountains on your way; rend asunder the witchery of time and space. *Khudī* is the tiger of God; the earth and the sky are its victims. There are more unmanifested words yet that are waiting for your conquest, for the courage of your thought and action. The only aim of life is that your self should become manifest to you. You are the conqueror of this world of good and evil. How can I tell you what is ordained for you?"

Like Browning again, Iqbal prefers a brave sinner to a timid saint. At places both Iqbal and Browning, like Milton, appear to be of the Devil's part—knowing it. In poem after poem ("The Statue and the Bust", "The Flight of the Duchess", "Youth and Art"), Browning condemns sloth and cowardice. To plan evil and to be slothful about it are two sins. In fact, he uses the words "crime" and "vice" for prospected elope-

ment and reserves "sin" for failure to carry it out.

For Iqbal also, as for Milton, Satan has a resistless appeal. In a poem, "Jibril-o-Iblis", Gabriel asks Satan to repent and regain heaven. Satan replies, with Iqbal's evident approval, "It is impossible for me now to reconcile myself to the silent world of yours, devoid of roads and palaces; my world is full of stir and strife, pain and scar, search and desire. You sit on the shore and watch the war between good and evil from a safe distance. Who suffers the buffeting of the storm, you or I? When you are sometimes alone with God, ask him as to who has made human life colourful."

In a very interesting poem, "Taskhir Fitrat," when Satan is ordered by God to worship Adam, he rebelliously retorts how he, born of fire, can worship Adam, born of earth. "The blood in the veins of the universe gets warmed up by the fire; I am the fury of the storm and the roar of thunder. I break what I make to pieces, in order to create new bodies out of earth—you give bodies to the stars; I give them motion; I am the hidden life behind this universe. You give life to the body; I give it activity and noise; you lead astray by rest; I guide by the fire of love. . . Man is born in your lap; he grows and develops in mine." Goading Adam to rebellion, he says, "The life of fire and music is better than your eternal rest. The dove becomes a falcon by the heat of the trap. Your life is worth nothing more than worship and prayer; rise up like a tall cypress tree, O sluggish in action. . . The good and evil are born of the whim of your God; enjoy the taste of action, step forward and achieve your object. Get up, because fresh victories are awaiting your actions; open the world-seeing eye and go about to enjoy the fun. You are at present a valueless drop; become a bright jewel. . . You are a shining sword. . . come out of the scabbard and show your worth. Open the wings of a falcon and shed the blood of the partridge; life in the nest is death for a falcon. You do not yet realise that fulfilment kills desire. What is eternal life? It is nothing but incomplete burning."

## IQBAL AND TAGORE

TARA CHAND RASTOGI

TAGORE was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, but this international acclaim hardly measured up to the genius that was Tagore's. His literary horizons were far too wide; the artistic channels were far too many to be described. Iqbal was also a multi-splendoured poet, and in many respects he can be accorded a niche alongside any internationally famous poet. India can well be proud of Iqbal's poetry and Tagore's artistic expressions. Since criticism in the Indian sub-continent is yet none too mature, critical studies concerning the comparative appraisals of the two poets hardly go beyond playing up one and playing down the other. This paper of mine I hope may go a little way towards providing a corrective of tendentious and sentimental outpourings, and I shall regard myself amply rewarded if I succeed in providing a focus on critical responses and perspectives required for a comparative study.

Iqbal and Tagore were contemporaries, the former dying at the age of sixty-five in 1938 and the latter at the age of eighty in 1941. "... The Nobel Prize awarded to Tagore for *Gitanjali*," Prof V.K. Gokak observes, "put him on the Indian horizon ... definitely as a shaping influence on Indian poetry." Tagore was a shaping influence on Indian poetry, it may be borne in mind, mainly through an English translation of the *Gitanjali* in regions other than Bengali areas. The message reportedly sent by Tagore on Iqbal's death describes his poetry as having a 'universal appeal'.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of this message, it may well be assumed that Tagore had some access to Iqbal's poetry. However, there is unfortunately nothing so far available to tell us Iqbal's opinion on the poetry of Tagore.

No Urdu critic has yet dealt with the likely influence of Tagore on Iqbal. References to Tagore, however, are sometimes made with a view



to magnifying the quality and content of Iqbal's poetry and as a consequence such references more often than not tend to be erroneous. One such attempt may be cited here. Qazi Abdul Hamid, in an article "Iqbal ki shakhsyat aur uska paigham" contained in "The Iqbal" published by Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu in 1944, writes: "In poetic sublimity only Tagore in the whole of India may be compared to Iqbal. Both of them are mystic poets. But whereas one stands for negative mysticism (*manafi tasawwuf*), the other preaches affirmative mysticism (*asbati tasawwuf*). Tagore desires to lead a calm life, Iqbal an enthusiastic and dangerous (*sic*) life. . . Tagore seeks a world of imagination to forget the difficulties of life, and Iqbal dares difficulties and desires to overpower them. . . Tagore is prostrate before God: Iqbal wants to keep his individuality intact even in the Divine Presence. The greatness of Tagore's poetry consists in life's negation. To Iqbal the imagination of life's affirmation is most predominant. Tagore espouses the cause of intellectual philosophy of Vedanta and is the mouthpiece of Hindu nationalism (*sic*). Iqbal is a poet of the 'Muslim Nation' (Muslim Qaum) and he preaches Islam's pragmatic philosophy of life. What is reality is known to God alone! War or peace—which is preferable?" (pp. 212-14)<sup>1</sup>

Such attempts at playing up Iqbal and decrying Tagore can hardly be regarded as a literary appraisal, objective or dispassionate. This is certainly not the way to do justice to either. A vision thus befogged can hardly discern clearly the impact or the impressions. Let us, however, proceed to analyse the observation made by Abdul Hamid. How far does his observation hold water? Tagore's was a multi-faceted genius. If only one aspect to the exclusion of the other characteristics is brought to light, the appraisal would only be bereft of the qualities that should characterize it. Tagore is to be viewed by a vision that can encompass what may aptly be described as "the Tagorean totality". What Abdul Hamid has in fact touched upon seems to echo the observations made by the "progressive" writers. The progressive writers claiming to stand for the underdog in society came out with a scathing criticism of Tagore's writings and they *inter alia* described Tagore as a "born aristocrat" whose "approach to the common man is marked by sentimental sympathy rather than genuine understanding. . . His mysticism is rarely founded on concrete experiences of the inner life. It tends to be dreamy and facile . . . A rejoinder to all this seems to be contained in the observation made by J. C. Ghosh in his work *Bengali Literature*; he says: "... Tagore was no escapist at any point in his career; neither his aestheticism nor his mysticism was ever divorced from life. His practical activities as politician, educationist and social and religious reformer bear ample evidence of this."<sup>2</sup> All this should be kept in view while looking for the influence exerted by Tagore who, in the words of V. K. Gokak, was "the high-

priest of the literary renaissance." Discussing Tagore's "pervasive influence", Gokak dealt with Urdu poetry as influenced by transcendental grandeur and literary charm and the philosophic ideas of the *Gitanjali*. Gokak's observation with regard to Urdu poetry is not very penetrating and does not carry us far afield. However, his criterion with regard to literary influences merits attention. He says: "The influence of a poet on his epoch or on his contemporaries and successors is a very subtle factor and critical instruments of the utmost precision are required to measure it. . . This impact may be one of stimulation or assimilation, of acquiescence or revolt. It reveals even in the revolt directed against it."<sup>3</sup> Iqbal's poetry, if scrutinized in the light of this learned observation, seems to point to the influence of Tagore. Iqbal's philosophical sensibilities and literary calibre must have at least gazed in appreciation at the trail of glory and renown that Tagore with his immortal *Gitanjali* blazed across the literary firmament. The poet in Iqbal, one may with confidence surmise, must have, consciously or unconsciously, looked for the merits and miracles that brought international renown to Tagore. And Iqbal must have come upon the factors contributing to Tagore's greatness since then-  
 ceforth he embarked upon doing what Tagore had done. What Tagore achieved may be gathered from an observation made by J. C. Ghosh: "Tagore enriched Bengali literature in three ways: by exploring the resources of Sanskrit literature, by importing ideas and modes from Europe, and . . . by incorporating themes, images and symbols from common Bengali life. . . It was perhaps his greatest achievement as a writer to cut a channel in which the three by no means easily reconcilable influences of ancient India, modern Europe, and popular Bengali origin could happily mingle."<sup>4</sup> This is what Iqbal too attempted to accomplish. He imported ideas from so many Western philosophers and poets, and incorporated themes, images and symbols from Moslem life. Thus "stimulated", his poetry took on these distinctive characteristics in the post-*Gitanjali* period. A look at the list of his works would show that barring the first two portions of *Bang-e-Dara* and a part of the third, all other works saw the light of day from the year 1914 onwards. And it is in these works that we can discern a fine blend of East and West. Against this background and the mental capacity and capability of Iqbal, it would be perhaps not far-fetched to infer that Tagore's world-famous *Gitanjali* might have whetted his desire for drawing upon the poetic way and means adopted by Tagore. If "Tagore used even traditional images with a peculiar freshness of outlook"<sup>5</sup>, Iqbal hit upon using old words and expressions with a new ring, and old styles and literary traditions in the then current socio-cultural background, of course, of his conception. Let us turn to Majnun Gorakhpuri: "The real innovation of Tagore consists in his using old words and expressions, old styles and traditions in an entirely new way and adapting these to the needs of our life."<sup>6</sup> This literary

*modus operandi* seems to have begun towards 1908 and gained in intensity from the time of Tagore's getting the Nobel Laureateship in 1913. For Iqbal's poetry, says Abdul Qadir Sarwari, "written prior to his leaving for Europe, compares and contrasts with the poetry written after his return".

To turn to the other points set forth in Abdul Hamid's article, he describes Tagore's mysticism as "negative". Hamid's contention gets refuted by what Aldous Huxley has opined on the point. Huxley observes: "Tagore was a mystic—a mystic . . . of the Tantrik school, a mystic of the kind who does not wish to achieve liberation outside the world, but aspires to achieve it within the world. He aspired to see the absolute within the relative, the infinite in the finite object, eternity within every moment of time. . . . His ideal was . . . to achieve Nirvana while working in the world."<sup>7</sup> Salamatullah shares this view: "Tagore is essentially an idealist. But his idealism does not allow him to escape from reality—the hard facts of this material world. His inner world is conterminous with the outside world . . ."

"Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of Freedom in a thousand bonds of delight."

(*Gitanjali*, LXXII)

Tagore does not fight shy of difficulties; far from shying away from encountering a host of difficulties, he welcomes the obstructions of the material universe. He says: "In its external aspect, the universe is a machine which does not deviate from its laws. This material universe obstructs us in various ways, and the people who have been so idle or foolish as to try to avoid it have ended with deceiving themselves instead of getting round the obstructions. On the other hand, the people who have mastered the laws of matter have not only overcome the impediments of matter but also been helped by it. . . . The laggards and late-comers have found that there was little or nothing left for them. . . ." (Tagore: *Towards Universal Man*, Asia, Bombay, pp. 232-33). His is a message of fundamental human unity based on righteous thought, deed and action. A reference to the following poem would drive the point home:

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow  
domestic walls;  
Where words come out from the depth of truth;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary  
desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by these into ever-widening thought  
and action—

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

(*Gitanjali*, XXXV)

Certainly this is no “negative mysticism”. Such an outpouring cannot but evoke feelings of appreciation. And Iqbal, one may well imagine, must have been stimulated to give such a message to the Muslims who, according to him, were “swayed by the kind of mysticism which blinked actualities, enervated the people and kept them steeped in all kinds of superstition”.<sup>9</sup> We have it from Prof. MacTaggart that Iqbal, during his stay in England, was “much more of a pantheistic and mystic”.<sup>10</sup> Iqbal’s *Asrar-e-Khudi* appeared in 1915, that is, two years after Tagore got the international award. In this work Iqbal, the pantheist and mystic of Cambridge days, appeared as “a religious enthusiast, inspired by the vision of a New Mecca, world-wide, theocratic, Utopian state in which all Moslems, no longer divided by the barriers of race and country shall be one”.<sup>11</sup> This shift in Iqbal’s opinion, which has yet gone unaccounted for, might have been the outcome of his responsive repercussions to the renown and glory won by Tagore. Tagore’s is a message for humanity and his nationalism coalesces with internationalism. Iqbal’s is a message for Muslims; his nationalism encompasses the Muslim community and to him Islam means entire humanity. But in his *Diary* there is a very unfortunate entry which seems to negate his stance: “All nations accuse us of fanaticism. I admit the charge. . . Fanaticism is patriotism for religion; patriotism, fanaticism for country.”<sup>12</sup> This entry might have had its origin in a momentary impulse.

Abdul Hamid’s opinion that Iqbal wants to keep his individuality intact even in the Divine Presence and Tagore is prostrate before God is hardly tenable in its applicability to Tagore’s attitude. We have it from J. C. Ghosh that “Man is as necessary to God in this religion, the poet’s religion, as God is to man. ‘O thou Lord of all heavens, where would be thy love if I were not?’ ‘Day after day you buy your sunrise from my heart.’ That is why Tagore knows no ultimate cleavage between body and soul . . . Tagore’s religion is humanistic in essence, and as far removed from hedonism on the one hand as from barren self-abnegation on the other . . . Self-centred abnegation is admonished in the following poem:<sup>13</sup>

“Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads !

Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple  
with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before  
thee!

....

"He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is like him come down on the dusty soil!"

(*Gitanjali*, XI)

'Work is worship' is the kernel of Tagore's poetry. He says: "... a man must live his full term of life and work without greed, and thus realize himself in the Being who is in all beings. This means that he must reveal in his own personality the Supreme Person by his disinterested activities."<sup>14</sup>

The foregoing discussion is sufficient to give the lie to any such criticism that Tagore's is a negative mysticism. Rather, he does not see eye to eye with passive worship in a temple with "doors all shut". Chanting, singing and telling of beads hardly constitute worship; worship, to Tagore, consists in serving mankind. One cannot therefore be dissuaded from holding the view that the *Gitanjali* with such poems must have touched responsive chords in Iqbal's heart. Iqbal must have gone through the *Gitanjali*, for it is common knowledge that any person with a taste for literature would desire to read a Nobel Prize-winning book. This contention seems to gain in credibility and weight when we find Iqbal firing a broadside at the Sufis in his work *Asrar-e-Khudi*. The scathing criticism of the Sufis in a work published just two years after Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize seems to be a pointer to the likely impressions from the *Gitanjali*. Since influences, as stated earlier, may be in the form of stimulation, assimilation, acquiescence or revolt, the influence of the *Gitanjali* on Iqbal seems to be in the form of stimulation alone. This in no way detracts from the value of his achievements as a poet. With regard to borrowing, Rabindranath Tagore has quite outspokenly stated that "a sign of greatness in great geniuses is their enormous capacity for borrowing, very often without their knowing it; they have unlimited credit in the world market of cultures. Only mediocrities are ashamed and afraid of borrowing, for they do not know how to pay back the debt in their own coin. . . ." And Iqbal had such enormous capabilities. He was a great genius and he could give expression to great thoughts with the appropriate emotional resonance. And we have to study him in a proper poetic continuum and socio-cultural perspective.

## NOTES

<sup>14</sup>Vide A. Anwar Beg, *The Poet of the East*, Sh. Md. Ashraf, Lahore, 1964, p. 54, for Tagore's message.

<sup>2</sup>V. K. Gokak, "Tagore's Influence on Modern Poetry", article in *Indian Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, Tagore Number, Vol. IV, 1961.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 99.

<sup>4</sup>J. C. Ghosh, *Bengali Literature*, OUP, 1948, pp. 183-84.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, p. 134.

<sup>6</sup>Majnun Gorakhpuri, *Iqbal*, Azad Kitab Ghar, 1955, p. 59 (translations mine).

<sup>7</sup>Aldous Huxley, "Tagore as Educationist" quoted in *Indian Literature*, Vol. IV, 1961.

<sup>8</sup>Dr Salamatullah, "Tagore as Educationist" quoted in *Indian Literature*, Vol. IV, 1961, p. 134.

<sup>9</sup>*Speeches & Statements of Iqbal*, Al-Manar Academy, Lahore, 1948, p. 133.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid*, footnote on p. 120.

<sup>11</sup>R. A. Nicholson, *Secrets of the Self* (Lahore, 1960).

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid*: *Stray Reflections*, ed. Javid Iqbal (Lahore, 1961), pp. 23-25.

<sup>13</sup>J. C. Ghosh, *Bengali Literature*, pp. 185-86.

<sup>14</sup>Tagore, *The Religion of Man* (London, 1963), p. 74.

## MOHAMMAD IQBAL AND PABLO NERUDA

JAN MAREK

Now it has become a habit in the literary world to compare mutually the lives and works of the great personalities to draw a parallel between their patterns of thought, to collate their ways of expression, etc. In the last few decades Mohammad Iqbal has been compared with several famous poets of Western Europe, both classical and modern, as, for instance, with the Italian classic Dante Alighieri, with the German poetic genius Johann Wolfgang Goethe, with the immortal author of *Paradise Lost*, John Milton, and from the more modern ones, with the English poets Wordsworth and Browning.

It is known that Iqbal was very widely read and well acquainted with the works of these poets, that he had read their poetry in the German or English originals or in good poetic translations. As a lecturer in English at the Government College, Lahore, he was teaching the history of English literature and with his students he analyzed the verses of various British authors, both classical and modern.

He found a deeper predilection for some of them; therefore, he decided to translate or adapt some of their poems into Urdu. Later, during his studies in Germany at the Heidelberg and Munich universities, he studied enthusiastically the works of the important German poets; in addition to Goethe, he concentrated mainly on Friedrich Schiller and Heinrich Heine. Occasionally, he became acquainted with the poets of other European nations as well, as, for example, with the verses of Sandor Petofi, one of the greatest writers of Hungary, as we may presume from a hint in his "Message of the East".

There is, however, another great poet to whom Iqbal came thematically very near in the later years of his career. In contradistinction to

those we have mentioned, this poet did not belong to the developed capitalist countries of Western or Central Europe, but was a member of the subdued peoples of South America. He was a citizen of Chile. Nobody knows him today under his proper personal name Neftali Ricardo Reyes Basoalte, but the whole world reads him under his simple poetical pseudonym Pablo Neruda. This literary name incidentally was adopted by him at the age of fifteen after Jan Neruda, an outstanding writer of Czechoslovakia, who is dear to the heart of every Czech as perhaps the greatest national poet and prosaist of the last century.

The name of Jan Neruda means in Czechoslovakia a great thought expressed in the simplest form and, what is even more important, an unlimited faithfulness to the people and its national culture. The poetic and creative career of Pablo Neruda proved that he had rightly borrowed the name of the glorious Czech poet. For the nations of Latin America, his poetry became a symbol of faithfulness to the cause of the people, a symbol of a determined fight for national independence and social justice. Neruda tried to do what Mohammad Iqbal was doing by means of his poetry: to awaken his compatriots, to create in them an understanding of the needs of the time and contribute to the liberation of his country from foreign domination.

Pablo Neruda was about a quarter of a century younger than Iqbal. He was born on 12th July, 1904 in the small Chilean town of Parral. His father, a railway servant, worked as a train gang boss, his mother was a teacher, but she died soon after his birth. Both Iqbal and Neruda thus belonged to the lower middle strata of a colonial or semicolonial society. Having completed his secondary education at Temuk, Neruda got enrolled at the University of Santiago de Chile. When he was thirteen, the Great October Socialist Revolution flared up. This great and universal historical event, which had a substantial impact on the national liberation movement of the colonial and semicolonial countries, exercised a considerable influence on the working masses of British India and Latin America. Both Iqbal and Neruda welcomed the victory of the Revolution and ascribed to it a fundamental importance.

Pablo Neruda plunged into a stormy student life at Santiago. His discontent with the reality which encircled him, the moods of social protest—hitherto indefinite and vague—brought him into 'The Barricades', a group that united the labourers and students of the capital.

It may be said that both the Asian and Latin American literatures developed their democratic traditions in a close dependence upon the fight against feudal oppression and upon the initial stage of the struggle for national liberation.

Although many leading writers of the nineteenth century in their best works defended various democratic interests, they could not yet free themselves completely from liberalism and their political programme was



very slushy. Exactly like the Indian literatures of the nineteenth century, the Latin American literatures of the same century, too, were noted for the lack of realism and the leading role of romanticism.

The political views of young Neruda were rather foggy, but they definitely had a democratic character. As a sensitive boy, capable of deep excitement and sympathy, he eagerly watched the heroic struggle of the Soviet people against imperialist intervention and the White Guard bands. He greedily searched for all the scanty and fragmentary news about the new life in the Soviet Union, which here and there happened to penetrate into Chile.

The first poems of Pablo Neruda appeared in the journal "Claridad" (Clarity), the official organ of the Chilean students' federation. His great poetic talent soon achieved recognition and his poem "The Festive Song" (La canción de la fiesta) was awarded the first prize in a literary competition. However, his first poetic collections, *Twilight* (Crepusculario, 1920), *Twenty Poems of Love and One Desperate Song* (Veinte poemas de amor y una canción desesperada, 1924) and *Residence on the Earth* (Residencia en la tierra, 1925-35) are immersed in the narrow circles of subjective feelings and frequently display the motives of pessimism and despair. And yet, Neruda was able to depict in them the natural beauties of his country with an extraordinary vigour, with very fresh colours and in a full voice. The love for Nature, his masterly description and patriotic feelings were the common features both of Neruda and Iqbal in the early years of their lives.

In 1927 Neruda entered political life professionally. At first, he was appointed honorary consul of Chile at Rangoon and then, within a short period of five years, he was often changing his stations in various countries of South and South East Asia, from Colombo through Batavia to Singapore. In 1929 he visited India and took part in the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress as an observer. He made his acquaintance with the leading political and cultural personalities of India; he met Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru and his son Jawaharlal, whom he called 'intelligent academician of revolution', and also Subhas Chandra Bose.

However, it would be misleading to think that he had also met Iqbal. Iqbal was living far from Calcutta at Lahore and by that time was engaged in the proceedings of the third Punjab Legislative Council of the Montagu-Chelmsford era. The two men of letters did not obviously meet in Europe either, although they spent some time in Spain soon after each other. Iqbal visited Spain about four years before the beginning of the civil war in that country. In 1932 he was on his way from London, where he attended the second (September 7-December 1, 1931) and third (November 17-December 24, 1932) Round Table Conferences called by the British Government to consult Indian leaders on the problems of

constitutional reforms for India. He passed through France to pre-revolutionary Spain, where he lectured at the University of Madrid on the role of medieval Spain in the intellectual development of the Muslim world, at the invitation of a reputed Spanish orientalist, Miguel Asin Palacios. Then he visited Cordoba, Granada and some other cities having medieval Muslim monuments.

By that time Pablo Neruda was back from Asia in Chile. It was only one and a half years later that he was nominated consul in Spain, at first at Barcelona and later at Madrid, at whose university he lectured almost exactly two years after Iqbal.

On the basis of these facts, we may assume that Iqbal had never met Pablo Neruda in person. It is highly improbable, too, that he may have read his poetry written in Spanish. Although he had attained a considerable proficiency in many languages, we may take for granted that he was unable to read Spanish. The first translations of Neruda's verses into English appeared only after Iqbal's death. Neruda's poetry has later been translated also into Urdu and Bengali, but these translations did not appear before 1950, that is to say, twelve years after Iqbal's death.

We have seen that in the professional careers of the two poets, there was a remarkable resemblance in many respects. In their childhood they both started learning European languages. After having completed his studies, Iqbal taught English language and literature at the Government College, Lahore, and Pablo Neruda studied at the Pedagogical Institute of Santiago to become a teacher of French.

Later on, both of them took an active part in politics and spent some time abroad. Neruda served his country for many years as professional diplomat in many foreign countries; Iqbal was elected member of the Punjab Legislative Council, in 1931 and 1932 participated in the two Round Table Conferences in London, later went to Afghanistan on a semi-official mission and visited a number of countries in Europe, Africa and Asia.

Both Iqbal and Neruda wrote their poetry at a time when imperialism was losing its positions one after another. It was a transitional period when the general crisis of capitalism in the developed countries of Europe and America was deepening and the crisis of the world colonial system inevitably began. Iqbal and Neruda paid much attention to political and social themes in the later stages of their life. In the initial periods of their career, the sentiments of their private emotional life played an important role in their creative activities, but gradually both of them began to deal with more decisive problems which arose out of the contact of the individual with other members of society. And from the very beginning, they shared a firm belief in the positive qualities of human beings and their unlimited development. Iqbal's humanism originally centred around a strong individual who built up his personality by

his own effort, whereas Neruda believed more in a type of a humanism which could be secured only by a just social order.

Both of them raised their voice in loud protest against the iniquities of a society based on the capitalist system. But it is here where the ways of the two poets part: Iqbal criticised the existing capitalist society and its shortcomings essentially from the standpoint of a Utopian, whereas Neruda took a much more realistic attitude, realizing exactly what were the basic moving forces in twentieth-century societies. For him it was the proletariat which soon became the main hero of his writings. In this class, he saw the leading force of the struggle for the liberation of his country from national and social oppression.

It is true that Iqbal was the first to introduce the concepts of "Sarmayahdar" (capitalist) and "nadar" (proletarian) into Urdu literature, but he never dared to go beyond these verbal expressions. His solutions to the existing social problems remained within the framework of Islamic socialism. And yet he displayed a deep apprehension of the sad deal of labourers in capitalist society and was well aware of their exploitation, as we may see from some of his poems in the *Message of the East*. In the "Worker's Song", for instance, he points to the fact that the creator of material values—the labourer—is unjustly exploited by his sluggish master:

"From the wage of the hard-working slave clad in rags  
His sluggish master receives a silk robe.  
The governor buys the ruby of his ring from the sweat of my forehead,  
The prince puts pearls on his horse out of the tears of my child's eyes."

Elsewhere he expresses his conviction that only the creative work of the labourer's hands can lay the foundations of a happy life of men in this world and that the parasitic capitalist represents but a heavy burden on the shoulders of the earth. He says:

"The capitalist is a burden on the shoulders of the earth,  
He has nothing to do except to eat and drink.  
The hand of the labourer gives wealth to the world.  
Don't you know that the idler is a thief?"

If there was a difference in the attitudes of the two poets towards the solution of the social question, we may find a more substantial affinity in their criticism of imperialist domination and in their struggle against its most monstrous form, fascism.

Both the poets were in Europe in the 'thirties, when the drive of

fascism into certain European countries began. Both reacted very sharply to the attack of the fascist powers against other countries. On 18th July, 1936, the military intervention of the German and Italian fascist regimes against the Spanish Republic started and exactly one month later, on 18th August, 1936, the Italian invasion of defenceless Ethiopia began. Both these military actions were qualified by the general public as an act of aggression by the axis countries.

The bourgeois democratic forces of those days, under the pretence of non-interference, followed a policy which objectively helped the fascist usurpers to tread under foot the Spanish and Ethiopian peoples. The progressive sections of mankind supported the heroic struggle of the Spanish people with sincere sympathies.

At the beginning of the intervention in Spain, Neruda was serving as the Chilean consul at Madrid. We are told he was a most unusual sort of diplomat in elegant society and at official receptions he preferred informal contacts with simple working men and women. He was very fond of the ancient Spanish country and was enchanted by its beauties of nature and glorious art. At the same time, his insight was sharp enough to see not only the beauty of subtropical vegetation under snowy peaks, but also the poverty of the Spanish villagers and the stringent needs of the working class. He admired the courageous Spaniards who were ready to make the highest sacrifice for the freedom of their country. In one poem he seems to be deeply moved by the fate of the Spanish mothers whose sons fell as revolutionary fighters.

He wrote to them:

"I knew your children  
I was proud of their lives  
As I am proud of their death."

By the time of Iqbal's death, Neruda devoted all his efforts to the defence of democracy and freedom of the Spanish people against imperialism. His passionate collection, *Spain in the Heart* (España en el corazón, 1938), aroused keen interest all over the world. It was highly political poetry, possessing importance which could perhaps be compared only with the significance of his later work, *Song of Love for Stalingrad* (Canto De amor a Stalingrado), 1942.

In the years of the civil war in Spain, Iqbal was no longer in Europe. He undertook his last European journey at the end of 1932, when he travelled to Italy, visited Rome and was received by the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. Their meeting took place before the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and that is perhaps why Iqbal initially felt a certain admiration for Mussolini's vitality and political dexterousness. His poem *Mussolini* gives a false impression that Iqbal approved of the invasion of

Ethiopia, but some of his later verses reveal clearly that he felt a deep indignation against the military adventures of fascist Italy. In a short collection of his Persian verses, *Pas Che Bayad Kard* (What to do), perhaps an allusion to a book of Lenin, he condemned the attack and challenged Indian Muslims to draw a lesson from the fate of the Ethiopians. He wrote :

"Fate incessantly brings struggle.  
We must draw a lesson from the plight of Ethiopia.  
The law of Europe placidly and without contest  
Allows wolves to devour lambs."

There is a striking resemblance between the poetical means employed by the two poets while dealing with those subjects. Iqbal and Neruda paint similar scenes and employ similar metaphors. Let us quote, for instance, the image of the imperialist 'Vultures', the bankers, officers and other representatives of the regime and their prey or dish.

In his "Rod of Moses", Iqbal says about Ethiopia :

"Those vultures of the West have yet to learn  
What poisons lurk in Abyssinia's corpse,  
That rotting carcass ready to fall in pieces."

Pablo Neruda used an almost identical metaphor when describing the corpses of the peace-loving inhabitants killed in the fascist bombing of the Andalusian port of Almeria. The dead bodies represent for him

"A dish for bankers, a dish in which there are faces and cheeks and  
dimples  
Of the children of the happy South, a dish with detonations  
A dish of raging waters, ruins and fear,  
A dish of shattered bones, of trampled faces,  
A black dish, a dish of Almeria's blood."

As far as other formal aspects of the poetical mastery of Iqbal and Neruda are concerned, it will be fitting to note that some European sources of inspiration were common to both of them. For instance, both had been influenced by the poetry of Dante. Pablo Neruda in some of his poems employed the same strophic patterns—the tercinas—which were used by Dante in his *Divine Comedy* when drawing the fantastic pictures of the infernal regions, where he placed the usurers, traitors and other despised individuals. Neruda places there the defenders of the fascist intervention who deserve a severe punishment. And as for Iqbal, the impact of the

*Divine Comedy* on the pattern of his *Javed Nama* is well known and has been studied in detail by various authors.

The sojourn in Europe and the study of European culture influenced both the poets immensely and effected deep changes in their outlook. These changes had a great impact on their further artistic development. The creative power of both the poets culminated in their masterpieces—Iqbal's *Javed Nama* (1932) and Neruda's *General Song* (Canto General), 1950. Each of them wrote his *magnum opus* in the most fruitful years of his career and each of them gained thereby world-wide recognition. In the case of Neruda, this recognition was expressed by the award to him of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971.

Neruda was perhaps the first representative of Western literature who raised his voice against the atrocities of fascism; Iqbal was the first poet in Urdu literature to point out the predatory character of imperialism and to condemn the outrages of the imperialist states.

Anyhow, it may be seen that Iqbal and Pablo Neruda, in spite of differences in their political and philosophical attitudes, display some affinity in their thought and are united by a remarkable kinship of poetic genius. Their poetry supported the national movements in their countries and became a powerful weapon in the struggle of their people for freedom

## IQBAL , NIRALA AND DINKAR

PRABHAKAR MACHWE

COMPARATIVE literature is a relatively new area of criticism, not yet fully incorporated in our universities and curricula. It is more a matter of concern as we cry hoarse about national integration, but very few scholars and critics know more than two or three Indian languages. Here I chose two major poets from twentieth-century Hindi literature, deliberately, because I found in their personalities and poesy some points of similarity: the same tension between tradition and modernity, the same non-conformism and attitude of anti-establishment, the same delicate balance between classicism and romanticism, the same desire to change the world and later shift from Marxism to metaphysical mysticism, the same dissatisfaction for not substituting worldly action.

*"Iqbal bara updesnak hai, man baton men moh leta hai  
Guftar ka ye ghazi to bana, kirdar ka ghazi ban na saka."*

*"Dhanya, main pita nirarthak tha ... harta raha main swartha  
Samar" (Nirala)*

*"Asal men ham kair nahin, shok ki santan hain" (Dinkar)*

### PERSONALITY OF THE POETS

Iqbal's life was a constant search for *Khudi* (Self). It was a life full of struggle and strain. He wrote in a personal letter to Atiya Begum on 9th April, 1909 :

"Yes I refused the Aligarh Chair of Philosophy and a few days ago

I refused to accept the Lahore Government College Chair of History. I do *not* wish to enter any service. My object is to run away from this country as soon as possible. You know the reason."

And again on 17th July 1909 :

"I am sorry to hear that you were distressed to find people in North India not respecting and admiring me. I tell you that I do not care for other people's respect—I do not desire to live by other people's breath ... people respect and admire hypocrisy. If hypocrisy brings me fame, respect and admiration, I would rather die unknown and unlamented. Let the many-headed monster of public give their dross of respect to others who act and live in accordance with their false ideals of religion and morality. I cannot stoop to respect their conventions who suppress the innate freedom of man's mind. Byron, Goethe and Shelley were not respected by their contemporaries—and though I am far inferior to them in poetic power, I am proud that I am in their company in this respect."

Nirala was almost driven to a semi-schizophrenic state of mind when he saw that the writer is not given his due. Instead, the politician is more admired than the literary artist. "I am an untouchable amongst Brahmins," he lamented.

Dinkar writes in one of his last poems: "Rabindranath had said: 'I do not trust my fame.' Then why should I rely upon my own fame?"

All the three strong, highly strung and sensitive personalities had great respect for power. Iqbal admired Nietzsche's *Wille zur Macht* (Will to Power); Nirala wrote *Ram ki Shakti-Puja* and Dinkar waited for Parashuram. All of them were well-versed in tradition. They knew their Rumi and Hafiz, Kalidasa and Tulsidas. Dinkar in his last preface to *Rashmi Lok* in 1974 frankly admitted his indebtedness to Tagore and Iqbal. And yet they were all rebel spirits. Iqbal attacked the weakness of the Sufis. Nirala's critical essays are called *Chabuk* (Whip) and Dinkar has attacked Gandhi's non-violence.

#### PHILOSOPHY OF POWER

When we use the term 'power', it is not in the mundane sense of self or position or predominance in the poetic field. It is something which Iqbal said in *Farman-e-Khuda*:

"Arise and awake the poor of my world  
Shake up the very foundations of the palaces of the rich  
Warm the blood of slaves with life-giving faith—



Give the humble sparrow strength to fight the falcon!  
 Burn every corn of wheat in that field,  
 Which does not provide subsistence to the cultivator."

Translation by Syed Abdul Wahid  
*(Iqbal, p. 163)*

Nirala invokes the cloud in 'Badal Raj' and says: "The treasures are moribund, there is agony of dissatisfaction. The poor farmer is starving and calling you, O hero of Rebellion! The cultivators are merely reduced to bones, their blood is sucked. You come O life, Ocean of Water."

For Dinkar,

"This is not the cave of peace. This is war, this is battle. We don't need penance. The only resort is the sword."

*(Rashmi Lok, p. 302)*

And he had declared,

"Vacate the throne, the people are coming!"

All the three poets had hero worship in their hearts. In his *Javed Nama*, the embodiment of Time and Space, Zaruiss asks the poet to be independent of both and he meets the tablets of Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, Mohammad, also Pharaoh, Kitchner, Lenin, Nietzsche, Nadirshah, Abdali, Tipu Sultan. Nirala translated Vivekananda's poems and also Tagore's. Dinkar has written poems on Buddha, Ashok, Yudhishtir, Gandhi and even on Rajendra Prasad, Rajarshi Purushottamdas Tandon and J.P. Thus the three poets have a strong belief in some destroyer and saviour in future.

#### LYRICS OF LOVE

Love for Iqbal was a stronger human motivation than intellect. In his poems like *Ilm-o-Ishq* and *Phalsapha aur Mazhat* and elsewhere Iqbal asserts, as in *Aql-o-Dil*:

"Intellect one day told the heart: 'I am the guide to those who have lost the way.' The heart heard and said, 'It is all right, but look at me what I am. You may be knowing the secret of life, but I see it with my eyes directly.'"

This directness, this irrational incisiveness of love assumes the form of the sword: Intellect is merely the sheath, the scabbard. This love is unending and all-pervading: There are many more tests of Love yet and

"Love has made me an unfathomable ocean."

Nirala says, "In the deluge of love, all boundaries disappear" (*Anamika*, p. 4) and "That knowledge is not wanted which he took to be light" (*Ibid*, p. 189).

Nirala knows the power of love transcending different casts, races, forms, religions:

*"Dossan ham bhima vama  
Bhinna Jaki, Bhinna roop  
Bhinna dharmabhav par  
Kewal apnai se prenomen ek the"* (*Ibid*, p. 8)

This is almost a literal Hindi rendering of '*Mazhab nahin sikhata apas men bair rakhana*'.

Dinkar's *Urvashi* is the climax of his poetry about love. There comparing intellect with love, Dinker writes:

"The intellect describes greatly the sands on the sea-shore. But the softness of the sand kissed by the waves is only known by naked feet and soles."

In his last poems, there is one thanksgiving where he says that his songs are only grateful receipts of whatever he received in the form of love from mother, sister and beloved.

Love has been the most important drive for Iqbal.

"Neither you care for wine nor you look at me  
'Tis wonder you know not the art of love-making."

#### NATURE

"He is so clever that He has revealed the secret of growth through Nature to me."

Iqbal's long poem "Ek Arzu" is an excellent piece of landscape painting. His description of the Himalayas reminds one of Nirala's famous lines:

"You are the high Himalayan peak. I am the rapidly flowing river."

Dinkar's poem on the Himalaya is almost a classic. There are many lines similar in spirit in Iqbal's *Himala* and Dinkar's.

Nature is not all peaceful and cream-and-strawberry for these poets.

Iqbal knows that "the eagle does not build a nest."

So in understanding Nature, as in Lectures by Iqbal (p. 47): "The appreciative self is a single 'now' which the intellectual or the efficient self, in its traffic with the world of space, pulverizes into a series of 'nows' like pearl beads in a thread. Here is then pure duration unadulterated by space." To Nirala Nature was Maya, like a true Vedantin he worshipped this primordial Female Power:

"O Mother, you descend on this land India, in the form of Maya; you create god-like great men; spread your powers."

To Dinkar Nature is like one who does not go by the straight and direct road, the spirit of rebellion, while for Iqbal the ego or personality is in an eternal state of tension, for the other two poets there is a kind of refuge in Mother Nature. The Hindu concept of reconciliation and synthesis ultimately has the upper hand in Nirala and Dinkar. But for Iqbal the quest is relentless:

"Iqbal! You are wandering in search of yourself.  
As though you are the traveller and you are the destination!"

#### SOCIAL INEQUALITY

All the three poets are keenly aware of the human injustice meted out to humans. It was Wordsworth who lamented:

"If this be Nature's holy plan  
Have I not reason to lament  
What man has made of man?"

Iqbal wrote a poem, "Lenin, Angels' Song and God's Command." This is a combination of romanticism and classicism. Lenin, who was an atheist, suddenly faced God, and asked, "Tell me whose Deity thou art? For the East the white men are the God, and for the West glittering sovereigns are God."

"This knowledge, this learning, this statesmanship, this statecraft,  
They suck the blood and yet preach equality.  
The ruddy complexion that one notices on faces in the evening  
Is either due to powders or the result of drinks.  
Thou art all-powerful and just, but in thy world  
The lot of the helpless labourer is very hard!  
When will this book of Capitalism be wrecked?"

The world is waiting for the Day of Reckoning!"

In the *Javed Nama*, Afghani exhorts the poet to tell Russians a message in which Islam and Communism are compared. H.A.L. Fisher said in his *History of Europe* (p. 1187), "For though Russian Communism denounced religion as the 'opium of the people', it bore, like Islam, the marks of a religious faith." S.M.H. Kidwai says in *Pan Islamism and Bolshevism* (p. 322), "Islam even anticipated the ideology of the Bolsheviks. Officials were called '*Amilin*' (Commissars) and the Prophet was called *Satabakum* (your comrade)."

Iqbal in his poem *Sarmaya-o-Mehnet* (Capital and Labour) rightly said that both in East and West exploitation was to be ended.

In Nirala there is no direct reference to Marx or Lenin, but it is there in his satirical poem on the aristocratic socialist, who is educated abroad and travels in aeroplanes and comes sometimes to the village to preach to the *Kisan-mazdurs*, and how photographers run about him and the Hindi poets who call themselves nationalists compose ten poems for a paisa on this elected leader and sing in a voice which will put a donkey to shame; the leader only vomits out the thoughts given by Russia; and this very poem "Van-bela" in *Anamika* is repeated later in *Naye patte* in *Mahanga Mahanja Raha* (Mahanja remained 'dear'), where the common Harijans in the village comment on the so-called leader's speech: the most biting poem by Nirala is called "Moscow Dialogues". Some comrade Asaraniji says that he has read this great book and he also likes people's language and wants to write in incorrect Hindi a dedication to *Syama*. How the so-called preachers of equalitarism were getting away and alienated from the masses is very finely hinted at by Nirala.

Dinkar, long before India's independence, wrote in 1931 :

"Awake O inspiration of the bard Bhushan  
Awake the spark in the heart of Lenin  
The fire in the youth is crushed by this Age  
Awake and arise, O virgin Rebellion."

He also wrote about the famine in 1937 ("Hahakar") and also wrote poems against the rise of fascism in 1935:

"The base of the Alps is trembling, rocks tremble, even small Japan  
The sky is resounding with thundering clouds,  
When will Hindustan arise  
On the banks of the Rhine civilization is blooming,  
Hitler rises, who will speak?  
Jewish blood is cheap, O Nazi, wash thy swastik in it

Dijla and Farat (Euphrates and Tigris) are swelling,  
 Shanghai has awakened.  
 Red Sea! Tell me on whom are these dark clouds going to trust  
 Snow walls are standing, high and low mountains are steep  
 Yet the Siberian bear is clapping his claws  
 Kabul is dumb, the Urals are far off, what shall innocent Anu say  
 The Mediterranean Sea is turbulent, how will Italy open  
 the mouth of the Suez  
 We are white gods! these *habshis* are of the desert  
 Lord Jesus be witness!  
 The Christian world has pulled out its dagger!"

### DEATH

From Revolution, which would destroy social injustice and class differences, which seems to be a common subject of the three poets, we know to what extent existentialism engaged the attention of all the poets: the two ultimate concerns about the destruction of all creation and the Creator Himself, if the poet is a theist, in this case, all the three of them end on a metaphysical note.

Let us see what Iqbal has to say about Death. There is a touching reference to Iqbal desiring to hear Bulle Shah's *Kafi* at the time when his end came near. His last words were 'God'. His stray lines on death are :

"Death is the name of the rebirth of life  
 It is a message of awakening in the form of a dream."

"The soul is never acquainted with non-existence  
 It may be out of sight but it is never destroyed."

"It is possible that you may not die with death."

"Angel of Death may touch your body  
 as far away from the centre of your existence."

"from this branch  
 from this branch  
 think it ephemeral  
 aped while it is being destroyed by

I am acutely conscious of the inadequacy of these translations. The original has great richness of nuances in each expression. But all this is to give some glimpse of the great poet's thoughts on this subject.

Nirala has many lines which deal with death. Dr Rambilas Sharma has devoted an entire chapter to this theme in the second volume of his definitive biography of Nirala which won the Sahitya Akademi Award, entitled *Nirala ki Sahitya Sadhana*. I quote his words :

"Nirala has written much on Death, from the beginning. Sometimes there is fear of death, the fear that one has to leave this world without having done much. Along with this fear, there is also hope that death will not come so soon, this is only the beginning of life."

"When this is the first step of my life,  
Where is death in it?  
It is all life, only life !"

Nirala also wrote some ghazals in *Bela*. Three lines have death as the theme :

"Days are spent in difficulties, so are the nights passed,  
Those who are defeated at the hands of life, they only understand,  
With life pass all the things and talks that make it active."

(*Bela*, p. 69)

In another poignant line in *Asima* (p. 55), Nirala says :

"This mango branch is dried up  
It says—Now no cuckoo or peacock  
will come here. I am that line (of a poem)  
Which has no meaning—  
Life is burnt out."

Dinkar has many touching poems in his last two collections of poems, *Atma ki Ankhen* (Eyes of the Soul) and *Hare ko Harinam* (a line from Surdas; the name of Hari or god is the only solution to the defeated in spite of all his robust optimism and even arrogant virility in his early collections, I shall quote only one very short one entitled "The Banana Leaf" (*Rashmi Lok*, p. 382):

"Ramakrishna (Paramahansa) and Raman (Maharshi)  
Both had suffered the pains of illness  
But in his last days Maharshi said one thing  
Life is a feast

The body is a banana leaf  
 Man eats with great love on this leaf  
 But he throws it away as soon as the eating is over  
 Does anyone ever keep and save a leaf or a plate of leaf ?

### GOD

In his interesting book *Metaphysics of Iqbal* (1944), Dr Ishrat Hasan has devoted an entire chapter to the absolute or God. I only quote a passage from it:

"Iqbal is thus a theist. But mark that this ultimate Ego is not the God of the old theists. He is not 'the god in the Heavens.' Iqbal's God comprehends the whole universe. 'Like pearls do we live and move and have our being in the perpetual flow of divine life'. His God is the Absolute of Philosophy. It is Ultimate Ego which comprehends in itself all beings, all finite egos." (pp. 81-82)

In the *Secrets of Self*, Iqbal maintains, "We are gradually travelling from chaos to cosmos and are helpers in this achievement." This achievement is not unconscious but is gained through our efforts. Iblis's famous reply to Gabriel is very revealing in this connection. His Persian poem on "God and Man", which is often quoted, shows his real humanistic passion. Man, to Iqbal, was in no way inferior to God.

Nirala in his last phase wrote many devotional lyrics collected in *Archana* and *Aradhana*, *Geetgunj* and *Sandhyakakali*. Yet in all these poems, Nirala never forgets the sufferings of the common man. He writes, "Where man is reduced to a pack-ox or a mule," Nirala questions traditional orthodox religion. He asks in *Bela* : "If Brahma is full of compassion, why do people beg in the streets?" "When one is needy, how does the Master turn his face and avoid the poor?" He is tortured by many doubts and questions. The practices which go by the name of conventional God-seeking do not satisfy him. He did refer to the *Gita* in his earlier poems like *Jago Phir Ek Bar* ("Awake, Once Again"), yet blind revivalism does not satisfy him. Nirala translated the works of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his life from Bengali into Hindi. He had a solid grounding in Vedanta, yet his last poems seem to denote some kind of Anti-Reason.

In the case of Dinkar, Raman Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo are the last stages of his intellectual quest. In his prose writings, he has questioned many heresies, has given a conspectus of history in his Indian culture in four chapters (for this he received the Sahitya Akademi Award; Jawaharlal Nehru had written a perceptive introduction to it). Yet his

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"Let the flower fall from this branch  
 Let the flower burst forth from this branch  
 The people who don't know think it ephemeral  
 Actually the form of life is shaped while it is being destroyed by itself."



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last poems seem almost to fit in the pattern of an agnostic turned devotee. In his poem "Mysticism", he said, "All experiences are from the senses. But when we think about it, we become mystics. When I eat a mango, am I enjoying only a mango, or am I not conscious of the spring breeze, the mellow sun, the juice in the Earth? Oh, for me bread also gives the pleasure of mysticism." (*Rashmi Lok*, pp. 352-53)

In this, rather sketchy survey of the poetry and ideals of three great Indian poets, one comes across a subtle thread of responses which are typical of this soil and the people of this land, about which Iqbal rightly said: "There is something in this land that our existence is continuous and indestructible."

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