

IQBAL'S NOTION OF THE SELF

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the School of Philosophy  
The University of Southern California

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

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June 1958

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P 58 A286

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Iqbal is a household name among the 120 million Muslims of Pakistan and India. In fact, the reputation of this philosopher-poet has travelled far and wide in recent years, and his influence is being felt in many other Islamic nations as well. He is considered to be, and not without justification, "the greatest thinker that the Muslim world has produced during the last six centuries."<sup>1</sup>

The West is not quite unfamiliar with Iqbal and his philosophy either. Most of his important works have been translated (from Persian and Urdu) into English and one into Italian also.<sup>2</sup> The Western reader should find Iqbal especially interesting because he has made a very successful attempt to present Islamic ideas in the light of Western philosophical traditions. He was greatly inspired by the writings of the philosophers like Kant, Fichte, Bergson and Nietzsche during his academic career in Europe, with the result that one discovers a strong, unmistakable image of the West in Iqbal. This, however, should not be identified

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<sup>1</sup> Bashir Ahmed Dar, Iqbal and Post-Kantian Voluntarism (Lahore, Pakistan: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1956), Foreword p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter II for details.

as the lack of originality of thought on his part. What it essentially indicates is that Iqbal chose the language of the West to express his characteristically Eastern ideas. He admits of this in a letter to a friend:

Most of my life was passed in studying the history of Western Philosophy and this angle of vision has become a second nature to me. Consciously or unconsciously, I study the truth of Islam from this point of view.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, on the other hand, he belongs to the community of philosophers, and philosophers as we know, have a tradition of erecting new structures on each other's ruins. Therefore, the similarities that we might discover between Iqbal's thought and the philosophical endeavors of any of the Western scholars may not be purely coincidental. During the course of this thesis, we shall try to determine precisely the extent to which Iqbal drew upon Western philosophy in order to make his own point.

Our present study, however, may not acquaint us with the whole of Iqbal; it will rather be limited to but one particular aspect of his philosophy, viz. his doctrine of the Self or Ego. And yet this very doctrine is his most valuable asset. He has built his whole metaphysical system

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<sup>3</sup> Shaikh Ataullah, Iqbal Namah, Vol. I (Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammed Ashraf, 1951), p. 47.

around it. Still more significant is the fact that it was with the development of the philosophy of the Self that Iqbal first emerged as a thinker of formidable stature.

His earlier inclinations were toward pantheism--a very common trend among the Muslim mystics. But under the forceful impact of the dynamic philosophy of people like Nietzsche he became alive to the dangers of pantheism and parted company with it. For the first time he came to realize that the decline of Islam was perhaps due--and in a large measure--to the tranquilizing influences of the pantheistic mysticism which had gradually crept into the religion during the 8th and 9th centuries and robbed it of its glorious dynamism. He wanted to lift his co-religionists out of the rut of inactivity; he found the answer in the idea of a living, willing and becoming Ego (Khudi). This idea, which later grew into a full-fledged philosophical system, was to revolutionize Muslim thought in India and culminate in the division of the sub-continent and the establishment of the largest Islamic state in the world, i.e., Pakistan.

Iqbal himself, however, was aiming at an entirely different objective. He was "inspired by the vision of a New Mecca, a world-wide theocratic, Utopian state in which all Moslems, no longer divided by the barriers of race and

country, shall be one."<sup>4</sup> Nationalism, he thought, breeds ill will and destroys feelings of brotherhood among men. He will have no part of it because it may well "rob us of Paradise."

This exclusive emphasis on the religious aspect of Iqbal's philosophy should not lead us into thinking that he was perhaps merely a religious enthusiast. Far from it; he never considered "philosophy as a hand-maid of religion."<sup>5</sup> In its broader context, the main stain of his thought was devoted to restoring the spiritual meaning and worth of human life in a world completely dominated by the dogmas of science. He pitted himself boldly against the mechanistic trends of our age and held that mere sense-experience cannot grasp the ultimate Reality, nay, it makes the Soul the slave of mechanical necessity, "leaving no scope for human or even Divine freedom:"<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, The Secrets of the Self, trans. by R. A. Nicholson (Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammed Ashraf, 1944), rev. Ed., Introduction, p. x.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. xiii.

<sup>6</sup> Sir Muhammed Iqbal, The Reconstructions of Religious Thought in Islam (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 51.



The scientists adorn a dead body  
 They possess not the Hand of Moses,  
 the Breath of Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

His main concern, therefore, was to "affirm the existence of God, the reality of the Self, its Freedom and Immorality."<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, he was acutely conscious of the pathetic state of the downtrodden Muslim peoples. When Iqbal appeared on the world scene in the first quarter of the 20th century, Islam was at the lowest ebb of its history. The Turkish Caliphate had completely disintegrated; Muslims everywhere were submitting to the invincible might of the socio-political forces of the West. The impact of Western civilization had nonplussed the Muslim mind and crippled its spiritual vigor. As a result, there was among the followers of Islam a general current of psychological tensions, ideological conflicts, intellectual unrest and, in short, an utter hopelessness. And here Iqbal made his appearance:

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<sup>7</sup> Sir Muhammed Iqbal, Zubur-i-Ajam (Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. M. Ashraf, 1927), author's translation.

<sup>8</sup> Ishrat Hasan Enver, The Metaphysics of Iqbal (Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. M. Ashraf, 1944), p. 3.



language is singularly well adopted to express philosophical ideas in a style at once elevated and charming.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, it should be admitted that poetry is hardly a medium suited to evolving complicated philosophical systems. Iqbal, thus, supplemented his poetical expressions in brief treatises in English and a series of lectures which have been collected in the form of a book, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.<sup>12</sup> We shall know more about Iqbal's writings in our chapter on his life and works which has been added to provide the reader with a proper perspective of the philosopher's socio-cultural background.

The purpose of this thesis, may we repeat, is to undertake an analytic and critical study of Iqbal's notion of the Self. In spite of his popularity in European quarters, Iqbal is relatively unknown to American students of philosophy. The present study, being very humble in its scope, does not promise to present Iqbal's thought in its full richness--for that the reader will have to turn

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Iqbal, op. cit.

elsewhere<sup>13</sup>--but it will perhaps familiarize the totally unfamiliar student with at least the fundamentals of his philosophy.

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<sup>13</sup> A comprehensive bibliography of Iqbal's works and of the works on him has been added at the end of the thesis. Of course only a few books will be available in America, the rest can be obtained directly from publishers.

## CHAPTER II

### A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND WORKS OF IQBAL<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal was born in 1873 at Sialkot, the city which became a part of West Pakistan after the division of Indian sub-continent in the year 1947. He came from a respectable Kashmiri family of Hindu Brahmins who were converted to Islam some two centuries and a half ago. (This fact is significant to remember, for it shows how he might have inherited the mystical tendencies of thought, which permeated a large part of his philosophy from his Hindu ancestors.)

Iqbal was known for his sharp wit and humor along with a natural bend for poetry even in his childhood. He received extensive religious education privately from a learned Muslim scholar, according to the custom of the day, and was well conversant with Arabic and Persian before being sent to school formally. At Scotch Mission High School in his hometown, Iqbal was one of the most brilliant students the school had ever had and won many scholarships

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<sup>14</sup> This sketch is based primarily on the book Zikr-i-Iqbal written in Urdu by Abdul Majid Salik, Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1955, Lahore, Pakistan.

on the basis of his merits. While yet in school, he had already started to write verse (in Urdu). It is interesting to note that some of these early poems are among his best.

In 1895, having finished his high school at Sialkot, Iqbal was sent to Government College, Lahore, for further studies. Here he selected English, Philosophy and Arabic as his major subjects and in 1897 received a Bachelor's degree, winning two gold medals at the same time for the most excellent performance in the examinations. He continued to do post-graduate work in Philosophy under the able guidance of the learned Professor Thomas W. Arnold. In 1899 he received his Master's degree with the highest honor once again and was awarded another gold medal.

Not very long after these remarkable academic achievements he became a lecturer of philosophy at his alma mater. In the meantime, Iqbal had established himself as a poet of great promise. His verse was in high demand everywhere, particularly because of its nationalistic spirit. Iqbal's poetry of this period was strongly reflective of pantheism as well. His style was simple but brilliant and his early Urdu poems seemed to be ". . . modelled on the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth, depict-

ing the beauty of natural objects."<sup>15</sup>

In 1905 he left for Europe for higher education. His first stop was in England where he joined Trinity College of the Cambridge University. Here he came into contact with, and was influenced a great deal, by the famous English Hegelian, Professor McTaggart.<sup>16</sup> It was the impact of McTaggart's philosophy that first jolted Iqbal out of his pantheistic slumber. He began to see clearly, as we shall note in the next chapter, how pantheism tends to reduce man to nothingness, and thus robs him of his important place in the Universe by denying the reality of the phenomenal world. It was perhaps during this period of mental readjustment that Iqbal had the initial vision of his own philosophy of the Self.

With this spark ignited in his mind, he moved on to Germany to obtain a Ph.D. from Munich. There again he decided to probe deeper into the history of pantheistic mysticism, but this time to trace its infiltration into

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<sup>15</sup> Mazheruddin Siddiqi, The Image of the West in Iqbal (Lahore, Pakistan: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1956), p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> John M. E. McTaggart devoted three books to the study of Hegel.

Islam causing complete deterioration of the religion. The findings of his research are ably put together in Chapter V of his doctoral thesis: "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia."

Iqbal returned to his homeland in 1908 a completely changed person.<sup>17</sup> Not only had he been cured of his earlier notions but he had drunk deeply of the fountain of the West also. The nationalistic fervor had left him and he had shaken off the ecstasies of pantheism. He was now dedicated to the revival of the dynamic cultural forces of Islam; the narrower concepts of nationalism were replaced by strong sentiments of Pan-Islamism.

The world of Islam was still in the phases of medievalism at the turn of the twentieth century. But under the powerful impact of Western civilization it had been made to move. Iqbal and the other men of insight were anxious to see that this transition from medievalism to modernism in Islam did not proceed without a definite

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<sup>17</sup> On his way home he stopped in England again and made a further addition to his qualifications by acquiring the Degree of Barrister-at-Law. The result was that he practiced law most of his life aside from a brief term of professorship at Government College, Lahore.



direction. "We heartily welcome the liberal movement in modern Islam," says Iqbal, "but it must also be admitted that the appearance of liberal ideas in Islam constitutes also the most critical movement in the history of Islam. Liberalism has a tendency to act as a force of disintegration . . . 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."<sup>18</sup> Iqbal called upon his coreligionists to equip themselves with the original dynamism and humanism of Islam and "to move forward with self control and a clear insight into the ultimate aim of Islam as a social polity."<sup>19</sup>

The political scene of British India was also beginning to look turbulent about this time. Nationalistic feelings were raging high among the Indians but there was, at the same time, the possibility of a rupture between the Hindus and Muslims because of their religious and cultural differences. Iqbal's poetry sensitively mirrors the socio-political tensions and the intellectual unrest of this period. And these, precisely, were the circumstances which

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<sup>18</sup> Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, pp. 154-55.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

formed the backdrop for the philosophy that we shall be dealing with.

Iqbal had an eventful political career also, a detailed account of which is perhaps outside the scope of our present study. Suffice it to say that he struggled incessantly throughout his life to bring harmony and discipline to the Muslims of India, and when he saw that the future of his brethren did not lie in a united India, he boldly proposed the idea of an independent Muslim state--the idea that was materialized in the coming into existence of Pakistan.

He died in 1938 of a heart ailment after having been knighted by the British Government for his brilliant statesmanship and his literary achievements.

Iqbal's first major work in which he evolved his doctrine of the Self was Asrar-i-Khudi (1915). It was translated from Persian verse into English with an introduction by Professor R. A. Nicholson in 1920 under the title "The Secrets of the Self." The Asrar-i-Khudi represents merely the beginning of the development of Iqbal's metaphysics. It does not, therefore, give a systematic account of his thought, but conveys his ideas in a popular and attractive form.

The Asrar-i-Khudi was followed by another important

poetic work (again in the Persian language) entitled Rumuz-i-Bekhudi (1918). In this work Iqbal explains "how the individual who loses himself in the community reflects both the past and the future as in a mirror so that he transcends mortality and enters into the life of Islam, which is infinite and everlasting."<sup>20</sup> Rumuz-i-Bekhudi was translated in English with introduction and notes by Professor A. J. Asberry as "Mysteries of Selflessness."

Other important works include Piam-i-Mashrigh (1923) written in response to Goethes' West Ostlicher Divan; Zubur-i-Ajam (1927), the English translation of which by Professor A. J. Asberry as "Persian Psalms" appeared in 1948; Javed Nama (The Book of Eternity) patterned after the Divina Commedia of Dante, translated into Italian by Dr. Alèssandro Bansani under the title "Il Poema Celeste;" Bal-i-Jibrael (1935); Zarb-i-Kalim (1936), etc.

And finally, he presented a systematic account of his thought in a series of lectures delivered at Madras, India, in 1928-29 which have since been compiled and published in the form of a book called The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. This book constitutes by far

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<sup>20</sup> Op. cit., Iqbal, Secrets of the Self, Introduction, p. xiv.

the most coherent attempt to re-interpret Islam and to re-establish its philosophy in the light of the latest developments in the various domains of human knowledge. It may be regarded as an indispensable guide to the understanding of the whole range of Iqbal's thought.

## CHAPTER III

### EMERGENCE OF THE IDEA OF THE SELF

It has been pointed out already that Iqbal's early poetic thought exhibited strong hues of pantheistic tendencies. In this, however, he was only being true to a long established tradition of this character among the Muslim poets of India. Interestingly enough, the local mystic climate had very little to do with the development of this trend in Muslim poetry. For Indian poetry at large has been flourishing after the pattern of Persian verse since the days of Mogul emperors who were primarily responsible for the expansion of Persian intellectual traditions over India. One would, therefore, have to trace the origins of the pantheism of Indian Muslims back to Persia where it has had a long historic background.

Iqbal himself has made an illuminating study of the birth and growth of Persian mysticism, or Sufiism<sup>21</sup> to be more precise, in his dissertation, The Development of Metaphysics in Persia. Different scholars apparently have

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<sup>21</sup> The ancient mystics of Persia used to carry a kind of special mark of identity in that they would constantly wear a dark blanket made of Suf--a coarse woollen cloth--and came to be known as Sufis.

had different notions about the origin of Persian Sufiism. Some try to relate it to Indian Vedanta; others regard it as an outcome of the influences of Neo-Platonism; still others think that Sufiism was an "Aryan reaction against the unemotional Semitic religion [viz Islam]." <sup>22</sup> Iqbal, however, is of the opinion that each of these theories appears to be a mere generalization inasmuch as it ignores the important principle "that the full significance of a phenomenon in the intellectual evolution of a people can only be comprehended in the light of those pre-existing intellectual, political and social conditions which alone make its existence inevitable." <sup>23</sup> His investigations reveal the following facts about the Islamic life at the end of the Eighth and the first half of the Ninth Century when, according to him, the Sufi ideal came into being. <sup>24</sup>

1. It was a time of "more or less" political unrest in Persia. The overthrow of Umayyads (749 A.D.); the persecutions of Zendikhs and revolts of Persian heretics (755-780); the struggle for political supremacy among the sons of Emperor Harun in the beginning of the

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<sup>22</sup> Iqbal, The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, p. 77.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Cf., Ibid., Chapter V.

Ninth Century; these and other like factors ". . . contributed to drive away spirits of devotional character from the scene of continual unrest to the blissful peace of an ever-deepening contemplative life."<sup>25</sup>

2. Islamic Rationalism gave rise to sceptical tendencies among Muslims and led them to appeal to a "supra-intellectual source of knowledge."

3. The rigid, unemotional piety of certain schools of Islam--the Hanafite, the Shafiite, the Malikite, and the Hambalite--were also responsible for forcing some of the sensitive, spiritual minds to ascetic Sufiism.

4. The bitter theological controversies during this period among the old and new schools of thought in Islam ". . . tended not only to confine religion within the narrow limits of schools, but also stirred up the spirit to rise above all sectarian wrangling."<sup>26</sup>

5. And finally, Iqbal thinks that the presence of Christian hermits, too, proved fascinating to the minds of early Muslim saints and stimulated the growth of asceticism in Islam.

Yet the secret of the widespread and the vitality

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

of Sufiism, Iqbal points out, lies in its synthesis and assimilation of the Semitic and Vedantic principles of life. In contrast to Semitic emphasis on the transformation of human will and Vedantic preoccupation with the mental aspects of man's nature, the Sufi tells us to "bring about the transformation of feeling, of which will and understanding are only specialized forms."<sup>27</sup> He goes even further and pays homage to Budhistic idea of Nirvana as well; human ego for him is meaningless--something to be destroyed. His formula of salvation, therefore, is "Love"--"love all, and forget your own individuality in doing good to others."<sup>28</sup> Iqbal sums up the characteristic features of Sufiism in the following remarks:

Like the geographical position of its home, it stands mid-way between the Semitic and the Aryan, assimilating ideas from both sides, and giving the stamp of its individuality which, on the whole, is more Aryan than Semitic in character. It would, therefore, be evident that the secret of the vitality of Sufiism is the complete view of human nature upon which it is based. It has survived orthodox persecutions and political revolutions, because it appeals to human nature in its entirety; and while it concentrates its interest chiefly in a life of self-denial, it allows free play to the speculative tendency as well.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 83.



Nonetheless, Sufiism, in its basic content, remained contrary to the spirit of Islam, even though the Sufis sought to justify their views from the Quaranic standpoint also.<sup>30</sup> Whereas Sufiism fervently advocated other-worldliness and complete abnegation of the individual self, Islam confronts the material world with a bold "yes" in order to gain mastery over its forces, and advises man to create in himself "the attributes of God." Consider, for instance, the following verses from the Quran:

Verily in the creation of the Heavens and the earth, and in the succession of the night and of the day, are signs for men of understanding; who, standing and sitting and reclining, bear God in mind and reflect on the Creation of the Heavens and of the earth, and say: "Oh, our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> They connect their creed to Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law and later one of the Caliphs of Arabia, and claim that the Prophet had conveyed an esoteric teaching to him which was not contained in the Quran. In support of their argument they refer to this verse of the Book; "As we have sent a prophet to you from among yourselves who reads our verses to you, purifies you, teaches you the Book and the Wisdom, and teaches you what you did not know before." "The Wisdom" alluded to in the verse, they content, is what constitutes that esoteric teaching communicated to Ali by the prophet. They further try to substantiate their pantheistic viewpoint in terms of verses like the following:

"God is the light of heaven and earth."

"We are nigher to him (man) than his own jugular vein," etc. (Cf. Chapter V, Ibid.)

<sup>31</sup> Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, op. cit., p. 9.

And again:

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.<sup>32</sup>

Thus it is evident that the asceticism of the Sufi ran in direct opposition to the dynamism of Islam. And yet, in spite of its innocent beginnings, Sufiism grew rapidly to assume enormous dimensions and became a major factor in the deterioration of Islamic civilization.

Iqbal, who was drifting in the same stream, seems to have come to appreciate the dangers of pantheistic Sufiism during the course of his stay in Europe. He probed deep into the history of this movement, in order not only to cure himself of his old malady but also to carve a sound basis for his future thought. He discovered that Sufiistic doctrine was vulnerable both on religious and philosophic counts.

From the religious point of view, as we have already seen, Islam places a distinct emphasis on the reality of the material world--the very thing that the Sufi denies. So, argues Iqbal:

. . . Inner experience is only one source of human knowledge. According to the Quran there are

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

two other sources of knowledge--Nature and History; and it is in tapping these sources of knowledge that the spirit of Islam is seen at its best. The Quran sees signs of the ultimate Reality in the 'sun,' the 'moon,' 'the lengthening out of shadows,' 'the alternation of day and night,' 'the variety of human colour and tongues,' 'the alternation of the days of success and reverse among peoples'--in fact in the whole of nature as revealed to the sense-perception of man. And the Muslim's duty is to reflect on these signs and not to pass by them 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.'<sup>33</sup>

From the philosophic standpoint, on the other hand, the pantheistic Sufi will be hard put to it to explain the being of the so-called objective world.<sup>34</sup> He may either regard the phenomena as the manifestation of God or as the emanation of Him. Yet in each case he cannot help but recognize different levels of existence in the objective world. For example, the school of Sufiism which thinks of the Ultimate Reality as Beauty, "whose very nature consists in seeing its own 'face' reflected in the Universe-mirror,"<sup>35</sup> distinguishes between two kinds of such mirrors.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>34</sup> Enver, The Metaphysics of Iqbal, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>35</sup> Iqbal, The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, op. cit., p. 88.

1. That which shows merely a reflected image--the external world.
2. That which shows the real essence--the being of man.<sup>36</sup>

Or again the school which conceives Reality as Light holds that "the fact of empirical diversity necessitates a principle of difference in the nature of the Ultimate Reality."<sup>37</sup> For them "the whole universe is . . . a continuous series of circles of existence, all depending on the original Light. Those nearer to the source receive more illumination than those more distant."<sup>38</sup> Man, of course, ranks high in this scale of existence also.

Thus, it dawned upon Iqbal that even pantheism could not ignore the uniqueness of the being of man, or subdue his individuality; human ego always would assert itself and emerge as more real than any other level of existence. It was with this that he revolted against the Sufi creed. Besides, he thought, without the Self as the center of all experience, the Sufi could not very well talk of any inner or outer experience. In order, therefore, to affirm the reality of God, he must first affirm

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

the reality of the Self. Hence, self-affirmation, and not self-abnegation, should be the ideal of man.

This, however, was just the beginning of the development of a dynamic system of metaphysics. For soon he was to see the idea of the Self operating behind all existence:

"The form of existence is an effect of the Self whatsoever thou seest is the secret of the self."<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, individuality persists in everything. "All life," he writes, "is individual; there is no such thing as universal life. God Himself is an individual: He is the most unique individual."<sup>40</sup>

It would seem that Iqbal drew considerable support for his thought from Professor McTaggart, his teacher at Trinity College in Cambridge.<sup>41</sup> The latter, following Hegel's doctrine of the absolute Idea, thought of reality as Spirit consisting in a "community of individuals" each of whom "partakes of the essential nature of Spirit."<sup>42</sup>

This differentiation of Spirit into parts is necessary be-

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<sup>39</sup> Iqbal, The Secrets of the Self, op. cit., p. 16, lines 187, 188.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. xvii.

<sup>41</sup> Enver, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>42</sup> J. M. Ellis McTaggart, Philosophical Studies (New York: Longman, Green & Co., 1934), p. 214.

cause without them it would be reduced to the state of mere Being which is equivalent to nothing. And since individual existence is not possible save as a part of the whole, the unity of the Absolute remains unaffected by its differentiation into an organism of particular individuals. Spirit, therefore, is realized not only in the whole but in each single part also. McTaggart's position is beautifully summed up in the following passage:

We conceive the universe as a spiritual whole, made up of individuals, who have no existence except as manifestations of the whole, as the whole, on the other hand, has no existence except as manifested in them. The individuals, again, find their meaning and reality only in their connection with one another. And this connection is not to be conceived as a mechanical or arbitrary collection of particulars, but as exhibiting some plan or principle, in which the self-differentiation of the universal into the particular, has become so perfect, that from the idea of the whole we could determine any part, and from any part we could determine all the other. The relation in which each individual, as subject, finds himself to the others as objects is one in which subject and object are in perfect equilibrium and perfect harmony.<sup>43</sup>

Such a concept of Reality, obviously, seems to visualize the universe as a neatly composed symphony, complete and consummated in all aspects. Iqbal, though in accord with the basic thesis of the argument, had yet a

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 266.

different picture of Reality in his mind. He did not believe, for instance, that the individual was merely a passive agent in the process of the realization of spirit; nor did he think that the universe had reached its consummation as yet. Hence, he writes:

The universe, as Dr. McTaggart says, is an association of individuals; but we must add that the orderliness and adjustment which we find in this association is not eternally achieved and complete in itself. It is the result of instinctive or conscious effort. We are gradually travelling from chaos to cosmos and are helpers in this achievement. Nor are the members of the association fixed; new members are ever coming to birth to cooperate in the great task. Thus the universe is not a completed act: it is still in the course of formation. . . . The process of creation is still going on, and man too takes his share in it, inasmuch as he brings order into at least a portion of the chaos.<sup>44</sup>

Be as it may, the fact that emerges from this discussion is that the impact of the West had awakened the genius in Iqbal. By now he was well on his way to formulate his philosophy of the Self.

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<sup>44</sup> Iqbal, Secrets of the Self, op. cit., pp. xvii; xviii.

## CHAPTER IV

### DETERMINATION OF THE IDEA OF THE SELF

The Universe, for Iqbal, is an "association of individuals," or egos as he calls it, emanating from and headed by "the most unique individual"--the Ultimate Ego or God Reality, conceived as such, is necessarily spiritual. "I have conceived the Ultimate Reality," writes Iqbal, "as an Ego; and I must add that from the Ultimate Ego only egos proceed. . . . The world, in all its details, from mechanical movement of what we call the atom of matter to the free movement of thought in the human ego, is the self-revelation of the 'Great I am!' Every atom of Divine energy, however low in the scale of existence, is an ego."<sup>45</sup>

But some egos, it would seem, are more real than others; for "the degree of reality varies with the degree of the feeling of egohood."<sup>46</sup> Since man, Iqbal says, is directly conscious of his own reality, in him egohood reaches its relative perfection. And it is in man, therefore, that the idea of the Self finds its full expression.

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<sup>45</sup> Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 68.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.



The question here arises as to how does man become conscious of his self? And what is the nature of the self revealed in this experience? A satisfactory answer to both aspects of this question should perhaps enable us to comprehend Iqbal's notion of the Self more readily. First, then, the aspect of attaining consciousness of the Self:

Cogito ergo sum, "I think, therefore I am," is excellent as far as it goes. But it does not go far enough; at best it remains an inference.<sup>47</sup> It does not probe deep into our ". . . privileged case of existence in which we are in absolute contact with Reality."<sup>48</sup> It is when we perceive ourselves "internally, deeply" that the secret of this privileged existence is revealed to us. What do I find when I fix my gaze on my inner life? In the words of Bergson, "I pass from state to state. I am warm or cold. I am merry or sad. I work or do nothing. I look at what is around me or I think of something else. Sensations, feelings, volitions, ideas--such are the changes into which my existence is divided and which

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<sup>47</sup> Enver, Metaphysics of Iqbal, p. 35.

<sup>48</sup> Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 44.

colour it in terms."<sup>49</sup> Iqbal, like Bergson, would assert that we seize this reality from within, i.e., by intuition: "we may sympathize intellectually with nothing else, but we certainly sympathize with our own selves."<sup>50</sup> Iqbal would further add that the intuition of the self is best realized in moments of "tension"; for "inner experience is the ego at work [and] we appreciate the ego itself in the act of perceiving, judging and willing."<sup>51</sup> The fact remains, however, that it is intuition, and not thought, which furnishes the surest grounds for the existence and reality of the self.

But since we have justified the existence of the self in terms of intuition, we are perhaps obligated to subject the method of intuition itself to some sort of examination. What exactly is the nature of this phenomenon called intuition? one may naturally ask.

Intuition (which for Iqbal is synonymous with mystic-consciousness), he would maintain, is a very unique kind of experience "in which sensation, in the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>50</sup> Henri Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics (New York: [Translated by T. E. Hulme] 1949), p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> Iqbal, op. cit., p. 97.

physiological sense of the word, does not play any part."<sup>52</sup>

The intuitional level of experience transcends the levels of sense-perception and thought. For, thought "grasps Reality piecemeal" and intuition "grasps it in its wholeness."<sup>53</sup> "The one fixes its gaze on the eternal, the other on the temporal aspect of Reality."<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Iqbal, after the fashion of the Quran, thinks that intuition is a peculiar property of the heart and not the mind or intellect:

The 'heart' is a kind of inner intuition or insight which . . . brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense-perception. We must not, however, regard it as a mysterious special faculty . . . [for] . . . the vista of experience thus opened to us is as real and concrete as any other experience. To describe it as psychic, mystical, or supernatural does not detract its value as experience.<sup>55</sup>

It may be, he points out, that we are not yet in possession of an adequate scientific method to study and analyse the contents of non-rational modes of our consciousness. Besides, the fact that mankind owes so much to the revealed and mystic literature is sufficient reason

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52 Ibid., p. 15.

53 Ibid., p. 2.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., p. 15.

why we cannot reject the non-rational experience as mere illusion. Intuition, therefore, should be considered a legitimate source of human knowledge. Its main characteristics are:

1. Intuition is a supra-sensual source of knowledge and affords an immediate experience of Reality.

2. It is an unanalysable whole: "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."<sup>56</sup>

3. Intuitional experience, by virtue of its very nature, is incommunicable, except perhaps in the form of idea. It is more of a feeling than thought. "The incommunicability of mystic experience," writes Iqbal, "is due to the fact that it is essentially a matter of inarticulate feeling, untouched by discursive intellect. It must, however, be noted that mystic feeling, like all feeling, has a cognitive element also; and it is, I believe, because of this cognitive element that it lends itself to the form of Idea."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

4. Since intuition grasps reality immediately and in its entirety, the serial time appears to it as unreal. In the act of intuition, therefore, one attains "intimate association with the eternal."<sup>58</sup>

It is with this sort of intuition, then, that man becomes conscious of the reality of his self. Its efficacy, in these terms, is incontestable, even though it may be "too profound to be intellectualized."<sup>59</sup>

We may now return to the second part of our original question, namely, what is the nature of the self?

When we direct our attention inward we perceive the ego as a unity of "events" or "mental states." These states are so related to each other that they form a

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58 Ibid., p. 21.

59 Ibid., p. 93.

continuous flux which is absolutely unique: "they mean and involve one another."<sup>60</sup> This unity is not comparable to the unity of a material thing, for instance, because the parts of a material thing can exist in mutual isolation. Nor are the time-space concepts that govern the material events applicable to mental events. It is perfectly possible for the ego to assume more than one space-order: "the space of waking consciousness and dream space have no mental relation; they do not interfere with or overlap each other."<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, the time-span of the ego, unlike the time-span of the physical

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60 Ibid.

It is interesting to note the exact similarity between Iqbal and Bergson on this subject. In An Introduction to Metaphysics (p. 25), Bergson makes the following remarks while analysing the content of the inner self:

There is a succession of states, each of which announces that which follows and contains that which precedes it. They can, properly speaking, only be said to form multiple states when I have already passed them and turn back to observe their track. Whilst I was experiencing them, they were so solidly organized, so profoundly animated with a common life, that I could not have said where any one of them finished or where another commenced. In reality no one of them begins or ends, but all extend into each other.

For a comparative study of Iqbal and Bergson, see Chapter V.

61 Ibid., p. 94.

event, is pure duration. It is not stretched like a straight line in the space but "is concentrated within it and linked with its present and future in a unique manner."<sup>62</sup>

Another important feature of the unity of the ego, according to Iqbal, is its "essential privacy." It is in this respect that every ego is unique. In spite of its capacity to respond to other egos, every ego "is self-centered and possesses a private circuit of individuality."<sup>63</sup> My feelings, hopes and aspirations, judgments and resolutions, are exclusively my own. And "it is this unique inter-relation of our mutual states that we express by the word 'I'."<sup>64</sup>

Now what about the life and activity of the ego? We have noted that the ego is best appreciated in moments of tension. This tension, may we add, is the very life of the ego; it is "caused by the ego invading the environment and the environment invading the ego."<sup>65</sup> The ego emerges from this mutual invasion "as a directive

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62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., p. 68.

64 Ibid., p. 95.

65 Ibid., p. 97.

energy and is formed and disciplined by its own experience."<sup>66</sup> Thus the ego in its essential nature is directive; it is constantly engaged in the creation of desires, ideals and "will-attitudes." (Man's personality, therefore, Iqbal says, is not a thing in space, it is an act resulting from a "directive attitude." We must appreciate and understand him in his judgment, in his aims and aspirations.) The ego's life is always an open possibility.

All this "spontaneous activity" of the ego, however, is not without a definite motive. It is meant to be "a forward assimilative drive"<sup>67</sup> against the world of matter, which is there per se and which, in Iqbal's

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66 Ibid.

67 Iqbal, Secrets of the Self, p. xviii.



terminology, is the "non-ego."<sup>68</sup> The ego is free inasmuch as it has directive control over its environment but its freedom is constrained by the presence of the non-ego. The non-ego obstructs its (ego's) journey toward the Ultimate Ego--and thus toward complete freedom. The ego, therefore, removes this obstruction by assimilating and absorbing it: "The true person not only absorbs the world of matter; by mastering it he absorbs God Himself into his ego."<sup>69</sup>

An important point to note here is that, although the world of matter or the non-ego is the greatest obstacle in the way to freedom of the ego, the non-ego is not to be regarded as evil. In fact, its existence is necessary for the complete realization of the ego," since

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<sup>68</sup> A passing comment on the nature of the material world is perhaps in order here. Iqbal takes its reality for granted. But it is not to be thought of as a static fact situated in an absolute void. It is a continuous act of Divine Creativity which "thought breaks up into a plurality of mutually exclusive things," it is an ever-expanding, dynamic organism whose growth has no final limits. Iqbal has his own romantic way of describing it. "Nature," says he, "is not a mass of pure materiality occupying a void . . . it is a structure of events, a systematic mode of behavior, and as such organic to the Ultimate Self. Nature is to the Divine Self as character is to the human self." (The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 54.)

<sup>69</sup> Iqbal, Secrets of the Self, p. xx.

it enables the inner powers of life to unfold themselves."<sup>70</sup>

But this interaction between the ego and the non-ego raises a very crucial question. That is: How is the self-determination of the ego related to the determinism of the phenomena? In other words, if the activity of the ego is spontaneous and freely determined, how does it fit into the framework of the so-called laws of Nature. Kant, may we recall, in reaction to Hume's scepticism about physical causality proposed the idea of Space and Time as being a priori categories by which human mind apprehends the external world. The phenomenon of causality could not be communicated to us through sensation because there is no such thing as causality existing as a concrete entity out there. It could not be brushed aside as merely a habit of the mind either; for in doing so we will reduce the whole scientific endeavor of man to a heap of ruins.

Iqbal would perhaps agree with this line of reasoning. But even Kant would be hard put to it to explain the presence of these a priori categories of sensibility in

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

human mind, since he himself rejected the concept of innate ideas. Iqbal, therefore, thinks that "the causal chain wherein we try to find a place for the ego is itself an artificial construction of the ego for its own purposes."<sup>71</sup> The ego, he maintains, is called upon to live in an unfamiliar and complex environment, so that it has to organize some kind of system to control the behaviour of things around it. Thus, the phenomenon of causality is not an expression of the nature of Reality, but merely "an indispensable instrument" in the hands of the ego to understand and master its environment: "Indeed in interpreting nature in this way the ego . . . acquires and amplifies its [own] freedom."<sup>72</sup>

Keeping the above context in mind, it should not be very difficult to understand Iqbal's notions on the historic issue of body-soul relationship. Decartes, as we know, was responsible for creating an unbridgable gulf between mind and matter, so that the occasionalists later had to introduce the mediation of divine will to explain the interaction of body and soul. Spinoza, on the

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<sup>71</sup> Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 102.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

other hand, tried to resolve this problem by declaring both body and soul to be "modes" of the same reality. This, still, did not eliminate the disparity between thought and extension; they remained mutually exclusive entities, and so did soul and body.

Leibnitz's attempt at solving this difficulty involved the concept of "pre-established harmony." But even in this scheme of things, body and soul operate independently of each other's interference. There is no real interplay between the two. In fact, the soul is reduced to "merely a passive spectator of the happenings of the body."<sup>73</sup>

In Iqbal's opinion, both parallelism and interaction are unsatisfactory. It is impossible to draw a line of cleavage between body and soul: "Somehow they must belong to the same system."<sup>74</sup> We have noted previously that, for Iqbal, the world of matter, being a mode of behaviour or a structure of acts, is organic to the life of the Ultimate Ego. Similarly, he maintains that "the body is accumulated action or habit of the soul; and as such undetachable from it. It is a permanent

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

element of consciousness which, in view of this permanent element, appears from the outside as something stable."<sup>75</sup>

Body thus is another manifestation of the activity of the ego and nothing else. The seeming conflict between body and soul is more apparent than real. This idea is beautifully expressed in the following verses:

By the Self the seed of opposition is sown  
in the world:  
It imagines itself to be other than itself.  
It makes from itself the forms of others  
In order to multiply pleasures of strife.  
It is slaying by the strength of its arm  
That it may become conscious of its own  
strength,  
Its self-deceptions are the essence of  
life, . . .  
The excuse for this wastefulness and cruelty  
Is the shaping and perfecting of spiritual  
life.<sup>76</sup>

Perfection of spiritual life, then, is the ultimate goal of the ego's life; for in it lies its complete freedom. It is further aided in its struggle for freedom by ishq (love). Ishq, in Iqbal's terminology, means "the creation of values and ideals and the endeavor to realize them."<sup>77</sup> We must, therefore, fortify the ego by cultivating ishq and avoiding inaction:

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>76</sup> Iqbal, The Secrets of the Self. Verses 193-9, 205-6.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. xxv.

The luminous point whose name is the self  
 Is the life spark beneath our dust  
 By love it is made more lasting,  
 More living, more burning, more glowing.<sup>78</sup>

It is this process of struggle, the state of tension which insures the ego's immortality also. The ego is not subject to the fetters of serial time, for time is one of its own "artificial constructions." The ego as such is timeless. It subsists in pure duration; we know this from looking deep into the recesses of our inner self. So long as, therefore, the ego is able to maintain that state of tension, it will never fade out of existence. However, "personal immortality," says Iqbal, "is not ours as of right; it is to be achieved by personal effort."<sup>79</sup> Man is merely a "candidate" for immortal life. He can have it by aspiring and struggling for it.

Physical death, in his opinion, is a kind of relief from activity. For after death there ensues an interval of relaxation, known in Quranic terms as Barzakh, or an intermediate state, which lasts until the day of Resurrection.<sup>80</sup> But not all the egos will emerge out of this state

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Verses 323-26.

<sup>79</sup> Iqbal, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>80</sup> Iqbal, op. cit., p. xxiv.

of relaxation to resume their career; only those will survive "who have taken good care during this life."<sup>81</sup>

This view of immortality, though very idealistic, will certainly appear fresh and vital if we were to compare it with the theories of some of the other modern thinkers. Kant, for instance, bases his argument of immortality of man on ethical grounds. Man, as a moral agent, should pursue the supreme good which comprises two heterogenous elements, virtue and happiness--duty and inclination. The narrow span of this life, however, is insufficient for the realization of this ideal. We must, therefore, postulate an unending life for man to achieve the consummation of virtue and happiness. But what guarantee is there that this process will not take infinite time?

Nietzsche tried to make his case by means of the scientific hypothesis of conservation of energy. The amount of energy in the universe being fixed, various energy-centers come and go without affecting this closed-off unity of the world. There is no room for novel happenings in the universe because what is happening now has

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

occurred before an infinite number of times and will recur in the same fashion an infinite number of times in the future. This basically is Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence. But this kind of immortality is extremely uninspiring and almost unbearable. It is energy as such, and not individual energy-centers, which has any significance in this recurrence of things.

The "Élan vital" of Bergson can be subjected to a similar sort of criticism. Here again eternity and endlessness are for the impetus of Life, the Élan alone. The individual shapes and forms, in which the universal life manifests itself, live their temporary life and vanish. Personal immortality of the individual is, therefore, of no consequence even in Bergson's philosophy.<sup>82</sup>

But to return to Iqbal. So far we have observed that the ego is fundamentally free and that the choice of permanent existence is open to it, i.e., it can achieve immortality only through personal effort. Iqbal finally envisions the evolutionary development of the human ego which will be climaxed in the emergence of a Perfect Man, the true "vicegerent of God on earth."<sup>83</sup> In his person-

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<sup>82</sup> This is true at least in the case of his early works.

<sup>83</sup> Iqbal, The Secrets of the Self, p. xxvii.



ality, egohood will have reached its consummation: "He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity."<sup>84</sup> The increasing development of human mind and body is bringing us closer to the birth of this unique individual. His appearance, in other words, will justify ". . . all the trials of a painful evolution":<sup>85</sup>

Nature travails in blood for generations  
To compose the harmony of his personality.  
Our handful of earth has reached the zenith,  
For that champion will come forth from this dust.<sup>86</sup>

For the present the Perfect Man is merely an ideal. However, Iqbal maintains that "the evolution of humanity is tending towards the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents."<sup>87</sup> Thus he will not only be the herald of the "kingdom of God on earth" but the whole humanity will attain redemption through him:

His person is an atonement for all the world.  
By his grandeur the world is saved.  
His protecting shadow makes the mote familiar  
with the sun,  
His rich substance makes precious all that  
exists.<sup>88</sup>

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84 Ibid., p. xxviii.

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid., Verses 939-42.

87 Ibid., p. xxviii.

88 Ibid., Verses 926-9.

Now, Iqbal's Perfect Man may appear to have the semblance of Nietzsche's Superman. But, regardless of the source of their individual inspiration (which probably in either case is religion),<sup>89</sup> we will have to recognize one fundamental difference between these two notions. That is: Iqbal bases his whole argument on the evolutionary development of man, from a lower status in the scale of life to the higher. For him, the appearance of the Perfect Man is a logically justifiable end of the gradually perfecting state of human existence. Nietzsche, on the other hand, deduces the theory of Superman from his doctrine of "Eternal Recurrence," which means that the Superman must have existed an infinite number of times before and his re-emergence will not be a leap forward in the direction of spiritual or organic improvement of humanity as such, but merely re-enacting of an old drama.

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<sup>89</sup> For a fuller discussion of this subject, see the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### IQBAL IN THE LIGHT OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

In the preceding pages, we have merely alluded to some of the striking similarities between Iqbal's thought and certain Western philosophical concepts. We shall now try to determine how much he really has in common with his western counterparts and to what extent he differs from them in some of the more familiar features of his philosophy, namely, intuition, ego and non-ego, and his notion of the Perfect Man.

Iqbal's method of intuition comes closest to that of Bergson. Both philosophers make intuition of the self their starting point, and from the analysis of this "privileged case" of existence they conclude that Reality is a constant flux of events and the real time, a pure duration "unadulterated by space," where there is succession without change.<sup>90</sup> This might lead one to think that

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<sup>90</sup> Iqbal is reported to have met Bergson in Paris and related to him one of Prophet Muhammad's sayings which reads as follows: "Do not vilify time, for time is God" (the reference being to the purity and eternity of time). Bergson was so thrilled that he jumped out of his chair and asked Iqbal to explain it further. (Salik, op. cit., p. 25.) This is simply to show that both thinkers were completely in accord with each other on and equally inspired by the continuous, unchanging and eternal view of time.

Iqbal, being a late contemporary of Bergson, was inspired in his thought by Bergsonian metaphysic which was the center of universal attention at the turn of the 20th century. It may very well be. However, it is remarkable, at the same time, to see that each of them employs this basic premise as a means to an entirely different end.

In the early days of Bergson's career, European thinking was completely dominated by mechanistic determination of physics, so much so that even the vital phenomenon of life was being regarded as an incidental product of the interaction of mechanical laws. "All problems, it was believed, were really the problems of physics. Energy and atoms, with the properties self-existing in them, could explain everything including life, thought, will, and feeling. The concept of mechanism--a purely physical concept--claimed to be all-embracing explanation of nature."<sup>91</sup> In short, the extreme materialism of the 19th century was posing a

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<sup>91</sup> Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 39. C. E. M. Joad, in his book Guide to Modern Thought (p. 39) quotes the famous British physicist John Tyndall (1820-93) as having said the following while speaking at a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1874: ". . . Science would one day be able to explain all that has happened in terms of the ultimately purely natural and inevitable march of evolution from the atoms of the primeval nebula to the proceedings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science."

serious threat to the moral and spiritual aspects of man's life.

Bergson reacted bitterly against this trend of his age. In opposition to the general emphasis on thought and intellect he advocated the primacy of intuition and instinct. He urged direct contact with life and all modes of experience as against the dry, geometric, discursive techniques of science.

On the analogy of our conscious experience--of which we have spoken earlier--"what we call things are events in the continuity of nature which thought spatializes and thus regards as mutually isolated for purposes of action."<sup>92</sup> Life is a sort of cosmic movement, a vital impulse or Elan vital. This is the fundamental reality, and we become aware of it through immediate experience or intuition. Thought, being serial in nature and working with static concepts, cannot grasp the essence of this cosmic movement, except by cutting it out into solid, stationary points. It is the "co-existence and succession" of these solids that gives us the

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92 Ibid., p. 49.

impression of space and time.<sup>93</sup>

Now the Élan which is the ultimate principle of all existence may be conceived as "pure will"; it is free, dynamic and creative. By virtue of its spontaneous activity it remains forever indeterminable. It holds in its bosom untold and unpredictable possibilities. There are no fixed plans for the forward rush of the vital impulse or else it could not enjoy complete freedom of creativity. There are, therefore, no teleological motives behind it.

At times, however, the continuous flow of the Élan is interrupted by a strange inversion of the life process. The result is the appearance of "inert matter" which retards its free activity. "The impetus of life," says Bergson, ". . . consists in a need of creation. It can not create absolutely because it is confronted with matter,

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<sup>93</sup> On the basis of this argument he asserts that sciences which necessarily deal with these artificial concepts can never fully grasp the intricate laws of human life. Life as such, being a spontaneous, creative movement, falls outside the domain of mechanical necessity. This is what experience reveals to us: "It is of no use," writes Bergson, "to hold up before our eyes the dazzling prospect of a universal mathematic; we can not sacrifice experience to the requirements of a system. That is why we reject radical mechanism." (Henry Bergson, Creative Evolution, translated by A. Mitchell, p. 39.)

that is to say with the movement that is inverse of its own. But it seizes upon this matter, which is necessity itself, and strives to introduce into it the largest possible amount of in-determination and liberty."<sup>94</sup> In other words, to overcome the resistance of inert matter, Élan manifests itself in three different evolutionary forms, namely, vegetable kingdom, arthropods and vertebrates leading to the emergence of man. Man proves to be the best instrument to gain control over the forces of matter and thus helps restore the lost freedom of the impetus of life by consciously refuting the mechanical necessities of matter. (His consciousness, however, is merely a means and not an end. It is serving the cause of the greater activity and life of Élan and vanishes after having done its job. The same holds true for the selves, the forms that possess this consciousness. They are temporary phases of Élan's activity. Selfhood, therefore, is not an end in itself either. The impetus of life is supra-conscious and supra-personal.)

All forms of organic life, in short, are driven by the same reality and are engaged in the same eternal

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<sup>94</sup> Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 251.

strife against the rival forces of matter:

As the smallest grain of dust is bound up with our entire solar system, drawn along with it in that undivided movement of descent which is materiality itself, so all organized beings, from the humblest to the highest, from the first origins of life to the time in which we are, and in all places as in all times, do but evidence a single impulsion, the inverse of the movement of matter, and in itself indivisible. All the living hold together, and all yield to the same tremendous push.<sup>95</sup>

Let us now see how far Iqbal agrees and disagrees with the conclusions drawn by Bergson from the method of intuition. Iqbal is in full agreement with Bergson in so far as the latter employs this method for determining the ultimate nature of Reality. But, for Iqbal, the self is not simply a vehicle of intelligence or a guide to the objective knowledge of the external world; it is in itself the most "fundamental fact of the universe."<sup>96</sup> It is not a mere instrument or a shadow of the Élan whose existence is subordinate to the existence of a higher reality. On the contrary, the self in itself is free and immortal. In its combat with the world of matter, the self fights for its own freedom, its own immortality. It is serving no other cause but the cause of its own

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>96</sup> Iqbal, The Secrets of the Self, p. xvii.



reality.

Again, Iqbal would agree that intuition reveals reality as a free unpredictable, creative, vital impulse of the nature of volition. But it may not necessarily be the case that thought is by its nature serial and its activity consists only in spatializing and viewing reality as a plurality of "things." For such a view, Iqbal points out, leads us to "an unsurmountable dualism of will and thought."<sup>97</sup> The reason, he says, why thought appears to break up Reality into fragments is that this process is necessary for our logical understanding. And "it is the inadequacy of the logical understanding which finds a multiplicity of mutually repellent individualities with no prospects of their ultimate reduction to a unity that makes us sceptical about the conclusiveness of thought."<sup>98</sup> Moreover, thought simulates spatializing character because of its association with serial time. It is not serial as such; "its real function is to synthesize the elements of experience by employing categories suitable to the various levels which experience presents." In

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<sup>97</sup> Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 49.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

this sense, thought is identical with life; for movement of life too involves such a synthesis of its various stages in the process of growth. In other words, "it is determined by ends, and the presence of ends means that it is permeated by intelligence. Nor is the activity of intelligence possible without the presence of ends. In conscious experience life and thought permeate each other. They form a unity."<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, Iqbal thinks, Bergson has misconstrued the analogy of the self in regarding the vital impulse as wholly undetermined by an immediate or remote purpose. It is true that in our conscious experience we find the past moving along with and operating in the present. But this does not represent the whole of our consciousness; "the unity of consciousness has a forward looking aspect also. Life is only a series of acts of attention, and an act of attention is inexplicable without reference to a purpose, conscious or unconscious. Even our acts of perception are determined by our immediate interests and purposes."<sup>100</sup> The development of our conscious self, therefore, is not quite so haphazard as Bergson would have

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

us believe. In fact, it is always governed by ends, goals and ideals.<sup>101</sup> And if the analogy of the human consciousness is to provide true testimony to the nature of Reality, then the Élan cannot be considered as a blind impulse "wholly unilluminated by idea." On the contrary, "its nature is through and through teleological."<sup>102</sup>

But the teleology which is involved here is not the teleology of a fixed plan that reduces the world process to a mere reproduction of an already worked out scheme of things. Such an interpretation will indeed be the worst kind of determinism, rendering the universe a meaningless show of puppets. Bergson was perhaps apprehensive of these consequences that he rejected the teleological character of Reality so as to leave the portals of the future open to it.

There is, however, another sense of teleology. As Iqbal points out: "From our conscious experience we have seen that to live is to shape and change ends and purposes

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<sup>101</sup> In connection with the development of human ego, we have noted in the preceding chapter that Iqbal postulates the emergence of the Perfect Man ultimately when the ego will have reached the state of maximum perfection. But this gradual ascent to perfection is possible only if the ego maintains a state of tension by projecting higher and higher goals into the future.

<sup>102</sup> Iqbal, op. cit., p. 51.

and to be governed by them. Mental life is teleological in the sense that, while there is no far-off distant goal toward which we are moving, there is a progressive formation of fresh ends, purposes, and ideal scales of value as the process of life grows and expands."<sup>103</sup> There might not be a discernable system behind it, yet all these abrupt changes are somehow related to one another, and looking back at one's life-history one finds it a well-rounded whole and not merely a medley of ill-adapted events.

In exactly the same manner, the movement of the universe in time is certainly devoid of all rigid determinations but it moves not without a method. It creates and it grows freely; its career is one of open possibilities. "It is purposive only in the sense that it is selective in character and brings itself to some sort of a present fulfillment by actively preserving and supplementing the past."<sup>104</sup> The ultimate Reality, therefore is of the character of pure duration but one in which thought, life as well as purpose inter-penetrate to form an organic unity.

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103 Ibid.

104 Ibid., p. 52.

And here Iqbal raises a very pertinent question with which his own philosophy assumes a radically different course from Bergsonian metaphysics. Is it possible, he asks, for pure time or pure space to hold together the multiplicity of objects and events? In other words, how can we conceive this unity--the unity of thought, life and purpose--except as a unity of a self? He thinks that Bergson was in error to regard pure time as prior to self; for "it is the appreciative act of an enduring self only which can seize the multiplicity of duration--broken up into an infinity of instants--and transform it to the organic wholeness of a synthesis."<sup>105</sup> Hence that which exists in pure duration is also a self. It is, however, the Ultimate Self.<sup>106</sup>

Iqbal's concepts of ego and non-ego find their nearest rival in the similar aspects of Fichte's philosophy. Once again we are likely to discover that behind this seeming identity there are points of crucial dif-

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>106</sup> It should be clear now why Iqbal looks upon the material world, not as something opposing the life impulse but as organic to the Ultimate Self. The human ego absorbs it and attains perfection. (See Chapter IV.)

ference between the two philosophers. Fichte's whole problem starts with that enigmatic question of the "thing-in-itself" raised by Kant. Kant believed the opposition of form and matter to be insurmountable. The motive of Fichte's philosophy, on the other hand, was to resolve this very dualism and rise above the conflict of the content and form of thought. It is true, he would say, that our knowledge is involved in this basic dualism, for in ordinary thinking we must make a distinction between subject and object; but its task is to overcome this phenomenality and regain that unity which is of the very essence of it. Kant himself had alluded to such a unitary principle, though he was firmly of the belief that it remains inaccessible to human understanding: "Human cognition has two stems, sensibility and understanding; these perhaps spring from a common root which, however, is unknown to us."<sup>107</sup> But Fichte thinks that if we try to explain the ideal by means of the real our results are bound to be negative. The correct approach lies in explaining the real by means of the ideal. Thus the ideal

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<sup>107</sup> Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, p. 15, cited by Ellen Bliss Talbot, The Fundamental Principle of Fichte's Philosophy (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1906), p. 8.

of the unity of form and matter, according to him, is the Idea of the Ego: "Egohood consists in the absolute identity of the subjective and the objective (absolute union of being with consciousness and of consciousness with being). . . . The essence of the Ego is not the subjective nor the objective, but--an identity. . . . Is it possible for any one to think this identity as himself? Surely not; for to think of one self, one must make that distinction between subjective and objective which is not made in this concept. Without this distinction no thinking is in any wise possible."<sup>108</sup> The subject and object poles of our experience, being unthinkable in mutual exclusion of one another, should and do find their unity in the fundamental and absolute unitary principle of the Ego.

The Ego as absolute is infinite, self-positing and self-sufficient. In its infinity, however, the Ego is "nothing for itself" and is therefore "nothing."<sup>109</sup> Thus the Ego subjects itself to self-limitation in order that it may attain the ideal of egohood. The outcome of this

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<sup>108</sup> Johann Gottlich Fichte, Das System der Sittenlehre, p. 42, cited by Talbot, Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>109</sup> Talbot, Ibid., p. 36.

process of self-determination is the "world of conscious individuality, the world in which Ego and Non-Ego seem opposed to each other."<sup>110</sup>

The finite Ego and Non-Ego, therefore, are two aspects of the Idea of the Ego; yet they are a necessary stage in the realization of the ideal unity of content and form. For, otherwise the identity of the subjective and the objective in the absolute Ego would remain empty if it were not made manifest in the opposition of "Ego and Non-Ego," and realized again.

But the perfect unity of subject and object is the goal of an infinite process and will never actually be realized: "The highest unity we shall find in the Wissenschaftslehre; not, however, as something which is, but as something which ought to be produced through us and yet can never be."<sup>111</sup> Or again, "the unity of the pure spirit is for me unattainable ideal; final purpose, but one which never becomes actual."<sup>112</sup> No number of finite beings or systems of finite beings can ever attain this goal. But they will always be guided by this ideal of

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.



unity in their moral and intellectual endeavors. This, in short, is the true basis of consciousness, this is what explains the phenomenon of the finite being and his infinite striving.

One can not fail to notice the unmistakable undertones of pantheism in Fichte's metaphysical system--the very thing that Iqbal fought so vehemently against. In the end, Fichte says, "all boundaries must disappear; the infinite Ego must remain as One and as All."<sup>113</sup> But Iqbal's finite Egos, as we have seen, are co-eternal with the absolute Ego; they always remain "distinct, though not isolated"<sup>114</sup> from the absolute Ego. The universe, for him, is a "community of individuals." "From the ultimate Ego," he writes, "only egos proceed . . . but there are degrees in the expression of egohood. Throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>114</sup> Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 112. "Stressing the individuality of the finite egos and their unique relationship with the absolute Ego, Iqbal says, "No doubt, the emergence of egos endowed with the power of spontaneous and hence unforeseeable action is, in a sense, a limitation on the freedom of the all-inclusive Ego. But this limitation is not externally imposed. It is born out of His own creative freedom whereby He has chosen finite egos to be participants of His life, power and freedom." P. 75.

note of egohood until it reaches its perfection in man."<sup>115</sup>

When Iqbal talks of non-ego he talks of it perhaps only figuratively. For, we have noted that he conceives even the world of matter as being of the character of an organism. Commenting on the nature of matter, he further writes, "What then is matter? A colony of egos of a low order out of which emerges the ego of a higher order, when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of co-ordination."<sup>116</sup> It should be clear, therefore, that the resemblance between Fichte and Iqbal's philosophy does not extend beyond mere surface similarities. Besides, Iqbal does not even doubt the capacity of thought to apprehend the form and content of its object. Thought, according to him, is not "a principle which organizes and integrates its material from the outside, but a potency which is formative of the very being of its material."<sup>117</sup> "Thus regarded thought or idea is not alien to the original nature of things; it is their ultimate ground and constitutes the very essence

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

of their being."<sup>118</sup> What it implies is that the 'thing-in-self' is not by any means inaccessible but rather owes its very existence to human thought.

We come, finally, to Iqbal's doctrine of the Perfect Man as it compares with that of Superman in Nietzsche. Notwithstanding the important difference in their methods of expression, it should perhaps be admitted that neither of these two thinkers was satisfied with the present lot of humanity. It is particularly true in the case of Nietzsche who was extremely resentful of the trends of his time. He found himself in the midst of a "decadent" culture and a "degenerated" morality. This state of affairs, he thought, had been brought about by the "rule of the herd" and the lack of faith in life prevailing among the "botched" and the "bungled." His reactions against Christianity were specially bitter. He charged it with having bred only "conformity and mediocrity"--"the church sends all 'great men' to hell, it fights against all 'greatness of man'"<sup>119</sup>--it was the

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, Der Wille zur Macht, p. 871, cited by Walter A. Kaufmann, Nietzsche (Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 275.

religion of the weak. He abandoned all other-worldiness by declaring God "dead." "I beseech you, my brothers remain faithful to the earth and do not believe those who speak to you of other-worldly hopes."<sup>120</sup> The goal of humanity thus lies not in "the end" but in the chance appearance of its "highest specimens,"<sup>121</sup> who by self-overcoming redeem themselves and the rest of humanity. Obviously, he did not believe in the modern notions of infinite progress: "Humanity does not represent a development to the better or stronger or higher, in the manner in which that is believed today. 'Progress' is merely a modern idea, that is, a false idea. The European of today remains in his value far below the European of the Renaissance; development is not by any means necessarily an elevation. . . . In another sense, there is a perpetual success of single cases, in the most different places on the earth and from the most diverse cultures, where a higher type does indeed represent itself: something which in its relation to the totality of mankind is a kind of Urbemensch [Superman]. Such lucky

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<sup>120</sup> Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra, Part III, cited by Kaufman, Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>121</sup> Kaufman, Ibid., p. 281.

accidents of great success were always possible and will perhaps always be possible."<sup>122</sup>

These ideas, it would seem, grew out of his doctrine of "Eternal Recurrence,"<sup>123</sup> i.e., "of the unconditional and infinitely repeated circulation of all things."<sup>124</sup>

Nietzsche's Superman, the one who would say a bold "yes" to the joys and even to the miseries of life, who "would not have anything different--not forward, not backward, not in all eternity,"<sup>125</sup> therefore, must have existed innumerable times before. His appearance in the future will not by any means be a novel happening in the world.

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<sup>122</sup> Nietzsche, Der Antichrist, Kaufman, Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>123</sup> "After the vision of the Übermensch in a gruesome way," wrote Nietzsche in one of his notes, "the doctrine of the recurrence: now bearable." (Kaufman, Ibid., p. 288.)

<sup>124</sup> Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, Kaufman, Ibid., p. 279. Whereas this doctrine appears to be connected with the scientific hypothesis of conservation of energy, it is by no means an entirely new thought in the annals of philosophy. Long before Nietzsche we find the rudiments of this doctrine in Heraclitus, Pythagoras and Epicurus. Nietzsche himself makes this statement: "I have found this idea in earlier thinkers." (Ibid.)

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 270.

Iqbal, on the other hand, conceives of his Perfect Man as "the last fruit of the tree of humanity," "the acme of life both in mind and body."<sup>126</sup> His like has never existed before. On the contrary, the evolutionary development of mankind so far is a necessary antecedent to the appearance of the Perfect Man. His personality will mark the maximum perfection man can achieve, physically and spiritually, in the life on earth. Besides Iqbal's notion of the Perfect Man is through and through religious. He takes his hint from the Quran in verses like the following:

And by the moon when at her full, that from state to state shall ye be surely carried onward. (84:19)

Yet are we not thereby hindered from replacing you with others, your likes, or from creating you again in forms which ye know not! (56:61)<sup>127</sup>

Man has been appointed God's representative on earth: "Lo, I will appoint a vicegerent on the earth." (Quran Ch. 2, V. 28.) But in order to be the true ruler of God's earthly kingdom he should have developed in himself the attributes of his Lord. He should have risen above the conflicts of mind and matter: "In him the dis-

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<sup>126</sup> Iqbal, Secrets of the Self, p. xxvii.

<sup>127</sup> Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 110.

cord of our mental life becomes a harmony. The highest power is united in him with the highest knowledge. In his life, thought and action, instinct and reason, become one."<sup>128</sup>

But, unlike Nietzsche, Iqbal does not think that the "aristocracy of Supermen" alone is destined to play this role. "Nietzsche," writes Iqbal, ". . . abhors the 'rule of the herd', and, hopeless of the plebeian, he bases all higher culture on the cultivation and growth of an aristocracy of Supermen. But is the plebeian so absolutely hopeless?"<sup>129</sup> This very plebeian, in Iqbal's opinion, might well contain the seeds of the Perfect Man. After all, he says, "out of the plebeian material Islam has formed men of the noblest type and power."<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Iqbal, The Secrets of the Self, p. xxvii.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. xxix. Footnote.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Iqbal was not in favor of systems, nor did he consciously attempt to build one in his philosophy.<sup>131</sup> It would not be wholly unfounded to say that he concentrated his intellectual efforts primarily on the re-interpretation of Islam in the light of philosophical traditions. This is not to suggest, however, that philosophy was perhaps for him merely a by-product of religion or religion entirely dependent on philosophical affirmation. In his own words: "The spirit of philosophy is one of free inquiry. It suspects all authority. Its function is to trace the uncritical assumptions of human thought to their hiding places, and in this pursuit it may finally end in denial or a frank admission of the incapacity of pure reason to reach the ultimate reality. The essence of religion, on the other hand, is faith; and faith, like the bird, sees its 'trackless way' unattended by intellect . . . yet it . . . is more than mere feeling.

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<sup>131</sup> "I am afraid," he once wrote, "that I have no philosophy to teach. As a matter of fact I hate systems of philosophy. . . . No doubt I talk of things in which philosophers are also interested. But with me these things are matters of living experience. (Mazher Uddin Siddiqi, The Image of the West in Islam, p. 77.)



It has something like a cognitive content, and the existence of rival parties--scholastics and mystics--in the history of religion shows that idea is a vital element in religion."<sup>132</sup> The faith of religion, however, is by no means to be accepted uncritically. In view of the crucial importance of its role in man's life it must find a rational basis for its ultimate principles. Philosophy, thus, may have jurisdiction to judge religion but without claiming its superiority over religion. For, says Iqbal, "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. While sitting in judgment on religion, philosophy cannot give religion an inferior place among its data. Religion is not a departmental affair; it is neither mere thought, nor mere feeling, nor mere action; it is an expression of the whole man."<sup>133</sup>

In interpreting Islam, therefore, Iqbal accepts the terms of religion and makes intuition, or mystic consciousness as he calls it, his starting point. (We noted earlier that the mystic consciousness would yield

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<sup>132</sup> Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

a direct and immediate vision of the whole of reality, whose contents, though essentially unanalysable and incommunicable, are yet of a cognitive nature.) He further defends the method of intuition by declaring it to be a faculty of knowledge over and above the faculties of thought and sense-perception. "Nor is there any reason to suppose," he writes, "that thought and intuition are essentially opposed to each other. They spring up from the same root and complement each other. . . . Both seek visions of the same Reality which reveals itself to them in accordance with their function in life."<sup>134</sup> The special function of intuition is to grasp the transcendental aspects of Reality which are beyond the reach of thought.

With the help of the faculty of intuition, then, he proceeds to establish the true nature of the human ego, his freedom and immortality. Extending this analogy further through the world of matter, he determines the nature of Ultimate Reality and discovers in the Universe a grand scheme of egos constantly striving to rise higher and higher in the scale of perfection: "I have conceived

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

the Ultimate Reality as an Ego; and I must add now that from Ultimate Ego only egos proceed. . . . Throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of egohood until it reaches its perfection in man."<sup>135</sup>

It would seem to be true perhaps that Iqbal was thoroughly inspired by his religion, but the question whether the whole range of his philosophic thought was a mere interpretation of Islam is certainly open to debate. At different stages of the history of Islam different schools of philosophy--Rationalists, Atomists, Sufis, etc.--emerged and they all claimed to find justification for their respective creed in the teachings of the Quran. To declare them all wrong will perhaps be an unfair judgment. One should rather say that they were as much the product of the general trends of their age as Iqbal is of his. Even the most inspired interpreter of a religion, it will be admitted, has his own peculiar frame of mind within which he works, a mind shaped and moulded by the multi-faceted environment that surrounds him. Besides, who can say judiciously that religious writings of all times, of all races have not always been flexible

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

enough to yield to ever new interpretations? This is what actually ensures their durability and permanence. The point is that Iqbal may well have read into the Quran a little more than what in fact was there. Or shall we say that he too sought to justify his philosophic and ethical views in terms of the Holy Book!

Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that Iqbal's mission in the Islamic world was almost apostolic. He made a superb effort to modernize Muslim theology which in the 20th Century was still very much medieval in scope and character. His dynamic thought opened new vistas of hope for the perplexed Muslim mind, particularly in the subcontinent of Indo-Pakistan. (He has not perhaps been given full recognition in other Islamic nations of the world, but it is too early to judge the results of his work yet, because the Muslim peoples everywhere are in the midst of political turmoils. When peace returns to them, the influence of Iqbal is apt to make itself felt.)

Other Muslim thinkers of India, not too long before Iqbal, had also tried to introduce social and cultural reforms but their methods, by and large, was one of indiscriminate following of the trends of the current age. The result was an artificial super-imposition of foreign values on the native culture which led to an intellectual

disharmony in the Muslim community of India. Completely overwhelmed by the impact of Western civilization, the educated Muslim youth turned its back in despair on its own moral and spiritual heritage and began copying all that was identified with the West rather blindly. Iqbal was deeply concerned about this state of affairs and took it upon himself to warn the present young generation of the grave dangers inherent in this superficial imitation. He did not object as such to the intellectual transformation which was taking place around him; for he thought that the modern West in its beginnings had actually received impetus from the early Muslim culture and developed further upon it. But, if today we are obliged to acknowledge the superiority of the West and follow it, we must not do so indiscriminately, or else we will not only fail to develop a true understanding of the Western culture but also will bring home that unfortunate spiritual vacuum which exists in the West because of the tyranny of materialism. "There was a time," writes Iqbal, "when European thought received inspiration from the world of Islam. The most remarkable phenomenon of modern history, however, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving toward the West. There is nothing wrong in this movement, for

European culture, on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam. Our 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."<sup>136</sup>

Aside from the cultural import of Iqbal's philosophy, there is present in it the structure of a full-

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<sup>136</sup> Iqbal, Ibid., p. 7. Iqbal was very critical of the material outlook and cold intellectualism of the modern European scientists and philosophers as is evident in the following verses from Persian Psalms (translated by A. J. Arberry):

Wakeful heart was never given  
 Europe's scientist by heaven's  
 All that God marked him by  
 Is the speculative eye,  
 Love he knows not, and the Brain  
 Snake-like bites into his vein,  
 Even though his golden cup  
 Flowing ruby filleth up.  
 (p. 83)

Europe's philosopher  
 So misseth the rapture fine  
 In the red bowl shines more clear  
 The gleam of crimson wine.  
 Better a man were blind  
 Better a thousand wise,  
 Than knowledge to have in mind  
 That the seeing heart denies  
 Though intellects jugglery  
 Peculiar joy impart  
 Better than subtlety  
 Is the faith of a simple heart.  
 (p. 103)

fledged system--however much he may "hate" philosophical systems. In metaphysics, he would belong to the school of monists because he conceives the Ultimate Reality to be of the nature of spirit alone. Matter, for him, is merely the manifestation of the activity of the spirit--or Ego. He eliminates thus the dualism of body and soul in the being of man. However, the human ego, though it shares the traits of the Absolute Ego (to a limited extent), always remains unique in its individuality.

Epistemologically, Iqbal is many things in one. He advocates the method of intuition to know the ultimate nature of reality. Yet he would not condemn the faculties of thought and sense-perception: "God reveals his signs in inner as well as outer experience, and it is the duty of man to judge the knowledge yielding capacity of all aspects of experience."<sup>137</sup> Thought and sense-perception, therefore, are necessary instruments for the understanding of the world of objects. Indeed, if it were not for the inadequacy of our logical understanding, thought would be ". . . capable of reaching an immanent Infinite in whose self-unfolding movement the

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<sup>137</sup> Iqbal, op. cit., p. 120.

various finite concepts are merely moments."<sup>138</sup> Knowledge, however, must begin with the sensuous apprehension of the concrete. For, "it is the intellectual capture of and power over the concrete that makes it possible for the intellect of man to pass beyond the concrete."<sup>139</sup> In other words, Iqbal would insist that the ideal life of Spirit is not to be thought of as being completely divorced from the real world of phenomena; nor do the ideal and the real exist in irreconcilable opposition to each other. "The life of the ideal," writes Iqbal, "consists, not in a total breach with the real which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life into painful oppositions, but in the perpetual endeavour of the ideal to appropriate the real with a view eventually to absorb it, to convert it into itself, and to illuminate its whole being."<sup>140</sup>

Senses as well as intellect, therefore, are "artificial constructions" of the ego to preserve and enhance its own life, to assimilate and absorb the world of matter: "Its essence is the continual creation of

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 9.



desires and ideals, and for the purpose of its preservation and expansion it has invented or developed out of itself certain instruments, e.g., senses, intellect, etc., which help it to assimilate obstructions."<sup>141</sup> Here Iqbal clearly emerges as a voluntarist. He does not denounce human intellect, nor does he make it subservient to the logics of an absolute Idea. He rather takes a dynamic view of life. Every ego is struggling to attain perfection, freedom and immortality. It wills and out of its free will it employs all the suitable means to achieve its objective. In willing and striving alone consists the life of the ego. But this Will is not the blind, irrational impulse of Schopenhauer. Neither is it a "Will-to-power" as conceived by Nietzsche. For the former teaches escapism from life and the latter appears as a ruthless "daemon of mankind": and yet the only criterion of human values. Iqbal's Will may well be called the Will-to-Freedom:

The Ego attains to freedom by the removal of all obstructions in its way. It is partly free, partly determined and reaches fuller freedom by approaching the Individual who is most free--God. In one word, life is an endeavour for freedom.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Iqbal, The Secrets of the Self, p. xx.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. xxi.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a complete list of Iqbal's works, being added for the benefit of interested readers. The contents of this list have been obtained from the publication of Bazm-i-Iqbal, Lahore, Pakistan.

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