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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

"Abraham in Idol-House": Mapping Identities in the Persian Poetry of Muhammad Iqbal

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Comparative Literature

by

Shahwali Ahmadi

1997

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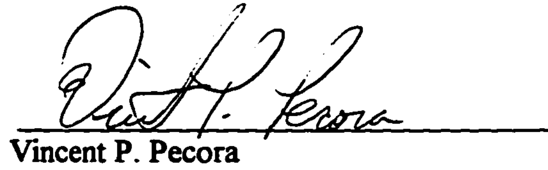

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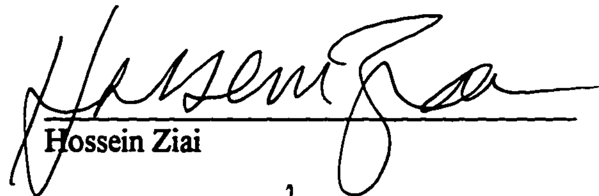

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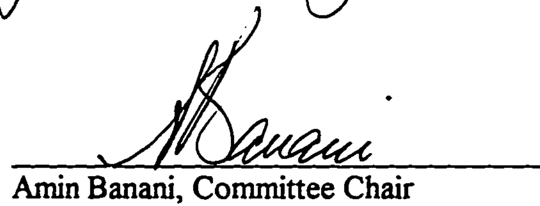

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To the Memory of My Father

and

To My Mother

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A NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS AND TRANSLITERATIONS

Throughout this dissertation, quotations are numerous--and justly so. Muhammad Iqbal is a master of economical expressions. Usually any "summary" of a few lines, other than a direct translation, would add useless words and reduce clarity. In this project I have cited the original Persian writings of Iqbal. To approximate the (formal) sound of Persian words, diacritical marks have been used only for the long vowels (â, û, and î). In a few cases, attempt has been made to observe regional differences in the pronunciation of certain Persian words.

For the translations of Iqbal's Persian writings, I have relied on the available English versions. Existing translations of Iqbal's *oeuvres* are generally fine and accurate. However, no formal conformity exists among these renditions: some observe the rhymed forms of English poetry, some are in blank verse, and still others are in prose. I have not attempted to impose any form of conformity upon this diverse body of translations. Yet, whenever appropriate, I have altered the translations for greater precision.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AK	Asrâr-e Khudî.
AH	Armaghân-e Hejâz.
KF	Kullîyât-e Iqbal: Fârsî.
JN	Jâvîd-nâmah.
MS	Musâfer.
PBK	Pas Cheh Bâyad Kard Ay Aqvâm-e Sharq?
PM	Payâm-e Mashreq.
RB	Rumûz-e Bîkhudî.
ZA	Zabûr-e 'Ajam.

RRT	The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.
TR	Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal.

ME	A Message of the East.
MS	The Mysteries of Selflessness.
NRG	The New Rose Garden of Mystery and the Book of Slaves.
PE	The Pilgrimage of Eternity.
PP	Persian Psalms.
TSS	The Secrets of the Self: A Philosophical Poem.
WBD	What Should Then Be Done O People of the East?

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While an exile in my actual life, I have had the opportunity to find shelter in several intellectual homes during the course of my graduate studies: Comparative Literature Program, Department of English, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, and the Center for Near Eastern Studies (UCLA) and Program in Asian and Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures (University of Virginia). I am indebted to all those friends and colleagues--some of whom exiles like myself-- who dwelled in these homes and who graciously welcomed me in their midst.

In the writing of this dissertation, I am deeply in debt of the members of my Doctoral Committee. Professor Vincent Pecora taught me literary theory and cultural studies. Professor Hossein Ziai taught me Islamic intellectual history and philosophy. I also learned a great deal from Professors Ismail Poonawala and Ross Shideler. My deepest gratitude, of course, goes to my Committee Chair Professor Amin Banani--a model advisor, teacher, mentor, and critic. I also thank Dr. Ali Razawi, formerly of Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Kabul University, who has been a personal friend and a significant source of intellectual stimulation during the past several years. I express my warm gratitude to several friends and colleagues who have offered me advice, support, and attention in the course of the preparation of this work.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Dr. M. Ismail Ahmadi, and to my mother, Khadija Ahmadi. Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to my family members, supportive sisters and brothers, delightful nieces and nephews.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

"Abraham in Idol-House":

Mapping Identities in the Persian Poetry of Muhammad Iqbal

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature

University of California, Los Angeles, 1997

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The nation-state is a powerful residue of European modernity. Western imperial and colonial domination has facilitated the emergence of nation-form or national imaginary in the rest of the world. The nation-state paradigm involves a complex web of cultural, political, and socio-economic developments. Most importantly, it embodies an elaborate and significant set of symbolic forces. Such forces prove to be crucial in the formation of collective identity along national(ist) lines. The present work deals with the emergence of nationalist sentiments within the (late) colonial context in the Indian Subcontinent. More specifically, it critically engages with the poetic compositions in Persian of Muhammad Iqbal, an emblematic figure in the movement for separate

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nationhood for Muslims of India. Iqbal's aim is primarily to draw the cultural contours of the nation-state on religious grounds. His complex and often paradoxical relationship with Islamic religious and intellectual/philosophical tradition involves his rethinking of Muslim heritage. Iqbal attempts to "deconstruct" Islamic intellectual legacy with the aim of "reconstructing" a religious ideology compatible with his view of Islamic polity in the modern world. Iqbal's crucial themes of *'aql* and *'eshq* demonstrate that the realm of his cultural-political paradigm extends to the East/West dialectical opposition. Iqbal's notion of *khudî* as the essence of individual and collective identities implies powerful communal sentiments in the context of Muslim separatism in the Subcontinent. The multiplicity of anti-colonial discourses in the Subcontinent, of which the Muslim separatist movement was an integral part, should be understood within the context of the dual, and often contradictory, processes of "modernization" and "re-orientalization" of Indian society under the British Raj. This study offers a critique of Orientalist and Indological discourses and practices that were significant in the development of symbolic identities in Indian society. It further points out the pitfalls and theoretical inconsistencies inherent in Iqbal's romantic and utopian cultural state, especially in the light of the subsequent advent of the *actual* cultural/religious entity he envisioned for Muslims of India.

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Introduction

NATION, IDENTITY, AND ALTERITY

I

The nation-state is a powerful residue of European modernity. Although questions of group consciousness, power, political organization, and territorial expansion existed before, the issues of nationness, national identity, and national polity arose primarily when major parallel and comprehensive socio-cultural transformations took place in Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century. The historical novelty of the social formation that Etienne Balibar calls the "nation form" (Balibar 1991) has been emphasized in various anthropological discussions of nationalism. "The basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected with it is its modernity," writes E. J. Hobsbawm (1990: 14). Benedict Anderson, too, maintains that "objectively, nations are modern artefacts" and defines the nation as "an imagined political community" (1983: 14, 15). According to Anderson, nations came into existence historically when: (a) sacred languages and scripts no longer provided privileged access to ontological truth; (b) the belief that society was naturally organized around and under high centers--e.g. kings with cosmological dispensation--was no longer held; and (c) the rise of a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were separated--that is to say, "simultaneous" or "Messianic" time was

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supplanted by "homogeneous, empty time" (40). These historically determined developments laid the foundations for a national *imaginary*, or national *consciousness*, in the modern sense. In a recent article, Anderson rejects the idea that the resurgence of nationalist and ethnic movements represents "deep historical memories and traditional communities" (1992: 7). Rather, they are distinctly modern and go back no further than the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[1]

The reality of European imperial and colonial domination has made the institution of the national state ubiquitous throughout the world, even in the remotest areas. The process of "decolonization" in many parts of the colonized world (often accompanied by violent wars of liberation) marked the emergence of the "Third World" in an international scene dominated by the nation-state paradigm. The newly-independent, post-colonial countries found themselves the inheritors of the nation form. Thus, "nation-building" and "nation-making" assumed paramount importance. It was soon discovered that no "national integration"--and no "national sovereignty"--is possible without a "national culture" and "national identity." The transformation from colonial domination to statehood, largely shaped according to the divisions directly imposed by colonial powers, presupposed a dominant, totalizing culture at the exclusion of the plurality of cultures and customs of various ethnic, linguistic, religious, or regional groups living within the bounds of the law of the new state.

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The national formation necessitated the construction of citizenship, the fusion of the nation and the state into the nation-state entity, and the loyalty of the citizen to the normative authority of the state. This ideological construction is referred to by Bruce Kapferer as "a particular ontology of the person and the state" derived from the assumption that

> The state . . . unites its internally differentiated population in a logic of hierarchy. As the state finds its coherence in this hierarchical order so does the person. The person discovers his or her internal unity as an essential hierarchical condition which, in turn, is dependent on the hierarchical encompassing unity of the state. . . . And so rich and poor and the powerful and the weak can unite as one, as a hierarchical combination of strength, and crush the fragmenting forces that have removed themselves from a controlled subordinate condition at the base and are ranged diametrically against the coherence of . . . state and person (1988: 103).

Thus, internal diversity and social cleavage are played down in favor of the primacy of the all-encompassing nation-state.

Modern nationalism, though apparently a political concept, embodies an elaborate set of symbolic forces. The appearance of Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities significantly paved the way for elaborating nationality, or nationness, as well as nationalism, as "cultural artefacts"--i.e. an imaginary order constructed through representation. "What I am proposing," writes Anderson "is that nationalism has to be

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understood, by aligning it not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which--as well as against which--it came into being" (1983: 19). Homi K. Bhabha, too, identifies the nation as "a form of cultural elaboration" or "representation"--with a transitional history, conceptual indeterminacy, ambivalent vocabulary--which profoundly affects narratives and discourses that signify a sense of "nationness" (1990: 2-3).

In the cultural nation metaphysical, abstract, and not readily definable criteria such as purported common heritage, aspirations, values, and shared historical memories and experiences demarcate the principles for the *group* identification and define the "togetherness" of the members of the nation. Symbolic forms like myths, legends, rituals, festivities, the arts, literature, etc., appear to provide the legitimization of social collectivity. This factor has been instrumental in formulating the concept of the nation as "consent of general wills" based on "the existence of a collective sentiment, of a social and cultural estate with organizational pretensions with regard to the human collectivity" (Bereciartu 1994: 23). The crucial characteristic of the *cultural* nation is that it is conceived, primarily, in *particularist*, *collectivist*, and *organicist* terms. It is particularist in that "each nation is unique and can be neither generalized nor imitated"; it is collectivist in that "it claims that individuals cannot live outside society (and by extrapolation cannot live a 'complete' life outside the society of their birth)"; and it is organicist in the sense that "the national society, and the individual citizen's attachment to that society, are said to be rooted in determinants that lie beneath that surface of

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reason and volition provided by the nation's laws--and therefore beyond the individual citizen's cognition and control" (Singer 1996: 311).

The cultural definition of the nation presupposes a transhistorical *Volksgeist* based on the presumption of cultural essentialism, homogeneity, and continuity.[2] Culture in this perspective becomes normative as "a reified entity" that "has a definite substantive content and assumes the status of a thing that people 'have' or 'are members of'" (Baumann 1996: 12). Kapferer, too, points out "the reification of culture, the production of culture as an object in itself." Accordingly, certain established patterns and traits are systematically abstracted, decontexualized, and reified. "Culture, its artifacts, texts, or ideas, separated from any concrete situation of social interaction, made freely abstract, is placed beyond or outside any specific social contextual limitation on its meaning" (1988: 97, 98). This cultural elaboration, then, powerfully modifies reality and participates in the project of building shared *communities* and constructing collective *identities*--in short, nations. As Gregory Jusdanis maintains,

> Culture, then, has figured prominently in nationalist discourse because of its potential to paste pieces into wholes, enabling nation-builders both to see a society as a fabric of complex patterns and to fit a national identity upon a population. . . . In other words, national cultures are ideals because they contain the indivisible distinctiveness of a people--the keeper and expression of this distinctiveness--whose loyalty to the nation-state is cultivated in the

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name of its originality. The group must survive to preserve culture, which in turn must preserve the identity of the group in order to survive. Nationalism proclaims the self-sufficiency of culture through self-grounding sophistry . . . (1995: 31-32).

II

To create the conditions for increasing internal cohesion and shared identification in the highly diverse societies *after* decolonization characterizes most "Third World" developmentalist theories. In the dominant discourse of modernization theory one finds a "First World" and a "Third World": the former embodies a firm, central nation-state that constitutes the model to which the latter aspires, or should aspire. In contrast to the claims of developmentalist theories, which some critics deride as a "master narrative" typical of Western modernity and *always* favoring the (former) colonizer, there exists another approach to history that insists on the diversity of historical courses and emphasizes the "specific" and the "concrete." It asserts the multiplicity as well as authenticity of "other" voices and "other" worlds. Writing from within the boundaries of postmodernist concern with "otherness," "fragmentation," and "particularism," Stanley Aronowitz, argues that "the multiple, local, autonomous struggles for liberation occurring throughout the postmodern world make all incarnations of master discourses absolutely illegitimate" (qtd in Bové 1986: 18). In White Mythologies, Robert J. Young dismisses "universalizing narrative[s] of the unfolding of a rational system of world

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history" as "simply a negative form of the history of European imperialism." In fact, he suggests, "the story of 'world history' not only involves what Fredric Jameson describes as the wresting of freedom from necessity but always also the creation, subjection, and final appropriation of Europe's 'others'" (1990: 2). The "postmodernist" stance, as Young has it, is not like this. Along similar lines, the sociologist Tugrul Ilter, goes so far as to conflate Marxian dialectics with what he considers demodé modernism and criticizes both as part and parcel of the universal-foundational validity claims of Enlightenment thinking, "which exhibits the imperialist and patriarchal arrogance of an ethnocentrism" (Ilter 1994).[3]

The relevance of postmodernism for my argument is the role it has played in the construction of the emergent project of cultural criticism, namely, *post-colonialism*, associated with the work of a number of leading "Third World" intellectuals in "First World" academe. Theoretically, post-colonial criticism privileges the repudiation of all "master narratives" and "Western epistemes" for their Eurocentric, ethnocentric, and historicist foundationalism and essentialism. Though far from unitary, the post-colonial depiction of the non-West in the postmodern agenda is premised, in general, on an irreducible cultural identity and culturalist difference. It delineates the notion that there is a different "order of truth" found in the culture of the non-Western "Other." Stuart Hall has defined this concept of cultural identity in terms of "a sort of collective 'one true self,' hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves,'

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which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (1990: 223). Thus, a process of "dehistoricization" is employed as "original history . . . frozen as the historic, as heritage, as tradition," to be discovered, excavated, and ultimately exalted.

The contemporary *Kulturkampf* waged by the proponents of "Islamic resurgence" is profoundly influenced by the view of culture expounded above.[4] In the specific case of the Middle East, various polemics derived from a transhistorical Islamism based on the assumption of an exceptionalist Muslim identity, generic socio-political homogeneity, and historical continuity, have often led to a quest for an absolute alternative, ascribing all identity to an invariant, monolithic Islam. Islamic resurgence

> aimed, from its very beginning at finding the *al-hall al-islâmî* (Islamic solution)--a famous slogan of all Islamist organizations--to the problem of alienation, education, economic organization, and social justice in society . . . Islamism is a total revolutionary ideology that advocated an Islamic nation without separation of religion and state. Next, it proposed an Islamic educational system with the goal of creating the "Muslim individual, the Muslim house, the Muslim nation, and the Muslim government." Third, it attempted to create an economic infrastructure based on Islamic principles to solve social injustice (Abu-Rabi' 1996: 51-2).

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With respect to Islam, the Arab intellectual Aziz Al-Azmeh best summarizes the context of the spirit that animates this ideological production:

> In the 1980s [the] relegation of the non-European world to irreducible and therefore irredeemable particularism was officiated, with increasing frequency and clearly as a mark of bewilderment, under the title of "culture," which became little more than a token for incomprehension: each "culture" is represented as a monadic universe of solipsism and impermeability, consisting in its manifold instances of expressions of an essential self, with each of these instances being a metaphor for the primary classifier--the West, Islam. Thus we have the invention of traditions, such as "Islamic" dress, an "Islamic" way of life, "Islamic" positions on various political matters, simulacra all of them of the invariant essence of Islam, a name which is posited as the final explanatory principle (1993: 21).

Emphasizing the invariant essence of Islam, this new, exclusivist form of cultural identity "takes place within the medium of variants of a discourse of 'authenticity,' in which societies chosen as the field of application of the totalizing category 'Islam'--'Islamic societies'--are thought to constitute a *Lebenswelt* with an essential and closed homogeneity" (22). Such a view dubs Islam a peculiar, monolithic "culture" and considers it a collective "community"--a homogeneous "nation" (*umma*)--bereft of social conditions and historical reality and abstracted from political and ideological bearings.

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It will be erroneous, however, to underestimate the originatory role Edward W. Said's pioneering Orientalism played in the emergence of the project of post-colonial cultural criticism and theory. There is hardly any discussion of post-colonialism, in the academic and non-academic contexts, that does not refer to this seminal work. Nonetheless, it is difficult to ignore the fact that despite Orientalism's attempts to discuss the discursive fabrication of representations of "the Orient" as an ontologically and epistemologically distinct entity, Said's political radicalism ultimately adheres to a form of humanism--a point missed by many of Said's detractors. There are clear distinctions between the Saidian project of post-colonial critique and other, more rigid versions of post-colonial practices today. In an article published in the journal Critical Inquiry, Said best characterizes his critical aim and concerns in Orientalism. It is worth quoting at some length:

> What I took myself to be undertaking in Orientalism was an adverserial critique not only of the field's perspective and political economy, but also of the sociocultural situation that makes its discourse so possible and so sustainable. Epistemologies, discourses, and methods like Orientalism are scarcely worth the name if they are reductively characterized as objects like shoes, patched when worn out, discarded and replaced with new objects when old and unfixable. The archival dignity, institutional authority, and particularly longevity of Orientalism should be taken seriously because in the aggregate these traits function as a worldview with considerable

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political force not easily brushed away as so much epistemology. Thus Orientalism in my view is a structure erected in the thick of an imperial contest whose dominant wing it represented and elaborated not only as scholarship but as a partisan ideology. Yet Orientalism hid the contest beneath its scholarly and aesthetic idioms. These things are what I was trying to show, in addition to arguing that there is no discipline, no structure of knowledge, no institutional epistemology that can or has ever stood free of the various sociocultural, historical, and political formations that give epochs their peculiar individuality" (1989: 210-211).

Orientalism, Said suggests, is a discourse which does not necessarily have a direct, one-to-one correspondence with politico-military power in the raw, but it is produced and exists in "an uneven exchange with various kinds of power": political power, economic power, intellectual power, cultural power, moral power. It is precisely for this reason that Said reiterates throughout the text that "Orientalism is--and does not simply represent--a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world" (Said 1979: 12). Assuming that Orientalism, as a discursive formation, does not convey a "delivered presence" but rather a re-presence or "representation," it acquires new concreteness as a learned field--often as "an enclosed space." As such, it is a form of "cultural praxis" for making statements about the Orient, for representing the Orient. The point is not that Orientalism is fundamentally a misrepresentation of some Oriental essence, but that it

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operates as representations usually do, "embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambiance of the representer" (272). "What this must lead us to methodologically," Said continues, "is to view representations (or misrepresentations--the distinction is at best a matter of degree) as inhabiting a common field of play defined for them, not by some inherent common subject matter alone, but by some common history, tradition, universe of discourse . . . according to a tendency, in a specific historical, intellectual, and even economic setting" (272-273). All these elements contribute to the form of representation (or misrepresentation) that Orientalism embodies, engenders, and reinforces. It is here that Said, while drawing principally from Foucault, diverges from him and, by identifying Orientalism as a broad form of a grossly inaccurate body of knowledge (false knowledge, that is), offers a kind of cultural critique akin to Marxian notion of ideology critique.

Said's treatment of the French Orientalist Louis Massignon is an important case in point in this regard. He recognizes Massignon's deep empathy with Islamic mysticism, his commitment to the Palestinian cause, and his relentless criticism of Western colonialism in the Middle East. Yet Massignon's work is still defined within, and confined to, a restricted "discursive consistency." "No scholar, not even a Massignon, can resist the pressures on him of his nation or of the scholarly tradition in which he works," Said writes. While it is true that Massignon tried to refine the Orient and its relationship with the West, a great deal of what he said was a repetition of other French Orientalists. The Oriental Arab remains, *en soi*, always "spiritual, Semitic,

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tribalistic, radically monotheistic, un-Aryan," not a common human being with "earthbound experiences" of war, colonialism, imperialism, economic oppression, love, death, and cultural exchange (270-271). For instance, the conflict between Israel and Palestine was not seen by Massignon as a struggle between modern colonialism and struggle for liberation but rather a quarrel between Isaac and Ishmael! More striking has been the expressions of H. A. R. Gibbs who thought that "the orientals have never understood the meaning of self-government the way 'we' do," so "to apply the psychology and mechanics of Western political institutions to Asian or Arab situations is pure Walt Disney" (qtd in Said 1979: 107).

Some form of common truth and of universal values shared by the participants of different cultures (what Said terms "human reality") is emphatically present in Said's work. "Can one divide *human reality*, as indeed human reality seems to be genuinely divided, into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, societies, even races, and survive the consequences humanly?" asks Said (1979: 45; emphasis added). The key theoretical issue is that, noting Said's crucial critique of representation, can one ultimately escape the process 'of "Orientalizing the Orient" in the making of interpretive declarations about "other" cultures and traditions? In other words, can there be more emancipatory alternatives to the pervasive, hegemonic Orientalism? Said's response to these questions, the way I see it, is a qualified affirmative. For Said the case of more recent "self-critical" scholarship is exemplary. Scholars (as intellectuals) "are perfectly capable of freeing themselves from the old

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straitjacket" of Orientalism (326) and, through "a direct sensitivity to the material before them" and "a continual self-examination of their methodology and practice," can escape the confinements of the dominant discourse and aspire to "a universalist and humanist" conception of the "other." "No one today is purely *one* thing," reiterates Said in Culture and Imperialism. "Yet just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities . . . Survival in fact is about the connections between things; in Eliot's phrase, reality cannot be deprived of the 'other echoes [that] inhabit the garden.' It is more rewarding--and more difficult--to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about 'us'" (1994: 336). This view differs radically from the rigid views held by many proponents of post-colonial theory, including some self-declared Saidians.

In agreement with Aziz Al-Azmeh, I propose that there are as many Islams as there are situations that sustain it. Consequently, there can be no single, monolithic "Islamic" answer to the so-called "challenge of modernity." Within each society there have been crucial, internal-structural factors that have shaped the fragmentary pattern of "Muslim" engagement with modernity. Muslim reality, like reality in general, is complicated, evolving, and discursively shifting and multiplying. It contains many fragments, many instances, many realities, which change from context to context. Thus, collective representation of *phenomena islamica* is historically imprecise, contextually groundless, and sociologically indeterminate. Socio-political formations and functions, ideology, class (the ruling and the subaltern), gender, race, and, above all, the

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institution of nation-state in various Muslim lands, are crucial in determining the (inconstant) nature of the reality for Muslims.

What follows is a critical engagement with the Persian writings of the South Asian poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, an emblematic figure in the so-called "Islamic resurgence" movement. It is an attempt to contextualize the narrative politics of Muhammad Iqbal's cultural definition of separate Muslim nationhood in India. Islam, as an integral component of nationalist culture, has provided the ideology behind the emergence, protection, and preservation of a homeland for the Muslim minority in India. The modern nation-state of Pakistan, it is argued, is primarily a religious and cultural unit. Its autonomy, identity, integrity, national genius, authenticity, and unity are derived from Islam. The tenets of this ideology supposedly evoke in tangible terms emotional responses from all strata of society. For the proponents of this view, Muhammad Iqbal is the poet-philosopher, the architect, the promoter, the theoretician, and, in short, the ideologue, of the Islamic state.

In the present study, I shall discuss the importance of Indological Orientalism during British colonial rule in the construction of the Hindu/Muslim communal ideology. Furthermore, I shall discuss Iqbal's "deconstruction" of the Islamic intellectual past and his belief in the "reconstructive" possibilities of that tradition. I shall also relate his views on Muslim communal identity in the Subcontinent to his vitalistic vision of personal identity--*khudī*, the self or the ego--of each and every individual member of the community. Furthermore, I shall attempt to evaluate the

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Iqbalian notion(s) of identity-politics in light of his emphasis on religion as the criterion for national integration among Muslims of India and his ignoring the political, sociological, and historical complexities involved in such a project. In this context, I shall point out the pitfalls and inconsistencies inherent in this ideological formation, especially as the cultural/aesthetic state Iqbal proposed for the Muslims came into existence in the form of a strong "Muslim" state dependent largely upon a powerful military machine and supported by global capital. Iqbal best represents the poeticization of Muslim political discourse in the modern world. This work intends to politicize Iqbal's poetics.

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Notes

1 Partha Chatterjee, in his significant text Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World criticizes "the bourgeois-rationalist" theories of nationalism of the post-Enlightenment European intellectuals for it proclaims itself universal and independent of culture and ignores the larger issues of *power* and *colonial domination* (see particularly Chapter One). The thesis that nations may not actually be a universal result of universal socioeconomic processes, but contingent phenomena, the result of special historical experiences, is put forward by Liah Greenfeld in her Nationalism--Five Roads to Modernity. Whereas most anthropological discussions of nationalism insist that modernization produces nations, Greenfeld argues that nationhood in fact produces most of the features that characterize modernity. "Rather than define nationalism by its modernity, I see modernity as defined by nationalism," she writes (1992: 18). Greenfeld's main contribution is that nationalism "is not a uniform phenomenon" to be found everywhere in the modern world, but is rather a highly specific historical phenomenon that varies from place to place and in many places may not be present at all.

2 Johann Gottfried Herder was the first philosopher of history who regarded national consciousness and national character as the *cultural* essence of any viable association. In Herder's Enlightenment anthropology, the natural and organic foundation of statehood was *Volk*--a people with its own peculiar *national* character. It embodied the one and only effective cohesive force (*Kraft*) in any socio-political organization. A *Volk*, according to Herder, "was a natural division of the human race, a community *suis generis*, endowed with its own language by means of that which differentiated it from the rest of humanity" (Barnard 1965: 142). The constitutive elements and processes of the *Kraft* are principally *language* (the most determined characteristic of a *Volk*); *statehood* (which, to be "natural," had to coincide with nationhood, that is, with an ethnic community); and a *nation*. The political organization of the state, Herder emphasized, was not merely a legal and welfare institution, but a community bound by spiritual ties and cultural traditions, a *Kulturstaat* as well as a *Rechtstaat* (Herder 1968). Herder's insistence on the particularity of cultural differences and traditional continuities paved the way for a whole discourse of *pure cultural authenticity* based on the radical difference of the Self from the Other. It should be emphasized, however, that although Herder was veritably instrumental in demarcating the nineteenth century cultural nationalism, and he had overemphasized national cultural differences, he was not a German nationalist *per se*. (See Barnard 1965).

3 It is somehow ironic that the "postmodernism" that Young and others have claimed as the basis of their critique should trace itself back to Nietzsche and Heidegger, both of them, in the words of Loren Goldner, "pure products of . . . the

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Greek romance of philosophy" (Callinicos 1995) (See also: Habermas 1987, Harvey 1989, and Jameson 1984).

4 In a recent study on Islam and postmodernism, the anthropologist Akbar S. Ahmed makes an "Islamic" claim to postmodernity. He considers "the Muslim modernist phase" as "engendered by European colonialism . . . as a drive to acquire Western education, technology, and industry" (Ahmed 1992: 29). Islamic postmodernism, which may have little in common with Western postmodernism, on the other hand, emphasizes cultural reassertion and the rejection of alien (Western) knowledge practices, cultural paradigms, and "the West's global civilization" (99). This postmodern perspective also provides the structural basis for the attempts towards de-Westernization of Islamic culture and knowledge--in order to reclaim the "authentic" Muslim self.

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Chapter One

ORIENTALISM AND THE COLONIAL CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNALISM

In a college textbook in Pakistan, the arrival of Islam to the Indian subcontinent is called a "blessing" because the "idolatrous" Hinduism, which had previously dominated India, was based on an "unethical caste system." Another history text discovers differences between the Muslim/Hindu communities in the "psychology of space": whereas "the houses of the Muslims were more spacious, airy, and open to light" those of the Hindus had "small rooms, verandahs, and less space open to sky [sic]" which "shows the secret and exclusive attitude of Hindu mind [sic]" (qtd in Jalal 1995: 78-80).

A recent book on the "threat of Islam" in India, on the other hand, declares that the Muslim conquerors of India were "aggressors" and "alien rulers" with "a mission to forcibly convert the local [Hindu] population." In the eighteenth century, the author asserts, it was the Marathas and the Jats who defeated the Muslims, not the British. The victorious Hindus, however, failed to achieve what the Spaniards achieved some centuries before. The Spanish reconquerors turned the Muslim "politico-military defeat" into "total defeat": they "reconverted Muslims to Christianity [and] Mosques were re-done as Churches." In India, the vanquished Muslims with their "tens of

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thousand of Mosques" were left intact. It is their descendents who have adopted "the strategy of waging armed struggles against India, creating obstractions in her development schemes" (Jog 1994: vii, 377).[1]

The genesis of Indian nationalism has been traced to various periods in history. The official nationalist narrative insists that there has been a continuous national unity and cohesiveness from the precolonial times to the present. Such claims are being contested in recent historical studies. While there was a "general consciousness of a sort of geographical and cultural unity" during the precolonial period, it was only after the British advent that nationalism began to connote "more than mere indigenous empire-building of a sort." In other words, it was a "direct outcome" of the changes induced by colonial rule (Ray 1973: 12). Articulating the historical contingency of nationalism, Sudipta Kaviraj boldly asserts:

> India, the objective reality of today's history, whose objectivity is tangible enough for people to try to preserve, to destroy, to uphold, to construct, and dismember, the reality taken for granted in all attempts in favor and against, is not an object of discovery but of invention. It was historically instituted by the nationalist imagination of the nineteenth century (Kaviraj 1993: 1).

In the case of South Asia communalism and nationalism are closely interrelated as the communalist element, however loosely defined, has always assumed an important place

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in the constitution and structure of nationalism. This fact demonstrates that despite the nationalist ideological pretense to historical homogenizing and congruity, the national phenomenon--inevitably derived from the overall relation between society, culture, and power--clearly involves structures and practices that reflect the problematic, and often contradictory, nature of nationalism. In his recent Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India Peter van der Veer makes a distinction between "secular" and "religious" nationalisms. "In India the most important imaginings of the nation continue to be religious, not secular--although secular nationalism does exist as an ideological force," claims van der Veer. Secular nationalists call religious nationalism "communalism," a term used as a political insult to show the "illegitimacy" of religious nationalism. But, in fact, "communalism is only a form of nationalism." "In communalism it is a common religion that is imagined as the basis of group identity; in nationalism it is a common ethnic culture that is imagined as such. . . . If there is a crucial difference between nationalism and communalism, it lies in their respective imagining of the content and practical implications of 'common ethnic culture' and 'common religion.' Rather than as utterly opposed ideological forces they should be seen as 'moderate' and 'radical' tendencies within nationalism" (van der Veer 1994: 22). van der Veer seems to suggest that "religious" nationalism implies primordial sentiments while "secular" nationalism implies invention and fabrication. That is to say, "religious" nationalism is essentially Indian while "secular" nationalism is, to borrow Partha Chatterjee's term, a "derivative discourse." van der Veer's distinction is

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problematic, however, because the element of religion is clearly present in modern, "secular" nationalism and secular tendencies, in turn, are found abundantly in "religious" nationalism. Most often religious identity and ethnic-cultural identity coincide and co-exist. van der Veer treats the categories of religion and ethnicity as essentially different: one is "radical" and purports to the realm of religion; the other is "moderate" and represents the more loosely defined notion of ethnic culture.

Writing just before the partition of India into a "Hindu" India and a "Muslim" Pakistan, the religious historian Wilfred Cantwell Smith wrote of communalism "as that ideology which has emphasized as the social, political, and economic unit the group of adherents of each religion, and has emphasized the distinction, even the antagonism, between such groups" (Smith 1946: 187). He further added: "In imposing its categories of thought, communalism [as well as nationalism, because 'recently the phenomenon called 'communalism' has developed into something for which 'nationalism' now seems a better name'] has aimed at exterminating all other sociological and political categories. In raising and making supreme the communal issue, it confuses, if it does not suppress, every other issue, political, social, economic, linguistic--and even religious" (188). According to Engineer, Shakir, and Shaheen communalism is not a "religious" phenomenon but a "socio-economic" one, an expression of class conflict between the elites and the larger populace. These authors explain communalism to be an ideology--akin to the Marxian notion of "false consciousness"--in the service of the upper classes to propagate their economic and political interests. Such "ideologization

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of interests" prevents the lower classes from locating their own proper *common* interests (Engineer and Moin 1985). Prabha Dixit, on the other hand, explains communalism as a "political doctrine which makes use of religio-cultural differences to achieve political ends." In the case of India, the demand for cultural autonomy, and an exaggerated emphasis on the cultural differences between Hindus and Muslims, is actuated by the demand for political autonomy. To believe otherwise, that is, to regard religion as the sole determinant force of social cohesion, would make, *a priori*, the Hindu and Muslim "communities" two "monoliths." Such an erroneous assumption, according to Dixit,

> has not only restricted our vision of the present but has also produced a distorted picture of the medieval past. The social solidarity of each [religion] is taken for granted and it is assumed that all segments within the two communities are imbued with equally keen awareness of religious identity and differences. The communal problem in India is thus traced back to the medieval past--the historical point at which the two religions, Hinduism and Islam, came into confrontation with each other. The political conflicts of that period are viewed as communal conflicts and the contemporary communal problem is easily interpreted as an extension of the long-standing hostility between the followers of the two religions (1974: 3).

It seems to me that the communalist-nationalist phenomenon should be addressed both as a historically contingent, but specifically socio-economic, problem

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and as a political problem.[2] Hindu-Muslim "communal" conflicts cannot be explained in terms of "religious antagonisms" in isolation from the historically determined and specific experience of British colonialism. Community identity, it should be emphasized, came to be constructed and expressed along supposedly self-explanatory religious lines within the context of the colonial "ordering" of Indian society and political culture.[3] It was largely during the nineteenth century where Hindu and Muslim religious antagonism became an iconic principle of colonial governance. The "religious" explanation per se, which has been applied to every confrontation between participants who have been labeled "Hindu" and "Muslim," fails to consider "the symbolic enactments of events and rituals that simultaneously delineated common values and drew on shared historical moments and locally significant cultural referrants" (Freitag 1989: 5). Freitag points to the importance of *collective*, *symbolic* (and essentially non-communal, in modern sense of the word) activities in "public arenas," activities that in the nineteenth century "became an alternative world to that structured by the imperial regime, providing legitimacy and recognition to a range of actors and values denied place in the imperial order" (6). Furthermore, Gyanendra Pandey's study of urban unrest in northern India shows how this fundamental division between "Hindus" and "Muslims," bolstered by routine administrative practices in the colonial period, became the critical site for the construction of communalism in India. Pandey sees the communalist doctrine to have been founded on the colonial sociology of knowledge

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and its emphasis on caste. Yet, the pre-colonial society was too fragmented and divided by subcastes and local, territorial loyalties to have allowed any larger allegiances, along an over-all monolithic "Hindu" or "Muslim" identity, to emerge (Pandey, 1990).

The following section discusses the close affinity between colonial practice and colonial knowledge involved in the process of production of communalism in the Subcontinent. British orientalism shows how colonial rule was based on *forms* of knowledge as much as on direct, institutional control. Furthermore, the diversity of discursive approaches to British colonies, such as India, during the nineteenth century demonstrates how much colonial adventures were reflections of British own politics and internal political culture.

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The Colonial Contests Over Practice and Knowledge

In discussing "the Orient's special place in European Western experience" Edward W. Said writes in his seminal <u>Orientalism</u> that:

> The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languanges, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture" (Said 1979: 1-2).

The British attitudes towards Britain's largest and richest colony--India--, even if contradictory and ambiguous at times, well illustrate the aptness of Said's remark. The reality of empire--a tangible, material phenomenon indeed--and its preservation were central to the British. No matter how differently *imperial* ideologies approached to rationalize the "reality" of India, the centrality of empire remained intact.

Prior to the coming of the Industrial Revolution, the British attitude towards India was dominated by the Conservatives and their allies, the Orientalists. The Conservatives emphasized that the political, social, and cultural development of India would be possible only if the British governed the country according to Indian laws and traditions--i.e. institutions which had emerged through the centuries and guaranteed a

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"peaceful" and "orderly polity" there (Misra 1987: 17, 22-23). The founding in 1784 of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta by Sir William Jones and other European scholars (and the subsequent founding of Royal Asiatic Society in London) was instrumental in the accumulation and acquisition of knowledge about the history, culture, religious practices and beliefs, and social instiutions of India (Schwab 1984: 33-47). As David Ludden notes, "military operations and political centralization required that data which had never been produced by Indian rulers be generated and controlled by government; such data constituted new facts for the creation of orientalism as a body of knowledge. Colonialism reorganized India politically and empirically at the same time, and the two reorganizations supported one another" (Ludden 1993: 253). On the close affinity between colonial control and colonial knowledge, Ludden further writes:

> In the early nineteenth century, pieces of colonial knowledge generated by experts as diverse as [Thomas] Munro and [William] Jones, on subjects as diverse as Hindu law and agrarian administration, became situated side-by-side within the empiricist espistemology, in which they could be integrated into a unified construction of India. Authoritative sources produced diverse types of data that became factualized and located in a unified empirical domain where they could be formed into verified statements about Indian reality (258-259).

It cannot be denied that much of this process was the result of practical experience of the British in law courts, in the assessment and collection of revenues, and the

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attendant English imperative to order and classify information about the Indian subjects.

While the philosophical foundation of the Conservative attitude towards India was laid in the work of Edmund Burke, the orientalist writings of Sir William Jones, the celebrated linguist, scholar, administrator, and lawyer, had had an enormous impact on the Conservative concern for the maintenance of the traditional Indian order (Sharpe 1993). In Said's study of Orientalism Jones embodies the Orientalist "impulse always to codify, to subdue the infinite variety of the Orient to 'a complete digest' of laws, figures, customs, and works" (Said 1979: 78). Jones had once said, "I want to know India as nobody before me ever knew." He called his "greatest desire," as S. N. Mukherjee writes, to become "the legislator of the Indians" (Mukherjee 1968: 112). Acutely aware of the importance of the Indian languages to gain "reliable" information about India, Jones was committed to legitimize British rule in an *Indian* idiom: "I speak *the language of the Gods*, as the Brahmens call it, with great fluency, and am engaged in superintending a Digest of Indian Law for the benefit of the *twenty four millions* of black British subjects in these provinces" (Jones 1970: II: 885; emphasis original). Such knowledge enabled Jones to claim that Indians "are happier under us than they were or could have been under the Sultans of Delhi or petty Rajas," (qtd in Majeed 1992: 23).[4]

The Conservative discursive dominance was largely supplanted, though not totally suppressed, in the 1820's by the Liberal-Utilitarian and Evengelical counter-

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discourses. This period marked the beginning of a new attitude in Britain to colonial territories with the aim of eventually opening up larger markets and avenues for British investments, trade, and commodities in the post-Industrial Revolution era (Sen 1975: 109). Unlike the Conservatives, the Liberal-Utilitarian "reformers" were severely critical of the Indian social systems and of the Hindu religion in particular. They also advocated greater political control over the colony and outright permanent possession of India by the British (Stokes 1959). In his influential book, The History of British India, James Mill gave the first clear expression of the Utilitarian attitude towards India. Countering the Orientalist Indological pronouncements, while actually deriving from the work of Orientalists, Mill (who had never been in India) wrote at length on the ancient history, culture, and civilization of the Hindus in order to prove that the Hindus were amongst the most degenerate nations of the world (Mill 1858; Majeed 1992).

The belief that Britain "had been given dominion over India, not to subdue that nation, but to raise it in the scale of civilization," was the cornerstone of the Liberal ideology. The triumphs to which British India should look forward were "the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism." India should embody "the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws," the Liberals demanded (Metcalf 1964: 12).[5] While the Liberal-Utilitarians were quite secular in their views, their stance was shared, to a large extent, by Evangelical proselytizers who saw India as a land

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cowering in darkness and calling for the light of the Gospel to bring moral improvement and spiritual emancipation to the lives of the Indian people. In short, despite the existence of competing ideologies for dominance, the belief in the superiority of British rule, as well as the conviction that the Indians were an inferior race and their civilization was primitive underlined the overall imperial attitude towards India in the middle of nineteenth century. The Indian rebellion of 1857, however, changed the order of colonial discourse as much as it transformed the rules of the colonial domination itself. "If absolute virtue were to be associated wtih one form of behavior, absolute evil could easily be ascribed to contradictory behavior," contends Francis Hutchins. "India in 1857 discovered [this] truth [as] Indians revealed quite simply that they were the incarnation of Satanic evil" in the eyes of the British (Hutchins 1967: 81).

On April 24, disturbed by rumors that had spread rapidly among the Indian soldiers of the British Army, the sepoys of the 3rd Native Cavalry of the Bengal Army stationed at Meerut, refused to touch the cartridges for the new Enfield rifles which were suspected to be covered with cow and pig fat. Both Hindu and Muslim soldiers found this defiling and highly objectionable. A number of recalcitrant soldiers were promptly court martialled and, on Saturday, 9 May, were marched before the rest of the brigade. The next day, on a sweltering Sunday, the soldiers of the 3rd Cavalry rose in rebellion against their officers. Chaos prevailed throughout Meerut. Europeans were murdered, their houses plundered, and British officers were cut into pieces. The

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mutineers then marched towards Dehli, from which point the rebellion spread throughout northern India. In Delhi, too, the British were massacred and their houses looted. The mutinous soldiers (both Hindu and Muslim) convinced the reluctant Bahadur Shah, the titular Mughal king, and a pensioneer of the East India Company, to declare himself the rightful ruler of Hindustan. Thence, the rebellion found a symbolic center and a focus. By early September, the British reconstitued their forces around Delhi with reinforcement from the Punjab. After intense fightings, the sepoys were routed and, on September 18, the city fell back into the hands of the British again. The fall of Delhi did not mean the end of rebellion, however. Large reaches of the country, above all the Gangetic plains of northern India, remained out of British control for a year and more. The victorious British forces sacked and pillaged the once Mughal capital and ruthlessly suppressed the revolt. Sepoys who were only suspected of mutiny were blown from canons and summarily shot. Bahadur Shah was arrested and sent into exile (Metcalf 1964; Majumdar 1957).

The Mutiny and the horrors associated with it deeply affected the collective psyche of the British. The rebellion was barely over when Martin Tupper, the so-called "poet of the Rebellion," wrote:

> And England, now avenge their wrongs by Vengence deep and dire,
>
> Cut this canker with sword, and burn it out with fire;
>
> Destroy those traitor legions, hang every Pariah hound,

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> And hunt them down to death, in all hills and cities round (qtd in S. B. Chaudhuri 1979: 259).

And an educted, self-declared "Anglo-Indian" wrote the following letter which appeared in the Times:

> Calcutta, 18th June, 1887 -- I am not for letting the State turn missionary. But if our soldiers knock down every filthy idol they see, and lay every Musjid [sic] level with the ground; and even if they pollute every shrine, and plunder everyone that is worth plundering; I shall not be sorry. For as to these 'religions'--what are they, in fact, but lust, lies, treachery, murder, and social disintegration (qtd in Muade 1894: II: 485).

The journal of Charles Dickens for 1857-58, too, was full of essays about the Indian crisis; he was quite disturbed by the news from India. On October 4 he wrote bluntly:

> I wish I were Commander in Chief in India. The first thing I would do to strike that Oriental race with amazement . . . should be to proclaim to them . . . that I should do my utmost to exterminate the Race upon whom the stain of the late cruelties rested; and that I was . . . now proceeding, with . . . merciful swiftness of execution, to bolt it out of mankind and raze it off the face of the Earth (qtd in Brantlinger 1988: 206-07).

As Patrick Brantlinger points out in his Rule of Darkness, "Dickens's sympathy for the downtrodden poor at home is reversed abroad, translated into approval of imperial domination and even, if necessary, of the liquidation by genocide of 'niggers' and

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'natives'" (Brantlinger 1988: 207). What Dickens wrote, however, symbolized a profound change of attitude in England vis-à-vis Britain's increasing imperial involvement in India.

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Re-Orientalizing the Orient

The period immediately following the revolt of 1857 was one of heightened ferver in Britain. It was generally agreed upon that the Indian people were either "professional robbers" and "low Mahomedan rabble" or "ignoble and credulous, like savages or children." There were many who advocated the total destruction of Indian society and the eradication of traditional Indian mores to prevent future mutinies. Nonetheless, the core of British colonial social policy became conciliation along a conservative line. In the meantime, attempts were made to substitute what Bernard Cohn calls "an incompleteness and contradiction in the cultural-symbolic constitution of India" before 1857 with a more coherently organized, hierarchical ordering of the colonial society.

The Conservatives, of course, had their own agenda when Disraeli, in the Commons, suggested that Britain was confronted not with a military *mutiny* but with a *national revolt*. The mutinous sepoys, he said, were "not so much the avengers of professional grievances as the exponents of general discontent." The revolt stemmed from the Liberals's and Evangelicals's abandonment of observing India's traditional laws and customs. Thus, the greased cartridges could be the pretext, not the cause, of the revolt. "The decline and fall of Empires are not affairs of greased cartridges. Such results are occasioned by adequate causes," he declared. It was time, he said, for the Government to return to the path of conciliation (Metcalf 1964: 73).

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The catastrophe of 1857 considerably paved the way for the appearance of what Hutchins terms "popular imperialism" in Britain that provided the political basis for the imperial adventures of later years (Hutchins 84). The Rebellion made India both grimly "real" and starkly "relevant." India was at once annexed psychologically by the British "nation." The abolition of the East India Company's rule and the imposition of direct Crown rule in 1858 convinced the British that India did indeed now "belong" to the nation. "The idea of a permanent *Raj*, which initially had referred simply to the continuation of a British presence in India, and whose advantages had been viewed simply as insuring order and progress for India and continued profit and employment for individual Englishmen, now become subsumed into a more ambitious notion," Hutchins writes. "India would be tied to England because India needed England to rule her" (139). The "reconquest" of India, however, should be not only comprehensive--because "national"--but also *just* and *enduring*. It was largely in the context of re-determination of British power that the seemingly "paradoxical resurgence of Orientalism" in India lies.

In the post-Mutiny period, then, a different colonial positioning emerged in British approach vis-à-vis India. As Bernard Cohn writes in his seminal essay on the representation of imperial authority in Victorian India, "In the two decades that followed this military action [i.e. the Mutiny of 1857], a theory of authority became codified, based on ideas and assumptions about the proper ordering of groups in Indian society, and their relationship to their British rulers. In conceptual terms, the British,

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who had started their rule as 'outsiders,' became 'insiders' by vesting in their monarch the sovereignty of India through the Government of India Act of 2 August 1858" (Cohn 1983: 165). Indian "characters" and "values" began to be sought, while the relevence of the Indian traditions were emphasized. It was ultimately conceded that the "Hindu mind" will not change, so the British should appeal only to Indian sensibilities to perpetuate their rule. In pursuing this end, unlike their Liberal predecessors, Orientalizers sought to "Indianize" the British domination. For instance, there emerged new enthusiasm for the supposed "Oriental despotism" in India, the observation of caste and racial distinctions, and the interest in Hindu and Muslim jurisprudence. While in the period before the Mutiny little attention was paid to the religious sensibilities of the Indian sepoys in the army, and Chrisitian proselytizers actually tried to convert the sepoys, the post-Mutiny regulations were different and rather severe at times:

> Men will observe the customs of their faith. A Sikh found smoking tobacco, or with his beard, moustache, or the hair of his head cut, or who dyes or pulls out the hair of his head or face--and a Musalman found drinking alcoholic liquor or disobeying in part or whole . . . the rules laid down for the observance of Ramazan will render themselves liable to punishment for disobedience of regimental Standing Orders (Hutchins 183-84).

To define Indianness as an official and "objective" sense, Indians had to *look* like Indians: "before 1860, Indian soldiers as well their European officers wore western-style uniforms; now the dress uniforms of Indianss and English included turbans,

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sashes, and tunics thought to be Mughal or Indian" (Cohn 183). No single event showed this "Indianization" or Orientalization of British rule more manifestly than the spectacular Imperial Assemblage of 1877 which marked Queen Victoria's inauguration to her new title as "Kaiser-e Hind."[6]

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The Raj and the Communal Ordering/Othering of Indian Society

The complexity and compartmentalization of Indian society, consisting of hosts of disparate castes and communities largely isolated from one another, posed a major problem for the colonial authorities and Indologists. Until the mid-19th century despite the impact of Orientalist discoveries, the British were less disposed to take seriously the social distinctions among their Indian subjects. It were the Victorians, however, who began to seriously attempt to order and classify the Indian "difference(s)" in accordance with methodic findings within the "scientific system of knowing." "The age of high imperialism thus transformed colonial knowledge and orientalism," notes David Ludden. This transformation involved "construction of theory and institutions on those foundations that wove orientalism deeply into social science and social experience. The idea that the village constituted the basic unit of social order in India and that Indian civlization was built on religion became institutionalized and theorized so as to obscure their colonial origins, which became irrelevant to their authority" (Ludden 267-68).

During the first half of the nineteenth century most Liberal reformers thought the British rule over India to be transitory. As soon as the "dark" subcontinent is enlightened, the "civilizing mission" of the English will be fulfilled and the Indians shall be left to govern themselves. Appreciative Indians, it was agued, will not bite the hand that brought them light. Thus, it was not unusual for the English to speak of an "Indian nation." It was uncritically accepted that all mankind was divided into "nations," and

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India was no exception and required no specific proof for demonstrating its "nationhood." With the failure of Liberal tendencies in British attitudes towards its colony, and especially after the Rebellion, the concept of Indian nationality disappeared; for if India were a nation then it had the right to national aspirations and self-government. "The fundamental fact then is that India had no jealousy of the foreigner because India had no sense whatever of national unity, because there *was* no India and therefore, properly speaking, no foreigner," wrote Seeley in Expansion of England (qtd in Hutchins 141). India, thus, became a mere "geographical expression," a Subcontinent to be held in the bosom of the Empire. It did, nonetheless, deserve the right to be ruled by the British. The latter had an obligation to observe and meet this right of India.

As far as the ordering of Indian society along communal lines was concerned, the notion that there existed fixed and distinct "Muslim" and "Hindu" communities in India had been current ever since the later part of the eighteenth century. It was clear from the early on that religious distinctions were seen as shaping differences of characters. Hindus and Muslims had firmly established and contrasting characters, it was generally supposed. Thus, adherents of the two religions were *essentially* different. "To be Hindu or Muslim by itself explained much of the way Indians acted" (Metcalf 1994: 133).

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The Communal Construction of Hinduism

While European preoccupation with Islam has a long history, mostly of contentions, discords, and confrontations, Hinduism, on the contrary, long remained obscure to many Europeans. The most common understanding of Hinduism was that it was a mysterious faith of incredible "idols" and "monstrosities." The European fixation with India began in earnest as the question of "human origin" became a central issue for the post-Enlightenment thinkers. This question stimulated interest in the roots of language with the aim of discovering humanity's earliest ancestors. Sanskrit figured prominently in European endeavors to unveil a universal language. Although speculating the form and nature of Sanskrit had started earlier, it was in 1786 address of Sir William Jones to the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal that the historical affinities between Sanskrit and classical, European languages was first systematically advanced. In the meantime, largely due to the work of Herder, language and thought were seen to be interdependent. "Similarly, assertions positing the individuality of a nation's speech and its intimate bonds with national thought, national literature, and national solidarity were particularly resonant" (Figueira 1994:52). In the early decades of the nineteenth century, furthermore, linguistic communities were increasingly identified with racial communities. German Romantics such as Friedrich Schlegel and others had idealized India and Indian culture as the source of inspiration and absolute spirituality. The "Indian mind" was essentialized and perceived to be "imaginative and passionate," in

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contradistinction to the diluted Christian and Western "rationality" (Schwab 1984; Inden 1989).[7]

The Orientalist and Indologist notions of a coherent vision of the "Hindu mind" necessarily, if indirectly, carried with it the assumption that "the Hindus, unable to supply this element [i.e. rationality] themselves, required an externally imposed 'rationality' to order their day-to-day lives" (Metcalf 1994: 135). And this turned out to be the most important intellectual assumption of the colonial administrative objectivces in British India. Yet, curiously enough, the British created for the Hindu religious system such a degree of coherence and unity that it had not--and historically could not have--possessed before. Thus, "by imposing their 'knowledge' upon it, the British made of Hinduism, previously a loosely integrated collection of sects, something resembling a religion--although, as they saw it, a religion that was not a 'proper' religion" (134). It was this unified and coherent vision of Hinduism, in contradistinction to an equally unified and monolithic definition of Islam, that developped into religious communalism that has persisted in India till today. It also provided for the nationalist periodization of Indian history into a classical Hindu phase and a medieval Muslim phase.

Hinduism as a monolithic religion, however, did not exist, contends the eminent Indian historian Romila Thapar:

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> [There] were Hindu religions (in the plural), using Hindu simply as a term that defines an area, and possibly up to a point, defines the culture but not completely. But the attempt then in the nineteenth century by western scholarship . . . was to try to put all these segments that constituted this vast mass of Hindu religions into one structure which was then called Hinduism, a desparate attempt to put it in the texts, fit in the rituals and the cults, to give it some semblance of order on the basis recognized as existing in the semitic religions (Thapar 1993: 121).

In fact, during the pre-British period, symbolic identities were largely defined in terms of distinct castes and sects along a social continuum than in terms of affinities derived from monolithic religions. "Even the recognition of a religious identity," Thapar maintains elsewhere, "does not automatically establish a religious community. Tensions, confrontations, and even persecution at the level of political authority were not necessarily repeated all the way down the social scale nor were all caste and sectarian conflicts reflected at the upper levels" (Thapar 1992: 80). It is within the context of the colonial construction of Indian communalism and communal social structure that one could better situate Iqbal historically and understand the ideology of his (communal) imagination.

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Notes

1 An important characteristic of Hindu nationalism has been the adoption of what the psychologist Ashis Nandy describes as British constructs of undifferentiated "hyper-masculinity," formed out of the colonial encounter and focused on "aggression, achievement, control, competition, and power" (Nandy 1983: 87, 89). The British long characterized educated Indians (particularly the Bengali elite) as "feminine, cowardly, and unrepresentative of the indigenous culture" (Anderson and Damle 1987: 12). In contemporary Hindu communal discourse, on the other hand, any India male who is not a Hindu nationalist is characterized as "westernized, effeminate, lacking in character," while the good Hindu is "brave, virile, physically strong, conscious of himself as a Hindu" (29). In the meantime, in the communal discourse the ideal woman assumes a chaste, motherly/sisterly role: dutiful and (self-) sacrificing, she is a supreme sign of the inner spiritual realm marked by devotion and purity. *Bharat Mata* (Mother India) needs strong, masculine, militaristic, and aggressively well-organized *sons* to protect her, and her daughters, from the treacherous, demonic "Other," the Muslim within as well as without. For an extensive elaboration of this point, see "The Nation and Its Women" and "Women and the Nation" in Chatterjee 1993: chapters 6 and 7 respectively; see also Hansen 1996.

2 I find Slavoj Zizek's analysis of the often violent national sedimentation in post-Soviet Eastern Europe relevant to my discussion of nationalism and communalism in the context of Hindu-Muslim conflict in South Asia. Using the Lacanian notion of "Thing," Zizek postulates that "The element that holds together a given community cannot be reduced to the point of symbolic identification: the bond linking its members always implies a shared relationship toward a Thing, toward Enjoyment incarnated. This relationship toward the Thing, structured by means of fantasies, is what is at stake when we speak of the menace to our 'way of life' presented by the Other" (Zizek 1993: 201). It is always the Other who prevents us from becoming fully what we *are*. The Other, paradoxically, is actually Us, since we can never positively express what we *really* are. We can only express what we are not, and we can thus only project our *jouissance* onto an undefinable, elusive Thing that always exceeds and escapes any ostensible self-evident social positivity. Therefore, Zizek contends, the essence of the nation-community qua enjoyment can ultimately only be expressed through crediting to the other (nation, group, community) an *excessive enjoyment*, which steals "our enjoyment" and prevents us from fully enjoying our national way of life. However, what is concealed by this construction of "theft of enjoyment" imputed to the Other is "the traumatic fact that *we never possessed what was allegedly stolen from us*" (203). In other words, the basic impulse in any ideological cause and, for that matter, cohesion of any imagined community--*in casu* the national community--is the search for fullness. This search, in turn, constitutes the community, which only can exist as long as this fullness is not *achieved* or is constantly *postponed*. This needs to be so, because

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otherwise once the fullness of identity is achieved--and the Other is eliminated--there can be no Cause and hence no community (or nation). Hence the intense hatred between opposing ethnic/national communities as witnessed in various parts of the world. See Zizek 1993.

3 As C. A. Bayly argues, it was only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (during the colonial rule in India and under colonialism's impact on identity formation) that a growing realization of being Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh began to emerge (Bayly 1995). Cynthia Talbot, however, convinced that "modern identities do not spring fully fashioned out of nowhere," insists that Hindu-Muslim identities predate the advent of colonialism (Talbot 1995).

4 While speculations about the nature of Sanskrit had began some time earlier, Jones's more systematic "discovery" of a common root among Indo-European languages paved the way for later racialist-linguistic arguments, including the Aryan myth. Jones himself was a diffusionist and probably meant no racist implications for his theories.

5 It was undoubtedly in such context that the British liberal administrator Charles Trevelyan insisted on the "moral and intellectual emancipation" of Indians through "a process of European improvement." "The political education of a nation must be a work of time; and while it is in progress, we shall be as safe as it is possible for us to be. The natives shall not rise against us, because we shall stoop to raise them; there will be no reaction, because there will be no pressure: the national energy will be fully and harmlessly employed in acquiring and diffusing European knowledge, and in naturalizing European institutions," argued Trevelyan. (See Metcalf 1964: 15)

6 The 1867 Rebellion has been the subject of many novels in English. For a concise study of this theme, see Singh 1975.

7 For a fascinating study of this crucial event from the "cultural system" perspective, see Cohn 1983.

8 The romantic infatuation with India was attacked by the philosopher Hegel. He identified India as an essentially "static" entity wrapped in Hinduism. Hindu Brahmanic thought, according to Hegel, insisted on the "annihilation" (or *emptying*) of the subject into the *Brahman* (the Ultimate Substance), thus destroying and benumbing all self-consciousness and freedom in part of the individual. Indian culture, then, is petrified and there is no ethical life or human dignity in India. (See Figueira 1994: 72-80).

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Chapter Two

SITUATING IQBAL: HISTORY AND MEMORY

Although Muslims had settled on the west coast of India since the time of the Caliph 'Umar, Arab military presence was first established in 711-712 when the Indus valley up to Multan were subdued by the Muslims. The successful Turko-Afghan invasions of India in the twelfth century consolidated the Muslim conquest. Following the rule of a number of Muslim dynasties (collectively called the Delhi Sultanate), in 1526, the famous Central Asian Prince Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur founded the Mughal Empire in Delhi. The Mughals rapidly gained control of northern India, gradually moved southwards, and ultimately conquered all but the very tip of the Indian subcontinent. This period marked the height of Muslim political and cultural domination in India.[1]

It should be pointed out, however, that even though the Mughals, "like other Indian Muslim states, maintained a symbolic commitment to *sharî'a* as an important source of legitimation for their authority . . . often in practice they ignored the *sharî'a* for political expediency or reasons of state" (Gilmartin 1988: 13). The Mughal state was Islamic to the extent that the ruler was a Muslim and the ruling elites were largely, though never exclusively, Muslims. Yet, neither the organization of the state nor its

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civil and military codes were defined and delineated by religious doctrines. According to the historian M. Mujeeb, "the Muslim state is a well-known historical and contemporary phenomenon, the Islamic state is a fiction created by the Indian Muslim mind . . . no Muslim ruler would have dared to risk an assessment of his administrative and political action [only] on the basis of Islamic doctrine" (qtd in Nanda 1989: 8).

The Indian Muslim polity was beset by social and economic distinctions and differences from the very early on. The structure of power had the king or emperor at the pinnacle of the power pyramid. The *'ulama* formed the consultative assembly, while the nobility (*ashrâf*, i.e., Muslims of foreign descent) headed the military establishment. Local chieftains, princes, and bureaucrats--both Muslim and Hindu--were in charge of their local domains, so long as they acknowledged the central rule in Delhi and paid tributes to the emperor. The actual situation of Muslims in India was diverse. While Hindus and Muslims had divergent belief systems and practices, the Muslims did not constitute a homogeneous entity in themselves. Theoretically, all Muslims were brothers, but in fact they were fragmented by consciousness of race, class, and economic status. In addition to doctrinal differences (particularly among the Sunnis and the Shi'is), major differences persisted between the native Indian Muslim and the foreigner, the patrician *ashrâf* and the plebian *ajlâf*. In addition, as the historian Jim Masselos maintains, "Economic and class divisions were equally pronounced. Apart from the distinctions between the peasant in the countryside and the artisan, petty trader, and laborer in the towns and cities, there was also a distinction in the nature of

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the Muslim elite in various parts of the country and in their general condition" (Masselos 1985: 122).

From a sociological perspective Islam in India remained a predominantly rural phenomenon and made little headway in towns and cities (Alavi 1988: 75; Barlas 1995: 143-91). Many of the Muslims were converts from lower, rural Hindu castes and long maintained the beliefs, prejudices, and practices of their ancestors. Many Hindu, especially Rajput, chiefs converted to Islam and their dependent peasants also converted, *en mass*, following their chiefs. Since most of the conversions took place through sufi popular propaganda in the rural periphery--and not necessarily through force and coercion as modern Hindu communalists claim--the Indian Islam acquired a peculiar nature and developed many unique features and practices which clearly reflected the influence of local and regional beliefs and rituals. More specifically, caste affiliations, particularly as the basis of marriage relations and often even occupation, remained strong among many Indian Muslims who also maintained their local languages and customs. Despite their pronounced divergent beliefs, Hindus and Muslims "also intermingled with one another and in some areas, especially in the north, had evolved a culture which synthesized their respective codes. Differences there were; but there were also elements that brought the two together" (Masselos 121). This phenomen, which has increasingly attracted the attention of social historians of religions, has led a scholar like Romila Thapar to claim that, historically, no one uniform Islam (or uniform Hinduism, for that matter) ever existed in India prior to the

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advent of British colonial rule. In the pre-colonial period symbolic identities were largely defined in terms of distinct castes and sects along a social continuum than in terms of affinities derived from monolithic religions. "Even the recognition of a religious identity," Thapar maintains, "does not automatically establish a religious community. Tensions, confrontations, and even persecutions at the level of political authority were not necessarily repeated all the way down the social scale nor were all castes and sectarian conflicts reflected at the upper levels" (1992: 80). It needs to be acknowledged, nonetheless, that the British, especially after the 1857 Rebellion, were keen to take advantage of this notorious complexity and compartmentalization of Indian society for their own purposes and colonial interests.

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The Raj and the Emergence of "Loyal Mohammedans"

British attutudes towards the Muslims in the Indian Subcontinent were to a large extent dictated by early Orientalist discourse on Islam. Indology, despite its distinct approaches and implicit inconsistencies, has long been based on the assumption that India should be studied through all-inclusive Brahmanical high traditions in Sanskrit texts. It considers the Brahmanical elites to be the most important--and most representative--stratum in society. As a result of emphasizing the solely textualist and religious culture in India, India of the Orientalist discourse consistently looks like a ahistorical, static, and stagnant entity. According to this discourse, "Indian civilization is supposedly founded on a Hindu religious ideology, and Muslims are seen as either not belonging to that civilization and therefore not to India or as hierarchically subsumed in an inferior position within this civilization" (van der Veer 1993: 25).[2]

The British colonial establishment usually projected Orientalist notions ascribed to Islam in general (as the traditional "Other" of Europe) to the Muslims in India. "Insofar as India's pre-colonial states were frequently constituted as Islamic polities, and Muslims provided the dominant elite within them," writes Thomas Metcalf, "it was easy to project the stereotypes constructed in the Middle East upon India's Muslims. In so doing, Muslims were inevitably distinguished sharply from their Hindu neighbors,

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and included within the alternate set of Orientalist notions of the 'East'" (Metcalf 1994: 138).

The Muslims were widely suspected as the main force behind the 1857 Rebellion. They were particularly sought and subjected to punishment despite the fact that the Mutiny had its origins in the army and its supporters included both Hindus and Muslims alike throughout northern India. "Almost universally they were regarded as the forementors of the Revolt and its chief beneficiaries," contends Metcalf. "The first sparks of dissatisfaction, it was generally agreed, were kindled among the Hindu sepoys who feared an attack upon their caste. But the Muslims then fanned the flames of discontent, and placed themselves at the head of the movement, for they saw in these religious grievances the steppingstone to political power. In the British view, it was Muslim intrigue and Muslim leadership that converted as sepoy muntiny into a political conspiracy aimed at the extinction of the British Raj. The British were also convinced that the Muslim community, though fewer in number, was far more hostile throughout the course of the uprising" (Metcalf 1964: 298). What the young civil servant Alfred Lyall wrote to his father from India in the midst of the uprising reveals the bitter suspicion and hostitlity of the British towards the Muslims: "[The] whole insurrection is a great Mahometan conspiracy, and the sepoys are merely tools in the hands of the *Mussalmans*." He thus differentiated the actions of Muslim and Hindu rebels: for Hindus "plunder always seems to be their chief object, to attain which they will perform any villainy, whereas the Mahometans only seem to care about murdering their

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opponents, and are altogether far more blood minded." The latter, he insisted, "hate us with a fanatical hate that we never suspected to exist" (qtd in Metcalf 1994: 139-40).

In his influential book The Indian Musalmans, while recommending punishment for the "traitors" who mostly came from the Muslim "lower classes," W. W. Hunter proposes a British policy of improving the fortunes of the upper classes, the "Musalman aristocracy," who had felt vulnerable with the termination of Muslim rule. Echoing the argument of earlier Anglicists, Hunter recommended not repression but English education for the Muslims in order to neutralize dissent and discontent among them. He advocates instruction of Muslims in "religious duties," with the hope that "their religion" might "perhaps be less sincere, but certainly less fanatical" (Hunter 1968). In the meantime, as the British embarked upon a new policy towards India after the Mutiny (and the rule of the Company gave way to the direct rule of the Queen), the Muslim ruling elites realized that even the illusion of Muslim rule and re-domination in India had disappeared. Some conservative elements, mainly the *'ulama* and *ashrâf* Muslims of the upper classes, began to advocate isloationism and accomodation with the colonial rulers. It was in this juncture that the influential Islamic "reformist" leader Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-98) emerged as an avowed advocate of an education that would disseminate elements of English knowledge within an Islamic context (Malik 1980).

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan is claimed in the postcolonial state of Pakistan as a "first true patriot." "Pakistan," writes one nationalist scholar, "is in reality, the direct

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result of the whole scheme of things as envisaged by this good old man, who represented in his person the ideology and aspirations of the whole Muslim nation of this Subcontinent" (Dar 1957: vi). Throughout the 1857 Revolt Sir Sayyid stood by the British. In Causes of the Indian Revolt, he defended the Muslims against common charges of conspiracy against the British. To point out Muslim loyalty to the British, he published stories of those "loyal Muhammedans" who had risked, against all odds, their lives and property to protect British officers and their families. He found nothing wrong with rule of the Raj in India, arguing that if people of India had really understood the benign intentions of the British government there would have been no Mutiny. He characterized those Muslims who took active part in the Revolt as "certain vagabonds and ill-conditioned men . . . wine drinkers and men who spent their time in debauchery and dissipation" (Khan 1860: 8). Sir Sayyid saw the British conquest of India as a "historical necessity." He compared India to "a poor widow" in need of a "husband," "which husband she herself chose in the English nation" (Nanda 1989: 25-57).

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan outlined three specific positions for the Muslims as an entity onto themselves in the British dominated India: (1) *loyalty and acquiescence to the British*. Sir Sayyid had felt that the British were to stay in the Subcontinent for a long time. "It is . . . necessary that for the peace of India and for the progress of everything in India the English Government should remain for many years--in fact for ever," he wrote (Khan 1886: 196-97). Thus, British support was crucial for the future of Muslim minority in the predominantly Hindu India; (2) *devotion to English*

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education and learning. In order to compete with other Indians for economic and political progress, the Muslims had to equip themselves with modern education and prevent the Hindus from assuming intellectual superiority and material advantage; and (3) *political isolationism or disinterest in politics*. For Sir Sayyid political commitment in part of the Muslims might lead to unnecessary and dangerous adventurism (like the Mutiny) and further deepen the chasm and hostility between them and the British colonial authority above (Aziz 1967: 18-28).

The cumulative effect of Sir Sayyid's efforts was to promote and mobilize the idea of a separate identity for the Muslims so they could see themselves as an entity onto itself, a distinct community apart from the rest. It can be argued, however, that his criteria for the construction of Muslim cultural community in India were derived not so much from religion (Islam) per se but significantly from the modern ideology of nationalism. Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan argued that a strong cultural-imaginative base must be built before an enduring political fabric could be erected upon it. The emphasis on Muslim education was certainly a result of this approach. In June 1875, the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh was inaugurated, mainly for the sons of respectable *ashrâf* Muslims with an urban social base. Sir Sayyid's foundation of the College (later to be named Aligarh Muslim University) was far more than just the establishment of an educational institution. "It gave birth to the famous Aigarh Movement which was partly educational, partly liteary, partly religious, and wholly

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cultural. It set new targets in education, new standards in literary composition and criticism, new ideals in social thinking, and new norms in Islamic exegesis" (Aziz 124).

As Kenneth W. Jones suggests, "Sayyid Ahmad evisioned the college as preparing men to serve the *qawm* [the nation]. It would supply educated, honest, public-spirited leaders able to work with the English government, and to protect the Muslim community. In time this elite would lift the Muslims into a cooperative dominance, ruling India in partnership with the British" (Jones 1989: 68). Aligarh was the earliest but not the only symbol of the awakening of a consciousness--along communal/national lines--among the Muslims. To further the cause of modern, European education among the Muslims, Sir Sayyid also established a Translation Society and a Scientific Society. The former was mainly responsible to translate into Urdu the works of European, particularly English, literature and philosophy. One should also mention the important role played by Osmanis University in Hyderabad. Osmania was the sole academic establishment in India which offered entire courses in the Urdu language.

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The Language of the Monological Nation

The importance of language in the formation of nationalist discourse has long been acknowledged. Nationalists assume that the true, or authentic, history of the nation consists of an essence, a core, a soul. "This soul is not only reflected and protected by the mother tongue but, in a sense, *the mother tongue is itself an aspect of the soul*, a part of the soul, if not the soul made manifest" (Fishman 1989: 276; emphasis original). It was Johann G. Herder who determinedly argued for language's place in the emotional, psychological, and intellectual composition of a collectivity of people (*Völk)*. "Their speech is their spirit and their spirit is their speech. One cannot express strongly the identity of the two," proclaimed Wilhelm von Humboldt (qtd in Rocker 1937: 228). Johann G. Fichte insisted that "men are formed by language far more than language is formed by men" and Schleiermacher held that "only one language is firmly implanted in an individual. Only to one does he belong entirely no matter how many he learns subsequently . . . [for] every language is a particular mode of thought and what is cogitated in one language can never be repeated in the same way in another . . . . Language, thus, just like the Church or state, is an expression of a peculiar [i.e. of a distinct way of] life" (qtd in Kedourie 1961: 63).

During the Muslim domination over the Indian subcontinent, Persian had been the language of courts and the administration as well as that of education and literary production. Yet "Hindustani," i.e. Urdu, had gradually emerged as the language

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commonly spoken throughout India, particularly in the north. Although it is suggested that Urdu had originated in the thirteenth century, as a literary language, it commenced only in the seventeenth century. With the establishment of an Urdu department (besides Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit) at Fort William College in Calcutta, and the making of Urdu as the medium of instruction at the Delhi College, Urdu's status enhanced considerably. In 1837 Persian was replaced by Urdu as state language (Fatehpuri 1987: 27). It was only after the 1857 Revolt, however, that Hindu revivalist movements began to propagate the cause for the resurgence of the Hindi language in opposition to Urdu. An article published in the Benares Gazette (22 January 1869) makes the Hindu opposition to Urdu explicitly clear:

> After the Muslims conquered India and established their rule in major part of the country, they introduced Persian as the language of their courts and the administration, and abolished the use of Hindi script . . . When the Government abolished Persian as the language of state and administration [in 1837], we had hoped that gradually our language, Hindi in Nagri script, will be given currency and Persian and its script will be foresaken. But, when we notice that every one is proposing the establishment of a vernacular university with Urdu, in Persian script, as the medium of instructions without realizing the harm they are doing to the cause of India itself, our hearts are filled with extreme sorrow (qtd in Fatepuri 111-12).

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The Muslim educated elites were equally adamently opposed to the introduction of Hindi, which they saw as something exclusively Hindu, while Urdu was seen as the lingua franca of the entire Subcontinent. Ever since, the Urdu-Hindi language controversy has gradually assumed a central place in the communal discord and cultural rivalry between the Hindus and Muslims. "As the controversy spread, the two languages became more and more exclusive. . . . Though Urdu was in its origin neither the language of Muslims nor a Muslim language, it gradually became so. Soon it assumed a place in their [Muslim] tradition 'second only to their religion.' Thus linguistic conflict added to Indian disunity and helped the formation of more than one nationalism, the more the Hindus laid stress on Hindi, the greater emphasis the Muslims put on Urdu. The Hindi-Urdu controversy was by now an integral part of the Hindu-Muslim questions" (Aziz 126). The belief that "a nation without national language of its own ramains dumb and dull, and a language without a nation to own it, backward and unrespected" (Fatehpuri 9) characterized the language controversy in the colonial period.

E. J. Hobsbawm's recent contention that "national languages are . . . almost always semi-artificial constructs and occasionally, like modern Hebrew, virtually invented," is quite applicable to the case of Urdu. Urdu emerged as a language under the Mughals by a combination of Persian, the court language, and some indigenous Hindi dialects. Though it was originally neither the language of the Muslims nor a Muslim languagne, it gradually became to be seen (or rather, imagined) as such through

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the efforts of educated Muslim middle class for whom "no language . . . can compare with Urdu in copiousness, elegance, and strength of vocabulary." At the time that Urdu began to assert itself, in fact more Muslims spoke Bengali than Urdu. As a "mother" tongue Urdu could only claim even fewer speakers. The Muslim intelligentsia of the early part of the twentieth century conveniently turned to Urdu in order to counter the claim of the Hindu nationalists of the latter part of the nineteenth century for Hindi an all-Indian status. In fact, the more Hindus laid stress upon Hindi, the greater emphasis the Muslims put on Urdu. As attempts were made to "purify" Hindi by the progressive incorporation (or reappropriation, in the words of the nationalists) of Sanskrit words, the proponents of Urdu went more often to Persian and Arabic for vocabulary as well as syntax.[3]

Colonial census reports obviously exacerbated the communal consciousness along linguistic lines. In this regard, Grierson's magisterial Linguistic Survey of India is of particuliar importance. As Aijaz Ahmad observes, "Grierson's lasting (I should say, devastating) contribution to Indian demography--and to our political imagination, generally--was the pseudo-scientific presupposition that each individual is born with one--and only one--'mother tongue,' and that speaking of each 'mother tongue' resided in a specific locale or region. If you were a 'Hindi-speaker,' in other words, you could not also be an 'Urdu-speaker'; and a 'region' reserved for Hindi could not then be a region for Bihar or Maithili. Variants of such ideas had been in the air since Gilchrist

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and Fort William College, but it was left to Grierson to present them with the full splendor of positivist belief' (Ahmad 1993: 16). Accordingly, the Muslims must have *a* language, without which there would be no Muslim nationalism. In this sense Urdu, which was certainly not the language of all--or even of a numerical majority of Indian Muslims--was taken up, not only as a language but also as a sentiment, for cementing (or contriving and concocting) national unity. The publication of glossaries, preparation of technical terminologies, coinage of new scientific terms, etc., further extended and consolidated the Urdu language. The grammarians prepared dictionaries, glossaries, and lexicons, thus legislating on the meanings, nuances, and shades of words. They virtually fixed the usage of phrases, adopted new words, and evolved new figures of speech (Ahmad 1993). Thus the Urdu language was transformed, first, into a *standard* language and, soon afterwards, into a *national* language.

As a form of "cultural elaboration" or "representation"--to borrow Homi K. Bhabha's terms--it was the Urdu literature, however, which clearly reflected the contours of Muslim cultural nationalism in India and profoundly affected narratives and discourses that signified a sense of separate "nationness." The foundation of literary groups and associations greatly contributed to the generation and development of Urdu literature and language. In India, the Hindus, under the inspiration of Rabindranath Togore, established the Shantiniketan, a sort of academic center for the protection and promotion of Indian (i.e. Hindu) culture. The Muslims, in their part, founded the analogous Anjuman-i Taraqqi-i Urdu (Society for the Promotion of Urdu) at

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Hyderabad, Deccan. Soon it established branches all over India and for a quarter of a century it championed the cause of Urdu language and literature.

Literature in Urdu appealed to the imagination of the urban, educated Muslims of middle strata especially in northern India. Islamic religious themes began to increasingly occupy an important place in the corpus of Urdu poetry. Many writings, religious in character but not necessarily theological in substance, were produced: *munajâts* and *na'ts* are examples of this genre. The Shâh Nâmah-i Islâm, a long epic by Hafeez Jullundhari, was a moving, popular religious poem in Urdu. The heroic and magnificient Muslim past, in India as elsewhere in the Muslim world, was the them of innumberable peoms, novels, essays, and even plays. Many literary works of the latter part of the nineteenth century will remain incomprehensible without a good knowledge of Islamic history, legends, and mythology. In this respect, composing biographies of Muslim heroic figures was quite current. Mawlânâ Shibli Nu'mani's six-volume biography of the Prophet Muhammad is the best known of all. The author, who was an accomplished scholar of classical Persian, also produced She'r al-'Ajam, a muti-volume critical history of Persian literature (Nu'mani 1920-22). A solid grounding in Persian literature and Arabic grammar and syntax was considered necessary for any learned Muslim in India of the late 1900's.

The greatest of poets in Urdu, after Mirzâ Ghâlib (1768-1869), was undoubtedly Altâf Husayn Hâlî (1837-1914). An early proponent of "natural poetry," Hâlî turned to religion under the influence of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan who challenged

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him to compose a poem on the rise and fall of Islam. The result was Hâlî's famous *musaddas*, a long account of the advent, rise, and fall of the Muslim power. Hâlî laments effectively the deplorable and grievous state of Muslims of his time, contrasting their "decadence" with the "splendor" and "achievements" of the Muslims in the height of their glory. This is how he sees the "ruined garden of Islam" of his own time (qtd in Ikram 1977: 65):

> Where even the rain does the work of fire,
>
> Where even the pearl-producing cloud produces floods,
>
> Which is devastated more, the more it is looked after,
>
> To which are congenial neither spring nor autumn,
>
> A voice is constantly coming from there--
>
> "This is the ruined garden of Islam."

This gloomy picture is abound throughout the poem:

> In the desert, when I came upon a barren wilderness;
>
> On which, even in rains, there was no trace of verdure,
>
> Which the farmer had long ceased to have the heart to till,
>
> I was reminded of the desolation of my own people!

As far as the Muslims were concerned,

> They possess neither wealth, nor prestige, neither learning, nor art,
>
> Faith alone remains--and that too is like a tree without leaves or flowers.

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The *musaddas* was phenomenally successful. The subject matter of the poem as well as the great literary and linguistic skill of the poet struck a responsive chord in the heart of many Muslims and definitely helped define and shape Muslim nationhood in India. However, no Muslim thinker played a more prominent role in the construction, elaboration, and imagination of a national homeland for the Muslims in the Indian subcontinent than the poet and philosopher Sir Muhammad Iqbal.

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Notes

1 The history of Muslim presence in the Indian Subcontinent has been extensively studied. See, for example, Schimmel (1980) and Richards (1993).

2 This "exclusivist" approach still persists in many Indological circles. For the anthropologist Louis Dumont, for instance, the historical Muslim presence in India does not matter for he seeks "the unity of India" still in "the very essence, existence, and influence of the traditional, higher, sanskritic, civilization" (Dumont 1970: 4). This topic is discussed in some detail in van der Veer (1993).

3 For a brief, but cogent and forceful, analysis of the post-Partition Urdu presence in the Subcontinent (1945-67), see Aijaz Ahmad (1993).

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Chapter Three

READING THE PERSIAN WORKS OF MUHAMMAD IQBAL

Mî tarâshad fekr-e mâ har dam khudâvandi digar
Rast az yak band tâ uftâd dar bandi digar . . .
Rah madeh dar Ka'ba ay pîr-e haram Iqbal râ
Har zamân dar âstîn dârad khudâvandi digar.

Our thought is constantly engaged in fascinating new gods,
Released from one bond, it entangles itself in another . . .
Custodian of the Harem, do not admit Iqbal,
For he has up his sleeve new idols every day.

Muhammad Iqbal was born in 1876 at Sialkot in Punjab. His family descended from the Kashmiri Brahmans who had converted to Islam some three hundred years before. He received a classical education at home before attending the Scotch Mission College, Sialkot. In college he received an European liberal education. In 1895 Iqbal went to Lahore and entered the Government College where he studied literature and philosophy. He subsequently earned a master's degree in philosophy from Punjab University in 1899. In Lahore Iqbal was introduced to Urdu literary circles, and his poetry was recognized and admired from early on. Iqbal joined Punjab University, as a junior faculty, before leaving for Europe in 1905. He studied in both England and Germany. In England he read law and also enrolled at Trinity College, Cambridge. He

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later submitted a dissertation entitled "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia" to Munich University for which he was awarded a doctorate in philosophy.

In 1908 Iqbal left Europe and returned to India. He briefly taught philosophy at Punjab University but soon resigned his position and began to practice law. In 1922 he was knighted by the British government. Iqbal devoted most of his time to writing and publishing while taking active interest in the politics of the Subcontinent. He served as a Muslim member of the Punjab Legislative Council in 1927 and was elected, in 1930, the President of the annual session of the All-India Muslim League at Allahabad. Iqbal was invited to attend the second and the third London Round Table Conference which was called by the British government to consult with Indian leaders on the problems of constitutional reforms for India. Until his death in April 1938, Iqbal was actively engaged in political struggle for the Muslim League in the Punjab Province and was adamant in resisting the influence of the Unionist Party of Muslim landlords and the Hindu dominated Congress Party led by Gandhi and Nehru.[1]

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Iqbal's Poetry in Persian

In addition to his dissertation which was published in London, Iqbal wrote an influential treatise in English, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam (1934), a collection of lectures which he delivered at the Universities of Madras, Hyderabad, and Mysore in 1928. Most of his speeches and letters were also written in English. His works in Urdu verse consist of Bâng-e Darâ (The Calling of the Caravan Bell, 1924); Bâl-e Jibrîl (The Wing of Gabriel, 1935); and Zarb-e Kalîm (The Stroke of Moses, 1936).

Seven of Iqbal's philosophical and theoretical *oeuvres*, however, are written in Persian poetry. Iqbal adopted the medium of Persian language to convey his subtle philosophical ideas and delineate his socio-political thought. He himself acknowledged the superiority of Persian (Darî, Pârsî) for this purpose of his in the following verses:

Gar cheh Hendî dar 'uzûbat shakkar ast

Tarz-e guftâr-e Darî shîrîntar ast

Fekr-e man az jalvah ash mahshûr gasht

Khâmah-ye man shâkh-e nâkhl-e tûr gasht.

Pârsî az raf'at-e andîsha am

Dar khurad bâ fetrat-e andîsha am.

Though Urdu is sweet in taste,

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The Darî (Persian) expression is still sweeter.

I was much impressed by its beauty,

My pen became like the branch of the Sinai tree.

As for the height of my thought,

Persian suits well with the nature of my imagination.

Iqbal's earliest Persian work is Asrâr-e Khudî (The Secrets of the Self), published in 1915. It is produced in the *masnavî* form which consists of the rhymed couplets. The elastic and rather flexible structure of this particular form of Persian poetry has always offered an appropriate medium for longer, especially discursive and narrative, poems. Elaborating his theory of human personality and individuality, Iqbal insists throughout Asrâr-e Khudî that strengthening of *khudî* guarantees "the system of the universe" and "the continuation of the life of all individuals." It is the "unveiling" of *khudî*, and the realization and affirmation of its potentials, that preoccupies Iqbal in this early work. Because this point is clearly the focus of all of Iqbal's subsequent writings, it will be treated in more detail in a separate chapter in this study.

If Asrâr-e Khudî concentrates on the development of the (integral) human "Self," the more didactic Rumûz-e Bîkhudî (The Mysteries of Selflessness, 1916) is concerned with the role of the individual in the community. Perhaps intended as a response to the critics who found the earlier work's preoccupation with the individual "self" too narrow, the latter *masnavî* speaks of the inevitable bond existing between the individual and the community in the ideal (Islamic) society. The community derives its

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strength from the individual members, while it also offers the necessary ground for the individual self-realization. From the cardinal Muslim belief in the Oneness of God (*Tawhîd*), Iqbal derives the political theory of Muslim unity, and its unique identity, in the modern world. His crucial notion of *markaz-e mahsûs* (to which I shall return in a later chapter) is delineated and elaborated in the Rumûz. Iqbal, however, is emphatic in pointing out that the message of Rumûz is not limited to the Muslims, but that it has a universal appeal and application.

In 1923, Iqbal published his Payâm-e Mashreq (The Message of the East), which was intended as an answer to Goethe's West-östlicher Diwan and dedicated to Amîr Amân Allâh, the King of Afghanistan (1919-29). In 1812, in the midst of the European Romantic infatuation with the Orient, Von Hammer's complete translation of the Divân of Hâfez of Shîrâz appeared in German and soon became an influential canon in the so-called "Oriental" movement in German literature and thought. Fascinated by the work of Hâfez, Goethe composed his West-östlicher Diwan. Iqbal's work in the Payâm, in turn, has been acclaimed as "a genuine attempt of a qualified Eastern poet, endowed with wide knowledge of Western literature and thought . . . to enter into dialogue with Europe" (Schimmel, 1963: 45).

The core of the Payâm-e Mashreq consists of "Lâla-ye Tûr" (The Tulip of Sinai), a collection of *rubâ'îs* (quatrains). Some of these quatrains are pointedly references to some Iqbalian themes treated in Asrâr and Rumûz. The second part of Payâm-e Mashreq is entitled "Afkâr" (Thoughts, Reflections) and consists of a series of

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poems written in various Persian meters and forms. These poems contain Iqbal's philosophical reflections and contemplations. The poem "The Conquest of Nature" (*Taskhîr-e Fetrat*), for example, narrates God's creation of Adam; Satan's refusal to acknowledge Adam's mastery; Satan's temptation of Adam--leading to the latter's *triumphal* exit from the Paradise; and finally Adam's repentance in the presence of God in the Day of Judgment (PM 85-88; KF 255-58). "Afkâr" is more or less an amalgamation of philosophical statements in the form of dialogues (e.g., between God and the human being, knowledge and love, philosophy and poetry, the bookworm and the moth, the snow and the mountain stream, the raindrop and the sea, the eagle and the fish, two gazelles, the houri and the poet, etc.).

"May-e Bâqî" (The Residuary Wine), the third section of Payâm-e Mashreq, is a collection of *ghazals* modeled after the style of the great classical masters of lyric poetry in Persian. Conventional topics in classical Persian *ghazals* (such as themes of "love," "yearning," "nightingale," "the tavern and the *sâqî*") assume remarkably novel nuances in most of Iqbal's *ghazals* (PM 141; KF 311-54). The last part of Payâm-e Mashreq is entitled "Naqsh-e Farang" (The Picture of the West). In this section, Iqbal engages critically with the ideas, and ideals, of a number of leading intellectual figures of Europe. This section imparts one of the central themes of Iqbal's thought: the contrast between, and contraposition of, the Western and Eastern patterns of thinking. Iqbal obviously draws clear lines of demarcation between the Eastern and Western models of thought, and, subsequently, privileges the Eastern, especially the "Islamic,"

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world view over the European one. Nonetheless, he borrows abundantly, and creatively, from Western thinkers. In addition to such political figures as Lenin and Wilhelm, philosophers and theorists like Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Marx, Comte, Bergson, and Einstein, as well poets and writers such as Goethe, Byron, Browning, Tolstoy, and Petofi are all directly or indirectly Iqbal's interlocutors in Payâm-e Mashreq (PM 185-222; KF 357-92). Payâm-e Mashreq ends with "Khurda" (Fragments) which consists of a number of miscellaneous brief verses (PM 218-22; KF 388-92).

Zabûr-e 'Ajam (Persian Psalms) was first published in 1927. The book has two sections, both containing mostly *ghazals* (lyrics). The two famous *masnavîs* of Iqbal, "Gulshan-e Râz-e Jadîd" (The New Garden of Mystery) and "Bandagî-nâmah" (The Book of Servitude) are also included in Zabûr-e 'Ajam. The theme of "love" sketched in the Payâm is treated more fully in the Zabûr. In one of the *ghazals* Iqbal writes:

Bar 'aql-e falak paymâ turkâna shabîkhûn beh,

Yak zarra-ye dard-e del az 'elm-e Falâtûn beh. (ZA 23; KF 415)

Better is the robbers' train

Than the heaven-pacing brain.

Better one distress of heart

Than all Plato's learned art. (PP 17).

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In various poems in Zabûr-e 'Ajam Iqbal sees himself more as a follower in the path of realizing the "self" than an already accomplished and self-contained "being." As such, though he often is critical of "reason" and "wisdom," he does admit that reason could, ultimately, be availing not in- and for-itself, but for the sake of the development of human personality towards self-realization.

Iqbal composed "Gulshan-e Râz-e Jadîd" as a rejoinder to Sadr al-Dîn Mahmûd Shabistarî's Gulshan-e Râz. Originally, Shabistarî's Gulshan-e Râz contained seventeen questions and answers, but the extant text of the book has only fifteen questions.[2] In his "Gulshan-e Râz-e Jadîd" Iqbal deals only with nine questions, but he covers most of the ground of the original Gulshan. He contemplates such questions as the nature of thinking, the quest for knowledge, the union of necessity and possibility, the severance of the eternal and the temporal, the issue of inner journey, the existence of a part greater than the whole, the designation of the Perfect Man, the implications of the statement "I am the Truth," and, finally, the mystery of Unity perpetuated by the Muslim Gnostics.

The brief *masnavî* "Bandagî-nâmah" (The Book of Servitude) is a statement on the *culture* of servitude. In the Prologue Iqbal contends that:

Az ghulâmî del be-mîrad dar badan

Az ghulâmî ruh gardad bâr-e tan.

Az ghulâmî zu'f-e pîrî dar shabbâb

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Az ghulâmî shir-e ghâb afganda nâb.

Az ghulâmî bazm-e mellat fard-fard

În u ân bâ în u ân andar nabard. (ZA 180; KF 572)

Bondage kills the heart in the live body

And makes the very soul a burden on it.

It enervates youth into palsied age.

It blunts the mighty jungle lion's teeth.

It tears the fabric of society to shreds,

Making each individual go his own way. (NRG 50)

"Bandagî-nâmah" explains, albeit briefly, the "Arts of the Slaves" and how servitude degenerates life and produces an entire culture of death, immobility, and decadence:

Dar ghulâmî tan ze jân gardad tahî

Az tan-e bî-jân cheh omîd-e behî.

Zawq-e îjâd u numûd az del ravad

Adamî az khwîshtan ghâfel ravad . . .

Kîsh-e ô taqlîd u kârash âzarîst

Nudrat andar mazhab-e ô kâfarîst.

Tâzagîhâ vâhm u shakk âfzayadash

Kuhna va farsûda khush mî âyadash. (ZA 188-89; KF 580-81)

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In servitude the body is drained of

The soul: What good can be expected from

A body with no soul? The heart is shorn

Of all joy of creation and all zest . . .

The credo of the slave is imitation

And his job is to make false images.

In his religion novelty is sin.

New things he is in his element. (NRG 59)

In 1936 appeared the *masnavî* Pas Cheh Bâyad Kard Ay Aqvâm-e Sharq? (What Is To Be Done, O People of the East?) along with a brief earlier *masnavî* Musâfer (The Traveler, 1934). In the Prologue to the poem Iqbal addresses his objective for the composition of the work; his broader aim is to counter the "mutiny" (*baghâvat*) of the "Intellect" which threatens the "dominion of Love":

Sepâh-e tâza bar angîzam az valâyat-e 'eshq

Ke dar haram khatari az baghâvat-e kherad ast . . .

Gumân mabar ke kherad râ hesâb u mîzân nîst

Negâh-e banda-ye mu'men qîyyâmat-e kherad ast. (PBK 5; KF 801)

A new army I shall raise from the dominion of Love

For there is a danger in the sanctuary of Intellect's mutiny . . .

Think not that the Intellect has no bound or reckoning

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The glance of the devout believer is Intellect's doomsday.

Nonetheless, Iqbal expounds chiefly a theory of politics in Pas Cheh Bâyad Kard? He contrasts, for instance, *Hekmat-e Kalîmî* (The Wisdom (or Rule) of Moses) with *Hekmat-e Fer'awnî* (The Wisdom (or Rule) of Pharoah). The first one is in essence a theocentric one; the second one is obviously different:

Hekmat-e arbâb-e dîn kardam 'ayân

Hekmat-e arbâb-e kîn râ ham bedân.

Hekmat-e arbâb-e kîn makr ast u fan

Makr va fan: takhrîb-e jân, ta'mîr-e tan.

Hekmati az band-e dîn âzâdah-ye

Az maâam-e shawq dûr uftâdah-ye. (PBK 15; KF 811)

I have described the wisdom (or rule) of the men of God

Do also know the cleverness (or rule) of the men of Evil.

The cleverness of the men of Evil means deception and craftiness

That is, the destruction of the soul and the nurturing of the body.

It is a cleverness free from the bounds of religion--

Fallen distant from the site of ecstasy.

The characteristic of "our" era, Iqbal maintains, is that the nations of the Orient, especially the Muslim nations, under Western colonial and imperial domination, are

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suffering from the persistence of the Pharoanic paradigm in the sphere of politics and society.

As seh qarn în ummat-e khwâr u zabûn

Zenda bî sûz u surûr-e andarûn . . .

'Asr-e mâ mâ râ ze mâ bîgâna kard,

Az jamâl-e Mustafâ bîgâna kard. (PBK 23-24; KF 819-20)

For three centuries this wretched and miserable [Muslim] nation

Has lived without internal rupture and delight . . .

Our era has alienated us from ourselves

It has alienated us from the splendor of the Prophet.

In a latter poem, Iqbal maintains that since Europe itself has now come to an absolute "spiritual" impasse, it is time for the nations of the East to reclaim their own identity and "illuminate their dark days" again. His indignation over the Italian attack on Abyssinia in August 1936, and the complicity of other Western powers vis-à-vis this aggression, pervade throughout Pas Cheh Bâyad Kard?

The *masnavî* Musâfer is a brief record of Iqbal's visit to Afghanistan at the invitation of Nader Shah to help chart the educational system of the country. In this work, Iqbal relates the notion of Divine Unity to the process of self-discovery and self-definition of the individual:

Chîst dîn? daryâftan asrâr-e khwîsh

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Zendagî marg ast bî dîdâr-e khwîsh. (MS 58; KF 854)

What is religion? The discovery of the secrets of the self,

Life is death without the realization of the self.

In Afghanistan Iqbal visits, among other places, the graves of the poet Sanâ'î and the Emperor Mahmûd in the city of Ghazna. He stresses the importance of spirituality and devotion to the cause of Islam for the Afghans--whose "bravery" and "warlike character" as a people Iqbal had always admired--to build a *model* Islamic polity.

Armaghân-e Hejâz (The Gift from Hejâz (Arabia)) is Iqbal's last work and was published posthumously in November 1938. The first part of the work (comprising almost three-fourth of the volume) is in Persian; the second part is in Urdu. The Persian part contains five "addresses": to God, to the Prophet Muhammad, to the (Islamic) Nation, to the Human Universe, and to the Fellow Companions of the Path. As Iqbal's last work, Armaghân reaffirms his fundamental belief in what he considered to be the "true" religion of Islam. He re-emphasizes the centrality of love in any spiritual quest and considers the realization of the authentic identity of the self as the prerequisite for the constitution and maintenance of an ideal collectivity.

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The Ascending Terrain of Jâvîd-nâmah

Jâvîd-nâmah, a long didactic narrative published in 1932, is generally regarded as Iqbal's *magnum opus*. Some critics have regarded Jâvîd-nâmah as Iqbal's response to Dante's Divina Commedia. In what follows, I shall deal with this particular work in some length and detail. Jâvîd-nâmah is the drama of a "mystical" journey through the celestial spheres. As a pilgrim, the narrator encounters and converses with a series of figures--some mythical, others historical.

The poem begins with an "Invocation" (*Munâjât*) in which the narrator expresses his anguish in the finite world and yearns for transcendence and union with the Infinite.

"Prologue in Heaven" (*Tamhîd-e Âsmânî*)--sung by the angels--depicts the creation of man as a momentous event with far reaching consequences both for the humans *and* for the Creator Himself:

Furûgh-e musht-e khâk az nurîyyân afzûn shavad rûzî
Zamîn az kawkab-e taqdîr-e ô gardûn shavad rûzî . . .
Chenân mawzûn shavad în pîsh-e pâ uftâdah mazmunî
Keh yazdân râ del az ta'sîr-e ô pur khûn shavad rûzî. (JN 16; KF 604).

Such glory shall the man of clay
Own far above the angels' light

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That with his star of destiny

He'll make the earth like heaven bright . . .

Soon fashioned forth in rhythmic poise,

This subject old, this common man,

Will with his rapturous impact

The heart of even God attain. (PE 8-9)

In the "Prologue on Earth" (*Tamhîd-e Zamînî*), the spirit of Mawlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn of Balkh, known as Rûmî, appears to the narrator. It is the former, in fact, who subsequently refers to the narrator as Zendarûd (literally the Living Stream). In the ensuing dialogue between Rûmî and the narrator, Rûmî explains the meaning of ascension (*me'râj*) to Zendarûd. Anxiety-ridden, the narrator then encounters Zarvân (the spirit of time and space), conceived as a sorcerer. As the stars are singing, the narrator starts his journey to the Higher Universe (*'âlam-e 'ulwâ*). Rûmî assumes the role of the guide in this intellectually tumultuous trip.

The first sphere the narrator visits in his ascension is the Lunar Sphere (*Falak-e Qamar*). Rûmî--the guide--takes Zendarûd to an Indian ascetic (paradoxically nicknamed Jehândust, or "the friend of the world") who lives in seclusion in a cave. Rûmî introduces Zendarûd to the Indian ascetic who looks to him favorably and recounts his own encounter with a heavenly angel. He predicts that the East will soon be awakened and find its authentic Self:

Guft: hangâm-e tulû'-e khâvar ast

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Aftâb-e tâza ô râ dar bar ast . . .

Ay khush ân qawmî ke jân-e ô tapîd

Az gel-e knud khwîsh râ bâz âfarîd.

'Arshîyyân râ subh-e 'îd ân sâ'atî

Chûn shavad bîdâr chashm-e mellatî. (JN 37; KF 625)

He said, "It is the twilight that shall bring

A new sun in the East . . .

How happy are the people who possess

A flaming soul and recreate themselves.

That moment is the very morn of Eid

In heaven, when a nation wakes again." (PE 28)

After meeting Surûsh, the narrator is led by Rûmî to the Valley of Yarghamîd, the realm of the prophetic vision. There, he comes across the tablets (*tâsîns*) of Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, and Muhammad, respectively.

From the Sphere of the Moon Rûmî and Zendarûd move on to the Sphere of Mercury (*Falak-e 'Atârud*) where reside

Pâk mârdân chûn Fazîl u Bûsa'îd

'Ârefân mesl-e Junayd u Bâyazîd. (JN 60; KF 648)

Those of lofty rank--the pious like Fâzil and Bûsa'îd

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And seers great Junayd and Bâyazîd. (PE 48)

Soon afterwards, the two pilgrims encounter Sayyid Jamâl al-Dîn al-Afghânî (a forerunner of the Islamic revivalist movement in the latter part of the nineteenth century) and Sa'îd Halîm Pâshâ (the Turkish statesman and a social reformer). After Rûmî introduces the narrator as Zendarûd to al-Afghânî, the latter queries about the present conditions of the Muslims. Zendarûd's response touches upon the threats posed to the world of Islam by Western imperialism and by such ideologies as nationalism and socialism:

Dar zamîr-e mellat-e gîtî shekan

Dîda am âvîzesh-e dîn u vatan.

Rûh dar tan murda az zu'f-e yaqîn

Nâ-umîd az quvvat-e dîn-e mubîn

Turk u Îran u 'Arab mast-e Farang

Har kasî râ dar gulû shast-e Farang.

Mashreq az sultânî-ye maghreb kharâb

Eshterâk az dîn u mellat burda tâb. (JN 62; KF 650)

The [Muslim] nation destined to transform the world

Is torn 'twixt faith and fatherland. Their faith

Is atrophied, their soul is dead, no hope

Have they in the vitality of truth.

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The Turks, Iranians, Arabs lie benumbed

With Europe's noose around their throats. The West

With its imperialism has wrecked the East

And socialism dimmed the flame of faith. (PE 50)

It is in the Sphere of Mercury that the basic premises of Iqbal's political theory are presented. His vision of the ideal Islamic state, his views on Marxism and socialism, and his relation to both imperialism and nationalism are conspicuously articulated in this part.

The next sphere is the Sphere of Venus (*Falak-e Zuhra*) where all pagan and pre-Abrahamic gods are gathered. Baal, the quintessential heathen god, sings joyously of modern man's separation from Abraham's path and declares the return of the old gods: "*Ay khudâyân-e kuhan, vaqt ast vaqt!*" (Our age has come, O ancient gods, our age!). From Venus the narrator and his guide traverse to the Sphere of Mars (*Falak-e Marîkh*) where they find an ideal world of spiritual and corporeal harmony. Soon appears an old Martian astronomer from his observatory and greets the two visitors in Persian--"the language of Tûsî and Khayyâm."

The chief attribute of the land of Marghdîn, according to the old Martian sage, is that:

Kas dar în-jâ sâ'el u mahrum nîst

'Abd u mawlâ hâkem u mahkûm nîst. (JN 107; KF 695)

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No destitutes we know; no lords, no serfs,

No rulers and no bondsmen here exist. (PE 97)

Ironically, before leaving the sphere of Mars, Zendarûd encounters a woman who claims to be a prophet, a woman whose "glow of complexion and beaming brow [does] not reflect the luster of the soul." The woman's message, nonetheless, is significant in itself:

Ay zanân! ay mâdarân! ay khwâharân!

Zîstan tâ kay mesâl-e delbarân?

Delbarî andar jahân mazlumî ast

Delbarî mahkumî u mahrûmî ast.

Dar dô gîsû shâna gardânîm mâ

Mard râ nakhchîr-e khud dânîm mâ.

Mard sayyâdi bah nakhchîri kunad

Gerd-e tô gardad keh zanjîri kund! . . .

Hambar-e ô bûdan âzâr-e hayât

Vasl-e ô zahr u ferâq-e u nabât.

Mâr-e pîchân, az kham u pîchash gurîz

Zahrhâyash râ ba khûn-e khud marîz! (JN 111; KF 699)

Tell me, O mothers, sisters, wives! how long

Thou'll like mere darlings live. To be beloved

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Is to be vassals, to be tyrannized.

As we our tresses comb, we think we make

Of man our prey. But in reality

Man is a hound while our mere quarry he

Pretends to be. And as he dances round

He fetters us . . .

In union with him

There's poison while his separation's sweet.

To be his mate is torture sore. Beware

This serpent's coils; let not his venom flow

Into your blood. (PE 101-102)

The old Martian sage who accompanies Zendarûd and Rûmî denies that the woman is actually a Martian; she must be an implanted European, intent to disturb the Martian social harmony. Iqbal's portrayal of the "feminist" message of this woman curiously betrays his own views vis-à-vis women's status within the society he envisages for the Muslims of his time.

The question of "love" constitutes the core of the Sphere of Jupiter (*Falak-e Mushtarî*). The "glorious spirits" (*arvâh-e jalîlah*) of the three eternal wanderers (the Muslim mystic Hallâj, the Urdu poet Ghâlib, and the Persian religious and social reformer and poet Tâhera Qurrat al-'Ayn) are found in this sphere. Hallâj and his

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companions are "eternal wanderers" because their "being" is defined by their constant "becoming":

Bâ maqâmi dar na mîsazîm u bas

Mâ sarâpâ zawq-e parvâzîm u bas.

Har zamân dîdan tapîdan kâr-e mâst

Bî par u bâlî parîdan kâr-e mâst. (JN 134; KF 722)

Impossible for us to be confined

To place, we only yearn to soar. To see

And then to quiver is all we must do;

To fly in space unfeathered and unwinged. (PE 125)

Rûmî then leads the poet to the Sphere of Saturn (*Falak-e Zuhal*) where Zendarûd witnesses a canoe in the midst of the dreadful Sea of Blood (*qulzum-e khûnîn*). The two men who ride the canoe are Ja'far and Sâdeq, historical figures whose acts of treachery helped the British defeat the Indian resistance.

Finally, it is in "Beyond the Spheres" (*Ân Sû-ye Aflâk*) that Zendarûd meets Nietzsche, "the German *savant*" (*farzânah-ye Âlmanî*):

Bar sughû-e în jahân-e chûn u chand

Bû mardi bâ sedâ-yi dardmand

Dîda-ye ô az 'uqâbân tîz-tar

Tal'at-e ô shâhed-e sûz-e jegar.

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Dam bah dam sûz-e darûn-e ô fuzûd

Bar labash bayti keh sad bârash surûd:

"Na Jebrîli, na ferdawsi, na hûri, nî khudâvandi

Kaf-e khâki keh mî-sûzad ze jân-e âruzûmandi!" (JN 151-52; KF 739-40).

On one end of this world of how and why

There lived a man whose voice was tragedy.

His eyes were sharper than e'en hawk's; his face

Was radiant with the fire that in his breast

Glowed ceaselessly. And he oft sang this verse:

"Neither for Gabriel nor Paradise,

Nor heaven's damsels, nor for God I cry:

I crave a mole of dust that is consumed

By a yearning soul." (PE 138-39).

Rûmî, in response to Zendarûd's query, speaks of Nietzsche as a wonderer like Hallâj, yet:

Râhraw râ kas neshân az rah nadâd

Sad khalal dar vâredât-e ô futâd.

Naqd bûd u kas 'ayâr ô râ nakard,

Kârdâni mard-e kâr ô râ na-kard.

'Âsheqi dar âh-e khud gum gashtah-ye

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Sâleki dar râh-e khud gum gashtah-ye.

Mastî-ye ô har zajâji râ shekast

Az khudâ bebrîd u ham az khud gusast! (JN 152-53; KF 740-41).

None showed the wanderer his way; so chaos grew

In his experience. A coin of gold

He was, which none could then evaluate,

Him none could utilize. A lover was

Enwrapped in his own sighs, a traveler

Thus lost his path. His wine all beakers broke,

He snapped himself from God, and so was torn

From self. (PE 140)

For Iqbal, Nietzsche's project was, ultimately, "a failure." While The Reconstruction attributes Nietzsche's failure to the fact that his "vision was solely determined by his internal forces, and remained unproductive for want of external guidance in his spiritual life" (RRT 195), Jâvîd-nâmah elaborates further that Nietzsche's failure should be sought in his reaching the stage of denial of gods, yet failing to get to the Qur'anic "but" as pronounced in the cardinal Islamic precept of "There is no God *but* He" (Qur'an sura II: 163):

Zendagî sharh-e eshârât-e khudîst

Lâ va illâ az maqâmât-e khudîst.

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Ô ba lâ darmând u tâ illâ naraft,

Az maqâm-e 'abdahû bîgâna raft. (JN 153; KF 741)

All life explains the signs

Of self, whose stages are the 'no' and 'but,'

He [Nietzsche] lingered at the point of 'no' and failed

To gain the stage of 'but'; nor realized

The rank and reach too of His worshipper. (PE 140)

In his encounter with *Shâh-e Hamadân*, Sayyid 'Alî Hamadânî, Zendarûd is reminded of the necessity of binary opposition, embodied in the perpetual strife between the Good and Evil, in the process of realization of the human identity. Iqbal explains that the existence of an adversary in the person of Satan better articulates the manifestations of God. The narrator then meets the Kashmiri poet Ghanî and the Hindi poet Bartari-Hari. Of the nature of "poetic quest" the latter says:

Ân del-e garmi keh dârad dar kenâr

Pîsh-e Yazdân ham namî-gîrad qarâr

Jân-e mâ râ lezzat andar justujûst,

She'r râ sûz-e maqâm-e âruzûst.

Ay tô az tâk-e sukhan mast-e mudâm,

Gar tô râ âyad muyasar în maqâm.

Bâ du bayti dar jahân-e sang u khesht

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Mî tavân burdan del az hûr-e behesht! (JN 170; KF 758)

The heart in him [the poet] that hotly quest doth not

Before God even find repose. To search

Unceasingly is our sole bliss; desire

To poetry lends its silent, quiv'ring fire.

O thou that drinkest juice of poesy's grapes,

If thou shouldst e'er attain this rank, know then

That, from the world of brick and stone, a verse

Entraps the hearts of nymphs of paradise. (PE 159)

The function and purpose of the poetic act, as such, is an integral part of Iqbal's overall theory of the "self" and "identity." Poetry is also considered to be a strong and effective device in the furthering of possibilities of resistance in part of the people of the East vis-à-vis Western cultural and political hegemony. This point is further discussed in the section that follows.

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The early part of the twentieth century was a period where significant discursive changes occurred in the sphere of poetry and poetics throughout the area where Persian was culturally prevalent. The social mission of poetry and the political task of the poet acquired a paramount importance in this era. In Iran, for instance, "All attempts at giving expression to patriotic, progressive, or democratic aspirations in poetry [were] interpreted as a welcome departure from an ossified tradition and part of the drive toward a new kind of poetry. In a great many essays on poetry, mostly published in the burgeoning press of the constitutional era, an expression of these sentiments [was] followed by appeals to poets to inculcate in their readers the ideals of liberty, constitutionalism, and the rule of law. In these exhortations, we begin to see a vision of poetry that at times goes beyond thematic concerns to address features of the poem which have to do with the poet's conception of his craft" (Karimi-Hakkak 1995: 62-63).[3] In Afghanistan, too, under the influence of Mahmûd Tarzî and his associates in the journal Serâj al-Akhbâr (1911-1918) such topics as political autonomy, social progress, cultural modernity, etc., increasingly became the subject of poetic compositions and the writings on and about poetry (Ghani 1982).[4] In Tajikistan, the influential "Movement for Modernity" (*Harakat-e Tajaddud*), inculcated by figures such as Ahmad Dânesh and Sadr al-Dîn 'Aynî, charted a novel poetic discursive

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formation.[5] Iqbal's Persian poetry should be studied, in part, within the overall context of the emergent shifts that were taking place in Persian literature in general.

In the System of Transcendental Idealism, Friedrich Schellling writes that "Philosophy was born and nourished by poetry in the infancy of knowledge, and with it all those sciences it has guided toward perfection; we may thus expect them, on completion, to flow back like so many individual streams into the universal ocean of poetry from which they took their source" (Schelling 1978: 232). Iqbal goes further and claims that, as an intuitive phenomenon, poetry is not only the beginning and end of philosophy but also superior to it. For Iqbal, the relationship between poetry and philosophy is analogous to the relationship between love and wisdom. In a poem entitled "Hekmat va She'r" (Philosophy and Poetry), in Payâm-e Mashreq, Iqbal alludes to the romantic tale of Layla va Majnûn--the archetypal love story in various Muslim cultures--in order to contrast the diverse paths of the philosopher Abû Alî Ibn Sînâ (the Latin "Avicenna") and the poet Mawlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn Balkhî (Rûmî) in attaining their goals:

Bû 'Alî andar ghubâr-e nâqah gum

Dast-e Rûmî pardah-ye mahmel gereft.

În farûtar raft u tâ gawhar rasîd

Ân ba gerdâbi chu gel manzel gereft.

Haq agar sûzi nadârad hekmat ast

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She'r mîgardad chu sûz-e del gereft. (PM 106; KF 276)

Bû 'Alî got lost in the dust kicked up by Layla's dromedary,

While Rûmî's hand seized the curtain of her litter.

The latter dived deeper, deeper still, till he came upon the pearl he was after,

But the former got caught in a whirlpool like a piece of straw.

If the truth has no fervor, it is plain philosophy

It is poetry when it is derived from the heart's earnest fervor. (ME 71)

Furthermore, poetry for Iqbal is also a profoundly *intuitive* process and, as such, it is intrinsically related to religion and religious experience. Following the Romantic aesthetic theory Iqbal defines religion not simply as the moral law but as the practice of *intellectual* intuition. He then identifies the motivating forces of the arts and poetry with the mental powers of religion:

Dami dar khwîshtan khalvat guzîdam

Jahâni lâzavâli âfarîdam. (ZA 146; KF 538)

I spent a moment in my inner solitude,

And there emerged a world which knows no finitude. (NRG 4-5)

If the ultimate objective of all human activity is the creative and exuberant realization of the self in life, human artistic creativity, then, must represent and embody this process.

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Such a conception of poetry is of a piece with Iqbal's overall cosmology. "In a poetic universe poetry is life and life poetry, and both are endless creation. The creative impulse . . . which is the primal source of all being, flows through innumerable human selves into the sea of becoming which is life," writes a student of Iqbal's poetry (Hussain 1971: 327). Art and poetry must create in human beings a yearning for eternal life and vitality, especially because the poet is by *nature* engaged in a restless, and relentless, quest for such a life. In the poem "Hûr va Shâ'er" (The Houri and the Poet), in Payâm-e Mashreq, the Houri of the Heaven is clearly envious of the poet's creative abilities:

Hama sâz-e justujû-îyy, hama sûz-e âruzû-yyî

Nafasi keh mî-gudâzî, ghazali keh mî-sarâ-yyî.

Ba navâ-îyy âfarîdî cheh jahân-e del kushâ-yyî

Keh Aram ba chashmam âyad chû telesm-e sîmîyâ-yyî. (PM 127; KF 296).

In every song you sing, in every breath you draw,

There is a quest, a pining for things yet to be.

O what a wondrous world you have fashioned with your songs,

It makes me feel as if Heaven were illusory. (ME 91-92)

In his response to the Houri, the poet refers to the inevitable quest that poets are unavoidably engaged in:

Cheh kunam keh fetrat-e man ba maqâm dar nasâzad

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Del-e nâ-sabûr dâram chû sabâ ba lâla zâri.

Chû nazar qarâr gîrad ba negâr-e khûbrû-yyî

Tapad ân zamân del-e man pa-ye khûbtar negâri.

Ze sharar setârah jûyam, ze setârah âftâbi

Sar-e manzeli nadâram keh bemîram az qarâri.

Chû ze bâdah-ye bahârî qadahi kashîdah khîzam

Ghazali degar sarâyam ba havâ-ye nawbâhâri.

Talabam nahâyat-e ân keh nahâyati nadârad

Ba negâh-e nâ-shakîbi, ba del-e omîdvâri. (PM 127-28; KF 297-98)

What can I do? I cannot stay at rest, for I

Am like the zephyr blowing over hill and plain.

As soon as my gaze comes to rest on a fair face

My heart begins to yearn for a still fairer one.

From spark to star, from star to sun, progressively--

Such is my flight. To stop would be sheer death for me.

When I rise, having quaffed a cup of vernal wine,

I sing a song of yet another spring to be.

I seek the end of that which has no end at all

With ever-hopeful heart and never-wearing eye. (ME 92)

Elsewhere, Iqbal writes:

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Fetrat-e shâ'er sarâpâ justujûst

Khâleq u parvardegâr-e ârzûst. (JN 44; KF 632)

The poet's nature is constant search

Creates he and sustains man's high desire. (PE 34)

This quest of the poets is a creative process, which, in turn, marks the foundation of human existence. In "Bandagî-nâmah," for instance, Iqbal speaks of the human will for ever creating (*zawq-e îjâd*) and of the artist as the one most endowed with this capacity:

Ân hunarmandi keh bar fetrat fuzûd

Râz-e khud râ bar negâh-e mâ kushûd . . .

Hûr-e ô az hûr-e jannat khushtar ast

Munker-e Lât u Manâtash kâfar ast.

Âfarînad kâ'enât-e dîgarî

Qalb râ bakhshad hayyât-e dîgarî.

Bahr u mawj-e khwîsh râ bar khud zanad

Pîsh-e mâ mawjash guhar mî afganad. (ZA 188; KF 580)

An artist, when he adds to Nature, brings

To light the secret of his inner Self . . .

The houris he creates are lovelier

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Than those of Heaven; the images he shapes

Are more authentic than Lât and Manât:

Denying this is like denying God.

He brings into existence a new world

And gives a new life to the heart of man.

He is a sea which hurls its waves upon

Itself and which casts its pearls at our feet. (NRG 58)

The creative nature of the arts is often so crucial that the process of artistic production becomes *almost* an end-in-itself. The artist (and the poet) can be Abraham the idol-breaker or Âzar (an uncle of Abraham and an emblematic idol-worshipper); both cases, however, involve an intense degree of creativeness:

'Ayn-e Ebrâhîm u 'ayn-e Âzar ast

Dast-e ô ham butshekan ham butgar ast.

Har benâ-ye kuhna râ bâr mîkanad

Jumla mawjûdât râ sûhân zanad. (ZA 188; 580)

He [the artist] is the essence of both Abrahm and Âzar,

And his hands both make and break idols.

He digs up every old foundation

And polishes up all creations. (NRG 59)

Nonetheless, the main difference remains:

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Ay basâ shâ'er keh az sehr-e hunar

Rahzan-e qalb ast u eblîs-e nazar! (JN 44; KF 632)

How many poets with the spell of art

But rob the heart and satanize the sight! (PE 34)

Although poetry can be a unique act of creative imagination, the poet is not autonomous (in the Kantian or Crocean sense). To insist on the autonomy of poetry, Iqbal felt, is a frivolous endeavor, because the referents of even the most "poetic" of elements have to be found in the larger context of the human experience. For Iqbal, an art without reference to what he considers life, humanity, and society is shallow. Iqbal makes a clear distinction between "poetry" *proper* and mere "poetizing," though he often uses the term *shâ'erî* to refer to both. In the *masnavî* "Gulshan-e Râz-e Jadîd" a poet is associated, on the one hand, with mere storytelling and idle talk (*afsânah-bastan*) and, on the other hand, with the vocation of the archangel Gabriel. The poet has the capacity to choose between the two. Iqbal's own choice is clear:

Na pendârî ke man bî bâda mastam

Mesâl-e shâ'erân afsânah-bastam.

Na bînî khayr az ân mard-e farû dast

Ke bar man tuhmat-e she'r u sukhan bast . . .

Ba Jibrîl-e amîn ham-dâstânam,

Raqîb u qâsed u darbân nadânam. (ZA 146; KF 538)

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Do not think I am drunk without an honest draught of wine,

That mere poetic fantasy is all this talk of mine.

No good will ever come from any churlish boor

Who lays the charge of versifying at my door . . .

I am Gabriel's interlocutor

Who knows no rival, no doorman, no courier. (NRG 4-5)

When it serves to shape humanity, poetry could claim direct lineage to the heritage of the prophets:

She 'r râ maqsûd agar âdam-garîst

Shâ 'erî ham vares-e paygham-barîst. (JN 44; KF 632)

When poetry doth aim at shaping man

It claims the heritage of prophet-hood. (PE 34)

Iqbal denounces those poets who write "decadent," "life-negating"--even if technically flawless--poetry for such poetry is detrimental to the human will to action and creativity. In the following passage quoted from Iqbal's early work Asrâr-e Khudî, the poet targets "decadent" poetry. In such nations in bondage as India, where freedom does not exist, Iqbal indicates, "decadent" poetry is indubitably prevalent:

Wây-ye qawmî kaz ajal gîrad barât

Shâ 'erash vâbûsad az zawq-e hayât.

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Khush namâyad zesht râ âyyînah ash

Dar jegar sad neshtar az nûshînah ash.

Bûsah-ye ô tâzagî az gul barad

Zawq-e parvâz az del-e bulbul barad . . .

Naghmah hâyash az delat duzdad subât

Marg râ az sehr-e ô dânî hayât . . .

Dar yam-e andîshah andâzad tô râ

Az 'amal bîgânah mîsâzad tô râ . . .

Khwâb râ khushtar ze bîdârî shumurd

Âtash-e mâ az nafas hâyash fesurd (AK 36-37; KF 36-37).

Woe to a people that resigns itself to death,

And whose poet turns away from the joy of living!

His mirror shows beauty as ugliness,

His honey leaves a hundred stings in the heart.

His kiss robs the rose of freshness,

He takes away from the nightingale's heart the joy of flying . . .

His melodies steal firmness from thine heart,

His magic persuades thee that death is life . . .

He plunges thee in a sea of thought,

He makes thee a stranger to action . . .

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Slumber he deemed sweeter than waking:

Our fire was quenched by his breath. (TSS 63-66).

During his visit to Afghanistan in 1933, in his address to the members of Kabul Literary Society, Iqbal expounded his views on the mission of poetry and the task of the poet in the constitution and upholding of the national imagination:

> I have a firm belief that Art, i.e. literature, paintings, music, or architecture help life and serve it. I must, therefore, term art as an invention rather than recreation. A poet can destroy or build the very basis of a nation . . . . It is vital for the poets of this nation [Afghanistan] to be the true leaders of young people. They should not portray the grandeur of death rather than that of life. When art glorifies 'death', it becomes devastating . . . . A nation does not depend on mere exterior. The imagination plays a vital role in the life-history of a nation. A poet portrays high ideals and makes people live according to those ideals. The nations are born in the hands of poets and die in the hands of statesmen . . . . A nation which is treading on the path of progress, must be fed properly and its collective 'self' carefully reared. It is the responsibility of the members of this society to create a new spirit among the youth, consolidate their views through literature, and give them such spiritual health that they recognize themselves and sing forth (qtd in Hamid 1980: 89-90).

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Iqbal's own work can be seen as the embodiment of the kind of poetry he encouraged other poets to write. His early Urdu songs "Our India," "The National Song for Indian Children," and "The Himalayas" adhered to a deep-felt Indian sense of patriotism. After his return from Europe, however, the question of Muslim identity in the British-dominated India often preoccupied him intellectually and affected his poetry to a great extent. The following lines in Jâvîd-nâmah demonstrates the importance Iqbal attached to poetry in the construction, and elaboration, of the nation:

Sha'er andar sînah-ye mellat chû del

Mellat-i bî shâ'erî anbâr-e gel. (JN 44; KF 632)

In a nation's breast the poet is the heart

For if a people lack in poetry they are a heap of clay. (PE 34)

The poet, according to Iqbal, has a dual task to accomplish. The poet must attempt to diminish the existential chaos that signifies the human condition in modern society, thus enabling him to transcend the limits of his temporal experience and see his finite existence as part of a larger infinity. Furthermore, the poet must help to create bonds of solidarity among the individual members of society, so that the society develops into "an organic whole, a living individual with a heart, a mind, and a soul." In this process, the poet, "should himself be the forerunner and prototype of the perfect man [in the perfect society]--rebel, iconoclast, revolutionary, hero of mortal strife, champion of high ideals, and prophet of human progress" (Hussain 1971: 328-32). The poet's

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optimum objective is to imagine a coherent nation (*mellat*) of individual selves (*khudīs*). A nation of imagination, however, is fundamentally a culturally *collective* artifact. To realize this cultural projection in a diverse and multilayered society composed of various (and often contesting) cultures--as colonial India was indeed one such society--will prove to be far more complex and problematical.

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Notes

1 For the life of Iqbal see Zakaria (1993) and Hasan (1978). Schimmel's Gabriel's Wing is still considered the best introduction to the work of Iqbal. See Schimmel (1963).

2 The original Gulshan-e Râz, E. G. Brwone remarks in A Literary History of Persia, "was composed, as the poet himself informs us, in the month of Shawwal 710 . . . in reply to a series of fifteen questions on mystical doctrine propounded by an inquirer from Khurasan named Amir Husayni." See Browne (1969: 147).

3 For a detailed discussion of these "modernist" tendencies in Persian poetry in Iran see Aryanpur, Az Sabâ tâ Nîmâ, vol. II (1354/1976); see also Shafi'i-Kadkani, Advâr-e Sh'er-e Fârsî (1980).

4 Aspects of modern Persian literature in Afghanistan have been studied, among others, by Poya-Faryabi (1374/1995) and Razawi (1357/1978).

5 Modern Tajik literature has been least studied by the scholars of Persian. See: Becka (1968) and Hitchins (1982). For a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the concept of "freedom" (*Âzâdî*) in the Persian works of modern thinkers from Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia, see Abdul-Hadi Ha'eri (1374/1995).

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Chapter Four

TRADITION RE-EXAMINED: THE PAST AND POSSIBILITIES

> It isn't that the past casts its light on the present or the present casts its light on the past: rather, an image is that in which the past and the now-time flash into a constellation.
>
> *Walter Benjamin, "Thesis on the Philosophy of History"*

> The borderline work of culture demands a encounter with "newness" that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art . . . renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent "in-between" space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The "past-present" becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living.
>
> *Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture*

The concept of "tradition," like the concept of "culture," is a complex and intricate one: it has always been associated with conservative meanings, it has been instrumental in shaping authority, and it has implied authenticity and continuity. The term *traditio*, a legal term in Roman law, denoted "delivery," "transmission," "conveyance," or "surrender." Soon after the advent of Christianity, tradition was supposed to mean "handing down" of an oral doctrine. It is in this sense that, in the European intellectual history, both the Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment regarded tradition to mean

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simply the "handing down" of something to someone in trust and obligating the receiver of the trust to keep it intact and unharmed.[1]

As a historically engendered phenomenon, tradition never remains fixed or static: it is rather selectively adopted, modified, and altered.[2] Tradition, in the sense of trust and obligation, occupies a central place in the work of Muhammad Iqbal. Like most Muslim intellectuals of his generation, Iqbal's perception of the tradition was formed in close conjunction with the challenge of modernity. In addition, it was bound to the tangible presence of colonial order in South Asia. From a theoretical perspective, one could argue, Iqbal proposes neither an unequivocal embrace of modernity (in the broad sense) nor an uncritical abandonment of the tradition. He primarily engages with modernity while rethinking, with the aim of reviving, the Islamic tradition. He concentrates on the limitations, as well as the possibilities, of the tradition throughout the history of Muslim societies. Furthermore, to resuscitate what he terms "Islamic reason" in the modern era, Iqbal insists that Islam is inherently "rational" and that this aspect of the religion should be emphasized in the modern world.

Following the general Orientalist discourse of his time, Iqbal postulates a process of cultural and intellectual decline in Islam: "During the last five hundred years religious thought in Islam has been practically stationary. There was a time when European thought received inspiration from the world of Islam," writes Iqbal in the collection of his influential essays The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam

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(RRT 1962: 7). Nonetheless, Iqbal points to "the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is [now] spiritually moving towards the West." What concerns Iqbal most about this "remarkable phenomenon" is that "the dazzling exterior of European culture may arrest our movement, and we may fail to reach the true inwardness of that culture" (7). Acknowledging that "Since the Middle Ages, when the schools of Muslim theology were completed, infinite advance has taken place in the domain of human thought and experience," Iqbal sets out to *reconstruct* Islamic thought within the context of modern philosophy with due regard to the religious heritage of Islam. It should be noted here that, in his endeavors, Iqbal's gaze is fixed more on what he thought were pressing needs and exigencies of the present. Iqbal's insistence on the reformulation of religious doctrines is founded on a two-fold understanding of Islam in the modern world. Theoretically, Islam is inherently open for reinterpretation; it embraces a realistic, dynamic, and forward-looking approach toward life. Practically, however, the Muslims in the twentieth century suffer from economic, political, cultural, and intellectual backwardness. Strong forces of conservatism, obscurantism, and retrogression, on the one hand, and the imposition of the European colonial power, on the other hand, keep the Muslim community weak and ineffectual. As one scholar comments, "He [Iqbal] is convinced that the Muslims in the twentieth century can ill-afford to keep their religious beliefs altogether insulated from the great strides made by the West in the various domains of human knowledge. Further, Iqbal's interest in the reinterpretation of Islam in terms of modern science and philosophy is essentially and

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primarily of a practical nature and not merely theoretical or academic. Thus alone, he thought, he could bring about the revival of the Muslim community and pull it out of the woeful state of backwardness into which it had fallen" (Sheikh 1982: 103-04). It is with reference to this practical aspect of religion that Iqbal advocates the need for discovering rational foundations of Islam.

It is important, with respect to Iqbal's evaluation of Islam, to see how he approaches religion in general. Religion, in the highest form, is the establishment--or perhaps the rediscovery--of a connection between the finite human being and the infinite Reality. To bring man into contact with the infinite is also the purpose of science. Science, however, is helpful in so far as the understanding of the visible natural phenomena is concerned. Knowledge via science derives from generalizations that are made by a process of conceptual synthesizing and integration of the data furnished by sense-organs. This process could reveal only part of the total reality. The transcendental aspects of reality, nonetheless, remain outside the sphere of scientific knowledge. Hence the significance of religion which aims to capture reality in its *totality*. More importantly, religion, being "essentially a mode of actual living," is also a normative phenomenon that offers the humans certain ethico-political ideals and cultural characteristics around which they could center their deeds and actions.

However, Iqbal is keen to point out that "in view of its function, religion stands in greater need of a rational foundation of its ultimate principles than even the dogmas of science." This rational foundation means not the submission of religion to rationality

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per se: "to rationalize faith is not to admit the superiority of philosophy over religion," Iqbal remarks. "Philosophy, no doubt, has jurisdiction to judge religion, but what is to be judged is of such a nature that it will not submit to the jurisdiction of philosophy except on its own terms. 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" (RRT 2).

Religion involves the complementary *synthesis* of intuition and reflective thought, Iqbal maintains. In The Reconstruction, a significant passage on the nature and character of religious life reads as follows:

> Broadly speaking religious life may be divided into three periods. These may be described as the periods of "Faith," "Thought," and "Discovery." In the first period religious life appears as a form of discipline which the individual or a whole people must accept as an unconditional command without any rational understanding of the ultimate meaning and purpose of that command. This attitude may be of great consequence in the social and political history of a people, but is not of much consequence in so far as the individual's inner growth and expansion are concerned. Perfect submission to discipline is followed by a rational understanding of the discipline and the ultimate source of its authority. In this period religious life seeks its foundation in a kind of metaphysics--a logically consistent view of the world

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with God as a part of that view. In the third period metaphysics is displaced by psychology and religious life develops the ambition to come into direct contact with the ultimate Reality. It is here that religion becomes a matter of personal assimilation of life and power; and the individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of the law but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his own consciousness (RRT 181).

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Tradition and the Dilemmas of **Ijtehâd**

For Iqbal, religion, as a cultural force, is deeply functional and practical. Despite his thorough grasp of multifarious cultural influences, Iqbal's concept of culture is motivated and sustained by his deep involvement in the teaching of the Qur'an. Time and again Iqbal alludes to "the dynamic outlook" of the Qur'an. He insists that the guiding principles of Islam have a truly practical orientation which transcends the conflict between the ideal and the real.

In the Sixth Lecture in The Reconstruction Iqbal deals with the principle of *ijtehâd* in Islam. "But eternal principles, when they are understood to exclude all possibilities of change which, according to the Qur'an, is one of the greatest 'signs' of God, tend to immobilize what is essentially mobile in its nature," Iqbal maintains. "The failure of Europe in political and social sciences illustrate the former principle; the immobility of Islam during the last 500 years illustrate the latter. What, then, is the principle of movement in the nature of Islam? This is known as *ijtehâd*" (RRT 147-48). (*Ijtehâd* literally means "to strive" and implies an independent juridical judgment in religion. The opposite of *ijtehâd* is *taqlîd*, which means simply following the prescribed path of tradition.) After pointing out different reasons which resulted in the cessation of *ijtehâd*, Iqbal discusses its possibility in the contemporary situation. He holds it perfectly justified for the modern Muslim to proceed in interpreting rules of law in accordance with the necessities of a growing civilization (Naraqi 1993: 41-46). No

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legal system formulated by a human being, though quite comprehensive and far-reaching in scope, can claim to be complete and final. Iqbal, thus, stresses constant revision of the rules that regulate the lives of Muslims and condemns uncritical idealization of the past. Where the society moves, the law cannot remain static:

> The claim of the present generation of Muslim liberals to re-interpret the foundational legal principles, in the light of their own experience and the altered conditions of modern life is, in my opinion, perfectly justified. The teaching of the Qur'an that life is a process of progressive creation necessitates that each generation, guided but unhampered by the work of its predecessors, should be permitted to solve its own problems (RRT 168).

For Iqbal the completion or the finality of the Qur'anic message did not mean that the details which were worked out to implement the fundamentals of Islam in the past were unequivocally binding for all times to come. *Ijtehâd* was thus meant to be an integral part of the principle of movement which gives Islamic doctrine its dynamic nature and universal application.[3]

That the law of Islam is capable of evolution is a focal point in Iqbal's evaluation of the Islamic religious tradition. One should remember, however, that "life is not change, pure and simple." Hence the *paradoxical* nature of Iqbal's pronouncements with respect to tradition. The categories of permanence and change have equal importance in the scale of universe conceived by Islam, Iqbal contends.

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"Life moves with the weight of its own past on the back, and in any view of social change the values and function of the forces of conservatism cannot be lost sight of . . . . No people can afford to reject their past entirely; for it is their past that has made their personal identity" (RRT 167). Thus, the legal system of Islam may well allow changes in the *framework* but not in what Iqbal considers its *fundamental principles*.

Iqbal's adherence to *ijtehâd*--irrespective of how paradoxically defined--has a practical political implication. Iqbal, in fact, endeavors to provide a workable mechanism for *ijmâ*' (consensus within the community), corresponding with the needs of modern age. He does not agree with the exercise of *ijtehâd* by individual representatives of legal schools, for example. He suggests the formation of Muslim legislative assemblies with "enlightened" *'ulama* acting as guides. "If the renaissance of Islam is a fact . . . [we] will have to re-evaluate our intellectual inheritance. And if we cannot make any original contribution to the general thought of Islam, we may, by healthy conservative criticism [sic], serve at least as a check on the rapid movement of liberalism in the world of Islam" (RRT 153). The liberalism that Iqbal warns against meant the movement in certain Muslim intellectual circles for more relentless critique of *taqlîd*. Iqbal, despite his apparent enthusiasm for *ijtehâd*, could not agree with this position. A radical stance towards the past and the tradition would mean the subjection of the entire Islamic heritage to criticism and the destruction of many age old social and ideological conventions around which the Muslim society was supposedly held

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together. Consequently, *ijtehâd* should not be utilized for subverting these durable bases of society, especially not in the periods of decadence ("*zamân-e enhetât*"):

Ijtehâd andar zamân-e enhetât

Qawm râ bar-ham hamî pîchad basât.

Z' ijtehâd-e 'âlemân-e kamnazar

Eqtedâ bar raftagân mahfûztar.

'Aql-e âbâyat havas farsûdah nîst

Kâr-e pâkân az gharaz âlûdah nîst.

Fekr-e shân rîsad hamî bârîktar

Var'-e shân az Mustafâ nazdîktar. (RB 125; KF 125)

In the time of decadence, to seek to exercise

The speculative judgment of the mind

Completes the people's havoc finally;

Salvation lieth less in following

The blinkered pedant's dictum, being found

In humble imitation of the past.

Caprice corrupted not thy fathers' brain;

The labor of the pious was unsoiled

By interested motive; finer far

The thread of thought their meditation wove,

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As closer to the Prophet's way conformed

Their self-denial. (MS 41)

Like many Muslim intellectuals of the modern times, Iqbal, too, at times conflates modernity with mere obsession with novelty, leading to the "blind" and "indiscriminate" importation of Western ideas and ideals. He contends that such importation cannot be justified in the name of *ijtehâd*. In Jâvîd-nâmah, in discussing the situation in Turkey and Mustafa Kamal's attempts to "modernize" the Turkish society, Iqbal warns of the impediments involved in the mere imitation of the West:

Mustafâ kô az tajaddud mî surûd

Guft naqsh-e kuhnah râ bâyad zudûd.

Naw nagardad ka'bah râ rakht-e hayât

Gar ze Afrang âyadash Lât u Manât.

Turk râ âhang-e naw dar chang nîst

Tazah-ash juz kuhnah-ye Afrang nîst. (JN 66; KF 654)

Kamal, enamored of modernity,

Proclaimed, "Let ancient patterns be effaced."

The coat of Haram's life is not renewed

If idols old are borrowed from the West.

No fresh tune trembles in the Turkish lute,

Her new is Europe's old. (PE 55)

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While Iqbal views *taqlîd* as essentially contrary to the spirit of Islam, for the sake of practical political reasons, he goes so far as to legitimize *taqlîd* as the foundation of social stability. This will be particularly true in the present age:

Muzmahel gardad chû taqvîm-e hayât

Mellat az taqlîd mîgîrad subât.

Râh-e âbâ raw keh în jam'iyyat ast

Ma'nî-ye taqlîd zabt-e mellat ast.

Dar khazân ay bînasîb az barg u bâr

Az shajar magsal ba umîd-e bahâr. (RB 124: KF 124)

Whene'er decay destroys the balanced temperament of life,

Then the Community may look to find

Stability in strict conformity.

Go thou thy fathers' road, for therein lies

Tranquillity: conformity connotes

The holding fast of the Community.

In time of Autumn, thou who lackest leaf

Alike and fruit, break never from the tree,

Hoping that Spring may come. (MS 40)

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The Legacy of Greek Thought

In Thoughts and Reflections Iqbal expressly condemns those Muslims who prefer "to roam about aimlessly in the dusky valleys of Hellenic-Persian Mysticism which teaches us to shut our eyes to the hard Reality around, and to fix our gaze on what it describes as 'Illuminations' . . . . To me, this self-mystification, this Nihilism, i.e. seeking Reality in quarters where it does not exist, is a physiological symptom which gives me a clue to the decadence of the Muslim world. The intellectual history of the ancient world will reveal to you this most significant fact that the decadent in all ages have tried to seek shelter behind self-mystification and Nihilism. Having lost the vitality to grapple with the temporal, these prophets of decay apply themselves to the quest of a supposed eternal; and gradually complete the spiritual impoverishment and physical degeneration of their society by evolving a seemingly charming ideal of life which seduces even the healthy and powerful to death. To such a peculiarly constructed society as Islam the work of these sentimental obscurantists has done immense harm" (TR 1964: 80).

All lines of Muslim thought should converge on a dynamic conception of the universe, Iqbal undertakes. Nonetheless, the Greek emphasis on pure reflection, as opposed to sense-perception, has led to the quietistic, fatalistic, obscurantist, and other-worldly trends in Muslim thought. According to Iqbal, "As we all know, Greek philosophy has been a great cultural force in the history of Islam. Yet a careful study of the Qur'an and the various schools of scholastic theology that arose under the

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inspiration of Greek thought discloses the remarkable fact that while Greek philosophy very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers, it, on the whole, obscured their vision of the Qur'an" (RRT: 3). Muslim thinkers "read the Qur'an in the light of Greek thought. It took them over 200 years to perceive--though not quite clearly--that the spirit of the Qur'an was essentially anti-classical, and the result of this perception was a kind of intellectual revolt, the full significance of which has not been realized even up to the present day."

Though scathing criticism of Aristotelian logic was offered by Ibn Sînâ, Nazzâm, Ibn Taymîyyah, and Ibn Hazm--as a result of which inductive method in logic emerged--and Muslim philosophers from Al-Kindi onwards generally attempted to reconcile their faith with the rational and philosophical knowledge of their day, there have also been many powerful efforts to the contrary. Both the *Mu'tazila* and their *Ash'arî* opponents, for instance, "failed to see that in the domain of knowledge--scientific or religious--complete independence of thought from concrete experience is not possible" (RRT: 5). Muslim thinkers, under the spell of Hellenistic philosophy, have mostly missed Islam's *rational* foundations, thus rendering Islam less fruitful than it might have been in the present modern age.

Iqbal's critique of the influence of classical Greek thought on Islamic thinking differs greatly from the critique of the subject offered by many other scholars of Islamic philosophy. It has long been argued that the Greeks' emphasis on the need for rational methodology and defiance of absolute intellectual authority undermined the faith of the

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Muslims in the religion of Islam. "This may be quite true. But here Iqbal makes a radical observation different from the traditional view. He says that the Greek influence was harmful for the earlier Muslim thinkers, not that it was too rational ***but because it was not rational enough***" (Hussain 1982: 309). In his anti-classical views Iqbal pinpoints what he sees as Islam's emphasis on the factual and the concrete as opposed to the Greek pre-occupation with the speculative and the meditative.

In his evaluation of Greek philosophy, Iqbal is critical of Plato, especially of the Platonic theory of ideas (or forms) of knowledge. Plato sees the visible world as an illusion and considers any attempt to know the external world as deceptive and misleading. Accordingly, he refuses to accord the material world an independent existence. In the allegory of "The Tiger and Sheep" (in Asrâr-e Khudî) Iqbal identifies Platonic reality-negation to the idea of self-negation promulgated by the weak to bring the strong into submission. In this allegory (which is strongly Nietzschean both in spirit and in form) a group of ferocious tigers attack the posture of the sheep and deprive them of their freedom to increase and multiply. A clever sheep, "being grieved at the fate of his fellows," seeks to preserve his kind from the slavery of the tigers. Declaring himself a prophet, he tactfully preaches self-negation to the tigers:

> *Mâyah-dâr az quvvat-e ruhânî am*
>
> *Bahr-e shîrân mursal-e yazdânî am.*
>
> *Dîdah-ye bî-nûr râ nûr âmadam*
>
> *Sâheb-e dastûr u ma'mûr âmadam.*

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Tubah az a'mâl-e nâ-mahmûd kun

Ay zîyyân-andîsh fekr-e sûd kun.

Har-keh bâshad tund u zûr-âvar shaqqîst

Zendagî mustahkam az nafy-e khudîst.

Ruh-e nîkân az 'alaf yâbad ghazâ

Târek al-lahm ast maqbûl-e khudâ.

Tîzî-ye dandân tôrâ rasvâ kunad

Dîda-ye edrâk râ a'mâ kunad.

Jannat az bahr-e za'îfân ast u bas

Quvvat az asbâb-e khusrân ast u bas.

Justujû-ye 'azmat u sitvat shar ast

Tangdastî az emârat khushtar ast . . .

Ay keh mî-nâzî ba zabh-e gûsfand

Zabh kun khud-râ keh bâshî arjmand. (AK 30; KF 30)

I am possessed of spiritual power,

I am an apostle sent by God for the tigers.

I come as a light for the eye that is dark,

I come to establish laws and give commandments.

Repent of your blameworthy deeds!

O plotters of evil, bethink yourselves of good!

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Who so is violent and strong is miserable:

Life's solidity depends on self-denial.

The spirit of the righteous is fed by fodder:

The vegetation is pleasing unto God.

The sharpness of your teeth brings disgrace upon you

And makes the eye of your perception blind.

Paradise is for the weak alone,

Strength is but a means to perdition.

It is wicked to seek greatness and glory,

Penury is sweeter than princedom . . .

O thou that delightest in the slaughter of sheep,

Slay thy self, and thou wilt have honor! (TSS 51-52)

The tiger-tribe embraces the "soporific advice" of the sheep. Not surprisingly, then:

An keh kardî gûsfandân râ shekâr

Kard dîn-e gûsfandî ekhtîyâr.

Bâ palangân sâzgâr âmad 'alaf

Gasht âkhar gawhar-e shîrî khazaf. (AK 31; KF 31)

He that used to make sheep his prey

Now embraced a sheep's religion.

The tigers took kindly to a diet of fodder:

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At length their tigerish nature was broken. (TSS 54)

As a result of this transformation "the souls [of the tigers] died and their bodies became tombs":

Zûr-e tan kâhîd u khawf-e jân fuzûd

Khawf-e jân sarmâyah-ye hemmat rabûd.

Sad maraz paydâ shud az bî-hemmatî

Kûtah-dastî, bî-delî, dûn-hemmatî.

Shîr-e bîdâr az fusûn-e mîsh khuft

Enhetât-e khwîsh râ tahzîb guft. (AK 31; KF 31)

Bodily strength diminished while spiritual fear increased:

Lack of courage produced a hundred diseases--

Poverty, pusillanimity, low-mindedness.

The wakeful tiger was lulled to slumber by the sheep's charm:

He called his decline Moral Culture. (TSS 55)

This is precisely what happened when Islamic mysticism encountered, and submitted to, the spirit of Greek thought and, as a result, turned inward and detached itself from reality. For Iqbal Plato followed the doctrine of the sheep by presenting the life-negating theory of ideas.

Râheb-e dîrîna Aflâtûn hakîm

Az gurûh-e gûsfandân-e qadîm.

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Rakhsh-e ô dar zulmat-e ma'qûl gum

Dar kuhestân-e vujûd afkanda sum.

Ân-chenân afsûn-e nâmahsûs khurd

E'tebâr az dast u chashm u gûsh burd.

Guft serr-e zendagî dar murdan ast

Sham' râ sad jelva az afsurdan ast.

Bar takhayyul-hâ-ye mâ farmân ravâst

Jâm-e ô khwâb-âvar u gîtî rubâst.

Gûsfand-i dar lebâs-e âdam ast

Hukm-e ô bar jân-e sûfî muhkam ast. (AK 32-33; KF 32-33)

Plato, the prime ascetic and sage,

Was one of that ancient flock of sheep.

His horse went astray in the darkness of idealism

And dropped its shoe amidst the rocks of actuality.

He wan so fascinated by the invisible

That he made hand, eye, and ear of no account.

"To die," said he, "is the secret of life:

The candle is glorified by being put out."

He dominates our thinking,

His cup sends us to sleep and takes the sensible world away from us.

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He is a sheep in man's clothing,

The soul of the sufi bows to his authority. (TSS 56-57)

The principal problem with Plato is that, being bereft of any taste for action, he called the world of phenomena a myth, without realizing that:

Zenda jân-râ 'âlam-e emkân khush ast

Murda del râ 'âlam-e a'yân khush ast.

Ahû-ash bî-bahra az lutf-e kharâm

Lezzat-e raftâr bar kabkash harrâm.

Shabnamash az tâqat-e ram bî-nasîb

Tâyerash râ sîna az dam bî-nasîb.

Zawq-e rûyîdan nadârad dânah-ash

Az tapîdan bî-khabar parvânah-ash. (AK 33-34; KF 33-34)

Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living spirit,

Dear is the world of ideas to the dead spirit:

Its gazelles have no grace of movement,

Its partridges are denied the pleasure of walking daintily.

Its dewdrops are unable to quiver,

Its birds have no breath in their breasts,

Its seed does not desire to grow,

Its moths do not know how to flutter. (TSS 58-59)

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An important aspect of Iqbal's thought is his critique of religious and philosophical systems that are based on body-mind dualism and dichotomy. Islam, Iqbal believes, does not subscribe to this dualism. "Islam does not bifurcate the unity of man into an irreconcilable duality of spirit and matter," Iqbal writes. In Islam, God and the Universe, Spirit, and matter, church and state, are organic to each other. Man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interest of a world of spirit situated elsewhere. To Islam matter is spirit realizing itself in space and time." This point, especially with respect to the relationship between religion and political power, is further elaborated in the *masnavî* "Gulshan-e Râz-e Jadîd":

Tan u jân râ dô tâ guftan kalâm ast

Tan u jân râ dô tâ dîdan harâm ast.

Ba jân pushîdah ramz-e kâ'inât ast

Badan hâl-i ze ahvâl-e hayât ast.

'Arus-e ma'nî az sûrat henâ bast

Numûd-e khwîsh râ payrâyah-hâ bast . . .

Badan râ tâ farang az jân judâ dîd

Negâh-ash mulk u dîn râ ham du tâ dîd.

Kalîsa sabha-ye Patras shumârad

Ke ô bâ hâkemî kâr-i na dârad.

Ba kâr-e hâkemî makr u fan-i bîn

Tan-e bî-jân u jân-e bî-tan-e bîn. (ZA 155; KF 547)

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To see in soul and body a duality

Is doubt and unbelief and heresy.

The secret of creation lies hidden in the soul;

The body is one of life's stages, not its goal.

The bride of meaning henna-decked its hands with form

The better to display its beauty's charm . . .

The West thinks soul and body as separate;

Hence the dichotomy between religion and governance.

The Church is busy saying prayers on Peter's rosary,

Quite unconcerned with polity.

And as for Western polity, it is all pure deceit.

Thus soul and body in the West can never meet. (NRG 16-17)

Iqbal is critical both of those aspects of the modern (Western) society which create in the humans an "infinite gold-hunger which is gradually killing all higher striving in him and bringing him nothing but life-weariness" (RRT: 187-88) and of systems of thought that emphasize only the spiritual character of life and preach renunciation of the material world. Islam, however--precisely because it does not consider the body and the soul as dichotomous and antagonistic--rejects both these approaches, Iqbal maintains. Self-denial means self-destruction and self-negation. In the *masnavî* Pas Cheh Bâyad Kard Iqbal writes:

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Mu'menân râ guft ân sultân-e dîn

Masjid-e mâ shud hama rû-ye zamîn . . .

Ay keh az tark-e jahân gû-yî ma gû

Tark-i în dayr-e kuhan tashkîr-e ô.

Râkebash bûdan az ô vârastan ast.

Az maqâm-e âb u gel barjastan ast . . .

Faqr-e kâfer khalvat-e dasht u dar ast

Faqr-e mu'men larzah-ye bahr u bar ast. (PBK 21-22; KF 817-18)

That religious leader said to the believers

That the whole world is like a mosque for us . . .

O you who preach renunciation forbear

Controlling this world is to free oneself from it.

To abode in it is emancipatory

It is to transcend the station of water and clay . . .

Renunciation of the infidel is retirement into wilderness

But renunciation of a believer is turning the world upside down.

Self-fulfillment and action, irrespective of where it may lead, are praised in the following verses from Payâm-e Mashreq:

Tarâsh az tîshah-ye khud jâdah-ye khwîsh

Bah râh-e dîgarân raftan harâm ast.

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Gar az dast-e tô kâr-i nâder âyad

Gunâh-i ham agar bâshad savâb ast.

Carve out your own path with your own pickax

It is mortifying to tread on somebody else's path.

If you do something new and original

Though it be sinful, it is a virtue.

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Taqdîr *and Free Will*

Destiny (*taqdîr*) for Iqbal is hardly a fixed, irrevocable and unalterable structure of events, but rather the working out of their latent possibilities. "These possibilities are ultimately contained within God's instantaneous act of perception but need not on that account have any predetermining effect on human volition. The world of contingency provides scope for the process of self-actualization; like the human ego it is also boundless and infinite because it is capable of change and growth. The very gift of choice--and choice involves the possibility of opting for good as well as for evil--with which man has been endowed run counter to the notion of destiny as ordinarily conceived" (Ansari 1978: 139-140).

In Jâvîd-nâmah, after encountering the Martian Sage (*Hakîm-e Marîkhî*), the narrator, Zendarûd, pronounces his orthodox belief in the unchangeability of destiny:

> *Sâ'il u mahrûm taqdîr-e haq ast*
>
> *Hâkem u mahkûm taqdîr-e haq ast.*
>
> *Juz khudâ kas khâleq-e taqdîr nîst*
>
> *Chârah-e taqdîr az tadbîr nîst.* (JN 107; KF 695).

> The destitute are so by God's decree,
>
> And slaves and masters too. Since He has shaped
>
> Our destiny, our efforts nought avail. (PE 97).

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The Martian Sage, however, believes otherwise. He reproaches the narrator and puts forward the theory of human capacity to change destiny at his/her will. If one changes oneself, one can also change one's destiny. Man is thus of extraordinary and infinite capacity: he has to choose whether to be a "dew-drop" or a "sea":

Gar ze yak taqdîr khûn gardad jegar

Khwâh az haq hukm-e taqdîr-e degar.

Tô agar taqdîr-e naw khwâhî ravâst

Zân keh taqdîrât-e haq lâ intehâst . . .

Ramz-e bârîkash ba harfi muzmar ast

Tô agar dîgar shavî ô dîgar ast . . .

Shabnamî? ufâtadagî taqdîr-e tôst

Qulzumî? pâyandagî taqdîr-e tôst. (JN 107-08; KF 695-96)

If thou shouldst be embittered by thy fate,

Seek from the Lord at fiat which will change

Thy destiny entire; He doth command

Fates limitless . . .

The point can be conveyed in simple words:

If thou transform thyself thy fate will change . . .

Art thou a drop of dew?

Evanescence is then thy fate. Art thou

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A sea? Then you will last forever. (PE 97-98)

That man is not bound by any fixed, predetermined order of responses but can actually pursue--and realize--his own course of action and orientation demonstrates that Iqbal's idea of destiny was quite different from the orthodox view of destiny. "Man rises and falls, makes and unmakes his life with reference to his preferences and value-judgments. He, and not any hypothetical, remote, and transcendent deity, is the architect of his life; he is the sole sovereign and master of his destiny. . . . In Iqbal's universe, therefore, man is to be understood in terms of personal choice and the world is to be equated with an open possibility" (Ansari 1978: 140). According to Iqbal's dynamic interpretation of the Qur'an, neither the universe is "a block universe, a finished product, immobile and incapable of change," nor is man incapable of building "a much vaster world in the depths of his own inner being, wherein he discovers sources of infinite joy and inspiration" (RRT 10, 12).

The emphasis on the non-deterministic nature of destiny--and, consequently, the importance of free and creative will--is further emphasized when, in the latter part of Jâvîd-nâmah, the narrator is told by Beauty (*jamâl*) that:

Har keh ô râ quvvat-e takhlîq nîst

Pîsh-e mâ juz kâfar u zandîq nîst. . .

Mard-e haq, burrendah chûn shamshîr bâsh

Khud jahân-e khwîsh râ taqdîr bâsh. (JN 191; KF 779)

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The one who lacks creative power

Is an infidel, a heathen vile. . .

O the man of God, let thy brilliance be that of a sword

And thyself be thy own world's destiny. (PE 182)

Thus, Iqbal privileges purposive direction and directive attitude in part of the self-determined individual over submission to the path of *taqdîr*. Iqbal refers to this in his early work Asrâr-e Khudî where he contrasts the slave (*'abd*) of time (i.e. destiny) and the freeman (*hur*) who is involved in constant innovation (*naw-âfarînî*). As I shall explore later, there are certain principles, however, which limit the extent of such innovations and show the ambiguities involved in Iqbal's conception of free will.

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The Intertextual Reading of Rûmî

Of all the Muslim thinkers of the past Iqbal is most indebted to Mawlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn of Balkh, known as Rûmî (1207-73). Rûmî features prominently in several of Iqbal's works. Both Asrâr-e Khudî and Rumûz-e Bîkhudî are composed in rhyming couplets, following the meter and style of Rûmî's well-know Masnavî Ma'navî. Iqbal considers Rûmî his guide and teacher. In the Prologue of Asrâr-e Khudî, the narrator speaks of his state of utter helplessness in the present times when his message finds little sympathetic audience. Then appears Rûmî who offers inspiration, as well as consolation, to him:

> *Âtash astî bazm-e 'âlam bar furûz*
>
> *Dîgarân râ ham ze sûz-e khud be-sûz.* (AK; KF 10)

> Thou art fire: fill the world with thy glow!
>
> Make others burn with thy burning! (TSS 11)

Rûmî's words prove effective in transforming the anxiety ridden narrator:

> *Zîn sukhan âtash ba pîrâhan shudam*
>
> *Mesl-e nay hangâmah âbastan shudam.*
>
> *Chûn navâ az târ-e khud barkhâstam*
>
> *Jannati az bahr-e gush ârâstam.*
>
> *Bargeraftam pardah az râz-e khudî*

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Vâ namûdam pardah az râz-e khudî. (AK 10; KF 10)

At these words my bosom was enkindled

And swelled with emotion like the flute;

I rose like music from the string

To prepare a Paradise for the ear.

I unveiled the mystery of the Self

And disclosed its wondrous secret. (TSS 12)

It is this "unveiling of *khudî*" which preoccupies Iqbal throughout Asrâr.

In Jâvîd-nâmah, too, Rûmî--"a figure bright in a light immortal"--appears early in the Prologue of the poem and his spirit accompanies the protagonist, Zendarûd, throughout the ascension to various planets and, ultimately, to the heavens. As the intellectual mentor Rûmî often saves his ardent disciple from bewilderment. In the poem "Jalâl va Hegel" (in Payâm-e Mashreq) Iqbal recalls how he was captivated one evening by reading Hegel's work and was fascinated by his extraordinary mind. Lost in "the tumultuous ocean" of Hegel's philosophy, Iqbal falls asleep. Then Rûmî--"pîr-e yazdânî," (the Divine Master)--appears in his dream and rescues him from utter intellectual perplexity:

Mî kushûdam shabi ba nâkhun-e fekr

'Uqdah-hâ-ye hakîm-e Almânî . . .

Chûn ba daryâ-ye ô furû raftam

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Keshtî-ye 'aql gasht tûfânî.

Khwâb bar man damîd afsûni

Chashm bastam ze bâqî u fânî.

Negah-e shawq tîztar gardîd

Chehrah benmûd pîr-e yazdânî . . .

Guft bâ man: cheh khuftah-yi barkhîz!

Ba sarâbi safînah mîrânî?

Ba kherad râh-e 'eshq mî pû-yî?

Ba cherâgh âftâb mî jû-yî? (PM 202; KF 372)

One night I was engaged in teasing out

The knots of Hegel's philosophic thought . . .

When I plunged into that tempestuous sea,

My mind became just like a storm-tossed boat.

But soon a spell lulled me to slumber and

Shut out the finite and the infinite.

My inner vision sharpened, I observed

An old man whose face was a godly sight . . .

"You sleep," said he, "awake, awake. To ply

A boat in a mirage is folly's height.

O you bid wisdom guide you on love's path!

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O you look for the sun by mere candle-light!" (ME 166-67)

What Iqbal finds extraordinary in Rûmî is the latter's views on the intricate relationship between religion, life, and society. For Rûmî, "God is not an abstract and absolutely attributeless Being who sits behind the screen eternally unmoved. According to Rûmî 'He [God] is the most active Being and loves activity. Every day He is busy with something new. The sovereign ruling the Universe cannot sit idle. He loves movement; therefore, even a useless effort is better than utter passivity.' What an utter refutation of quietism, generally considered to be inseparable from mysticism" (Hakim 1959: 109). Rûmî's view of life as perpetual activity and endless endeavor to attain freedom as a person, on the one hand, and immortality, on the other hand, is essentially the theoretical foundation of Iqbal's own view of life. It is probably for this reason that Iqbal attempts to closely adhere to what he surmises to be Rûmî's concept of human evolution. Rûmî puts forward the following hypothesis in the Masnavî:

Az jumâdî murdam u nâmî shudam

Vaz namâ murdam ze hayvân sar zadam.

Murdam az hayvânî u âdam shudam

Pas cheh gû-yam chun ze murdan kam shudam.

Bâr-e dîgar az falak parrân shudam

Vâncheh andar vahm nâyad ân shudam.

Dying from animality, I became a man

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Why should I be afraid of becoming anything less through another death?

In the next step I shall die from animality in order to develop wings like the angels.

Then again I shall sacrifice my angelic self and become that which cannot enter imagination.

If by assimilation simple matter can progress to become man, there shall be no obstacle in the way of evolution of man to higher stages of being, including acquiring qualities of God. Man constitutes one stage in the long process of change and growth. But this process, as Iqbal interprets Rûmî, is not the same as historical determinism operating as an impersonal collective sway, to which man is irresistibly and mechanically drawn. It is rather a creative, autonomous process derived from the self-conscious endeavors of the free, individual ego (Kamali 1971: 238-39). Iqbal elucidates this point in one of the poems in Jâvîd-nâmah where the angels sing in unison:

Furugh-e musht-e khâk az murîyân afzûn shavad rûzi

Zamîn az kawkab-e taqdîr-e ô gardûn shavad rûzi.

Khîyâl-e ô keh az sîl-e havâdes parvaresh gîrad

Ze gerdâb-e sepehr-e nîlgûn bîrûn shavad rûzi.

Yakî dar ma'nî-ye âdam negâr az mâ cheh mîpursî

Hanûz andar tabî'at mîkhalad mawzûn shavad rûzi.

Chunân mawzûn shavad în pîsh-e pâ uftâdah mazmûni

Keh yazdân râ del az ta'sîr-e ô pur khûn shavad rûzi. (JN 16; KF 604)

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Such glory shall the man of clay

Own far above the angels' light

That with his star of destiny

He'll make the earth like heaven bright.

Possessed of such a mind that feeds

On every storm that time may bring,

He'll fly and clear across one day

The whirlpool of this azure ring.

Consider what man signifies

Evolving to what's yet to be,

A subject heaving into form,

Of him why should you ask of me?

Soon fashioned forth in rhythmic poise,

This subject old, this common man,

Will with his rapturous impact

The heart of even God attain. (PE 8-9)

Yet, in describing the relationship of the finite ego to the Infinite Ego, Iqbal rejects the idea of the *annihilation* of human individuality into the all-absorbent unity of God. In this regard, as elsewhere in his evaluation of Rûmî's teachings, Iqbal differs a great deal from Rûmî's Muslim commentators as well as from such Orientalists of his own time as

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R. A. Nicholson. In his translation and explication of Rûmî's Masnavî, Nicholson relied on Turkish interpretations (such as those of Isma'il Anqirawi and Sari 'Abdallah) that define sufi discourse in terms of Ibn 'Arabi's school of *wahdat al-wujûd*. Nicholson claimed that Rûmî derived some of his teachings from Ibn 'Arabi and, to prove this assertion, he frequently quoted formal parallels with Rûmî's verses in Ibn 'Arabi's writings (Chittick 1994a: 97). I shall return to Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of *wahdat al-wujûd* below.

Iqbal argues that *wahdat al-wujûd*, as presented by Ibn 'Arabi, had little impact on Rûmî. He is critical of this doctrine which he associates with ascetic sufism preponderant throughout Islamic culture and history. Ascetic sufism gradually acquired a purely speculative side based on total otherworldliness, thus becoming ultimately inconsequential for the future of the Muslim community. In The Reconstruction of the Religious Thought Iqbal criticizes the spirit of ascetic sufism which "obscured men's vision of a very important aspect of Islam as a social polity, and offering the prospect of unrestrained thought on its speculative side, it attached and finally absorbed the best minds of Islam" (RRT 150).

Among Muslim thinkers Abû Hâmid al-Ghazâlî (d. 505 / 1111) attempted, at least initially, to base religion on rational and philosophical skepticism. However, finding no hope in analytic thought, Ghazâlî eventually turned to mysticism and wrote his famous Tahâfat al-Falâsifah refuting the arguments of the Greek philosophers. Iqbal contends that Ghazâlî essentially played the same role in Islamic thought and "broke the

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back of that proud but shallow rationalism which moved in the same direction as pre-Kantian rationalism in Germany" (RRT 5). Apropos Ghazâlî's (and Kant's) idea of knowledge and intuition, Iqbal's position betrays a powerful Hegelian influence. "In its deeper movement, however, thought is capable of reaching an immanent Infinite in whose self-unfolding movement the various finite concepts are merely moments. In its essential nature, then, thought is not static; it is dynamic and unfolds its internal infinitude in time like the seed which, from the very beginning, carries within itself the organic unity of the tree as a present fact. Thought is, therefore, the whole in its dynamic self-expression, appearing to the temporal vision as a series of definite specifications which cannot be understood except by a reciprocal reference" (RRT 6). Thus, if the finite thinking is possible because of the presence of the total Infinite in the movement of knowledge, then,

> Both Kant and Ghazâlî failed to see that thought, in the very act of knowledge, passes beyond its own finitude. The finitudes of Nature are reciprocally exclusive. Not so the finitudes of thought which is, in its essential nature, incapable of limitation and cannot remain imprisoned in the narrow circuit of its own individuality. In the wide world beyond itself nothing is alien that thought demolishes the walls of its finitude and enjoys its potential infinitude. Its movement becomes possible only because of the implicit presence in its finite individuality of the infinite, which keeps alive within it the flame of aspiration and sustains it in its endless pursuit. It is a

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mistake to regard thought as inconclusive, for it too, in its own way, is a greeting of the finite with the infinite (RRT 6-7).

Ghazâlî, nonetheless, had affirmed the possibility of knowledge in a way that Kant had denied it. Finding no hope in analytic thought, the former moved to "mystic experience." Although mysticism enabled Ghazâlî to secure for religion independence from both science and metaphysics, nonetheless "the revelation of the total Infinite in mystic experience convinced him of the finitude and inconclusiveness of thought and drove him to draw a line of cleavage between thought and intuition"--a conclusion not justified by the true spirit of Islam, and thus rejected by Iqbal.

Iqbal further maintains that not only sufism per se, but rather the realization that "according to the teachings of the Qur'an, the universe is dynamic in its origin, finite and capable of increase, eventually brought Muslim thinkers into conflict with Greek thought" (RRT 138). As a result of this intellectual revolt against Greek philosophy "a real spirit of the culture of Islam" began to emerge, self-negation was rejected and self-assertion of the human ego was emphasized. Iqbal regards his own theory of *khudî* (ego- or selfhood) as the culmination of this process.

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Iqbal and Ibn 'Arabî's wahdat al-wujûd

Thoroughly indebted to sufism, Iqbal nonetheless finds objectionable the prevalence of the speculative doctrine of pantheism in the sufi discourse. Influenced by the judgments of Western scholars of Islamic thought, Iqbal maintains that under the shadow of Platonism crept the neo-Platonic, pantheistic doctrine of *wahdat al-wujûd* (the "Oneness of Being" or "Unity of Existence") into Islamic mysticism. The resemblance between the concept of *tawhîd* (the belief in one God) in Islam and the pantheism of neo-Platonism made *wahdat al-wujûd* dominate, if not overwhelm, subsequent sufi thought. The turning point in the history of speculative sufism in Islamic intellectual history came with the Hispano-Arab mystic, *al-Shaykh al-Akbar*, Muhy al-Din Ibn 'Arabî (1165-1240), the author of numerous works, including Futuhât Makkîyyah (Meccan Revelations) and Fusûs al-Hikam (Bezels of Wisdom) (Corbin 1969; Chodkiewicz 1993).

The doctrine of Ibn 'Arabî, despite its systematicity and consistency, is highly multifarious, to the extent that it is often difficult to brand it pantheistic in the proper sense of the term. It will be also misleading to classify the entire corpus of Ibn 'Arabî as pantheistic, existential monist, pantheistic monist, or the like. The term *wujûd*, for example, is employed by Ibn 'Arabî to mean a number of things. Nonetheless, two basic senses of the term can be discerned in his work: one, on the highest level, it refers to the absolute and unlimited reality of God--the Real Being (*al-wujûd al-haqq*) or the

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Necessary Being (*wâjib al-wujûd*); and two, the term also refers to the universe or cosmos (*al-'alam*) and the things within it. In the second sense, *wujûd mâ siwâ Allâh* ("the being of that which is other than God") has a metaphorical (*majâz*) meaning for Ibn 'Arabî. In reality (*haqîqa*), *wujûd* belongs only to God. "If things other than God appear to exist, this is because God has lent them *wujûd*, much in the same way that the sun lends light to the inhabitants of the earth. In the last analysis, there is nothing in existence but the Real. There is only one Being, one *wujûd*, even though we are justified in speaking of many 'existent things' (*mawjûdât*) in order to address ourselves to the plurality that we perceive in the phenomenal world" (Chittick 1994a: 75).

In short, God is the Absolute Being and the sole source of all existence; in Him alone Being and Existence are one and inseparable. The Universe possesses Relative Being, either actual or potential; it is both eternal-existent (as being in God's knowledge) and temporal-non-existent (as being external to God). God is both Transcendent and Immanent. Being, apart from God, exists by virtue of God's Will, acting in accordance with the laws proper to the things thus existent; His agents are the Divine Names, or universal concepts. As William Chittick points out, "the later Islamic tradition is correct to ascribe the doctrine *wahdat al-wujûd* to Ibn 'Arabî, because he affirms that *wujûd* in its truest sense is a single reality and that there cannot be two *wujûds*. . . . Nevertheless, Ibn 'Arabî devotes most of his writings to explaining the reality of manyness (*kathra*) within the context of the divine oneness. It would be a great error to suppose--as some shortsighted critics have supposed--that he simply

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affirms the oneness of *wujûd* while ascribing the manyness of the cosmos to illusion or human ignorance" (1994b: 16).

In his evaluation of Ibn 'Arabî and the so-called "pantheistic" sufism, Iqbal seems to follow the more or less conventional Islamic and Orientalist reception of Ibn 'Arabî's thought. In reducing the doctrine of *wujûd* to the Unity (*wahda*) of God, Iqbal ignores Ibn 'Arabî's affirmation of the *reality* of multiplicity (*kathra*):

> The most succinct expression of Ibn 'Arabî's teachings about the nature of the one *wujûd* and its relationship to the multiplicity of the cosmos is probably the phrase 'He/not He' (*huwa lâ huwa*). What is a creature, a thing, an existent reality, a world? It is He/not He. A things is identical with *wujûd* inasmuch as it exists, but other than *wujûd* inasmuch as it is itself. Ibn 'Arabî's opponents, in criticizing his teachings, look only at the first half of this phrase: 'The cosmos is He.' This sentence recalls the refrain employed by Persian poets long before Ibn 'Arabî, 'All is He' (*hamah ôst*). For his part, Ibn 'Arabî constantly affirms that the cosmos is also not He. One must combine affirmation and negation, just as one must combine incomparability and similarity. To affirm that 'All is He' and to forget that 'All is not He' would be unacceptable. But it would be equally unacceptable to claim that 'All is not He' in every respect, for that would make the cosmos into an independent reality, another divinity" (Chittick 1994a: 76-77).

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It seems that some of Iqbal's criticism of Ibn 'Arabî stems from his misconception of the coherence, or comprehensiveness, of Ibn 'Arabî's vision of *wahdat al-wujûd*. In the last analysis, it was the inherent speculative nature of *wahdat al-wujûd* that was targeted by Iqbal; other than that, Ibn 'Arabî's paradigmatic Muhammadan Reality (*al-haqîqa al-Muhammadîyya*) which later evolved into the notion of "Perfect Human Being" (*al-insân al-kâmil*) in the work of later sufi writers like 'Abd al-Karîm al-Jîlî (1366-1408), for instance, provided the basis for Iqbal's own theory of Perfect Man--*mard-e mu'mem*, or the Man of Faith.[3]

A vigorous critic of Ibn 'Arabî was the Hanbalite jurist Taqî al-Dîn Ibn Taymîyya (d. 728 / 1328). Ibn Taymîyya claimed that the proponents of *wahdat al-wujûd* deny the three fundamental principles of Islam: they have no faith in God, in His prophets, or in the Last Day. Ibn Taymîyya and most of his followers, however, took a partial position vis-à-vis Ibn 'Arabî's doctrine. They believed in a simple, straightforward explanation for the relationship between God and the cosmos, while Ibn 'Arabî and his followers emphasized *imaginal* consciousness and held that the highest understanding is utter bewilderment (*hayra*) which transcends definite categories such as yes and no, either/or (Chittick 1994a: 86). Iqbal speaks with approval of Ibn Taymîyya's revivalist attempts in Islam, particularly his rejection of the finality of Islamic legal schools and his claim of the continuity of *ijtehâd*. Against legists, theologians, and philosophers of medieval Islam, Ibn Taymîyya wished to purge

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Islam of what he considered "heresies" and "corruptions" and restore the pristine Islam of the time of the Prophet Muhammad. He formulated a comprehensive concept of the *Sharî'a* and attempted to re-orient the contact between theology and law (Rahman 1979: 111-115).

Ibn Taymîyyah's "puritanical" views found substantial resonance within the Muslim establishment in India. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindî (d. 1624), at least before his joining the Naqshbandi school of sufism, also advocated the purification of Islam. Fearing that Ibn 'Arabî's *wahdat al-wujûd* was quite susceptible to easily blend with pertinent Vedantic speculation in Hinduism, Sirhindî formulated *wahdat al-shuhûd* (the Unity of Contemplation or Testimony), which means seeing God's Oneness and looking at nothing else, but acknowledging nonetheless that phenomena do exist. Perhaps proposed as a preferable position to *wahdat al-wujûd*, at least partly to foil the criticisms of Ibn Taymîyyah and his followers, Sirhindî's *wahdat al-shuhûd* insisted upon the non-reducible and absolute otherness of God (Chittick 1994a: 89-90; Friedmann 1971). Iqbal admires the *Imâm Rabbânî* (an epithet of Ahmad Sirhindî), quotes him in several instances in his poetry, and characterizes him in The Reconstruction as "a great religious genius . . . whose fearless analytical criticism of contemporary sufism resulted in the development of a new technique" (RRT 192).

The ensuing squabbles between the Mughal Princes Dârâ Shukûh and Awrangzîb proved that, in the arena of politics at least, the limited, but widely held, view of *wahdat al-wujûd* could potentially undermine the integrity of doctrinal Islam in

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the predominantly Hindu India. The heir apparent Dârâ Shukûh (1615-59), an accomplished sufi, had done a partial translation of the Upanishads into Persian, entitled Serr-e Akbar (The Greatest Secret), and had written the treatise Majma‘ al-Bahrayn (The Meeting of Two Oceans) on the harmony of Islam and Hinduism (Shayegan 1979). Partly in response to such unifying measures of Dârâ Shukûh, his "puritanical" brother Âlamgîr Awrangzîb (1618-1707) wrested the throne from him, and put him and his family to death. (Already in 1910 Iqbal stated that Awrangzîb "must be looked upon as the founder of *Mussalman nationality in India.*") This is how Iqbal portrays the squabble in Rumûz-e Bîkhudî:

Tukhm-e elhâdi keh Akbar parvarîd

Bâz andar fetrat-e Dârâ damîd.

Shâm'-e del dar sînah-hâ rawshan nabûd

Mellat-e mâ az fasâd îman nabûd.

Haq guzîd az Hend 'Âlamgîr râ

Ân faqîr-e sâheb-e shamshîr râ.

Az pay-e ehyâ-ye dîn mâ'mur kard,

Bahr-e tajdîd-e yaqîn mâ'mur kard.

Barq-e tîghash kherman-e elhâd sûkht

Shâm'-e dîn dar mahfel-e mâ bar furûkht . . .

Shu'lah-ye tawhîd râ parvânah bûd

Chûn Barâhîm andarîn butkhânah bûd. (RB 98; KF 98)

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When that the impious seed of heresy,
By Akbar nourished, sprang and sprouted fresh
In Dara's soul, the candle of the heart
Was dimmed in every breast, no more secure
Against corruption our Community
Continued; then God chose from India
That humble-minded warrior, Alamgir,
Religion to revive, faith to renew.
The lightning of his sword set all ablaze
The harvest of impiety; faith's torch
Once more its radiance o'er our counsels shed. . .
He was a moth that ever beat its wings
About the candle-flame of unity,
An Abraham in India's idol-house. (MS 17)

With the disintegration of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century, Shâh Walî Allâh of Delhi (1702-62), a scholar of Qur'anic exegesis, prophetic traditions, Islamic history and jurisprudence, and mysticism appeared in India. A sufi in the strict sense of the term, he linked the degeneration of Muslim power and prestige to the Muslims' inability to realize the "true" nature of Islam. His political ambition was to reenact a mighty Muslim power in India (Smith 1957: 44-45). Shâh Walî Allâh

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translated the Qur'an into Persian, the language more widely known than Arabic among Muslims of India. The act was bitterly opposed by the religious establishment. Nonetheless, one of Shâh Walî Allâh's sons, Shâh 'Abd al-Qâdîr, went so far as to translate the Qur'an into idiomatic Urdu (Jones 1989: 18-19). "Perhaps the first Muslim who felt the urge of a new spirit" in Islam, as Iqbal describes him, Walî Allâh, in his many writings, had tried to show that Islam is not only a matter of worship and dogmas but an essential part of daily life. Walî Allâh's opposition to the prevalent viewpoint of his time that the final words on questions of theology were spoken in the tenth century, and that the door of independent judgment on questions of religion was effectively closed, appealed to Iqbal enormously (Gordon-Polonskaya 1971: 125).

Iqbal's philosophy was very much influenced by another type of Muslim reformist and ideologue: Sayyid Jamâl al-Dîn al-Afghânî (1838-97), the chief proponent of both local Muslim nationalisms and Pan-Islamism. Afghânî saw Islam mainly as a means of unity of the people of the East against Western colonial encroachment and imperial domination (Landau 1990). But, more importantly, as Gordon-Polonskaya suggests, "Iqbal essentially shared the desire of Afghani and other ideologists of pan-Islamism to express unity on the religious basis of Muslims as a supraclass and a supranational unity, which contributed to the appearance in his political philosophy of the motif of religious isolation of the Muslim community, as well as the blending of the concept of religious and national unity" (Gordon-Polonskaya 1971: 115). Iqbal, whose theoretical propensity always remained Islamic (in the broadest sense), employed Pan-

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Islamic ideals to forge a Pan-Indian Muslim communal constituency. This was particularly true when the Pan-Islamist *Khilâfat* movement ended in failure in the 1920's and Muslim nationalism won increasing prominence and strength among the Muslim elite in the Subcontinent.

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Notes

1 There also existed a less familiar meaning of tradition--i.e., "surrender" and "betrayal." The betrayal of Christ by Judas, theologicans argued, was an act of "tradition." So was the ecclesiastical crime of surrendering (or delivering over) sacred texts in a time of persecution to destruction by unbelievers. A "traditor" (or, in later usage, a "traitor") was one guilty of the crime of "tradition." It was Martin Heidegger and Walter Benjamin who, in their two very different ways, problematized the concept of tradition and emphasized the "treacherous" and potentially "destructive" nature of it. For Heidegger and Benjamin "The act of 'handing over' destroys the object it surrenders; it is in no sense a 'medium,' let alone a *neutral* medium for the transmission of the past to the present . . . tradition is a paradoxical, even destructive, phenomenon characterized by a delivery which both exceeds and is contained by what is delivered" (Caygill 1994: 12-13). The implications of this latter meaning could be enormous in evaluating Muslim traditions. Some recent attempts have been made in this respect by Muslim philosophers, but Iqbal was, of course, following the more accepted definition when he approched the tradition of Islam.

2 As David Gross writes in his challenging recent book The Past in Ruins: Tradition and the Critique of Modernity, "no tradition is ever taken over precisely as it was given, or passed on precisely as it was received. Rather, it is always adapted to a situation" (1992: 14).

3 Iqbal is critical of the established 'ulama who monopolize the interpretation of the Qur'an. He discourages the Muslims from following the pronouncements of the organized religious establishment, because it emphasizes the letter of Islam and ignores its spirit:

> *Ba band-e sûfî u mullâ asîrî*
> *Hayât az hekmat-e Qur'ân nagîrî.*
> *Ba âyâtash tô râ kâri juz în nîst*
> *Keh az Yâsîn-e ô âsân bemîrî.* (AH 73; KF 955)
>
> O you who are bound to the mullâ and the sûfî
> You will never achieve life from the wisdom of the Qur'an.
> You will look into its verses
> Only to die from its sûra Yâsîn.

Elsewhere, too, Iqbal refers to the custodians of official religion as mere "khânaqâh neshînân" (cloistered monks) and "shabânân-e bî-ramah" (shepherds without the sheep) (ZA 69; KF 461).

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4 In an early article (1900) Iqbal discusses al-Jīlī's theories, especially his notion of *Insân-e Kâmil*, at some length. See "The Doctrine of Abslute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani" in TR 4-27. See also Nicholson 1921: 77-142.

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Chapter Five

THE SYMBOLISM OF COMMUNAL CLOSURE

Dar bûd u nabûd-e man andîshah gumân-hâ dâsht
Az 'eshq huvaydâ shud în nuktah keh hastam man.

About my being or non-being thought was in doubt.
But Love made manifest the fact that I exist.

The 'Aql *and* 'Eshq *Dialectic*

Iqbal's epistemology and ontology are inseparable. He insists that, ultimately, the distinction between thought and praxis, judgment and affection, consciousness and will disappears. He formulates this view through the notion of *'eshq*. *'Eshq* (or love--although this is hardly an exact English synonym) is that intuitive process that embodies, and energizes, the entire phenomenal world--the reality in toto. *'Eshq* is both tangible and concrete: it is identical with the creative and powerful movement unfolding itself in the objective world. Since reality is actualized through self-realization, *'eshq* further implies a constant and unwavering striving for selfhood (*khudî*), the quintessential theme throughout Iqbal's *oeuvres*.

There is a strong vitalistic trend in Iqbal's description of love and its potential for self-realization. In a letter to the translator of Asrâr-e Khudî, the Orientalist scholar

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R. A. Nicholson (quoted in the Introduction to the English translation of the book), Iqbal writes: "The Ego [*khudī*] is fortified by love (*'eshq*). This word is used in a very wide sense and means the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and ideals and the endeavor to realize them. Love individualizes the lover as well as the beloved. The effort to realize the most unique individuality individualizes the seeker and implies individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker" (TSS: xxv-xxvi). Love is thus explicitly associated to the notion of *self*--to the whole idea of being--as the following verses illustrate:

> *Nuqtah-ye nûri keh nâm-e ô khudîst*
>
> *Zîr-e khâk-e mâ sharâr-e zendagîst.*
>
> *Az muhabbat mîshavad pâyandah-tar*
>
> *Zendah-tar, sûzendah-tar, tâbendah-tar . . .*
>
> *Fetrat-e ô âtash andûzad ze 'eshq*
>
> *'Alam-afrûzî bîyâmûzad ze 'eshq.*
>
> *'eshq râ az tîgh u khanjar bâk nîst*
>
> *Asl-e 'eshq az âb u bâd u khâk nîst.* (AK 18; KF 18)

> 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.

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Its nature gathers fire from love,

Love instructs it to illumine the world.

Love fears neither sword nor dagger,

Love is not born of water and air and earth. (TSS 28-29).

What is crucial about the notion of love is that love transcends the limitations of knowledge via sense-perception. Love is often portrayed as that vital ecstatic gesture--that sudden leap into the depth of the unknown and the unknowable--that provides *higher* mode of apprehension derived from inner illumination, intimate knowledge, and, above all, ardent desire. The path of love may appear tortuous and impassable, nevertheless:

Vâdî-ye 'eshq basî dûr u derâz ast valî

Tay shavad jâdah-ye sad sâlah ba âhi gâhi. (ZA 2; KF 394)

Far though the valley of Love be, a long and a terrible way,

The path of a hundred years may be traveled at times in a single sigh. (PP 1)

Elsewhere, Iqbal maintains:

In harf-e neshât âvar mîgûyam u mîraqsam:

Az 'eshq del âsâyad, bâ în hamah bîtâbî.

Har ma'nî-ye pîchîdah dar harf na-mîgunjad

Yak lahzah ba del dar shav, shâyad keh tô daryâbî. (PM 133; KF 303)

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I sing these joy-inspiring words--

I sing them and dance with delight--

Love is a balsam for the heart

Despite its soul-tormenting might.

Not every subtle point can be

Expressed in words. Consult awhile

Your own heart: maybe you will see

My point made in the heart's own style. (ME 96)

Iqbal considers himself as the disciples of love and the vanquisher of reason. This point is eloquently expressed in one of the *ghazals* (lyrics) in Zabûr-e 'Ajam:

Man bandah-ye âzâdam 'eshq ast emâm-e man

'eshq ast emâm-e man 'aql ast ghulâm-e man . . .

Ay 'âlem-e rang u bu în suhbat-e mâ tâ chand

Marg ast davâm-e tô 'eshq ast davâm-e man. (ZA 139; KF 531)

I am a slave set free, and Love still leadeth me;

Love is my leader still, Reason bows to do my will . . .

O the wise man of scent and hue, how long shall we so do?

Death thy survival proves, my living all is Love's. (PP 125-26)

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Iqbal attempts to demonstrate that *'eshq* is not, and can hardly be, irrational in the strict sense of the word, though it does contain elements of *unreason* (which often prove to be invigorating and liberating). He makes a clear distinction between intellect pure and simple and the higher faculty of intellect--which assimilates synthetically elements from love.

'Aql-e khudbîn degar u 'aql-e jahânbîn degar ast

Bâl-e bulbul degar u bâzî-ye shâhîn degar ast.

Degar ast ân keh barad dânah-ye uftâdah ze khâk

An keh gîrad khuresh az dânah-ye parvîn degar ast . . .

Degar ast ân sû-ye nuh pardah kushâdan nazari

In sû-ye pardah gumân u zann u takhmîn degar ast.

Ay khush ân 'aql keh pahnâ-ye dô 'âlam ba ôst

Nûr-e efreshtah u sûz-e del-e âdam bâ ôst. (PM 189-90; KF 359-60)

The self-absorbed and world-regarding wisdoms are two things

The nightingale and falcon have two different kinds of wings.

It is one thing to pick up stray grain lying on the ground;

Another to peck at gems in the Pleiades' earrings . . .

It is one thing to let doubt and conjecture bog you down;

Another to look up and see celestial happenings.

Blest is the wisdom which has both the worlds in its domain,

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Which calls man's heart's fire as well as the angels' light its own. (ME 156)

From time immemorial reason and love have been vying for supremacy--and each has found its group of supporters and advocates. Iqbal maintains that, at least in the modern era, it is reason that looks upon love as trivial; the poet has no illusion where he himself stands:

Gar cheh matâ'-e 'eshq râ 'aql bahâyi kam nehad

Man nadeham ba takht-e jam âh-e jegar gudâz râ. (PM 149; KF 319)

Although the intellect rates Love not very high,

I would not give a lover's anguished sigh

For Jamshid's throne. (ME 112)

Iqbal, then, translates his views on reason and love to his understanding of religious beliefs. While he is keen to point out the rational bases of religion, he further accentuates that religious truths are not rational only but also involve intuition. Acutely conscious of the limitations of reason-in-itself, Iqbal supplements reason by the more powerful and more important force of *'eshq* or love. He hypothesizes that mere intellectual contemplation and cogitation would involve delusion and deception, and that an entirety *rational* apprehension of religious truths, even if valuable, will ultimately remain precarious:

Ba chashm-e 'eshq negar tâ suragh-e ô gîrî

Jahân ba chashm-e kherad sîmyîâ u nayrang ast.

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Do you wish to know the mystery of the world,

then look at it through the eye of *'eshq*.

It is delusion and empty pageantry

if seen through the eye of reason.

In Payâm-e Mashreq, through a conversation between *'elm* (knowledge) and *'eshq*, Iqbal puts forward a dialogical composition, a dialectical synthesis, or mélange, of knowledge and love for the creative evolution of the individual self and the productive structuring of the human society. In the dialogue, *'elm* first gloats that:

Negâham râzdâr-e haft u châr ast

Gereftâr-e kamandam rûzgâr ast.

Jahân bînam ba în sû bâz kardand

Marâ bâ ân sû-ye gîtî cheh kâr ast . . .

My eye sees the whole spectrum of material thing

It captures the world in its comprehensive net.

My field of vision is this side of heaven: I have

Nothing to do with those celestial happenings . . .

'Eshq's response, on the other hand, is modest yet suggestive. It refers to the intriguing point that love and knowledge, though vastly divergent now, were initially essentially homologous. *'Eshq* explains:

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Ze afsûn-e tô daryâ shu'lah zâr ast

Havâ âtash gudâz u zahr dâr ast.

Chû bâ man yâr bûdî, nûr bûdî

Burîdî az man u nûr-e tô nâr ast.

Ba khalvat khânah-ye lâhût zâdî

Va lîkan dar nakh-e shaytân futâdî.

Your evil magic sets the ocean's waves ablaze,

And shrouds the atmosphere in a foul gaseous haze.

When you were friends with me, you were incarnate light;

But since you broke with me, your light is a dread blight;

You were born in the sacred shrine of the Divine;

But you got yourself firmly caught in Satan's twine.

'Eshq, then, appeals to *'elm* to rejoin its original partner to assemble a meaningful whole:

Bîyâ în khâkdân râ gul-setân sâz

Jahân-e pîr râ dîgar javân sâz.

Bîyâ yak zarrah az dard-e delam gîr

Tah-e gardûn behesht-e jâvedân sâz.

Ze rûz-e âfarînesh hamdam hastîm

Hamân yak naghmah râ zîr u bam hastîm. (PM 97-98; KF 267-68)

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Come, make this dusty waste a garden once again.

Rejuvenate this ancient, time-worn, ailing world.

Come, take from me a little of my passion's pain,

And under the skies build a lasting Paradise.

From the first we have kept each other company:

We are the treble and bass of one grand symphony. (ME 61)

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(En)closing the West

For Iqbal, the dialectical synthesis of head and heart, reason and intuition, love and knowledge, is indispensable for the modern day human societies' survival. In his lectures on religion, Iqbal emphasizes the centrality of reason, yet he maintains, especially in his poetical works, that love and reason (or intellect) ought not be constant polarities. The two actually can be examined as dialectically interwoven phenomena. In the larger context, however, Iqbal sees in the love/reason relationship the manifestation of the contrast between the Orient and the West.

While undoubtedly nurtured on the Western intellectual traditions, Iqbal's relation with the West had always remained ambivalent: he was simultaneously attracted to and repelled by the West. For Iqbal, terms like *farang* (France, i.e. Europe) and *gharb/maghreb* (the West), "are associated with the exploitation of the real producer of the wealth, industrialism raising the specter of economic crisis, machine turned into totem, capitalist democracy being like a juggler's show, secularization of life and culture, atheistic materialism, overemphasis on intellect and reason, lack of spiritualism, the conquest of external nature but denigration of the human personality, scientism, and the vision of life deriving from it" (Ansari 1978: 306). Yet--and here lies the ambivalent nature, or, perhaps, the dilemma, of Iqbal's encounter with the West--Iqbal admires Western thought, philosophy, and literature. "To be able to understand the secrets of life," Iqbal is quoted in the translator's Introduction to <u>Asrâr-e Khudî,</u>

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"their [i.e. Western] thought and literature can serve as the best guide for the people of the East . . . . The spirit and mind of the East need to benefit from [Western thought] and to revise its old philosophical traditions in that light." Iqbal further contends that with the advent of contemporary/modern period (*dawr-e hâzer*), "it is necessary to examine, in an independent spirit, what Europe has thought and how far the conclusions reached by her can help us [Muslims] in the revision and, if necessary, reconstruction, of theological thought in Islam" (RRT 8).

In a poem entitled "Payâm" (Message), Iqbal uses the terms *'eshq* and *'aql* to describe the enormous material achievement and prosperity of the West but also warns of the consequences of such achievement. He writes:

> *Az man ay bâd-e sabâ gûy ba dânâ-ye Farang*
>
> *'Aql tâ bâl gushûdast gereftârtar ast . . .*
>
> *'Ajab ân nist keh e'jâz-e Masihâ dâri*
>
> *'Ajab in ast keh bimâr-e tô bimârtar ast.*
>
> *Dânesh andûkhtah-î del ze kaf andâkhtah-î*
>
> *Âh zân naqd-e gerânmâyah keh darbâkhtah-î.* (PM 187-88; KF 357-58)

> O morning breeze, convey this to the Western sage from me:
>
> With wings unfolded, Wisdom is a captive all the more . . .
>
> It is not strange that you have the Messiah's healing touch:
>
> What is strange is your patient is the more sick for your cure.

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Though you have gathered knowledge, you have thrown away the heart;

With what a precious treasure you have thought it fit to part! (ME 154).

He further points out that the material prosperity of the West is due, above all, to scientific discoveries and technological advancements:

Qûvvat-e maghreb na az chang u rabâb

Ni ze raqs-e dukhtarân-e bî hejâb . . .

Muhkamî ô râ na az lâ-dînî ast

Ni furûghash az khat-e Lâtînî ast.

Qûvvat-e Afrang az 'elm u fan ast

Az hamîn âtash cherâghash rawshan ast. (JN 78; KF 766).

Europe's might arose from neither flute nor harp

Nor from the dance of half-nude girls . . .

Its strength, nor atheism nor Latin script.

From art and science doth the West derive

Her power which is the only kindling flame that light her lamp. (PE 168)

Surely the Western sciences and arts (*'elm va fan*) have been immensely successful in many respects, but such advancements often have proven disruptive and destructive:

Adamîyat zâr nâlîd az Farang

Zendagî hangâmah barchîd az Farang . . .

Mushkelât-e hazrat-e ensân az ôst

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Adamîyat râ gham-e penhan az ôst.

Dar negâhash âdamî âb u gel ast

Kâravân-e zendagî bî manzel ast... (PBK 43; KF 839)

Humanity is tormented by the West

Life is endangered by the West . . .

Many of man's hardships are its product

Humanity's inner sorrow is its result, too.

In its eyes the human being is trifle water and clay,

And the caravan of life is without a resting place . . .

In his evaluation of the West, Iqbal sees a symmetrical relationship between material progress and spiritual decline--a process best embodied by the modern West:

'Aql andar hukm-e del yazdânî ast

Chûn ze jân âzâd shud shaytânî ast. (PBK 44; KF 840)

Reason under the command of the heart is Divine

When freed from the soul it turns Evil.

Iqbal concludes that the ever lasting quest for material gains has led the Western man not only to seek imperial conquests in the rest of the world but also to devoid himself of any sense of compassion and pathos. As a result, no attempt is being made in the West to salvage ethics and morality, Iqbal suggests. With no "spiritual discipline"

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existing, no criteria for moral judgment develops in the West. Furthermore, since the West has now turned into the hegemonic political and cultural force throughout the world--"gurgi andar pûstîn-e barah-ye"--the consequences of the so-called "moral degradation" of the West, plus Western imperial order, appear to be disastrous not only for the West itself but potentially for the future of the entire mankind:

Yûrup az shamshîr-e khud besmel fetâd

Zîr-e gardûn rasm-e lâ-dînî nehâd.

Gurgi andar pûstîn-e barah-ye

Har zamân andar kamîn-e barah-ye. (PBK 43; KF 839)

Europe is slain by its own sword,

Since it formulated the path of heresy.

Europe is a wolf clothed as a lamb,

Constantly lying in wait to ambush a lamb.

On the other hand, while the West has abandoned the "heart," the East (especially the Muslim Orient) suffers from the lack of "vitality," Iqbal contends:

Khâvar keh âsmân ba kamand-e khîyâl-e ôst

Az khwîshtan gusastah u bî sûz-e ârzûst.

Dar tîrah khâk-e ô tab u tâb-e hayât nîst

Jawlân-e mawj râ negarân az kenâr-e jûst.

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But khânah u haram hamah afsurdah âtashi

Pîr-e mughân sharâb-e havâ khurdah dar sabûst. (ZA 49; KF 441).

The East, that holds the heavens fast

Within the noose its fancy cast,

Its spirit's bonds are all united,

The flames of its desire have died.

The burning glow of living birth

Pulses no more in its dark earth;

It stands upon the river side

And gazes at the surging tide.

Faint, faint the fires of worship be

In temple and in sanctuary;

The Magian still his cup could pass,

But stale the wine is in his glass. (PP 40-41)

Iqbal is tormented by the conditions prevailing throughout the East which have rendered it lifeless and dispirited; he then laments:

Mashreq kharâb u maghreb az ân bîshtar kharâb

'Alam tamâm murdah u bî-zawq-e justujûst. (ZA 50; KF 442)

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The East is waste and desolate,

The West is more bewildered yet;

The ardent quest inspire no more

Death reigns supreme the whole world o'er. (PP 41)

Part of the problem lies, however, in "our" (Oriental) fascination with things Western. Iqbal warns those Easterners who are deceived by the appearance of Western manifestations and fail to realize the dangers inherent in them:

Kîmîyâ sâzî-ye ô rîg-e ravân râ zar kard

Bar del-e sukhtah eksîr-e muhabbat kam zad.

Vây bar sâdagî-ye mâ keh fusûnash khurdîm

Rahzani bûd kamîn kard u rah-e âdam zad.

Its alchemy made the particles of dust into gold,

But it hardly offered the elixir of love to the affected heart.

Pity be on our naiveté that we were bewitched by its sorcery,

It was a robber who ambushed and waylaid humanity.

The people of the East--the "*Turk-e az khud raftah u mast-e Farang,*" for instance--see the material prosperity of the West superficially and are easily deceived:

Bandah-ye afrang az zawq-e numûd

Mibarad az gharbîyyân raqs u surûd . . .

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Az tan âsânî begîrad sahl râ

Fetrat-e ô darpazîrad sahl râ.

Sahl râ justan dar în dayr-e kuhan

In dalîl-e ân keh jân raft az badan. (JN 179; KF 767)

The wish for self-display makes Europe's slave

but borrow from her tunes and dance . . .

His nature loves the facile and the smooth.

If one, in this old temple, seeks mere ease,

It signifies departure of the soul. (PE 168-69)

Instead of following the Western model, however, the Easterners should criticize the West:

Sharq râ az khud barad taqlîd-e gharb

Bâyad în aqvâm râ tanqîd-e gharb. (JN 167; KF 766)

By imitation of the West, the East has lost her moorings

She should possess a keener sight to critique the West.

The "self-alienated" Oriental is the subject of some of Iqbal's scathing criticisms as well as admonishment:

Ay asîr-e rang pâk az rang shav

Mu'men-e khud kâfer-e Afrang shav.

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Reshtah-ye sûd u zîyân dar dast-e tôst

Abrû-ye khâvarân dar dast-e tôst

In kuhan aqvâm râ shîrâzah band

Râ'yat-e sedq u safâ râ kun buland. (PBK 35; KF 841)

If polluted by the West, purify yourself

Believe in thyself and reject the West.

The noose of profit and loss is in your hand

The dignity of the whole Orient is in your hand.

Bring together these ancient nations

Raise up the flag of truth and sincerity.

In order to survive, the East is bound to resurrect itself, especially that the "night" of colonialism is (soon to be) over and the "sun" (of revolution) has already appeared in the horizons:

Pas cheh bâyad kard ay aqvâm-e sharq?

Bâz rawshan mîshavad ayyâm-e sharq.

Dar zamîrash enqelâb âmad padîd

Shab guzasht u âftab âmad padîd. (PBK 33; KF 839)

What should be done O people of the East?

Once more enlightened become the days of the East.

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In its conscience is stirred a revolution

The night is over and the sun has come.

The new challenges require new solutions and new strategies. To understand Iqbal's position in this respect, it seems necessary to return to the paradigm of love/reason discussed above. In Jâvîd-nâmah Iqbal contends that only when reason and love are synthesized--that is to say, when the East-West antithetical relationship is potentially historically overcome--new possibilities will emerge:

Gharbîyân râ zîrakî sâz-e hayât

Sharqîyân râ 'eshq râz-e kâ'yenât.

Zîrakî az 'eshq gardad haq shenâs

Kâr-e 'eshq az zîrakî muhkam asâs.

'Eshq chûn bâ zîrakî hambar shavad

Naqshband-e 'âlam-e dîgar shavad.

Khîz u naqsh-e 'âlam-e dîgar beneh

'Eshq râ bâ zîrakî âmîz deh. (JN 65; KF 653)

For Westerners doth reason furnish all

Accouterment of life and for the East

Love is the key of mystery. Love-led

Can reason claim the Lord and reason-lit

Love strikes firm roots. When integrated,

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These two draw the pattern of a different world.

Let love and reason intermixed be

To chart a world all new. (PE 54)

The wedding of reason to love would require no less than a revolution--a material as well as a spiritual one:

Vaqt-e ân ast keh âyyîn-e degar tâzah kunîm

Lawh-e del pâk be-shûyyîm u ze sar tâzah kunîm.

It is time that we establish a different system,

The heart's tablet we wash clean and make a new beginning.

Iqbal sees himself as the poet-prophet of this "different system," which is as yet to be realized: "I am the voice of the poet of tomorrow," says Iqbal.

Entezâr-e subh-e khîzân mîkasham

Ay khushâ Zartushtîyân-e âtasham.

Naghmah am az zakhmah bî parvâstam

Man navâ-ye shâ'er-e fardâstam.

'Asr-e man dânendah-ye asrâr nîst

Yûsuf-e man bahr-e în bazâr nîst.

Nâ umîd astam ze yârân-e qadîm

Tûr mîsûzad keh mîâyad Kalîm. (AK 6; KF 6)

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I am waiting for the votaries that rise at dawn:

Oh! happy the Zoroastrian worshippers of my fire!

I have no need of the ear of Today,

I am the voice of the poet of Tomorrow.

My own age does not understand my deep meanings,

My Joseph is not for this market.

I despair of my old companions,

My Sinai burns for sake of the Moses who is yet to appear. (TSS 3-4)

Despite the arduousness of the path leading to the future, Iqbal remains remarkably optimistic:

Muzhdah-ye subh dar în tîrah shabânam dâdand

Shâm ' kushtand u ze khurshîd neshânam dâdand.

The blessing of morn was given to me in this dark night,

They blew off the (mere) candle and gave me the sign of the (rising) sun.

Yet the "sign of the (rising) sun" can be given only when the individual seeker is truly immersed in the realization of his/her total *selfhood*. The following chapter deals with Iqbal's complex theory of the self, the foundation of his conception of identity in the contemporary world. This theory is particularly important because Iqbal's conception of the self underscores his belief in the possibilities and potentials inherent in Islam as a religion:

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Ramz-e dîn-e Mustafâ dânî keh chîst?

Fâsh dîdan khwîsh râ shâhanshahîst.

Chîst dîn? dar-yâftan asrâr-e khwîsh

Zendagî marg ast bî dîdâr-e khwîsh

An musalmân-i ke bînad khwîsh râ

Az jahân-i bar-gûzînad khwîsh râ. (PBK 58; KF 854)

Do you know what the secret of Muhammad's religion is?

To see one's self unveiled is (like) ruling an empire.

What is religion? discovering one's own secrets

Life is death without seeing one's own self.

That Muslim who sees his self

Will choose himself over a whole world.

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Chapter Six

COGNITION OF THE SELF, CONSTITUTION OF THE OTHER

> Difference now comes to mean not otherness, exclusive opposition, but specifically, variation, heterogeneity. Difference names relations of similarity and dissimilarity that can be reduced to neither coextensive identity nor nonoverlapping otherness. . . . Difference no longer implies that groups lie outside one another. To say that there are differences among groups does not imply that there are not overlapping experiences, or that two groups have nothing in common.
>
> *Iris Marion Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference*

The Genealogy of Khudî *and the Quest for Shared Identity*

The main feature of Iqbal's works and world view is the doctrine of *khudî*, variously translated as "self-hood," "personality," "individuality," and "ego-hood." *Khudî* is to be understood and appreciated in the framework of the human being's own judgment, pertinence, ideals, desires, and aspirations. While describing the meaning of *khudî*, and the ambiguities involved in the term, Iqbal distinguishes between a "metaphysical" meaning and an "ethical" meaning. "Metaphysically," he writes, "the word *khudî* is used in the sense of that indescribable feeling of 'I' , which forms the basis of the uniqueness of each individual. Metaphysically it does not convey any ethical significance for those who cannot get rid of its ethical significance. . . . Ethically the

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word *khudî* means (as used by me) self-reliance, self-respect, self-confidence, self-preservation, even self-assertion when such a thing is necessary, in the interests of life and the power to stick to the cause of truth, justice, duty, etc., even in the face of death. Such behavior is moral in my opinion because it helps in the integration of the forces of the Ego, thus hardening it, as against the forces of disintegration and dissolution (vide Reconstruction); practically the metaphysical Ego is the bearer of two main rights that is the right to life and freedom as determined by the Divine Law" (TR 243-44). It is in the latter sense that Iqbal wrote to the translator of his Asrâr-e Khudî that "The moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation but self-affirmation and he attains and he attains to this ideal by becoming more individual, more and more unique" (TSS xviii-xix).

That life is essentially individual and the individual is the center of life is a determining factor in Iqbal's doctrine of *khudî*. Despite the capacity of the ego to respond to other egos, the nature of the ego dictates that "it is self-centered and possesses a private circuit of individuality excluding all egos other than itself" (RRT 72). The self-centered ego, however, is not self-absorbed. It is not confined to an act of contemplation and meditation only. Rather, it constantly manifests itself creatively in order to subordinate, and ultimately reshape, the external world. The reality and the unity of *khudî*, therefore, lies in its directive attitude and purpose: "The final act," Iqbal writes, "is not an intellectual act, but a vital act which deepens the whole being of the ego, and sharpens his will with the creative assurance that the world is not something

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to be merely seen or known through concepts, but something to be made and re-made by continuous action" (RRT 198).

The affirmation of *khudî* is well elaborated in the following passage from the *masnavî* "Gulshan-e Râz-e Jadîd":

Agar gû-yî keh man vahm u gumân ast

Numûdash chûn numûd-e în u ân ast.

Begû bâ man keh dârâ-ye gumân kîst?

Yakî dar khud negar ân bî neshân kîst? . . .

Khudî râ haq bedân bâtel mapendâr

Khudî râ kesht-e bî hâsel mapendâr.

Khudî chûn pukhtah gardad lâzavvâl âst.

Ferâq-e 'âsheqân 'ayn-e vesâl ast . . .

Vujûd-e kûhsâr u dasht u dar hîch

Jahân fânî, khudî bâqî, degar hîch . . .

Ba khud gum bahr-e tahqîq-e khudî shaw

An'al-haq gûy u seddîq-e khudî shaw. (ZA 140-41; KF 562-63)

If you say that the "I"

Is all pure fantasy,

Nothing but an illusory

Thing seen by the mind's eye,

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Then tell me whose experience

Is this delusion of the inner sense.

Who is the subject of this fantasy?

Look inward at yourself: are you not he? . . .

The Self is not Illusion but Reality.

Do not regard it as a barren field;

For it is rich in yield--

The fruit of immortality.

Its separation from the Infinite

Is a true lovers' separation: it

Is union in duality . . .

The being of hill, desert, city, plain

Is nothing and this world is all a vain

Illusion; but the Self enjoys eternity . . .

Lose yourself in your Self to verify

Your being's truth.

Declare, "I am the Truth," and affirm

the existence of your Self. (NRG 39-41)

The absence of *khudī*, on the contrary, means death and its weakness tantamounts to inertia and lethargy. "Personality is a state of tension, and can continue only if that state is maintained. If the state of tension is not maintained, relaxation will ensue." Thus

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writes Iqbal to the translator of Asrâr-e Khudî. This point is crucial, because from this "Iqbal draws the criterion for the ethical values of good and evil: Everything that strengthens the personality is good; everything that weakens it is evil. These are the positions from which religion, ethics, and art must be evaluated" (Anikeyev 1971: 271).

In a clear Nietzschean tone, Iqbal deprecates systems of thought that shun tension and suffering, presage decline, and preserve death and decay--of souls as well as of bodies. Such views, he contends, disseminate inertia, relaxation, ease, and comfort. Iqbal, in his part, finds danger, obstacles, and suffering fascinating. He is not even fond of the paradise for it involves peace and tranquillity. He avoids to take the road to Ka'ba--the holiest Muslim pilgrimage place--on account of its being the shelter for calmness and repose:

Ba kîsh-e zendadelân zendagî jafâ talabîst

Safar ba ka'ba nakardam keh râh bîkhatar ast.

According to the creed of the living, life lies in inviting dangers,

I did not undertake a journey to Ka'ba because its path is not beset with dangers.

A similar sentiment is expressed in the following line:

Va lîkan man narânam keshtî-ye khwîsh

Ba daryâ-yi keh mawjash bî nahang ast.

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But I do not row my boat

Through a river the waves of which do not contain a crocodile.

To Iqbal true being (*hastî*) is perpetual becoming, a process of constant movement:

Hastam agar mîravam, gar naravam nîstam. (PM 128; KF 298)

If I roll, I am

If I roll not, I am naught.

It is precisely for this reason that Iqbal is opposed to the pantheistic belief in *vasl* (union) which implies the end of individuality and freedom of the self--"Beware if union means the end of desire and love" (*vasl agar pâyân-e 'eshq ast al-hazar!*):

Tô nashenâsî hanûz shawq bemîrad ze vasl

Chîst hayât-e davâm? sukhtan-e nâtamâm.

As yet do know not that desire dies with union:

What is eternal life? a never-ending burning.

It is *ferâq*, the opposite of *vasl*, that Iqbal praises, because it incarnates ceaseless quest and everlasting pursuit.

Chû nazar qarâr gîrad ba negâr-e khûbrû-yi

Tapad ân zamân del-e man pay-ye khûbtar negâri.

Ze sharar setârah jûyam ze setârah âftâbi

Sar-e manzeli nadâram keh bemîram az qarâri.

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When my vision is arrested by a beloved's beauty,

My heart then burns to have a more beautiful beloved.

I seek the star from the spark, then a sun from the star,

I do not think of destination, as rest tolls my death-knell.

Contentment, even in the abode of the moon, is to be rejected:

Ze jû-ye kahkashân begzar, ze nîl-e âsmân begzar

Ze manzel del bemîrad gar cheh bâshad manzel-e mâhi.

Swim through the river of the milky way, and traverse the blue firmament

Destination, though it be the moon itself, tolls the death-knell of the heart.

The movement of *khudî* is not, however, an aimless movement, an evolution without a purpose, Iqbal insists. With the strong teleological tradition in Islam before him, Iqbal could not remain confined to a Bergsonian blind, unconscious *élan vital*, however creative it might be. He finds the Qur'an clear in this respect: "We have not created the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them in sport. We created them not but with truth; but most of them know not" (The Qur'an xliv, 38-39). A deeper understanding of the self is the first prerequisite to understand the Real in its full glory, as Iqbal maintains in Armaghân-e Hejâz:

Bîyâ bar khwîsh pîchîdan bîyâmûz

Ba nâkhun sînah kâvîdan bîyâmûz.

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Agar khwâhî khudâ râ fâsh bînî

Khudî râ fâshtar dîdan bîyâmûz!

Come and learn to look within your self

It indeed involves painful effort.

If you wish to see God unveiled

Learn to look at your self without a veil.

The realization of *khudî* is so significant a process that, without falling back into the pantheistic tenet of the annihilation of the self into God, Iqbal wonders who (God or the human being) is the actual seeker and who is the one who is sought:

Mâ az khudây gum shudah-îm ô ba justujûst

Chûn mâ nîyâzmand u gereftâr-e ârzûst . . .

Dar khâkdân-e mâ guhar-e zendagî kam ast

In gawhari keh gum shudah mâyyîm yâ keh ôst?

God lost us in the first instance and is now searching for us,

He is like us the captive of love and desire. . .

The pearl of life is wanting in our clay house,

Does He or do we constitute that lost pearl?

The human being who has realized the self in its totality is placed *at least* on an equal plane with God the Creator. In the famous poem "Mahâvarah mâ-bayn-e Khudâ va

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Ensân" (The Dialogue Between God and Man), in Payâm-e Mashreq, man proudly recounts his achievements in the face of God's complaint about man's unruly actions in the world:

Tô shab âfarîdî, cherâgh âfarîdam

Safâl âfarîdî, ayâgh âfarîdam.

Bîyâbân u kûhsâr u râgh âfarîdî

Khîyâbân u gulzâr u bâgh âfarîdam.

Man ânam keh az sang âyyînah sâzam

Man ânam keh az zahr nûshînah sâzam. (PM 114; KF 284)

You mad the night; I made the lamp that lights it up.

You fashioned clay; I made it a drinking cup.

You made the wilderness, the mountain and the steppe;

I fashioned garden, orchard, avenue, and space.

I change dread poison into panaceas, and

I am the one who fashioned mirror out of sand. (ME 78)

Iqbal, then, introduces the concept of the Perfect Man as the intermediary in the progressive unfolding of individuality, initially to selfhood, and ultimately to the Absolute--i.e. the Divine. He considers the movement of the ego towards Absolute Uniqueness to have taken place in *three* interdependent phases: obedience to the law; self-control; and Divine vicegerency. Though the first two phases are crucial in the

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formation and strengthening of the self, it is the last phase, Divine vicegerency (*niyâbat-e elâhî*), that constitutes the self in its totality, as the Perfect Man. The concept is lucidly defined in the Introduction to the English edition of Asrâr-e Khudî:

> The *nâ'ib* (vicegerent) is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is the completest Ego, the goal of humanity, the acme of life both in mind and body; in him the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony. This highest power is united in him with the highest knowledge. In his life, thought and action, instinct and reason, become one. He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity, and all the trials of a painful evolution are justified because he is to come at the end. He is the real ruler of mankind; his kingdom is the kingdom of God on earth. Out of the richness of his nature he lavishes the wealth of life on others, and brings them nearer and nearer to himself. The more we advance in evolution, the nearer we get to him. In approaching him we are raising ourselves in the scale of life. The development of humanity both in mind and body is a condition precedent to his birth. For the present he is a mere ideal; but 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. Thus the kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth. Nietzsche had a glimpse of this

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ideal race, but his atheism and aristocratic prejudices marred his whole conception (TSS xxvii-xxix).[1]

Only that person who reaches the apex of *khudî* will turn into the Perfect Man, and only the Perfect Man could claim:

Tarâshîdam sanam bar sûrat-e khwîsh

Ba shakl-e khud khudâ râ naqsh bastam.

Marâ az khud berûn raftan muhâl ast

Ba har rangi keh hastam khud parastam. PM 68; KF 238)

All idols that I make resemble me.

God is after my likeness, even He.

Unable to go out of my Self, I

Adore myself, no matter in what guise. (ME 36)

In the following lines, whose ecstatic mood in the original Persian is hardly lost, Iqbal identifies the individual self with the Perfect Man and with the Divine Himself. Iqbal postulates that the self/other distinction no longer holds:

Darûn-e sînah-ye mâ dîgarî cheh bul'ajabîst

Ki râ khabar keh tô-yî yâ keh mâ dôchâr-e khudîm.

Kushây pardah ze taqdîr-e âdam-e khâkî

Keh mâ ba rahguzar-e tô dar entezâr-e khudîm.

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How surprising it is that some one else should pervade our bosom!

Who can with certainty know whether we are enjoying Your sight or are facing our own Self?

Remove the curtain from the destiny ordained for the man of dust,

As we are waiting for our own Self even in Your path.

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Khudî *and the Formation of Collective Self*

Iqbal believes that *khudî* is properly embodied, and manifests itself discernibly, in the creative activity of the individual in the external world--i.e. the human society. The individual and the society complement and supplement each other. While it is true that personality's development as self-realization is of primary importance, equally important is the evolution of an ideal society, a *communitas*. Society is the sphere where all the qualities and potentialities of the individual are realized and where "man can unfurl his creative activity, approach the ideal of man, gain freedom, and make himself immortal. The individual personality must take a social path and devote itself to serving society. This does not at all mean the loss of its individuality; on the contrary, the social path enables personality to realize itself" (Anikeyev 1971: 272). As can be expected, the ideal society should be, above all, a cultural construct, a collectivity of imagination. Precisely for this reason, i.e. the emphasis on imagination in the formulation of the homogeneous society, the Iqbalian paradigm turns into a powerful ideological project.

The concept of self (or ego) is to be supplemented by the cognizance of the collective ego-hood of a people. Hence Iqbal's emphasis on the importance of society (*mellat*) and the historical past that forms the integrity of the community. In Iqbal's view, society is the very essence of the individual development:

Fard u qawm ayyînah-ye yakdîgarand

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Selk u gawhar, kahkashân u akhtarand.

Fard mîgîrad ze mellat ehterâm

Mellat az afrâd mî-yâbad nezâm.

Fard tâ andar jamâ'at gum shavad

Qatrah-ye vus'at talab qulzum shavad . . .

Paykarash az qawm u ham jânash ze qawm

Zâherash az qawm u penhânash ze qawm. (RB 86; KF 86)

The Individual a Mirror holds

To the Community, and they to him;

He is a jewel threaded on their cord,

A star that in their constellation shines;

He wins respect as being one of them,

And the Society is organized

As by comprising many such as he.

When in the Congregation he is lost

'Tis like a drop which, seeking to expand,

Becomes an ocean . . .

To the Society he owes his body and his soul,

Alike his outward and his hidden parts. (MS 5-6)

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The creative, individual self and the larger society should work harmoniously, because the latter is the external manifestation of the former and the former is the foundation of the latter:

Fard râ rabt-e jamâ'at rahmat ast

Jawhar-e ô az kamâl-e mellat ast.

Tâ tavânî bâ jamâ'at yâr bâsh

Rawnaq-e hangâmah-ye ahrâr bâsh. (RB 85; KF 85)

The link that binds the Individual

To the Society a Mercy is;

His truest Self in the Community

Alone achieves fulfillment. Wherefore be

So far as in thee lies in close rapport

With thy Society, and luster bring

to the Wide intercourse of free-born men. (MS 5)

Similarly, active and living membership of a vital community confers upon the individual a sense of collective purpose necessary for further enhancement and growth of the human self. With the dissolution of the "I" in the society, the individual joins a history, a past tradition, a culture, and a worldview. Iqbal thus conveys this principle:

Lafz chûn az bayt-e khud bîrûn neshast

Gawhar-e mazmûn ba jîb-e khud shekast.

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Barg sabzî kaz nehâl-e khwîsh rîkht

Az bahârân târ-e umîdash gusast.

Har keh âb az zamzam-e mellat nakhurd

Shu'la hâ-ye naghmah dar 'ûdash fesurd.

When a word is taken out of its verse,

It causes the sense to be lost.

The green leaf that falls from the branch

Loses all hopes of enjoying the spring.

He who does not drink from the fountain of society,

Will find that the fire of his melodies dies out in him.

Iqbal insists that a true society must have certain attributes, the most significant of which are the "unity of hearts" and the "unity of purpose":

Mellat az yakrangî-ye delhâsti

Rawshan az yak jalvah în sînâsti.

Qawm râ andîshah hâ bâyad yakî

Dar zamîrash muda'â bâyad yakî.

Jazbah bâyad dar zamîr-e ô yakî

Ham 'ayâr-e khûb u zesht-e ô yakî. (RB 92; KF 92)

When several hearts put on a singly hue

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That is Community, which Sinai

Grows radiant in one epiphany.

Peoples must have one thought, and in their minds

Pursue a single purpose; to one draw

Their temperaments respond, one testing-stone

Discriminates the hideous from their fair. (MS 12)

In Iqbal's view, the ideology which will inspire both the individual and the society is to be found in the framework provided by *religion*. "And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual," reads The Reconstruction, "can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and wither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values" (RRT 188).

Thus, Iqbal was convinced that the experience of the ego is ultimately defined by the experience of religion--more specifically, Islam. The dynamism of the ego manifests itself more thoroughly when it is constituted within the bounds of Islam. Iqbal proposes a society where Islam is the sole constituting order, where, theoretically, the ego is best fulfilled. Of course, on a number of issues, his philosophical interpretation of

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Islam is at odds with the views of the conservative *'ulamá*. By regarding Islam itself as a dynamic faith which is ever creative in essence, Iqbal justifies his views on the religious nature of the congregation of egos.

The Islamic religious paradigm--based primarily on the notion that the earth is the possession of God and on the norms of equality, social justice, and human solidarity, as Iqbal puts it--can provide the ideological foundation of the ideal civil society which would cut across racial and territorial limitations. As such it can have universal human application. "While I have the greatest love for Islam, it is in view of practical and not patriotic considerations . . . that I am compelled to start with a specific society (e.g., Islam) which, among the societies of the world, happens to be the only one suitable to my purpose," Iqbal writes (TR 99).

> The object of my Persian poems is not to make out a case for Islam; my aim is simply to discover a universal social reconstruction, and in this endeavor, I find it philosophically impossible to ignore a social system which exists with the express object of doing away with all the distinctions of caste, rank, and race; and which, while keeping a watchful eye on the affairs of this world, fosters a spirit of unworldliness so absolutely essential to man in his relations with his neighbors. This is what Europe lacks and this is what she can still learn from us" (100-01).

In the same manner that in the *ideal* Islamic society all political subjugation and economic exploitation are to be discarded, the pride in either family, nation, or race is

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equally deprecated as harmful and bound to retard the full flourishing of the human potentialities. Iqbal is especially adamantly opposed to the "race-idea"--"which is the greatest enemy of Islam--in fact, of all humanity, and it is the duty of all lovers of mankind to stand in revolt against this dreadful invention of the Devil"--and the idea of nationality based on race or territory (98).

Asl-e mellat dar vatan dîdan keh cheh?

Bâd u âb u gul parastîdan keh cheh?

Bar nasab nâzân shudan nâdânî ast

Hukm-e ô andar tan u tan fânî ast. (RB 93; KF 93)

Thinkest thou the Community is based

Upon the Country? Shall so much regard

Be blindly paid to water, air and earth?

It is dull ignorance to put one's boast

In lineage; that judgment rests upon

The body, and the body perishes. (MS 13)

In Europe, Iqbal contends,

Rûh az tan raft u haft andâm mând

Adamîyyat gum shud u aqvâm mând . . .

Qawm-e 'Isâ bar kalîsâ pâ zadah

Naqd-e âyyîn-e chalîpâ vâ zadah. (RB 116; KF 116)

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The spirit has departed from the flesh,

Only the seven disjointed limbs remain;

Vanished is humankind; there but abide

The disunited nations . . .

Jesus' followers spurning the Church;

Debased the coinage of the True Cross's law. (MS 32)

The ideal Muslim society, on the contrary, embraces *all* countries and races, and is, by implication, universal and cosmopolitan in character:

Mellat-e mâ râ asâsi dîgar ast

In asâs andar del-e mâ muzmar ast . . .

Tîr-e khush paykân-e yak kîshîm mâ

Yak numâ, yak bîn, yak andîshîm mâ.

Muda'â-ye mâ ma'âl-e mâ yakîst

Tarz u andâz-e khîyâl-e mâ yakîst. (RB 93; KF 93)

Other are the foundations that support

Islam's Community; they lie concealed

Within our hearts . . .

Well-pointed arrows of one quiver are we,

One showing, one beholding, one in thought;

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One is our goal and purpose, one the form,

The fashion, and the measure of our dream. (MS 13)

Iqbal repeatedly emphasizes submission to certain rules, norms, and traditions (*âyyîn*) to strengthen the ideal collective *mellat.* Obedience to social norms, though vexatious and troublesome at times, is actually the source of strength of the self. So crucial are these norms and tradition to the survival of the society that their absence tantamounts to social decay and disintegration:

Mellati râ raft chûn âyyîn ze dast

Mesl-e khâk ajzâ-ye ô az ham shekast.

Hastî-ye Muslim ze âyyîn ast u bas

Bâten-e dîn-e nabî în ast u bas.

Barg-e gul shud chûn ze âyyîn bastah shud

Gul ze âyyîn bastah shud guldastah shud. (RB 121; KF 121)

When a Community forsakes its Law

Its parts are severed, like the scattered dust.

The being of the Muslim rests alone

On Law, which is in truth the inner core

Of the Apostle's faith. A rose is born

When its component petals are conjoined

By Law; and roses, being likewise bound

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By Law together, fashion a bouquet. (MS 37)

A true society requires a center--an axis or a visible focus (*markaz-e mahsûs*)--around which the entire society rotates. This center--which Mecca's sacred house is to the Muslims--would prove instrumental in upholding the foundations upon which the society is structured:

Hamchunân âyyîn-e milâd-e umam

Zendagî bar markazi âyad ba ham.

Halqah râ markaz chû jân dar paykar ast

Khatt-e ô dar nuqtah-ye ô muzmar ast.

Qawm râ rabt u nezâm az markazi

Rûzgârash râ davâm az markazi. (RB 135; KF 135)

Such is the law that governeth the birth

Of nations. Life gathereth on a point

Of focus which, related to the ring,

Is as the spirit hidden in the flesh,

The track of the circumference concealed

Within the center. (MS 50) [2]

Iqbal's evaluation of the spirit of Islam and the Muslim culture leads him to propose that a planned but growing organic structure defined around an Islamic principle could

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best embody the necessities of our time and constitute the edifice on which a higher culture can be constructed. Stressing the organicity of such society, Iqbal nonetheless warns of the dangers of possible regimentation of it, too. He thus reemphasizes the individual *khudī* within the collective society:

> . . . the ultimate fate of a people does not depend so much on organization as on the worth and power of individual men. In an over-organized society the individual is altogether crushed out of existence. He gains the whole wealth of social thought around him and loses his own soul. Thus a false reverence for past history and its artificial resurrection constitute no remedy for a people's decay. . . . The only effective power, therefore, that counteracts the forces of decay in a people is the rearing of self-concentrated individuals. Such individuals alone reveal the depth of life (RRT 151).

Now, within the framework of this relationship between the individual and the larger society, Iqbal explores the cultivating of a uniform and homogeneous outlook, a unique *Weltanschauung*, a collective imagination among the Muslims of India. "[The] unity of religious belief on which our communal life depends, is supplemented by the uniformity of Muslim culture. . . . In order to participate in the life of communal self, the individual mind must undergo a complete transformation," stated Iqbal in a 1911 lecture (TR 378-79). He further added: "In order to become a living member of the Muslim community, the individual, besides an unconditional belief in the religious principle, must thoroughly

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assimilate the culture of Islam. The object of assimilation is to create a uniform mental outlook, a peculiar way of looking at the world, a certain definite stand point from where to judge the value of things which sharply defines our community and transforms it into a corporate individual giving it a definite purpose and ideal of its own" (379).

Defining the contours of such a paradigmatic society predominates virtually all of Iqbal's writings. Nonetheless, Iqbal became increasingly convinced that, contrary to his earlier pronouncements, an integral *communitas* based on "common purpose" and "unity of hearts" is impossible to be realized in a society such as India. The social, and especially "communal," structure of India under the British rule prevented the realization of Iqbal's thesis. Thus, in spite of his stated aversion to racial, linguistic, territorial, and sectarian views, Iqbal ultimately opted for a *separate* community reserved for the Muslims of the subcontinent and limited to them only. Iqbal's communal-reductionist vision of a genuine society for the pure (i.e. Pakistan) asserted itself fiercely and fervently as the actual moment of the Muslim "nation" arrived in India, when the colonial order crumbled in 1947.

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In the official nationalist discourse in Pakistan, where heroes are in short supply, Muhammad Iqbal is considered "the founding father of the nation," "the intellectual godfather of national independence," and "the architect" of an independent state for the Muslims of the Subcontinent. Except for his early youth, especially before leaving for Europe, when Iqbal entertained the idea of a comprehensive and all-encompassing Indian nation, he had always been--albeit in various degrees--a proponent of Muslim nationalism and a separate Muslim identity in India. He concluded that Islam and Hinduism constituted two fundamentally different world views. As his various writings, especially his Persian poetry, shows he was convinced that Muslims and Hindus could never be brought together to form a viable polity in the Subcontinent to replace the British colonial order. No compromise formula could be sought to allow both groups to coexist as equal partners in the post-colonial era within a single state.

Iqbal's "imaginative" strategy was intended, at least in part, as a Muslim response to the Hindu national imaginary, particularly the one disseminating from Bengal. Among the Hindu nationalist writers of the last decades of the nineteenth century, it was Pratapnarayn Misra who reflects the most profound sense of urgency about grappling with the Hindu Muslim controversy. As Sudhir Chandra maintains, Pratapnarayn draws clear lines of distinction between the Hindus and Muslims whom he implicitly regards as "alien" and "foreign" in India. He asserts that it was the Hindus

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to whom the country essentially belonged: "Hinduism is ours because we are Hindus. . . . Our progress or decline was, is, and shall be the progress and decline of Bharat. . . . Hindustan can be made or marred depending upon whether Hindus are made or marred." Hindus, accordingly, are described as "the chief inhabitants of the country. . . . Although Mussalmans, Christians, and Parsis all live here, they are called Hindustanis, and that is an appellation which is derived from our names. . . . We are the Hindus and the country is our land. All the others are called Bharatiya in a secondary sense" (Chandra 1992: 124). It was only by virtue of their association with the *real* Indians--the Hindus--that non-Hindu inhabitants qualified as Indians. In a 1892 poem, Pratapnarayn assimilates religion, ethnicity, and language with the cause of "Mother India":

> If you truly desire your own welfare,
> Then in unison, O children of Bharat,
> Keep chanting with one voice,
> Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan. (qtd in Chandra 141)

Iqbal was intent to counter this powerful Hindu discourse. What he wrote in the early decades of the following century resonate, in an Islamic garb, some of the almost formulaic, but nonetheless lucid and potent, imaginative writings of the Hindu literati. [3]

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Iqbal's famous Presidential Address to the annual session of the All-India Muslim League on December 29, 1930, is a significant source of reference for understanding his evolving political theory and his ideology of communal identity. The Address maintains:

> It cannot be denied that Islam, regarded as an ethical ideal plus a certain kind of polity--by which expression I mean a social structure regulated by a legal system and animated by a specific ethical ideal--has been the chief formative factor in the life-history of the Muslims of India. It has furnished those basic emotions and loyalties which gradually unify scattered individuals and groups and finally transform them into a well-defined people. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say that India is perhaps the only country in the world where Islam as a society is almost entirely due to the working of Islam as a culture inspired by a specific ethical ideal. What I mean to say is that Muslim society, with its remarkable homogeneity and inner unity, has grown to be what it is under the pressure of the laws and institutions associated with the culture of Islam (TR 162).

Thus, it will be impossible for Indian Muslims to renounce, suppress, or leave behind, the primary criterion for collective identity--i.e. Islam--for the sake of another identity--i.e. an *all*-Indian national identity. Hence Iqbal's rejection of the Indian National Congress's theory of the so-called democratic and non-communal Indian state: "Is it possible to retain Islam as an ethical ideal and to reject it as a polity in favor of

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[collective] national polities, in which religious attitude is not permitted to play any part?" (166). Iqbal's own response is as follows: "The religious ideal of Islam [is] organically related to the social order which it has created. The rejection of the one will eventually involve the rejection of the other. Therefore, the construction of a polity on [Indian] national lines, if it means a displacement of the Islamic principle of solidarity, is simply unthinkable to a Muslim. This is a matter which at the present moment directly concerns the Muslims of India" (167).

In discussing the potential for Muslim nationhood in India, Iqbal seems to have assimilated Ernest Renan's famous argument (which Iqbal quotes in English in his Address) that "L'homme n'est esclave ni de sa race, ni de sa langue, ni de sa réligion, ni du cours des fleuves, ni de la direction des chaînes de montagnes. Une grande agrégation d'hommes, saine d'esprit et chaude de coeur, crée une conscience morale qui s'appelle une nation" (Renan 1947: 905). Such development is quite possible, though not simple, Iqbal suggests. In the specific case of India, "[e]xperience," Iqbal writes, "shows that the various caste-units and religious units in India have shown no inclination to sink their respective individualities in a larger whole. Each group is intensely jealous of its collective existence. The formation of the kind of moral consciousness which constitutes the essence of a nation in Renan's sense, demands a price which the people of India are not prepared to pay" (TR 167-68). Renan's contention that a nation is a soul, a spiritual principle constituted by "la possésion en commun d'un riche legs de souvenir" as well as "le désir de vivre ensemble, la volonté

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de continuer a faire valoir l'héritage qu'on a récu indivis," or that a nation is "une grand solidarité, constitué par le sentiment de sacrifices qu'on a faits et de ceux qu'on est disposé à faire encore. Elle suppose un passé; elle se résume pourtant dans le présent par un fait tangible: le consentement, le désir clairement exprimé de continuer la vie commune" (Renan 1947: 904) is not practical or applicable in the case of India. India, Iqbal contends, is a composite of many nations with their own distinct cultural affinities: It is "a continent of human groups belonging to different races, speaking different languages, and professing different religions" (TR 170). The concept of "daily plebicide" referred to by Renan cannot be applicable to the case of India.

According to Iqbal, the historical complexity and political predicament of Muslim presence in India prevents the emergence of a single, collective Hindu-Muslim nationhood based on the principle of democracy, internal cohesion, and social harmony. This fact has to be recognized, even if it means the endorsement of communalism. After all, "[t]here are communalisms and communalisms," Iqbal says. "A community which is inspired by feelings of ill-will towards other communities, is low and ignoble. . . . Yet I love the communal group which is the source of my life and behavior and which has formed me what I am, by giving me its religion, its literature, its thought, its culture and thereby recreating its whole past as a living operative factor in my present consciousness" (TR 169).

In the same way that the potential for individual growth lies in the realization of the self, the inner being, in each person, the potential for societal development and

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progress lies in the growth of the communal inner life: the organic wholeness of a unified will. From this perspective, which strongly echoes the *Volk* theory of Herder, Fichte, and the Romantics in general, Iqbal concludes, "[t]he Muslim demand for the creation of a 'Muslim India' within India is, therefore, perfectly justified" (170). An "organized will" focalized on a single "definite purpose" is a necessity for the Muslims as well as for other communal entities in India. Thus, the Muslims' endeavor to achieve "the organic wholeness of a unified will" (i.e. a national polity based on Islamic ideals) should not pose a threat to other communities' striving to do the same. Each community deserves to realizes its own potential collective will to its utmost. "I entertain the highest respect for the customs, laws, religious and social institutions of other communities," Iqbal writes. Theoretically, even though Islam remains the supreme religion and the best of paradigms for the life of humanity, that Zoroastrian (or any non-Muslim) is praiseworthy who attempts to accomplish his "unbelief" (*kufr*) to its fullest extent. Asrâr-e Khudî reads:

Man nagûyam az butân bîzâr shaw

Kâferi, shâyestah-ye zunnâr shaw.

Ay amânat dâr-e tahzîb-e kuhan

Pusht-e pâ bar maslak-e âbâ mazan.

Gar ze jam'îyat hayât-e mellat ast

Kufr ham sarmâyah-ye jam'îyat ast.

Tô keh ham dar kâferî kâmel na-î

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Dar khur-e tawf-e harîm-e del na-î. (AK 59; KF 59)

I do not bid thee abandon thine idols,

Art thou an unbeliever? Then be worthy of that badge of unbelief.

O inheritor of ancient culture,

Turn not thy back on the path thy fathers trod!

If a people's life is derived from unity,

Unbelief, too, is a source of unity.

Thou that art not even a perfect infidel,

Art unfit to worship at the shrine of the spirit. (TSS 110-11)

In short, Iqbal's main concern with Muslim individual and collective existence had been the preservation of Muslim cultural identity. It is the "fullest cultural autonomy" of the Muslim community in the Hindu-dominated India that Iqbal intended to define and defend. It was for the sake of Islam as a culturally authentic (as well as an inherently homogenous) phenomenon that a specified territory for the Muslim concentration in India was demarcated and propagated by Iqbal. Hence the "logical" necessity of dividing post-colonial India along communal lines into two--and only *two*--nations: "I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind, and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State

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appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India" (TR 171).

Anwar H. Syed has well stated the selective nature of the communalist ideology in Iqbal:

> In its "pure" form Muslim nationalism was wholly ideological. Ethnic, linguistic, and territorial affiliations were not only irrelevant but repugnant to its spirit. In its application to Indian Muslims, however, the same discarded components were put back to work: territory became crucial, ethnic and linguistic homogeneity and historical tradition became valuable, and Islam itself became virtually the same thing as "culture." This would seem to be almost like a metamorphosis. . . . Territorial, ethnic, and linguistic appeals are to be rejected if they are being addressed by a non-Muslim group to a smaller Muslim group. Muslim nationalism is preeminently ideological in actually or potentially confrontational situations involving the non-Muslim. But when only a Muslim group is involved, territorial, ethnic, and linguistic sympathies may be summoned in aid of ideology to strengthen the group's inner cohesion necessary for plain survival as well as for undertaking significant collective action. Where Muslims are politically dominant Islam has no quarrel with modern territorial nationalism (Syed 1979: 89-90).

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Iqbal's version of "two-nation theory" "provided a grand ideology, a phantasmagoria which all sections of the Muslim community could find their images, and since he did not get down to concrete prescriptions about how to organize Muslim society, but remained at the level of optimistic speculation, the generality of his thought has effected considerable controversy over his message" (Ahmed 1987: 75). The "two-nation theory" was soon championed by the Muslim League--in collaboration with its newly found fundamentalist allies--which turned it into the emblem for the Pakistan demand.

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Notes

1 Iqbal's relationship to the German "irrational" thought (to borrow Georg Lukács's term in The Destruction of Reason) has been a complicated one. In a "Note on Nietzsche" Iqbal dismisses the suggestion that he was influenced by Nietzsche. First of all, he sees Nietzsche's "materialism"--that is, the recognition of no spiritual purpose in the universe--as diametrically opposed to his own views in Asrâr-e Khudî, for instance. This "materialism" underscores Nietzsche's conception of the Superman also: it turns "the human ego into a monster, which, according to Nietzsche's idea of immortality, has repeated itself and will repeat itself infinite number of times." Accordingly, "Nietzsche fell into this error of the world repeating itself on account of his fatal error, namely that clock time is the real time. . . . He never grappled with the problem of time and accepted without criticism the old Hindu and Greek idea of time. The time movement in him is circular. In the Asrâr-e Khudî it is regarded as straightline. Life, therefore, to Nietzsche is repetition, to Asrâr-e Khudî creation" (TR 241-42). For a brief exposition of Iqbal's relation to Nietzsche see Rostogi (1987): 60-80.

2 In the final "Invocation" in Asrâr-e Khudî, Iqbal makes a fervent appeal to God to re-unify Muslims who are helplessly scattered all over the world:

Reshtah-ye vahdat chû qawm az dast dâd
Sad gereh bar rû-ye kâr-e mâ futâd.
Mâ parîshân dar jahân chûn akhtarîm
Hamdam u bîgânah az yak dîgarîm.
Bâz în awrâq râ shîrâzah kun
Bâz âyyîn-e muhabbat tâzah kun. (AK 76; KF 76)

When the [Muslim] nation let the clue of Unity go from their hands,
They fell into a hundred mazes.
We are dispersed like stars in the world;
Though of the same family, we are strange to one another.
Bind again these scattered leaves,
Revive the law of love! (TSS 142-43)

To illustrate his point, Iqbal refers to the situation of the Jews and warns his fellow Muslims to learn from their "Diaspora":

'Ebrati ay Muslim-e rawshan zamîr
Az mu'âl-e ummat-e Musâ begîr:
Dâd chûn în qawm markaz râ ze dast
Reshtah-ye jam'îyat-e mellat shekast. (RB 136; KF 136)

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Take heed once again,
Enlightened Muslim, by the tragic fate
Of Moses' people, who, when they gave up
Their focus from their grasp, the thread was snapped
That bound their congregation each to other. (MS 51)

Was it one of those unexplained "ironies of history" that the "Muslim" state of Pakistan and the "Jewish" state of Israel emerged almost at the same time (in 1947 and 1948 respectively), each one around its own exclusive and narrowly defined "*markaz-e mahsûs*"?

3 For a study of the emergent communalist discourse among Hindu nationalist intellectuals in this particular period, one should mention Partha Chatterjee's careful examination of the nationalization of Hinduism in a set of Indian school textbooks from the nineteenth century Bengal. Chatterjee argues, first of all, that such claims as "India, that is Bharat," and Indian, that is "the Hindus," "become possible only within the modern forms of historiography which is necessarily constructed around the complex identity of a people-nation-state" (Chatterjee 1992: 112). As the past of India began to be glorified specifically in Hindu terms, and the future was increasingly foreseen as a modern nation, the intervening period--that is, India ruled by the Muslims--needed to be characterized as the period of corruption and decadence of Hindu society. Consequently, the cause of the decline of India was the "dissolute" Muslim rule, the subjection of the Hindu "nation" by "the cruel, fanatical *Yavanas*." Hence, the distinct history of the Muslims clash with the history of the Hindus--the Indians proper. These nationalists of the late nineteenth century saw a pattern of classical glory, medieval decline, and modern renaissance throughout Indian history (Chatterjee 1992). Furthermore, such pronouncements were increasingly echoed by Hindu poets and writers and proved enormously influential in the constitution of communal imagination in the Subcontinent (Chandra 1992).

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Afterword

THE ENDS OF IMAGINATION AT THE END OF EMPIRE

> What my mind could not resolve was the question: what country did we belong to now, India or Pakistan? And whose blood was it that was being mercilessly shed every day? And the bones of the dead, stripped of the flesh of religion, were they being burnt or buried? . . . When I sat down to write, I found my thoughts scattered. Though I tried hard, I could not separate India from Pakistan and Pakistan from India. I would repeatedly ask myself: to whom will now belong what had been written in undivided India? Will that be partitioned too?
>
> *Saadat Hasan Manto*

British colonial rule ended when the Subcontinent was divided in August 1947 into two sovereign states of India and Pakistan. The momentous partition was preceded by the worst Hindu-Muslim communal bloodshed that the Subcontinent had ever experienced. Was the creation of an Islamic state the demand and aspiration of the Muslims of India? Did the Muslims share an exclusive culture, a common social consciousness, a unique religious and ethnic identity that justified the creation of the Muslim homeland? Was the creation itself a "historical inevitability" as nationalist historians would like to convey? In short, was the nation-building an act of symbolic self-identification stemmed from a shared memory, a collective imagination, a common dream-work?

Throughout the colonial era, largely because of British Indian policies--which directly corresponded to the conditions of global capitalist expansion--the

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Muslim-dominated regions in India continued to be rural, while Hindu-dominated areas were urbanizing and industrializing. As a result, the Muslim ruling magnets remained largely feudal and conservative and steadfastly retained their rural roots under British patronage. The Hindu elite, on the other hand, were more receptive to the dissemination and induction of English education than were the Muslim elite. The Hindu educated strata proved to be the first group to make inroads into the colonial bureaucracy and were assimilated into the colonial order. Thus, the discourse of Indian nationalism was for a long time dominated by the Hindu literati, especially those associated with the so-called "Bengal Renaissance."

After the 1880's, as the British attempted to broaden their colonial domination and make it into a hegemonic one, it was the Hindu intellectuals who put forward appeals for "native representation" in the running of India. Thus, an intricate system of division of authority between the British and the propertied classes was instituted. One crucial consequence of this framework of "dyarchy" was that Hindus and Muslims were allocated separate electorates to represent them, which strengthened the view that the followers of the two religions were essentially political adversaries (Barlas 1995: 88).

When the Congress advocated "progressive" ideals and "nationalist" ideas, the Muslim elite were promoting "loyal Mohammedanism." It took the Muslim League (conceived by the Muslim landlords to serve their interests) nearly three decades to broaden its power base beyond its original feudal base and advocate the "Pakistan

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demand" along nationalist lines. It was only in the 1940's that the League was capable enough to break the alliance between the colonial power and the Unionist Party of the Muslim provincial landlords and the clergy, especially in the heartland of Muslim politics, the Punjab. However, the widespread tendency "to attribute political and ideological positions to Indian 'Muslims,' in an over-generalized way, as if Muslims of different social strata and classes in different regions were equally involved [in the enterprise of national formation] . . . is manifestly untrue" (Alavi 1988: 13).

The national(ist) enterprise is complicated and involves multiple discourses and takes place on multiple sites. What, then, constituted the driving social force behind the emergent Muslim communal-national movement? "There was one particular social group for whom, more than any other, the conception of 'Muslim' nationhood (and not religious ideology) was particularly meaningful," says the sociologist Hamza Alavi. "That class [sic] was the product of the colonial transformation of Indian social structure in the nineteenth century and it comprised those who had received an education that would equip them for employment in the expanding colonial state apparatus as scribes and functionaries, the men (for few women were so employed) whose instrument of production was the pen" (68). Alavi's term to apply to this "class" is "salariat" which is different from both the economically dominant classes and the subaltern classes. It was the urban based movement of educated elite that propagated the nationalist agenda among Indian Muslims up to the partition of the Subcontinent. The "salariat's" degrees of devotion to Islam as a faith varied considerably. Most of

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them were secular in their perspectives and espoused a secular state for the Muslims and *not* an Islamic state per se, a theocracy of the *'ulama*.

While it is true that the traditional *'ulama* in the colonial period remained, to a large extent, hostile to the British, they were hardly propagators of the ideology of Muslim nationalism. In fact, they remained quite peripheral in the "Muslim renaissance" and did not actively participate in the movement for a separate, independent land for India's Muslims. Nationalism, as a result, hardly motivated the mostly rural and highly diverse, and often contradictory, Islam of the *'ulama*.

The role of traditional Islam in the Muslim national consciousness (except perhaps during the brief period of the Khilafat movement in the early 1920's) was negligible. In fact, neither the Jam'îyat al-'Ulamâ-ye Hind--the leading organization of the Deobandi *'ulama*--nor Jamâ'at-i Islami of Mawlânâ Mawdûdi joined the nationalist bandwagon till very late in the Muslim League's demand for Muslim nationhood. The Muslim *'ulama* were adamantly opposed to the independence demands and allied themselves with the landlords and magnets. Only when the dissolution of the British Empire became almost a reality did they, mostly out of opportunism, desert the Unionist Party to join the League and become the "self-appointed godfathers" of an independent Islamic state. Subsequently, however, it was the *'ulama* who became the staunchest torchbearers of the strictly doctrinal interpretation of the state. As Asma Barlas maintains in her recent Gramscian analysis of the politics of the Subcontinent, only in the 1940's "segments of the clergy which had dubbed Pakistan (which means

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the Land of the Pure) 'Kafiristan' (the land of the heretics) and denounced Jinnah as the leading infidel, felt no qualms in crossing its borders in search of fresh proselytizing opportunities giving credence to claims that the motive force behind its creation was an insurgent Muslim ethos. However, not only had parts of the clergy opposed Pakistan's creation, but so had the majority Muslims who had fought it tooth and nail, only scampering aboard the League at the eleventh hour" (1995: 187).

The idea of a unified, indeed hegemonic, Muslim nationhood was left behind in pre-partition world. Islam, as an integral component of nationalism, undoubtedly provided the ideology behind the emergence, protection, and preservation of a homeland for the Muslim minority in India. Thus, theoretically, the modern nation-state of Pakistan, far from being a specific geographical entity, is primarily a religious and cultural unit. Its identity, integrity, autonomy, authenticity, fraternity, and national genius are derived from Islam. The tenets of this ideology supposedly evoke in tangible terms emotional response from all strata of society. For the proponents of this view, Muhammad Iqbal is the poet-philosopher, the architect, the promoter, the theoretician, and, in short, the ideologue of the Islamic state. However, despite the nationalist ideological pretense to coherence, unity, and congruity, the national phenomenon--inevitably derived from the overall relation between society, culture, and polity--clearly involves structures and practices that reflect the problematic, and often contradictory, nature of nationalism. Indeed, with the emergence of the modern nation-state of Pakistan, the initial ideological cement that had held the Pakistan demand together

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dissolved as it became clear that communal Muslim identity had outlived its original purpose. Instead, class, ethnic, sectarian, linguistic, and regional differences asserted themselves forcefully and significantly. The Muslim "salariat" (now in necessary collusion with the landlords and chieftains) could no longer speak for a collective Muslim "us" versus the Hindu "other." The illusion of the unified "us" was shattered soon after the so-called "Muslim" identity gave way to Bengali, Baluch, Pathan, Muhajir, Sindhi, and Punjabi identities. With the absence of civil society, the central state--now "national" and "autochthonous"--turned into a powerful form of domination over internal "others." So devastating the suppression of internal dissent was that no imaginative strategy, Iqbalian or otherwise, could prevent the state-enforced nationalism from disintegration and collapse. What was needed then was the shift of rhetoric of the dominant state ideology, in short, a new discourse of authority to justify the oppressive post-colonial regime.

The post-colonial authoritarian oligarchy, termed by Eqbal Ahmad "neo-fascist" states suffering from "the pathology of power" (1981), found an ally in the increasingly powerful Muslim fundamentalist movement. Islam--and notions of Islamic fraternity, unity, harmony, etc.--began to assert itself as the official discourse of the authoritarian state, to the exclusion of all tangible differences. After all, are not all Pakistanis brothers in Islam? Increasingly the religious zealots dominated the enterprise of collective remembrance in the Muslim nation-state. They have largely been successful in winning the contest for power over representation of "us" versus "them."

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And if the Islamic state is beset with so many complications, the fault lies with the minority of "misguided" and "deceived" secularists whose commitment to the faith is suspect and who implicitly belong to the camp of the "other."

As much as Muhammad Iqbal served the ideological interests of nationalists of the Muslim League before, he was also claimed by later fanatic fundamentalists who found in him an ideological prototype. Their reading of Iqbal--necessarily a selective one, like reading in general--provided them a convenient ideological mechanism. Iqbal's work is paradoxical and open to contradictory readings. He clearly wanted, on the one hand, to recover what he considered the pristine Islam and reclaim the authentic Islamic message. On the other hand, he wanted to see the Muslims live in a vital, dynamic society in accordance with the needs of modern times. The two went necessarily together, since, Iqbal insisted, a vital society requires a dynamic ideological basis--which he proposed through his own reconstruction of Islamic religious thought.

As a philosopher and a poet, Iqbal had envisioned a polity for Muslims in India; such a polity, however, was derived from an overall romantic and idealistic vision. As a result, the whole Iqbalian project remains largely ahistorical and metaphysical. Like all other poetics of perfectibility, its socio-political realization has to be constantly deferred and postponed, for now as for ever. The experience of the last five decades in the state whose unique contours of identity, based on imaginative particularism and pure difference, were mapped by Iqbal suggests that his model of a coherent, much less shared, "national" community has been a failure.

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The potency of national imagination is palpable. But to believe that the Iqbalian narrative paradigm provided the portico upon which the Muslim nation was built is to give imagination more than its due. A nation is indeed embedded in profound imagination, in a narrative dream-work, but imagination is *not* wholly innocent of ideology: in many cases, it incorporates ideology and it serves ideological purposes and objective (or, objectively perceived) social and class interests. With respect to the nation-state of modernity, especially the post-colonial state, one is to be reminded of Fanon's succinct words that the marginalized and disenfranchised "masses have no illusions. They are hungry; and the police officers, though they are now Africans, do not serve to reassure them particularly. The masses begin to sulk; they turn away from this nation in which they have been given no place and begin to lose interest in it" (1968: 169). They realize that the post-colonial nation-state, despite its apparent endurance and its monopoly over the emotive symbolism of "blood and belonging," actually produces strategies of containment and constraint. It is then that national imagination, no matter how well cemented, turns sterile and nationalist discourse turns banal. As we witness the rapid fragmentation and violent dissolution of even some "established" nation-states in front of our own eyes, it is far from impossible that the productive dream of the nation could well turn into a protracted nightmare.

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