

H. H. BILGRAMI

Glimpses of
IQBAL'S
Mind
&
Thought

SH. MUHAMMAD ASHRAF

KASHMIRI BAZAR - LAHORE

The book presents certain fundamental principles, which in the opinion of the learned author, determined Iqbal's approach to the various problems of our life. He has endeavoured to show the path he (Iqbal) would like us to follow in order to achieve that complete harmony of body, mind and soul where the realities of our present life are not left behind but are made use of in the quest of the Ideal.

The author has chosen only such aspects of Iqbal's poetry and thought which have not received sufficient attention at the hands of his students and critics. He has not touched other aspects which have already been dealt with by other scholars of Iqbal.



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PREFACE

These six lectures on Iqbal which are collected here in a book form were delivered at London, Oxford and Cambridge at various occasions during my five years of stay at London University.

If an apology is at all needed for putting these lectures in a booklet, it is to be found in the warm appreciation which was graciously offered by some of the scholars and critics of the West whose opinion I value and whose words I consider an encouragement for any writer on the Art and Literature of the East.

I do not claim to have added anything very original to the study of the poetry and philosophy of Iqbal but I have contented myself with the humbler task of bringing to the consciousness of the people certain fundamental principles which to my mind have determined his approach to the various problems of our life. I have, wherever possible, endeavoured to show the path he would like us to follow in order to achieve that complete harmony of body, mind and soul where the realities of our present life are not left behind but are made use of in the quest of the Ideal,

I have often chosen those aspects of Iqbal's poetry and thought which have not received sufficient attention at the hands of his students and critics. Certain aspects of his thought, *e.g.*, *Khudi* and *Bekhudi* which have been dealt threadbare by Nicholson, Arberry, Saiyidain, Vahid and others have, therefore, been omitted.

I am conscious of my limitation but it has given me a delight to live with Iqbal in the domain of his refreshing thought and reinvigorating poetry and it will certainly be a matter of gratification if my readers are able to share this joy with me unmindful of my shortcomings.

Iqbal has rightly been called the mainspring of Muslim renaissance. He devoted the best part of his life to the careful study of Islam, its laws, polity, culture, history and literature. He was convinced of Islam "as a living force for freeing the outlook of man from its geographical limitations,"¹ he firmly believed that "religion is a power of utmost importance in the life of individuals as well as states" and in order to convince the

1. *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, (1944), p. 7. (Presidential Address to the annual session of All-India Muslim League at Allahabad, 29th Dec., 1930).

world of these eternal truths he did not merely devote his life in giving expression to his thoughts and feelings in his philosophy and poetry but also passed many a restless night praying to God :

خدایا آرزو میری یہی ہے
میرا نور بصیرت عام کر دے

This, O God, is my wish
Spread on all my light of vision.

Perhaps his prayers have been granted and there is a growing awakening amongst the Muslim youths all the world over of the true spirit of Islam. There is also a growing realization in Pakistan—the land of Iqbal's dreams—as well as elsewhere that the pristine glory of Islam has to be revived through "Knowledge" and "Action". This awakening, however, is being throttled sometimes by vested interests, sometimes by sheer stupidity, often by bare inefficiency and ignorance. Today attempts are often made to make amends for this lack of drive, initiative and imagination by paying mere lip-service to the ideals propagated by Iqbal. The future, however, lies with the youth. They have to imbibe the dynamic spirit of Islam and mend their lives in the light of Iqbal's philosophy of Faith and Action.

Much has been written on Iqbal. But if these lectures contribute to the understanding of the poet and his messages to mankind even by one reader, and awaken in him the desire to live the life of a true Muslim that Iqbal envisaged, my efforts would be more than amply rewarded.

I must take this opportunity of thanking very sincerely all those writers whose works I have consulted and made use of. I am also grateful to those who have helped me in any way in bringing out these lectures, specially my student Mr. J.C.S. Bearne at the School of Oriental and African Studies, who has translated some of the lines of Iqbal for me. Thanks are also due to the Editors of *Dawn*, *Islamic Literature* and *The Voice of Islam* for getting some of these papers published in their esteemed papers and journals.

H. H. BILGRAMI

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I

SHEIKH MUHAMMAD IQBAL

[1873-1938]

This is the concluding lecture of the series: "Eastern Thought and Art" delivered at the Summer School, organized by the Royal India, Pakistan and Ceylon Society, at Balliol College, Oxford, on the 15th July, 1951.

The object of this talk was to introduce Iqbal to a large number of persons including many students from the three Dominions whose love and interest in the culture of the East had brought them together to live for a few days in the peaceful atmosphere of the College.

Here an attempt is made to give a brief sketch of the poet's life and to remove some of the misunderstandings about him which unfortunately are still found lurking in many minds, specially in the West.

Extracts from this lecture have appeared in the Society's journal *Art and Letters* for 1952 (1st issue). This lecture was also published by the Iqbal Society, London, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the poet in its Bulletin "Iqbal—Mainspring of Muslim Renaissance."

مرا بنگر کہ در ہندوستان دیگر نمی بینی
برہمن زادہ رمز آشنائے روم و تبریز است

Look at me, for in Hind thou wilt not see again,
A man of Brahmin extraction versed in the mystic knowledge of
Rum and Tabriz.¹

The great mystic poet of the East who was proud of his Brahmin ancestors was born at Shalkot, West Punjab, in the year 1873. He received his early education at a *Maktab*, and later at a Scottish Mission School. It is here that he came under the influence of Mir Hasan—an inspiring personality who perceived the genius of the poet and moulded it on the lines, the value of which cannot be over-estimated. Iqbal has acknowledged his indebtedness in the following words:

وہ شمع بارگہ خاندان مرتضوی
رہے گا مثل حرم جس کا آستان مجھ کو
نفس سے جس کے کلی میری آرزو کی کھلی
بنایا جس نے مروت کا نکتہ داں مجھ کو

That light of the exalted family of Ali,
Whose threshold will always be sacred like the Ka'ba to me,

1. Tr. from S.A. Vahid, *Iqbal: His Art and Thought* (Lahore, 1944), p. 5.

Whose breath enabled the bud of my desire to blossom,
Whose kind enlightenment developed my critical faculty.¹

On another occasion he referred to himself as a "living book" of his tutor.

Finishing his distinguished career at school he joined the Government College, Lahore, where he came in contact with another great magnetic personality, Professor Sir Thomas Arnold, an embodiment of all that was "the noblest and the best" in Western civilization.

These two influences, coupled with the fact that he was conscious of his Aryan origin, have played a great part in determining the trend of his thoughts. Iqbal's love of Eastern values and Western discipline, his desire to break the so-called barriers of the East and West, his desire to see his country playing a free part in the establishment of world peace, may be related largely to these early influences of his two great teachers.

Equipped with the idea of one humanity and one God as the basis of Muslim culture, which he learnt at the feet of Mir Hasan, and the scientific approach of the West to the problems of life, which he gained from Professor Arnold,

1. Tr. from S.A. Vahid, op. cit. (Lahore, 1944), p. 5.

Iqbal went to Cambridge in 1905. For his further researches he went to Munich where he submitted his thesis—"The Development of Metaphysics in Persia"—and obtained his Doctorate in Philosophy. Later, when this thesis was published in London in 1908, he dedicated it to Professor Arnold with all respect and reverence. That same year he was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn, and the mind that had shown its grasp of philosophical ideas now revealed its ability to master legal issues.

Iqbal's short stay in the West undoubtedly gave him training in the "Western Philosophy and Method of Research" but he could not help feeling that Western civilization, if allowed to grow on the ideals of imperialism and nationalism, would soon be deprived of the wealth of love and the sense of the higher purpose of life, and would ultimately bring about its own downfall. The following lines, written during his stay in the West, not merely show his discontent for the "Commercialism" of Western life, but give a timely warning of the shadows of coming events:

زمانہ آیا ہے بے حجابی کا عام دیدار یار ہوگا
سکوت تھا پردہ دار جس کا وہ راز اب آشکار ہوگا

.....

دیارِ مغرب کے رہنے والو خدا کی بستی دکاں نہیں ہے
 کھرا جسے تم سمجھ رہے ہو وہ اب زرِ کم عیار ہوگا
 تمہاری تہذیب اپنے خنجر سے آپ ہی خود کشی کریگی
 جو شاخِ نازک پہ آشیانہ بنے گا نا پائیدار ہوگا

The time of the unveiling has come,
 The Beloved will be seen by all,
 The secret which was veiled by silence
 Shall become manifest.

....

O Dwellers of Western Lands, God's world is not a shop,
 That which you consider good coin shall prove to be of low value;
 Your civilization will commit suicide with its own dagger,
 A nest built on a slender bough cannot last.¹

Iqbal returned to India after completing his Bar and started his practice at Lahore. He entered into political life in 1927 when he was elected to the Punjab Legislative Council, and remained a member for three years. He was appointed president of the annual session of the Muslim League held at Allahabad in the year 1930. This year is considered to be of great significance for the Muslims of the sub-continent of India; it is of greater significance to me as I had for the first time the honour of meeting him.

Iqbal's words that were destined to change

1. Tr. from Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan, *The Poetry of Iqbal* (1922), pp. 11, 12.

the fate of the East are worth recalling for here he suggested the only possible solution of the rootless conditions of the Indian sub-continent. Reviewing the general condition of the country, its caste system, its religious units, its failure to sink its respective individualities in a larger whole, the jealousy of each group for its collective existence, he could not help remarking:

"The unity of an Indian nation, therefore, must be sought, not in the negation but in the mutual harmony and co-operation of the many. True statesmanship cannot ignore facts, however unpleasant they may be. The only practical course is not to assume the existence of a state of things which does not exist, but to recognize facts as they are, and to exploit them to our greatest advantage. And it is on the discovery of Indian unity in this direction that the fate of India as well as of Asia really depends. India is Asia in miniature. Part of her people have cultural affinities with nations in the east and part with nations in the middle and west of Asia. If an

effective principle of cooperation is discovered in India, it will bring peace and mutual goodwill to this ancient land which has suffered so long, more because of her situation in historic space than because of any inherent incapacity of her people. And it will at the same time solve the entire political problem of Asia.”¹

—a truth that was accepted by the Muslim League in its demand for Pakistan in 1940 and which was achieved in 1947. Though the full significance of it has not yet been realized because of the various factors that are hampering the progress of the two nations, and because of the various dangers to which they are exposed, but the practicability of the idea has at least been witnessed by the world.

Iqbal unfortunately did not live long enough to see the results of his efforts. From 1934 onwards his health deteriorated; he could not accept the invitation to Oxford as Rhodes Lecturer in 1935. At last, on the morning of the 21st April, 1938, the soul that came to guide the

1. *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (Lahore 1944), pp. 9-10.

destiny of its brothers and of humanity breathed its last.

The lines that were often on the lips of the poet during the last days of his illness give us an insight into his modesty and greatness :

سرود رفتہ باز آید کہ ناید نسیمے از حجاز آید کہ ناید
سر آمد روز گار این فقیرے دگر دانائے راز آید کہ ناید

The departed melody may recur or not !
The zephyr may blow again from Hija'z or not !
The days of this Faqir have come to an end,
Another seer may come or not.¹

It is unfortunate that Iqbal's association with the political life of his country should have made the people of his own country and those of Europe think that he was the poet of Muslim India, or, at his best, of the Muslim world. That the universal element of his poetry should be so ignored, and that his desire for a peaceful East should be so much misunderstood is not difficult to account for. In the early years of this century the peoples of the West were so preoccupied with the idea of nationalism and racial superiority that it was hardly possible for them to appreciate any solution of the world problem which did not

1. Tr. from S A. Vahid, op. cit. (Lahore, 1944), p. 24.

accept the geographical unit as its basis. Iqbal's philosophy of life, based on the ideology of Islam, cutting as it did at the very root of nationalism, and, in fact, of all 'isms,' and accepting the principle of freedom, equality and love as the basis of universal brotherhood, could not be taken as being anything more than an oriental idea. His frequent choice of personalities from Muslim history and his constant references to the Qur'an also stood in the way of the West's appreciation of the real significance of his message.

Replying to the charge of Mr. Dickinsons—"While his poetry is universal, his application of it is particular and exclusive"—Iqbal says :

"This is in a sense true. The humanitarian ideal is always universal in poetry and philosophy, but if you make it an effective ideal and work it out in actual life you must start, not with poets and philosophers, but with a society exclusive in the sense of having a creed and well-defined outline, but ever enlarging its limit by example and persuasion. Such a society has so far proved itself a

more successful opponent of the race idea which is probably the hardest barrier in the way of humanitarian idea . . . While I have the greatest love for Islam, it is in view of *practical and not patriotic* consideration as Mr. Dickinsons thinks that I am compelled to start with a specific society, *e.g.*, Islam . . . Nor is the spirit of Islam so exclusive as Mr. Dickinsons thinks. In the interest of universal unification of mankind the Qur'an ignores the minor differences and says—"Come let us unite on what is common to us all." "

Further he points out :

"The object of my Persian poems is not to make a case for Islam ; my aim is simply to discover a universal social reconstruction and in this endeavour I find it philosophically impossible to ignore a social system which exists with the express object of doing away with all distinctions of caste, rank or race, and which, while keeping a watchful eye on the affairs of the world, fosters a spirit

of unworldliness so absolutely essential to man in his relations with his neighbours. This is what Europe lacks and this is what she can still learn from us."¹

Thanks to the efforts of the various translators of Iqbal's poems into English, *e.g.*, Professor Nicholson and Professor Arberry, much of the misunderstanding is being removed from the minds of the West. Present-day trends in world politics have also made the peoples of the West realize that it is not a territorial nationalism but an ideology as a working principle of life that matters today.

The causes of some of the misunderstandings about the poet in the East are perhaps largely due to the political atmosphere that has been prevailing in India from the beginning of the present century.

It is not the place to go into the details of the growing consciousness of the people of their deplorable conditions, nor of the strides that were made by the idea of nationalism, nor of the

1. Iqbal's letter to Prof. Nicholson, written from Lahore on January 24, 1921. (*Dawn's 'Iqbal Supplement,'* April 21, 1949, pp. 4 and 6.)

meeting together of the two major communities of India at least twice, once in 1916 and again during the Khilafat Movement, but it will be recollected that this unity was of a superficial nature, a unity for an apparent cause and was not the result of a proper understanding and mutual consideration. It only resulted in a bitterness too acute to be redressed.

If conditions were allowed to deteriorate and no satisfactory solution found, all the efforts made in the past for the achievement of freedom would be brought to nought. Iqbal was not unmindful of this, and he did not hesitate in putting forward before the people of India a solution which, to his mind, was the only solution of the problem. He was convinced that it was in the best interests of both communities of his country. None regretted more than he the failure of the people to find a principle of internal harmony, and his intuitive eye could not fail to see the cause of the failure. He asks: "Why have they failed?" and answers:

"Perhaps we suspect each other's intentions and inwardly aim at dominating each other, perhaps in the higher interests of

mutual cooperation we cannot afford to part with the monopolies which circumstances have placed in our hands, and conceal our egoism under the cloak of nationalism, outwardly stimulating a large-hearted patriotism, but inwardly as narrow-minded as a caste or a tribe. Perhaps we are unwilling to recognize that each group has a right to free development of its own cultural traditions. But whatever may be the causes of failure, I still feel hopeful."

He was hopeful of his own theory, *i.e.*, the redistribution of the country on the lines of racial, religious and cultural affinities. He not only considered it to be a cure of all hidden egoism and greed for domination, but also a sound basis of free and healthy development of the two major communities of India.

Man claims to be progressive in his ideas, but he is conservative by nature. He often takes long to change his ideas and only accepts a reality when he has done sufficient harm to himself. What happened in India is perhaps partly due to this inherent weakness in man.

The conservative element of society made it all the more difficult for the reasonable element to accept the reality as a basis for the future society of India, but with the removal of the clouds of ill-feeling, jealousy and egoism and the sense of false prestige, the peoples of the East will realize the prudence of Iqbal's solutions, as the peoples of the West have already realized. Thus the causes of misunderstanding are, to my mind, mainly due to :

- (1) People's lack of vision to grasp the gravity of the situation, which requires a thorough analysis of its inherent causes.
- (2) The mistaken idea that partition was suggested solely in the interests of the Muslims, and that it was not in the best interests of the people of the majority community. People fail to realize that a population of one hundred million, having its own culture and religion, cannot, if it is not itself a willing party, be an asset to any system of self government.
- (3) The inability of the people to understand

the paradox that Iqbal's support for the idea of separate existence for Muslims was not nationalism but the negation of nationalism. If anything, Iqbal was anti-nationalist, and he attributed many of the ills of modern society to nationalism. In political separation he saw the basis for establishing Indian society at least on two separate ideologies, or ways of thinking, which had not necessarily to be bound by geographical limitations. The limiting factor was to be that of ideology and not that of geography; and through ideology he aimed at developing, in the individual, toleration, respect of humanity at large irrespective of its national division. The idea was not merely the result of the political conditions prevailing in India, but was the result also of the chaos that he found prevailing over the whole world.

In fact Iqbal had realized, long before any idea of partition, the necessity of a society that may be knitted by the love of God as the guiding and ultimate principle, and service to humanity

ity as a means of realizing this end. He had given expression to this idea in some detail in his *Ayran-i-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self), and in his *Rumuz-i Bekhudi* (Mysteries of Selflessness) as early as 1915 and 1918.

If the fact is realized that the new state of Iqbal's conception was the establishment of a society deeply interested in the service of humanity, in the promotion of peace and in providing equal opportunities for all irrespective of colour, caste or creed, much of the misunderstanding will be removed.

Iqbal devoted the greater part of his life to giving people a faith in such an ideology of love and peace. The universal appeal of his poetry and the sincerity of his message have been recognized by thinkers both of the East and of the West.

This brings us to the consideration of the aspects of his philosophy on which he wished to see the social order of the world based. The starting point of Iqbal's philosophy is the firm belief in Tauhid—the oneness of God. "Islam, as a polity," he says, "is only a practical means of making this principle a living factor in the

intellectual and emotional life of mankind. It demands loyalty to God, not to the thrones. And since God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, loyalty to God virtually amounts to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature."¹ He again asserts in his *Lectures* that "The essence of 'Tauhid' as a working idea is equality, solidarity and freedom. The state, from the Islamic standpoint, is an endeavour to transform these ideal principles into spacetime forces, an aspiration to realize them in a definite human organization. It is in this sense alone that the state in Islam is a theocracy, not in the sense that it is headed by a representative of God on earth who can always screen his despotic will behind his supposed infallibility."² For the foundation of such a state it was essential that the individual train himself in such a way that he develop in him the attributes of God. His theory of 'Khudi' in a nutshell is the message of developing these Godly attributes in oneself. To him, the complete person was one "who comes nearest to God." Man has therefore to act and strive. He has to

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1951), p. 147.

2. *Ibid.*, 154-55.

be careful at every stage of his progress lest he revert to the state of relaxation, for he would say, "Personality is a state of tension and can continue only if that state is maintained. . . That which tends to maintain the state of tension tends to make us immortal."¹ Iqbal wanted the individual to undergo the training of obedience to law, self-discipline and self-control in order to develop his selfhood and be worthy of the responsibilities of the state.

Incidentally, his idea of a 'Perfect Man' must not be confused with the German thinker's 'Superman.' He himself says, "I wrote on the Sufi doctrine of the perfect man long before I read or heard anything of Nietzsche. This was published in 'Indian Antiquary' and later in 1908, formed part of my *Persian Mystics*."² Moreover, the atheistic and aristocratic 'prejudices' of Nietzsche can in no way be compared to a system that has a spiritual approach and "is based on the assumption that every human being is a centre of latent power."³ That which is abhorred by Nietzsche is respected by Iqbal.

1. *Secrets of the Self*, Intro., pp. xxi, xxii.

2. Iqbal's letter to Nicholson, published in 'Dawn,' April 21, 1949, p. 4.

3. *Secrets of the Self*, Intro., p. xxix.

The other point of interest in the poetry and philosophy of Iqbal is his emphasis on love. Love, which fortifies Ego, is used by him "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 endeavour to realize the most unique individuality individualizes the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker."¹

We are grateful to Professor Arberry for translating a section of Iqbal's *Payam-i-Mashrig* (Message of the East), which the poet wrote in reply to Goethe's *Divan*. I cannot do better than quote a few quatrains of Iqbal from this beautiful translation to give some idea of Iqbal's conception of love—a guiding principle of life and a prevailing reality :

به برگ لاله رنگ آمیزی عشق
بجان ما بلا انگیزی عشق
اگر این خاک دان را واشگافی
درونش بنگری خونریزی عشق

'Tis Love that paints the tulip petals' hue,
'Tis love that stirs the spirit's rule ;
If thou couldst cleave this carrion of clay,
Thou shalt behold, within, Love's bloodshed to.

1. *Secrets of the Self*, Intro., pp. xxv, xxvi.

He sees the inherent love in the universe, but, looking to the chaos around him, he calls love to bring another Adam out of the present clay of mankind :

بیا اے عشق، اے ریز دل ما
بیا اے کشت ما، اے حاصل ما
کہن گشتند این خاکی نهاداں
دگر آدم بناکن از گل ما

Come, Love, thou heart's most secret whispering,
Come, thou, our sowing and our harvesting,
These earthly spirits are too aged grown—
Out of our clay another Adam bring !

Iqbal confesses that he is indebted to this love for knowledge of his own self :

بهر دل عشق رنگ تازه بر کرد
گهی با سنگ گه باشیشہ سر کرد
ترا از خود ربود و چشم تر داد
مرا با خویشتن نزدیک تر کرد

Love plays with every heart a different role,
Now as a stone, and now a crystal bowl ;
Love robbed thee of thy self, and gave thee tears,
But brought me ever closer to my soul.

Thus the dominant aspects of his poetry are development of selfhood, love, toleration, courage and, above all, a faith in one's own self and in the love of God.

The growing restlessness of the people and a kind of inner conflict in their minds, the fulness of which they were unable to realize being in it themselves, was to the poet a sign of revolutionary changes in the spiritual and cultural order of the present world. From the relics of past civilization and culture, nature was moulding a new man, glimpses of which are sometimes seen in the writings of Einstein and Burgson. He was becoming convinced that "the evolution of humanity is tending towards the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents. 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."¹ To this he contributed his share in rediscovering for the world a workable and practical basis of a universal social order. Let us hope that his message will bring closer the divided humanity, and will be considered by the world on its own merits.

1. *Secrets of the Self*, Intro., p. xxviii.

II

IQBAL'S APPROACH TO THE SPIRIT OF ISLAMIC CULTURE

This address was given to a very large and distinguished audience consisting of scholars and students of the London University, Heads of Diplomatic Corps in U.K. and the cultured elite of the town on the occasion of Iqbal Day at the Islamic Culture Centre, London, on the 21st April, 1952. His Excellency M.A.H. Ispahani, the High Commissioner for Pakistan in U.K., the patron of the Society, was in the chair.

What are Iqbal's reactions to the unfortunate modern tendency of substituting culture for religion? Does a Muslim who believes in Islam as an ideology—a perfect way of life both for the individual and the society—need such a substi-

tution? What is meant by Culture, Religion and Islam, and what is the spirit of Islamic Culture that a Muslim can look up to for guidance? Answers to such searching questions have been sought in Iqbal's writings.

Nothing from Iqbal's point of view would be more detrimental to the interest of the Muslims than to narrow down the concept of Islam. It will be equally detrimental to try to find a justification for personal weaknesses or the glamorous temptations of the fashionable society which are discordant with his comprehension and long-range view of life here and hereafter, in the name of so-called culture.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the spirit of Islamic culture as presented by Iqbal, it is essential to understand what he implies when he speaks of Islam or of culture.

Does he agree with Goethe's formula of culture, which defines culture as "life in the whole, in the good and in the beautiful," thus including morality under the heading of "life in the good," art under the heading of "life in the beautiful" and knowledge of the universe under the heading of "life in the whole"?

Or, does he agree with those who think that religion is the principle of life and that culture is the directive given to the development of life?

Finally, would Iqbal go so far as to say that culture is the outcome of a spirit of opposition to all that is secular and religious?

None of these attitudes, Iqbal would say, would throw any light on the spirit of Islamic culture unless we understand what we mean by Islam.

If Islam is equated with the word "religion,"

as it is generally understood and used in a narrow and limited sense, it would be correct to affirm that such a narrow concept of religion has to be supplemented by something external: but, if Islam is much more than religion in this narrow concept, as it assuredly is, then it would not merely embrace the whole, the good and the beautiful, but also transcend the boundaries of present realities.

What Islam is?

Islam is not merely belief, it is the cultivation of eternal and fundamental beliefs in the life of the individual and of society; it is a striving, a labouring and also a waiting. It is much wider than culture and also more definite and more sublime; it is a means and an end in itself.

The greatness of some religions, Iqbal says, lies in "the search of an independent content for spiritual life which, according to the insight of (their) founders, could be elevated, not by the forces of a world external to the soul of man, but by the revelation of a world within his soul. Islam fully agrees with this insight and supplements it by the further insight that the illumination of the new world thus revealed is not

something foreign to the world of matter but permeates it through and through."¹

Thus, in the words of a European Orientalist, quoted by Iqbal, "the spirit of Islam is so broad that it is practically boundless. With the exception of atheistic ideas alone, it has assimilated all the attainable ideas of surrounding peoples and given them its own peculiar direction of development."² Islam is a growing and progressive concept of life, both for the individual and for society.

What culture means?

Let us now turn to the meaning of culture.

According to C G. Shaw, the world is indebted to Bacon for the introduction of the word 'culture.' But the word came into prominence in the English language through the efforts of Emerson who, for over 30 years from 1837 onwards, wrote various essays on culture and civilization and on the connected concepts of these subjects.

It was, however, left to Matthew Arnold to

1. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. p. 9.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 164.

exhort the contemporary British people to make culture the guiding concept of their ideal and practice.

A little dispassionate thinking will quickly bring home the reasons that must have led Arnold to accept culture as an ideal and practice in the middle of the 19th century.

We cannot do better than go to those early prophets of culture to understand the true significance of this word. Emerson points out that "culture is corrective to the theory of success, power and wealth... Individuality is the basis of this culture, and its object is to foster geniality. Culture opens [the sense of beauty without which man is beggarly; cheerfulness and repose, which are the badge of a gentleman, are also ingredients of culture. Intellectual qualities form an important aspect of culture."] ¹

Clearer picture

Arnold² gives a clearer picture of culture when he points out that culture is the "pursuit

1. Prof. G. S. Churye, *Culture and Society*, (Oxf. Univ. Press, London 1947), pp. 52-53.

2. Prof. G. S. Churye, op. cit. Also see Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, edited with an introduction by J. Dover Wilson, (Camb. Univ. Press).

of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world, and through this knowledge turning a stream of fresh and free thoughts upon our stock notions and beliefs, which we now follow staunchly but mechanically."

"True human perfection, being harmonious culture, must mean developing all sides of our humanity, and total perfection must involve developing all parts of our society."

To Arnold, "culture was entirely an inward process." It was intended to produce sweetness and light and not turn out miners, engineers or architects.

The social side of culture is stressed by him through the exhortation to make the will of God prevail for he points out that "perfection is not possible while the individual remains isolated."

The ideal culture, according to Arnold, must lead to absolute inward peace and satisfaction—the peace and satisfaction which are reached as we draw near to complete spiritual perfection.

Culture, in short, in Matthew Arnold's

opinion, "being the discovery and putting into operation of the 'will of God,' nay, it is even superior to religion as it aims at the harmonious expansion of all the powers of human personality."

As Arnold remarks, "here culture goes beyond religion as religion is generally conceived by us."

Impact of Islam

I am sure that these utterances of Arnold must call to your mind the great impact of Islamic ideas upon the Western world when the spirit of Islam compelled people to recognize the world of reality as supplementing the world of ideals.

The greatness of Arnold lies in his emphasis of the importance of the inwardness of a culture and in his making it clear beyond all doubt that "an inward condition of mind and spirit is the only source from which perfection proceeds."

Later scholars of culture have tried to define culture more briefly. Tylor says that culture or civilization is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom any

other capabilities and beliefs acquired by man as a member of society.

Linton equates culture with 'social heredity'; Lowie calls it 'the whole of social tradition.'

Kroeber, giving these definitions in his *Anthropology*,¹ concludes that all these statements use the terms "society" and "social" but in an alternative and qualifying sense. We can accept this much that society and culture, social and cultural, are closely related concepts. Kroeber defines culture as being that which the human species possess and others lack, *i.e.*, knowledge, belief, custom, arts, technology, ideas, etc.

Two Aspects

From all that has been said of culture it will be seen that it can broadly be classified under two heads—internal and external.

The internal aspect includes beliefs, moral ideas, mythology, etc., whilst the external takes into account the structure of the society,

1. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, (New York, 1948).

family life, national life, social life, education, technology, economics, politics, etc.

Each of these two divisions possesses its own essentials and non-essentials.

It should be noted that the whole of internal life is the most essential and is to a certain extent the foundation of a culture, as has well been pointed out by Arnold.

The essentials of the external aspect are no less important and its outward manifestations betoken the prosperity of a nation.

An important point may here be noted that the internal aspect reflects itself upon the external, but is not always influenced by the external. A prudent and successful administrator of a society is always careful that he does not introduce practices in the external that may be repulsive to the very essentials of the internal culture of the society.

Iqbal's Concept

We have reached a point where we can now proceed to analyze Iqbal's concept of the Islamic culture. We have seen that in the concept of

Islam, the ideal and the real are not two opposing factors which cannot be reconciled. "The life of the ideal," says Iqbal, "consists, not in the total breach with the real which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life into painful opposition, but in the perpetual endeavour of the ideal to appropriate the real with a view eventually to absorbing it, to convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole being."¹

This organic wholeness of life demands a principle for world unity. "As a cultural movement," Iqbal says, "Islam rejects the old static view of universe and reaches a dynamic view."² It recognizes the worth of the individual but finds the system of unification based on blood-relationship or throne too earth-rooted.

Principles of "Tauhid"

Islam came to unite the world on the principle of "Tauhid"; and, "as a polity," Iqbal says, "it is only a practical means to making this principle a living factor in the intellectual and emo-

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (Lahore 1951), p. 9.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

tional life of mankind.”¹ Thus “Tauhid” becomes the dominating concept of Islamic culture. Iqbal has dwelt at length on the various aspects of “Tauhid,” its meaning for the individual and for society. “The essence of ‘Tauhid’ as a working principle,” he says, “is equality, solidarity and freedom.”²

If humanity has to understand the full significance of the principle of “Tauhid” as a working principle of life it must be provided with a living example by one who would not merely formulate the dominating concepts of “Tauhid,” but who would also knit them into his own life and show mankind how to illumine its whole self. This preceptor must demonstrate to society the principles through which a noble, balanced and dignified life is to be led.

Finality of Prophethood

This leads Iqbal to devote a whole chapter to the finality of the institution of prophethood, in presenting his analysis of Muslim culture.

Iqbal defines a prophet as a type of mystic consciousness in which “unitary experience tends

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 147.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

to overflow its boundaries and seeks opportunities of redirecting and refashioning the forces of collective life.”¹ The teachings of Islam are not isolated from the past but are, in fact, the continuation and completion of the aims and ideals of preceding prophets.

“The Prophet of Islam,” says Iqbal, “seems to stand between the ancient and the modern world. In so far as the source of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the ancient world ; and in so far as the spirit of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the modern world. In him life discovers other sources of knowledge suitable to its own directions.”²

Thus, “the birth of Islam . . . is the birth of inductive intellect.”³ This must have been so if the real is to be lived in harmony with the ideal.

Gaze on the Concrete

The most important point of the spirit of Islamic culture is that “for purposes of knowledge” it fixes its gaze *on the concrete and the finite*.

It reveals two great sources of knowledge—

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 125.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

history and nature—and firmly affirms that neither one's observation nor experiments can reveal to one a contradiction in the real and the ideal.

It goes further and makes it a duty incumbent on the Muslim to reflect on the signs and not to pass on "as if he is deaf and blind."

It appeals to the intellect but in no way is it desirous of replacing emotion by the reason. This spirit was not revealed merely in the Qur'an but also in the practices of the last and final Prophet himself who came to make it clear in unequivocal terms to humanity that in its own interests it must accept the sense of values as final as laid down by him.

Ijtihad

Accepting as final the sense of values as laid down by Islam, one may ask, what would be the principle of movement in the structure of Islamic society. Iqbal's answer would be "Ijtihad."

This word literally means "to exert," but in the terminology of Islamic law it means to exert with a view to forming an independent judgment

on legal questions "according to certain principles."

In formulating this independent judgment guidance is to be sought first from the Qur'an which says: "And to those who exert We show our path," then from the Hadith and the Sunna, and finally by the exercise of personal judgement.

It would, of course, be somewhat out of place here to go into the details of the principles of "Ijtihad," but it is important to understand in what way the practices of the Prophet are to be accepted as being universal in application.

Shah Waliullah's Approach

Iqbal summarizes Shah Waliullah's approach to this point: "The prophetic method of teaching, according to Shah Waliullah, is that, generally speaking, the law revealed by a prophet takes especial notice of the habits, ways, and particularities of the people to whom he is specially sent. The prophet who aims at all-embracing principles however, can neither reveal different principles for different peoples, nor leave them to work out their rules of conduct. His methy is to train one particular people, and to use

them as a nucleus for the building up universal Shari'at. In doing so he accentuates the principle underlaying the social life of all mankind, and applies them to concrete cases in the light of the specific habits of the people immediately before him."¹

Organic Whole

In short, Islamic culture is an organic whole which includes the internal as well as the external. It acknowledges the past and accepts all that is noble in it; it strives to make the present a happier and better world, keeping in view the future through which the soul has to pass.

It takes not merely a broader view of life—life of the individual and of the society as a whole—but also a larger view of it.

It has in its ken the whole unseen world through which the Ego or "Khudi" of man has to pass.

In the world of realities the Ego is fortunate in possessing a "freedom of will," thus enabling it to choose between good and evil, right and wrong, but as soon as the soul departs from the body, the Ego must then move onwards through

the force of that which it has cultivated during its relation with the body, and it faces pleasures or pains according to what it has accumulated for itself until, finally, it comes into the presence of its Creator.

In order to reveal to mankind what is eternally good to the *soul*, the enlightened spirit of the life of the Prophet works as a guidance to mankind.

Islamic culture differs from other cultures in the sense that it does not aim at cultivating the individual or the group but fixes its gaze on the entire humanity. The individual cannot, for fear of becoming stunted and enfeebled, leave the society, for in so doing he would be harming his own interest in the march of perfection.

"No amount of works of art and literature could be a justification of Islamic culture as long as it does not strive to remove wrong, injustice and intolerance which are crushing humanity."¹

Nothing less than "universal brotherhood" is its goal; it aims at peace, prosperity and dignity for mankind in the world of reality, and

1. M. Pickthall, *Islamic Culture*, January 1927.

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 171-72.

peace, tranquillity and light in the domain of the spiritual life.

“And for this end it recognizes one leader, follows one guidance and looks towards one goal. The leader is the Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him); the guidance is the Holy Qur'an, and the goal is Allah.”¹

III

IQBAL'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN HIS POETRY

1. M. Pickthall, *Islamic Culture*, January, 1927.

This talk, which was followed by an interesting discussion, was given to the 'Oxford University Group of Study of Religion' at ALL SOULS.

It deals with Iqbal's views on 'Ilm and shows how for he agrees with Ghazzali's theory of knowledge and where he seems to differ. To Iqbal, knowledge is not merely the basis of his moral and ethical system but the founda-

tion-stone of the whole life—seen and unseen, real and ideal. The subject is somewhat abstract but it is in such domains of abstract thoughts that his analysis is most illumining and interpretations are most enlightening. How his theory of knowledge has found an expression in his poetry is another half of the article which was added in order to create an interest in the study of Iqbal's poetry.

It would, perhaps, be of interest and value if, while going into the details of Iqbal's theory of knowledge, we could recapture some of the aspects of the meaning of al-'Ilm which were emphasized at various stages of its growth by the Muslim scholars of the past.

No doubt, in the words of Iqbal, "the search for rational foundation in Islam may be regarded to have begun with the Prophet himself, whose constant prayer was: 'God! grant me knowledge of the ultimate nature of things!'"¹ It is true that the Prophet has emphasized the need of achieving knowledge in traditions that are often quoted, but it is doubtful if, after the Prophet, the true significance of the word al-'Ilm and its full connotations were ever brought out by the mystics, rationalists or theologians of Islam before Iqbal.

To a student of Islamic studies it is a painful reality that al-'Ilm is sometimes equated with Ma'rrif and Sha'ur,² and sometimes it is narrowed

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 3.

2. *Lexicon*.

down in usage to the knowledge of definite things like the Qur'an, Tafsir and sometime it is confused with 'Amal, as pointed out by MacDonald:¹ various definitions are given in the *Ta'rifat* of Djurdjani,² e.g., knowledge is the firm belief which is compatible with reality... it is the occurrence of the image of a thing in the mind... knowledge is the confirmed quality through which generalization and details are conceived—knowledge is the attaining of the soul to the meaning of the thing, etc. Ghazzali in his *Ihya* maintains that about twenty interpretations were given by the various schools about the meaning of knowledge which is made obligatory to all Muslims.³ All these definitions lack in one way or another the full connotation of the word al-'Ilm. It is not surprising, therefore, that the very idea of religion is something covering the whole of life, based on the evolution of the past ideologies and carried over in principle to that which was eternal and everlasting—was itself reduced to either intellectual discourses of the contemporary philosophy, or to the mystical practices of certain

1. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. II.

2. Ali b. Mohammad Dschorschane, *Definitions*.

3. Ghazzali, *Ihya*, Book I, Bah. I.

saints. The spiritual sense, it was believed, was more awakened in these saints than in the ordinary men, and their personalities, therefore, were often imitated without much understanding.¹ The historical and philosophical exposition of knowledge under the various scholastic and mystical influences are well brought out by Ibn-i-Khaldun in his *Muqaddima*. The early influence of Greek philosophy on Muslim philosophers and 'Mutakallims' is well known. Whilst they revived much of the Greek sciences and also criticized some of the theories which they thought to be against the spirit of Islam, they were seldom able to free themselves from the classical spirit of the Greeks. This was perhaps due to their attitude of submission to the great philosophers whom they accepted as authority, as has been pointed out by Dr. Boer: "The earliest Muslim thinker were so fully convinced of the superiority of Greek knowledge that they did not doubt that it had attained to the highest degree of certainty. The thought of making further independent investigation did not readily occur to an oriental"²

1. See Nicholson, *Risala Alkushairi of the Mystics of Islam*.

2. Dr. T. J. De Boer, *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, p. 28.

Iqbal's study of various schools of scholastic theology that arose under the inspiration of Greek thought clearly disclosed to him that, "while Greek philosophy very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers, it, on the whole, obscured their vision of the Qur'an. Socrates concentrated his attention on the human world alone. To him the proper study of man was man and not the world of plants, insects and stars. How unlike the spirit of the Qur'an," he points out, "which sees in the humble bee a recipient of Divine inspiration and constantly calls upon the reader to observe the perpetual change of the winds, the alternation of the day and night, the clouds, the starry heavens, and the planets swimming in infinite space!" "As a true disciple of Socrates," Iqbal continues, "Plato despised sense-perception which, in his view, yielded mere opinion and no real knowledge. How unlike the Qur'an, which regards 'hearing' and 'sight' as the most valuable Divine gifts, and declares them to be accountable to God for their activity in this world. This is what the earliest Muslim students of the Qur'an completely missed under the spell of classical speculation. They 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 is not yet fully realized, even up to the present."¹

Iqbal thinks that Ghazzali's basis of religion of "philosophical speculation is partly owing to this revolt and partly to his personal history."² But it would seem to a student of Ghazzali rather an unjust remark, certainly not based on any malice or prejudice, but on underestimation of the truth of those experiences through which the soul of Ghazzali had passed in gaining a fuller vision of Reality. In the opinion of Iqbal, Ghazzali's stepping into mystical experience is due to his failure "to find any hope in analytical thought." It is thus to his mind an escape from the real to the unseen, but it is far from truth. Certain experiences refute interpretation, intellect fails to comprehend the knowledge gained through such experiences, and what Ghazzali failed to realize through his sense-perception, his soul achieved in the realms opened up to him through

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 3-4.

2. *Id.*, p. 4.

the heart, or *Qalb*. This yearning of the soul for a higher realm is termed by Iqbal himself as the "knowledge direct" which is received by *Qalb*. Ghazzali, in the quest of higher knowledge, was passing those realms where, in Iqbal's own words, "philosophy must recognize the central position of religion and has no other alternative but to admit it as something focal in the process of reflective synthesis."¹

Ghazzali, undoubtedly, did not feel his experiences in the words of Bergson "that intuition is only a higher kind of intellect"—perhaps because he found in the domains of intuition or heart that which was never revealed to him in the realm of intellect. Yet he emphasized the constant progress from the knowledge of self to the knowledge of God. He was well aware of the limitations of human intellect, and very often he felt that the methods of arriving at knowledge of God were "too obscure to the ordinary intelligence."² He has therefore left them and dealt only with the methods which can easily be comprehended.

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 2, 5.

2. Cf. *The Alchemy of Happiness*, Claud's translation (1910), p. 31. Cf. *Al-Risalat Al-adunniyya* (translated by M. Smith).

Ghazzali's refusal to be dragged into controversies about his experiences of higher realities, and his systemization of this aspect of knowledge, which cannot be covered by intellect, under the more comprehensive field of mysticism, was not without meaning. In doing so, his object was twofold:

- (1) To make the scholastic 'Ulama realize the futility of the different aspects of knowledge and the absurdity of taking pleasure in intellectual gymnastics and useless discussion, which has created more of bitterness than any proper understanding of any problem.
- (2) To make the people feel the meaning and grandeur of the inner life, to give them time to reflect on the glories of Nature that were around them so that they might long for the realization of a lasting happiness instead of indulging in the idle pursuit of listening to scholastic discussions beyond their comprehension.

It is but natural that Ghazzali should lay more stress on that part of knowledge which is

termed mystical. To ignore this point is to miss the whole spirit of his teaching.

It would, perhaps, not be out of place here to deal with certain aspects of knowledge which have been emphasized by Ghazzali, and which we find reflected in Iqbal's theory of knowledge with little change. The most important is Ghazzali's interpretation of heart. He considers that knowledge of heart is the first step to the knowledge of self, and says:

“The first step to self knowledge is to know that thou art composed of outward shape called body, and the inward entity called the heart, or soul. By heart I do not mean that piece of flesh situated in the left of our bodies, but that which uses all the other faculties as its instrument and servant. In truth, it does not belong to the visible world but to the invisible, and has come into this world as a traveller visits a foreign country for the sake of merchandise and will presently return to his native land. It is the knowledge of this entity and its

attributes which is the key to the knowledge of God.”¹

The inspiration, no doubt, is taken from the Qur'an: “God hath made everything which He hath created most good; and began the creation of man with clay, then ordained his progeny from germs of life, from sorry water: then shaped him, and breathed of His spirit into him, and gave you hearing and seeing and hearts: what little thanks do ye return.” [32: 6 8 (Trans. Rev. J. Rodwell, M.A.)]

It is most significant that in the process of the intellectual growth of the Muslim mind its attention should have been drawn to this most revealing method of knowledge at a time when it was grossly enwrapped in the superficial aspect of knowledge, and Ghazzali's contribution in giving a lead to the direction of starting the investigation from within is of immense value when seen against the social and literary background of his age. He was the first to combine the scholastic and the mystical ways of life into a harmonious system, which has been termed by Ibn-i-Khaldun as ‘Ilm-i-Tasawwuf.²

1. *The Alchemy of Happiness*, pp. 20-31.

2. *Ibn-i-Khaldun*, Urdu translation, Part III, p. 105.

The second of his theory of knowledge can be stated briefly in the rather exaggerated words of MacDonald: "He thought that intellect should be used to destroy trust in itself, and that the only trustworthy knowledge and gained through experience."¹

These experiences, which given in ordinary language, were bound to create many controversies and, though in the following centuries we notice Muslim philosophers criticizing various aspects of his theory of knowledge, yet it is no less surprising that Ghazzali's teachings were gaining a firm root in the minds of the mystics, and especially the mystic poets of Persia, *e g*, Rumi, 'Attar, etc.

It is not for me to point out the unfathomable depth of influence of Ghazzali in this direction, in helping to create in the people the attitude of submissiveness, modesty, extreme kindness, a sense of contentment, and are strait from the pleasures of the world; that it undoubtedly did, but it is unfortunate that in its zeal for these qualities it also failed to emphasize the importance of initiative and leadership and that bold-

1. MacDonald's article in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

ness and ambition which are the distinctive features of a man.

Iqbal's theory of knowledge is the revolt against the spirit of false contentment and the lack of initiative which had taken hold of the Muslim nation under the influence of those who had neither the insight of Ghazzali, nor the intellect of 'Rushd,' and he cried out:

شیر مردوں سے ہوا بیشہ تحقیق تہی
رہ گئے صوفی و ملا کے غلام اے ساقی

No lion-heart now rides, fearless to the truth;
None now remains but slaves of creed and sect!

Iqbal fully agrees with Ghazzali in his meaning and interpretation of the value of Faud and Qalb (heart). He also realizes that the heart "is a kind of inner tuition or insight which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, 'feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense-perception.' It is, according to the Qur'an, something which 'sees,' and its reports, if properly interpreted, are never false. We must not, however," he would say, "regard it as a mysterious special faculty; it is rather a mode of dealing with Reality in which sensation, in the physiological sense of

the word, does not play any part. Yet the vista of experience thus opened to us is as real and concrete as any other experience."¹ Iqbal only further elucidates, in the light of modern philosophy, the nature of the knowledge which is achieved through heart. He, too, is as vague as Ghazali in spite of all his modern terminology, and he himself was conscious of it and attributed it to the lack of "a really effective scientific method to analyze the contents of non-rational modes of consciousness."²

But the important point which is to be taken note of is that he does not disregard the value of intellect. To him it is not "to be used to destroy trust in itself," but it has to play the most important part in achieving knowledge. Intuition in itself to Iqbal was a kind of higher intellect. He, therefore, attaches every value to intellect and to all those senses that are responsible for repeating impressions or sensations to the mind. He considers sense-perception of the first importance. No doubt, these are to be *supplemented* by the preception of heart, or Qalb. He beautifully elaborates the two sources of knowledge as supple-

menting each other in the following lines, and this, to him, is also the true concept of knowledge according to the Qur'an :

"The Qur'an, recognizing that the empirical attitude is an indispensable stage in the spiritual life of humanity, attaches *equal* importance to all the regions of human experience as yielding knowledge of the ultimate Reality which reveals its symbols both within and without. One indirect way of establishing connexions with the reality that confronts us is reflective observation and control of its symbols as they reveal themselves to sense-perception ; the other way is direct association with that reality as it reveals itself within. The naturalism of the Qur'an is only a recognition of the fact that man is related to nature, and this relation, in view of its possibility as a means of controlling her forces, must be exploited in the interests, not of unrighteous desire for domination, but in the nobler interest of a free upward movement of spiritual life. In the interests of

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 15-16.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

securing a complete vision of Reality, therefore, sense-perception must be *supplemented* by the preception of, what the Qur'an describes as, 'Faud,' or 'Qalb,' i.e. heart."¹

Here it is, in attaching equal importance to all aspects of knowledge which are essential for moulding the environment, that the value of Iqbal's theory of knowledge lies. He would not be satisfied with any interpretation of the knowledge of the summit, the highest peak, without a reference to all the knowledge which lies alongside the foot of the hill. It is the knowledge of the things and their inherent nature that has raised man *higher* than the angels² in the eyes of God, and it is only through a continuous struggle in achieving the knowledge of things that man can maintain his superiority with justice in the world. No uphill movement of soul in realizing the ultimate truth is possible unless it starts and finds its way through the thick and thin of the world, moulding it and not ignoring it, changing

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 14-15. (Italics mine.)

2. Cf. the Qur'an (2 : 28, 31).

it and not leaving it, pondering over it and not condemning it.

The progress of man from beginning to "a permanent element in the constitution of being" is well explained by Iqbal when he says :

"It is the lot of man to share in the deeper aspirations of the universe around him and to shape his own destiny as well as that of the universe, now by adjusting himself to its forces, now by putting the whole of his energy to mould its forces to his own ends and purposes. And in this process of progressive change God becomes a co-worker with him provided man takes the initiative. But his life and the onward march of his spirit depend on the establishment of connexions with the reality that confronts him. It is knowledge that establishes these connexions, and knowledge is sense-perception elaborated by understanding."¹

This passage reveals two points of interest :

(1) Knowledge, though distinguished from

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 12.

action and essential for the establishment of connection with the reality, is not of much use to man if not employed for the purpose of the advancement of his whole self for, if the knowledge gained is not used in the development of self, the self is bound to lose its 'richness,' and its spirit is sure to be hardened within itself.

- (2) The definition of knowledge as given by Iqbal is "sense-perception elaborated by understanding." How very different it is to the idea of knowledge as given by Ghazzali—"Know that knowledge is the presentation to itself of the rational, tranquillized soul (النفـس المـطـمـئـنة), of the real meaning of things and their outward form when divested of matter, in themselves and their modes and their qualities and their substance and their essences, if they are simple (i.e. uncompound) . . . The nobility of knowledge is in accordance with the nobility of the thing known, and the rank of the known corresponds to the rank of the knowledge."

This second point, in the light of the famous

lines of the Qur'an dealing with the superiority of man over angels (2 : 28-31), is elaborated by Iqbal. He argues that "man is endowed with the faculty of naming things, that is to say, forming concepts of them, and forming concepts of them is capturing them. Thus the character of man's knowledge is conceptual, and it is with the weapon of this conceptual knowledge that man approaches the observable aspect of Reality."¹

Turning to the higher concepts of knowledge, i.e., the Realization of the Divine, Iqbal had an important contribution to make. He realized that certain attempts of higher Sufis were absolutely misunderstood by their followers and successors, and just as in the beginning the imagination of the people was captured by Greek philosophy so, at a later stage, it was dominated by some of the ideas of Hindu philosophy and the thread of Islamic thought was again lost. Iqbal attributes the idea of *Fana*, or annihilation, to the Buddhist idea of *Nirvana*. This idea, though much worked on as a synthesis of both Semitic and Aryan formulae, can hardly find a justification from the Qur'an in the sense that the idea of *Nirvana* is

1. Cf. Iqbal's letter to Saiyidain : *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*, p. 99.

found in Buddhism. *Fana fil'lah* only exists in Islam in the sense :

"Say : My prayers and my worship and my life and my death are unto God, Lord of the Worlds. He hath no associate. This I am commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.

"Say : Shall I seek any other Lord than God, when He is Lord of all things? No soul shall labour but for itself ; and no burdened one shall bear another's burden. At last ye shall return to your Lord, and He will declare that to you about which you differ." (6 : 163-164)

The idea ceases to be Islamic when it is thought that an individual can actually be absorbed or merged with God. The highest portion for the individual is : *وَسَجِدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ* : i.e., to "... adore, and draw nigh to God" is to come nearer to God and not to be God.

Thus the theory of knowledge as understood by Iqbal is a progressive ideal starting from the knowledge provided by sense-perception, and ending with the knowledge provided by heart. In

fact, it never ends, for the ultimate Reality cannot be grasped in full by the self. Iqbal has conveyed this idea very well in a single couplet :

علم حق اول حواس آخر حضور
آخر او می نگنجد در شعور

First the senses see the light of truth, and then it mingles with the light divine,
Beyond the reach of human understanding.

For the purpose of poetry this conception of knowledge is divided by Iqbal into two parts :

- (1) The knowledge achieved by sense-perception is called 'Ilm.
- (2) The knowledge gained by heart is called Real Knowledge, the knowledge of ultimate Reality, or 'Ishq (love)

An attempt is made throughout his poetry to maintain a harmony between the two aspects of knowledge. Iqbal in one of his letters points out that the knowledge achieved by sense-perception provides one with a kind of natural power which in all cases must be subordinate to the higher principles of life called *Deen*. If it is not under its control, it is called "Shaitanat" (a source of

evil); otherwise this 'Ilm is the beginning of the true knowledge.'¹

Man in the development of his 'selfhood' (Khudi) has to equip himself from both the aspects of knowledge; one cannot be separated from the other. It is in the synthesis of 'Ilm and 'Ishq that the warmth and the completeness of life can fully be realized.

Iqbal has often shewn his disgust with the present system of education, which fails to give the youth a vision of the ultimate Reality, and keeps him absorbed only in his books. He says to one who is in quest of knowledge :

خدا تجھے کسی طوفان سے آشنا کر دے
کہ تیرے بحر کی موجوں میں اضطراب نہیں
تجھے کتاب سے ممکن نہیں فروغ کہ تو
کتاب خواں ہے مگر صاحب کتاب نہیں

May God acquaint thee with a restless urge, for
thy life is a calm indifferent sea ;
Thou and thy books are never apart ; thou redest,
yet thou dost not see.

In *Bal-i-Jibril* he again repeats the lack of this higher aspect of knowledge called 'Ishq in a very effective couplet :

1. *Zarb-i-Kalim*

عشق کی تیغ جگر دار اڑا لی کس نے
علم کے ہاتھ میں خالی ہے نیام اے ساقی

Who has upraised the soulful sword of Love ?

O Saqi, the hand of knowledge grasps an empty sheath.

The significance of this 'Ishq has often been the theme of his poetry. This 'Ishq, or love, is the whole life—a guiding force within and a prevailing law of nature without :

بہ برگ لالہ رنگ آمیزئی عشق
بیجان ما بلا انگیزئی عشق
اگر این خاکدان را واشگافی
درونش بنگری خون ریزی عشق

In the tulip's hue is mxtured love, the tumult in my
heart is love.

If opened by this dust-bound breast, within is found
the blood of love.

بیباغان باد فروردین دھد عشق
براغان غنچہ چون پروین دھد عشق
شعاع مہر او قلزم شگاف است
بماہی دیدہ رہ بین دھد عشق

Love into the garden breathes the breath of Spring ;
Love with starry buds the verdant meadow spots ;
Love the ocean cleaves with sun-like rays ;
Love lights the eye of searching fish.

It is this higher aspect of knowledge which should
be the ultimate aim of man, and for which he

must continuously strive. Iqbal is not unhopeful of that state when the union of mind and heart would produce conditions of bliss for humanity. He prays God for that blissful state :

تو میری رات کو مہتاب سے محروم نہ رکھ
ترے پیمانے میں ہے ماہ تمام اے ساقی

I pray thee, ravish not the moon-gleam from my night,
O Saqi, thou holdest in thy cup night's full bright orb.

and he is conscious of the fact that with the true yearning and the earnest striving of the self in spite of unsurmountable difficulties the vision of such a knowledge becomes a reality :

وادی عشق بسے دور دراز است ولے
طے شود جادہ صد سالہ بہ آہ گاہ
در طلب کوش و مدہ دامن امید ز دست
دولت هست کہ یابی سر راہے گاہ

Far distant oft the vale of love, and yet sometimes,
ever that age-long path a solitary sigh will bound;
In strife and constant search loose not thy grasp
upon the skirt of hope because, sometimes riches
by the way are found.

It will perhaps be not far from the truth to say that our present miseries are to a great extent due to ignoring either the one or the other aspect of knowledge. If one is absorbed with pure 'Ilm,

i.e., knowledge gained by sense-perception, and has closed the window of his heart to the true light, the other is aimlessly groping in the dark for higher light without taking any help from the elementary sources of knowledge, and both are deprived of true knowledge.

But the poetry of Iqbal is rich enough to provide for the shortcomings of both. Let us hope that the day is not far distant when his poetry will be a guiding star to both. It will enlighten one with the path of knowledge, *i.e.*, knowledge achieved through sense-perception, and it will cure the other of the lack of relish for true devotion by opening to him the door of *Qalb*, or heart.

IV

IQBAL'S PHILOSOPHY OF 'AMAL

This lecture was given at Pembroke College, Cambridge, at a meeting organized by the Iqbal Society of the Cambridge University and was presided over by a well-known scholar and interpreter of Iqbal — Professor A.J. Arberry. *cusses here the philosophy of Iqbal with regard to the motives and directives, purposes which govern the lives and actions of human beings. He says that according to Iqbal man's concept of the GOOD determines his behaviour. It is here that the importance of Faith*

It appeared in *The Islamic Literature* of August 1952 with the following note of the Sponsor: *comes in, for Faith in some fundamental and ultimate good is the primitive requisite for healthy individual and national effort."*

"... Dr. Bilgrami dis-

Before going into the details of Iqbal's philosophy of action, I would like to make it clear that by action, or 'Amal, I mean simply work, labour, service, and would not wish to enter into the controversial meanings of 'Amal. Distinction is made between Fa'l (deed) and 'Amal (action). The Lexicon points out that Fa'l is "a deed with a sort of difficulty; or according to Er-Raghil, 'Amal is any Fa'l, deed or action, that proceeds from an animate being through his intention; and thus 'Amal has a more particular meaning than Fa'l, for Fa'l is something attributed to animate beings from which it proceeds without intention." I mean by 'Amal that kind of deed which is seldom attributed to inanimate things. It is true that 'Amal is a motion of the whole or a part of the body, but I would not include here, for the purpose of the present discourse, an act which is mere utterance of a saying. I may also point out that sometimes 'Amal is made only a part of knowledge, *i.e.*, 'Ilm, and is called '*Ilm i-Amali*, and sometimes it is altogether confused with '*Ilm*. There is no doubt that one is to be understood in relation to the other; they are closely inter-

connected but that does not mean that they are identical.

Often in the field of knowledge our attention has been diverted from the real issue to the unproductive channels. This hairsplitting really leads us nowhere. These controversies constitute a kind of literary opium which slackens and gradually kills our spirit of action. Iqbal has nicely hinted at this weakness of our nation in his poem "*Iblis ki Majilis-e-Shura*." Here Satan is in consultation with his advisers; he listens to their accounts but finds his only consolation in the fact that the Muslim nation is absorbed in futile discussions, unmindful of the purpose for which it was created. Satan says:

ہے یہی بہتر الہیات میں الجھا رہے
یہ کتاب اللہ کی تاویلات میں الجھا رہے

Better it is that they be engrossed in metaphysical thought,
Or absorbed in interpretations of the Holy Book.

Many a ruin of Baghdad would stand a witness to this statement and many a weakness of the presentday Muslim world can be traced to the lack of faith of the Muslims themselves in Islamic principles and in their inability to move in this direction. This is another cause for consolation

for Satan, and in the same poem he says :

چشم عالم سے رہے پوشیدہ یہ آئین تو خوب
یہ غنیمت ہے کہ خود مومن ہے محروم یقیں

Well indeed if the Holy Law be hidden from man's eyes ;
Blessing indeed if the faithful be deprived of his faith !

For over five hundred years the Muslim nation ceased to progress both intellectually and spiritually. It ceased to draw inspiration from the dynamic force of Islam and bordered on the verge of destruction. Many a State no doubt attempted to progress, but their loyalties were limited to their own conception of nationalism. They were concerned chiefly with their own affairs and their progress can hardly be called real in any direction. The utmost that was achieved by them was the introduction into their way of life of some of the traditions and customs of the West. They lost their own inwardness and were unable to grasp the inwardness of the West. The binding and unifying force of Islam was shelved in the hope of some fresh pastures, and fresh pastures remained only a dream.

Thanks to the efforts of people like Jamal-ud-Din Afghani and the political upheaval in the East, the Islamic East was awakened from its

deep slumber of centuries. It was now for Iqbal to give a lead. He realized that life cannot create any change around itself or in its environment unless this change is first brought out in its own being. No appreciable change in life can come into existence unless it first takes in shape in the mind or the consciousness of the people. He found this clue in the simple but expressive words of the Holy Qur'an :

ان الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى يغيروا ما بانفسهم

Verily God will not change His gifts to men till they change what is in themselves. (13:12) (Rodwell).

Iqbal was convinced of the truth, and devoted his life to creating in the minds of the people in general and Muslims in particular a faith in the principles of Islam which have always advocated the equality of man and service to humanity. He clearly saw the goal of world-peace lying in these Islamic principles, where the world is not divided by race, colour or caste, and where men are not allowed to be sacrificed on the altar of any nationalism or other *ism*, except for the cause of truth and righteousness.

Let us analyze the significance of this faith as our starting point of Iqbal's philosophy of ac-

tion. Human actions, with which we are concerned here, are those that are expressive of consciousness, called in the technical psychological term 'conation'. The obvious types of such action are those "where the purpose precedes the performance," but it is not always easy to assign a purpose to every action. The actions of adults are usually of a higher type, and are often the result of various and self-conscious desires, and sometimes result from a conflict of desires where a decision is to be taken. This decision is sometimes guided by the idea of pleasure or utility and sometimes by a concept of Good. The mind profits by its own experiences of the actual problems of life, and it gets the opportunity of rectifying or verifying some of the concepts of its notion of Good. It is here that faith in certain principles of life plays a very important part in humans. Take for instance the case of a man who has complete faith in the purpose of life, to whom life does not end in death, but rather enters another stage of its development, who firmly believes in the accountability of human action. This man will not, in most cases, act in the same manner as a man to whom this world and its pleasures are end in themselves. This is an ex-

treme case but one which well illustrates the point that the conduct of every individual depends entirely upon his or her faith in certain deeprooted principles of life, which determine his or her outlook. It is therefore of the utmost importance that humanity as a whole should have its faith in the Fundamental and Ultimate Good, a source that will not merely guide but give also a unity of purpose to its actions. The birth of this faith is gradually realized by the people in their thoughts and its beauty is only appreciated by those who discover its contents within the depths of their own beings. This is why Iqbal considers faith as the essence of religion; he compares faith with a bird that sees its "trackless way" unattended by intellect which, in the words of the great mystic poet of Islam, "only waylays the living heart of man and robs it of the invisible wealth of life that lies within." Iqbal agrees with Professor Whitehead that, on its doctrinal side, faith is "a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended." The essence of faith is '*Tauhid*' (the oneness of God), which is not to be taken as a matter of belief but which must be, in the

words of Iqbal, worked up as "a living factor in intellectual and emotional life of mankind." It is to be accepted as a driving and guiding force. He was well aware that the immobility of the Muslim nation, or its activities in the direction of fruitless fields, is due to the fact that the Muslims had ceased to take any inspiration from this only source. If humanity is to be put on the right track, it must be made conscious of this guiding force, its way of working, its nature of guidance, only a vivid realization of which can kindle in the individual light that can illumine his whole being and lift him to the heights befitting of man.

The potentialities of the miraculous power of this faith are often brought out in Iqbal's poetry:

غلامی میں نہ کام آتی ہیں شمشیریں نہ تدبیریں
جو ہو ذوقِ یقین پیدا تو کٹ جاتی ہیں زنجیریں
کوئی اندازہ کر سکتا ہے اس کے زور بازو کا
نگاہِ مردِ مومن سے بدل جاتی ہیں تقدیریں
ولایت، پادشاہی، علمِ اشیاء کی جہاں گیری
یہ سب کیا ہیں؟ فقط اک نکتہٴ ایمان کی تفسیریں
براہیمی نظر پیدا مگر مشکل سے ہوتی ہے
ہوس چھپ چھپ کے سینوں میں بنا لیتی ہے تصویریں
حقیقت ایک ہے ہر شے کی خاکی ہو کہ نوری ہو
لہو خورشید کا لپکے اگر ذرہ کا دل چیریں

یقین محکم، عمل پیہم، محبت فاتحِ عالم
جہادِ زندگی میں ہیں یہی مردوں کی شمشیریں
یقین افراد کا سرمایہٴ تعمیرِ ملت ہے
یہی قوت ہے جو صورتِ گر تقدیرِ ملت ہے

Not sword nor artifice prevail in slavery,
But before the man of faith the bondage-chains fall off.
Who can assess the strength of his right arm
Whose glance can change the very course of fate?
Sainthood, dominion, world-embracing knowledge,
What are all these but the subtleties of faith?
Abraham's insight we but hardly gain,
For furtive lusts within our hearts alluring pictures paint.
Each thing in essence is the same, be it light or dust;
The sun's blood will flow if the atom's heart be rent.
Firm faith, a constant striving and world conquering love,
These are men's weapons on the battlefield of life.
The wealth of nations lies in man's faith,
This power alone can shape the nation's fate.

The most difficult of all deeds is the purification of the motive. Once that is done, the individual gains tremendous power, and so the nation, against which then nothing will dare to stand. It conquers and is never conquered. The source of such a power lies solely in an unshaken faith in Tauhid. This is what Iqbal means by محکم (firm belief) and ایمان (faith) in the above lines. He clearly sees the truth of this faith and prays that youth may be allowed to share in his insight:

خدایا آرزو میری یہی ہے مرا نور بصیرت عام کر دے

This, my God, is my desire,
Let all men have my vision.

We can now enter the next phase of our subject, where this faith is to be translated into action, and a healthy personality or selfhood, both of the individual and of the nation, is to be built up on the firm foundation of these eternal principles. Here we have to analyze some of the important aspects of our personality, the realization of which should be the aim of our actions. Iqbal rightly points out that:

"My real personality is not a thing, it is an act. My experience is only a series of acts, mutually referring to one another, and held together by the unity of a directive purpose. My whole reality lies in my directive attitude. You cannot perceive me like a thing in space, or a set of experiences in temporal order; you must interpret, understand and appreciate me in my judgments, in my will-attitudes, aims and aspirations."¹

This leads us to a brief examination of Iqbal's

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 103.

aims and aspirations, towards which humanity should move. It is, in a word, development of an Ego, selfhood (خودی). This development of self, which starts from within so as to find an expression in the outer world, is not a new idea. Descartes, the father of modern philosophy, thought of it long before Iqbal. Even Iqbal's idea of an Ego is not peculiar to him. Dr. Taseer rightly points out that it is "the same as Schopenhauer's 'Genus,' Carlyle's 'Hero' and Schiller's 'Karl Moor.' Spinoza's 'Conatus Preservandi,' Fichte's 'Ich,' Schopenhauer's 'will to live,' Nietzsche's 'will to power,' Bergson's 'Elan Vital' are all in the same line of thought."¹ But, to my mind, where Iqbal's concept of this Ego differs from all of these is that it starts on an absolutely different footing. It is faith in Tauhid that is his starting point. This fundamental principle, as he prefers to put it, is that "the secret of selfhood is that there is no God but God." It is not merely an abstract idea, but an idea which has a tremendous significance as a working principle. The essence of Tauhid as a working idea is, according to Iqbal, "equality, solidarity, and freedom."² How far

1. Introduction, *Aspects of Iqbal*, Lahore 1938, p. xiii.

2. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 147.

an act is guided by these principles determines the nobility of its character. "An act is temporal or profane if it is done in a spirit of detachment from the infinite complexity of life behind it; it is spiritual if it is inspired by that complexity."¹ A man has, therefore, to keep this "single unanalyzable reality" in view, and, in developing his ego conquest by his constant of his environment, has also to subordinate himself to the general discipline of an Absolute Ego. He has to place himself, body and mind, in line with the general character of the Ultimate and Absolute Ego called God. He has also to seek guidance from this Directive force. The ego has to develop His attributes. The act which is, therefore, of highest importance to man is that which keeps his ego in constant touch with the Ultimate Ego. This is known as prayer, and Iqbal very firmly affirms:

"Psychologically speaking, prayer is instinctive in its origin. The act of prayer as aiming at knowledge resembles reflection. Yet prayer at its highest is much more than abstract reflection. Like reflection it too is a process of assi-

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 154.

milation, but the assimilative process in the case of prayer draws itself closely together and thereby acquires a power unknown to pure thought. In thought the mind observes and follows the working of Reality; in the act of prayer it gives up its career as a seeker of slow-footed universality and rises higher than thought to capture Reality itself with a view to become a conscious participator in its life. There is nothing mystical about it. Prayer as a means of spiritual illumination is a normal vital act by which the little island of personality suddenly *discovers its situation* in a larger whole of life."¹

It is, to him, not a ritual, but an "escape from mechanism of life to freedom."

This placed Iqbal's philosophy of action on a very sound foundation, and he proceeded with confidence on a well-planned and well-disciplined scheme for the development of 'selfhood.' He preached his gospel of action, and just as his poetry has given the nation a fresh and vigorous faith

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought: in Islam*, p. 90.

in the principles of Tauhid, so it stimulated them to act with confidence, to strive hard and draw inspiration from the prayer: "God grant me the knowledge of ultimate Reality." He tried to convince people that the secret of the actual bliss of life lay in 'Amal, i.e., work and striving, that this world and the hereafter were not the hereditary right of any nation or individual, but that their blessings were to be achieved by action. A person by his nature is destined to be neither saint nor sinner.

عمل سے زندگی بنتی ہے جنت بھی جہنم بھی
یہ خاکی اپنی فطرت میں نہ نوری ہے نہ ناری ہے

Man by his action makes his own Heaven and Hell,
For man is not by nature predestined fire or light.

To achieve 'light' one has to follow 'light,' and has to guard oneself against 'fire.' These two aspects in the growth of the personality, i.e., guarding oneself against evil and following the path of right, may be put, in the words of the Qur'an as 'Taqwa' and various aspects of Iqbal's concept of Good are but the expansion of the idea of Taqwa, vividly realized and impressively conveyed, in the actual working of this life. In philosophical terms, Evil is that which weakens the ego and

check its free development, and Good is that which strengthens it and makes its expansion possible. Of all the aspects of Good, Iqbal has laid great emphasis on two: (1) عشق ('Ishq), and (2) خلق (good manners, courtesy), the first of which is the goal, the second its mode of achievement.

A person asked the Holy Prophet which was the best of all actions, and the Prophet replied حسن خلق, i.e., the mode of dealing with others based on courtesy, sympathy, proper understanding and genuine desire for good. The following lines bring out very clearly the two aspects mentioned above:

دین سراپا سوختن اندر طلب
التمہائش عشق آغازش ادب
آبروے سکل ز رنگ و بوئے اوست
بے ادب بے رنگ و بو بے آبروست
نوجوانے را چون بینم بے ادب
روز من تاریک می گردد چو شب

Faith in essence is a burning search,
Whose beginning is respect, whose end is love.
The rose is honoured for its grace and charm,
And worthless a man if not these he have.
When I behold a churlish youth,
Dark as the night becomes my day.

These are some of the ideals towards which human action is to be guided, and in this uphill

march man has to labour, toil and strive continuously and courageously. In this onward march he has not to stop if he is at all desirous of the heights he wants to reach. To stop is to perish. Iqbal writes in "Zindagi-o-'Amal" (Life and Action) :

ماہ گردد تا شود صاحب مقام
سیر آدم را مقام آمد حرام

On rides the moon to its peak of glory,
But there is no halting-place for man's endeavour.

ساحل آفتادہ گفت گرچہ بسے زیستم
هیچ نہ معلوم شد آہ کہ من چیستم
موج ز خود رفته تیز خرامید و گفت
ہستم اگر میروم گر نروم نیستم

Thus the immobile shore spake forth—
I live, but know not what I am.
The restless wave in haste replied,
I am if I move, I am not if I move not.

Iqbal widens the intellectual horizon of youth by giving it a picture of many of the unconquered worlds which must not be lost sight of. These worlds are not like this world of ours, but are worlds which lie beyond it which are ahead of the stars and which are awaiting an Ego to explore them :

ستاروں سے آگے جہاں اور بھی ہیں
ابھی عشق کے امتحان اور بھی ہیں

تہی زندگی سے نہیں یہ فضاہیں
یہاں سینکڑوں کارواں اور بھی ہیں
قناعت نہ کر عالم رنگ و بو پر
چمن اور بھی آشیاں اور بھی ہیں

There are worlds yet beyond the stars,
There are yet more trials for love.
These spacious spheres are not devoid of life,
For here are countless caravans.
Rest not content with this alluring world,
For there are other gardens, and there are other nests."

I may here mention a point of special importance, namely that Iqbal does not attach any importance to an act which is merely a result of "an arid intellectualism," as Saiyidain puts it, and which "is devoid of the warmth of love and intuition." It does not mean that Iqbal desired to ignore scientific knowledge, for, in fact, he attaches great importance to it, but it means that he emphasized the need for supplementing this knowledge by another sense-perception, which is called heart, and he wanted to see this knowledge subordinated to the higher principles of life in action. In other words, man must be guided in all his acts by a love of higher motives and not by his ambitious scheme of exploitation. Love is to be made the

guiding principle of life, and knowledge and power must always be accompanied by it.

تنے پیدا کن از مشت غبارے
تنے محکم تر از سنگیں حصارے
درون او دل درد آشنائے
چو جوئے در کنار کوهسارے

Create a body from a pinch of dust,
A body stronger than a stone-built fort.
Create within a heart inured to pain,
Like the rivulet around the mountain's skirt.

To sum up, we can say that Iqbal's philosophy of action starts from a firm belief in the fundamental principles of Tauhid and finds expression, first in the purification of the motive, and then in establishing a relation between the personal Ego and the Ultimate Ego through prayer. The Ego must then be developed in closer contact with its environments, conquering them and not submitting to them. Iqbal's philosophy tries to emphasize the beauty of good acts, or '*Amal-i-Sualeh*', and warns us of the act which would ruin the full development of selfhood.

V

IQBAL'S CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY

BASED ON

ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES

This is the text of a annual meetings of Iqbal lecture given on the occasion of Iqbal Day on April 21, 1953, before a large and distinguished audience that usually attends the annual meetings of Iqbal Society, London. The meeting was presided over by His Excellency M.A.H. Ispahani, High Commissioner for Pakistan in U.K.

I deal first with a general misunderstanding which prevails amongst young readers of Iqbal, and which is sometimes shared by some learned scholars. These have complained of some contradiction in Iqbal's writings. To a certain extent all writers are guilty of some contradiction, but the difficulty of these young students lies mostly in a lack of understanding of certain words commonly conveying certain connotations, but used by Iqbal in differing meanings in different contexts. Occasionally Iqbal has made clear his meaning by explaining the two aspects of the word used, but often he has left the imagination of his readers to grasp the pertinent meanings of the word used in its different contexts. Take, for instance, the word 'وطن' (homeland), on which is based Iqbal's condemnation of the theory of nationalism. He points out the two aspects of 'وطنیت' in a short poem—one natural, and therefore lovable ; the other political, at the altar of which many a life has been sacrificed. He says :

اس دور میں مے اور ھے جام اور ھے جم اور
ساقی نے بنا کی روش لطف ستم اور

مسلم نے بھی تعمیر کیا اپنا حرم اور
تہذیب کے آذر نے ترشوائے صنم اور
ان تازہ خداؤں میں بڑا سب سے وطن ہے
جو پیرہن اسکا ہے وہ مذہب کا کفن ہے

گفتار سیاست میں وطن اور ہی کچھ ہے
ارشاد نبوت میں وطن اور ہی کچھ ہے
اقوام جہاں میں ہے رقابت تو اسی سے
تسخیر ہے مقصود تجارت تو اسی سے
خالی ہے صداقت سے سیاست تو اسی سے
کمزور کا گھر ہوتا ہے غارت تو اسی سے
اقوام میں مخلوق خدا بٹی ہے اسی سے
قومیت اسلام کی جڑ کشتی ہے اسی سے¹

This is an age of change, of new idols and new gods; and the greatest of these new gods is *Watan* or Fatherland, which heralds the death of religion, and lays waste the Prophet's teachings. Strengthen thy arm with the strength of *Tauhid*, thy country is Islam, thou belongest to the Prophet. Remember thy past glories and cast this new idol to the dust. If thou be slave to place thou shalt perish; be as free of fatherland as the fish in the sea. Fatherland means one thing in political discussion, another in the bidding of the Prophet; it breeds rivalries and suppressions, it robs politics of truth, and it plunders the weaker nations. It divides God's world into nations, and cuts through the root of Islam.

Presenting his view of democracy in his poetry and in his writings he has maintained this same dual approach, i.e., that of praising one aspect of

1. *Bang-i-Dara*, pp. 173-74

a thing and condemning the other. He undoubtedly had an admiration and respect for democracy and the democratic way of life and wanted to see a true democracy reigning over a united world, but he did not fail to remind the world in the strongest possible terms of the sad and unfortunate results of the often narrow concept of democracy when translated into practice. He had no patience for such democracies, and considered them as harmful society as Fascism and Communism. Broadcasting on the occasion of New Year's Day in 1938, Iqbal said:

"The modern age prides itself on its progress in knowledge and its matchless scientific developments. No doubt, the pride is justified. . . . but, in spite of all these developments, the tyranny of imperialism struts abroad, covering its face in the masks of Democracy, 'Nationalism, Communism, Fascism and heaven knows what else besides. Under these masks, in every corner of the earth, the spirit of freedom and the dignity of man are being trampled underfoot in a way of which not even the darkest period of

human history presents a parallel.”¹

And, after presenting a fearful picture of greed and avarice, bloodshed and the economic exploitation of the weak nations by the strong, he concludes :

“So long as this so-called democracy, this accursed nationalism and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long as men do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole world is the family of God, so long as distinctions of race, colour and geographical nationalities are not wiped out completely, they will never be able to lead a happy and contented life and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will never materialize.”²

In writing about democracy in his poems, he refers to Steindal when he says :

اس راز کو اک مرد فرنگی نے کیا فاش
 ہر چند کہ دانا اسے کھولا نہیں کرتے
 جمہوریت اک طرز حکومت ہے کہ جس میں
 بندوں کو گنا کرتے ہیں تو لا نہیں کرتے

1. *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, 1944, pp. 200-01.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

A European once revealed this secret,
 Although wise men do not usually reveal it,
 Democracy is a form of government in which
 People are counted, but not appraised.

Here Iqbal has hinted of some of the inherent defects of democracy—where heads are merely counted instead of being weighed, or appraised, with the result that the greater part of the energy of those elected is spent in maintaining the numbers of the herd around them, instead of in elevating the status of each member as an individual. At its best this type of democracy benefits only a certain class of people in a nation.

Iqbal has criticized certain aspects of democracy, not because he was against it, but because he saw that the future of world peace, and the uplifting of humanity lay in accepting the truly democratic way of life. He was keen to reform the concept of democracy in such a way that it might purge humanity of all evils, and establish a social order that would be nearer to the concept of the “Kingdom of God on Earth”; and he saw the vision of this democracy in Islam, which does not ignore the masses, but develops in them a character that has a higher purpose in life. Thus Islam shifts the basis of democracy from econo-

mic exploitation to a spiritual purification and better economical adjustment.

Writing as early as 1916, and criticizing Nietzsche, Iqbal said :

“The democracy of Europe—overshadowed by Socialist agitation and anarchical fear—originated mainly in the economic-regeneration of European society. Nietzsche, however, abhors this ‘rule of herd’ and, hopeless of the plebeian, he bases all higher culture on the cultivation and growth of an Aristocracy of Supermen. But, is the plebeian so absolutely hopeless? The democracy of Islam did not grow out of the extension of economic opportunity ; it is a spiritual principle, based on the assumption that every human being is a centre of latent power, the possibilities of which can be developed by cultivating a certain type of character. Out of the plebeian material Islam has formed men of the noblest type of life and power. Is not, then, the democracy

of early Islam an experimental refutation of the ideal of Nietzsche ?”¹

The basis of this Islamic democracy has well been pointed out by Mr. Ameer ‘Ali in his *Spirit of Islam*, and by Mr. Farid Ja‘fri in his *The Spirit of Pakistan*. According to both of them, it lies in the words of the Prophet himself when “he addressed the assembled multitude on the 8th of Zu‘l Hijja, i.e., the 7th March, 632 A.D., in words which should ever live in the heart of Muslims—

“Ye people, listen to my words . . . your lives and your property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until you appear before the Lord . . . Ye people, you have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you . . . Keep always faithful to the trust reposed in you and avoid sin . . . Usury is forbidden . . . Ye people, listen to my words and understand the same. Know that all Muslims are brothers unto one another. Ye are one brotherhood, nothing which belongs to another is lawful unto his brother

1. R.A. Nicholson, *Secrets of the Self*, Intro, p. xxix, footnote,

unless freely given out of his good will. Guard yourselves from committing injustice."

"The aristocracy of old time is trampled under my feet. The Arab has no superiority over the non-Arab. And a non-Arab has no superiority over the Arab. All are children of Adam, and Adam was made of the dust of the earth."

To this concept of equality and brotherhood, liberty and freedom, social justice and humanitarianism, Iqbal looked when giving shape to a social order that can only be called Islamic democracy. He had dreamed of a homeland for the Muslims of India, not for the sake of a new country of which the people could be proud in being the largest Muslim state, but to use it as a means to realize the higher ideals of this Islamic democracy. Iqbal has well analyzed in his poetry and his essays the concept of this democracy. His great desire was that Muslims themselves should work it out and thus provide a light to the world. Nothing would be more unfortunate for Muslims than to be unfaithful to the trust reposed in them.

Let us analyze some of the fundamentals of Iqbal's concept of Islamic democracy :

1. The fundamental basis of Islamic democracy is Tauhid—the oneness of God. "The supreme power and the final authority in Islamic democracy is that of God." Only His guidance is to be followed, and only He is to be obeyed. The head of the state and the government are only His representatives to carry on according to His wishes. Iqbal, in his usual philosophical style, puts it as follows :

"Islam, as a polity, is only a practical means of making this principle (of 'Tauhid') a living factor in the intellectual and emotional life of mankind. It demands loyalty to God, and not to thrones. And, since God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, loyalty to God virtually amounts to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature."¹

A point which Iqbal has emphasized, and which is often overlooked, is that it is not sufficient to offer lip-service to God, or merely to have

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 147.

a faith in His existence, but, what is important, is firmly believing in Him as a Creator, Lawgiver and Almighty, and acting according to His laws and orders. It is in this obedience and submission to God, and to His will, that the salvation of the individual and of humanity lies.

2. The second point of importance in Iqbal's theory of Islamic democracy is the obedience to the Law as given from time to time to mankind by the prophets, and as completed by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him. With him the age of revelation has come to an end and the age of realization has started. He is the completest Ego, the goal of humanity. "The more we advance in evolution, the nearer we get to him." It would be a solemn duty of any state wishing to follow Islamic democracy to preserve and obey these laws as illustrated in the teaching and noble actions of the Prophet. Iqbal's poem on the Mysteries of Selflessness deals at length with this divine guidance as revealed in the extraordinary and remarkable personality of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. His love is not merely described as a great unifying force of the Muslim community, but Iqbal has also found in his

teachings of freedom, social equality and human brotherhood, the pillars of true Islamic democracy. Here none was to be deprived of his rights on the grounds of colour, sect or social and economic circumstances. Iqbal cried out :

از رسالت در جهان تکوین ما
از رسالت دین ما آئین ما
دامتش از دست دادن مردن است
چون گل از باد خزاں افسردن است

Our genesis on earth comes from the Prophethood,
From the Prophethood come our religion and our laws.
Leaving his side is but to perish
As the rose withers in the autumnal wind.

3. The third point which characterizes the spirit of Islamic democracy is that of tolerance. Iqbal does not believe in tolerance which is the result of weakness. Since his theory of Islamic democracy is based on the assumption that all human life is spiritual in origin, he could not ignore this important aspect of true humanity. Since humanity is spiritual in origin, it is essential that individuals try to understand and tolerant one another, and to further this tolerance and understanding is one of the important tasks of Tauhid (the oneness of God). Iqbal says that, viewed psychologically, "Tauhid seeks to restore

the torn and divided world to its integral unity, and offers an intellectual impetus towards the resolution of those dualisms which have always tended to arrest the thought." Tolerance has been given the same importance in Iqbal's system of the development of self and of the social order as it should be. In Iqbal's Islamic democracy all persons would enjoy, as any Muslim would, the same security of life and property, honour, freedom of religion and beliefs, freedom of expression and freedom of movement, freedom of association and occupation, and equality of opportunity. Only the head of the state would be a Muslim, but in return it would be the duty of all Muslims to see first to the needs of their non-Muslim brethren.

4. Iqbal's concept of Islamic democracy is not limited to any particular geographical, racial or linguistic boundary. We need not go into the details of his open condemnation of nationalism. The principle of a nation to him was nothing more than the principle of a small family which must live in harmony with the general laws of humanity, and the truth of this is well known, even to those who deny it.

5. The final and important question is that of interpreting the divine laws into action, and making provision for a principle of movement in the progressive ideology of Islamic democracy. This has been boldly faced by Iqbal in his theory of Ijtihad. Those interested would perhaps do well to read his illuminating lecture on 'The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam'¹ where he has dealt at length with the principle of Ijtihad.

I have chosen these five pillars of Islamic democracy from the writings of Iqbal. He was hopeful that sometime it might perhaps be possible to have a democracy of more or less unique individuals presided over by the most unique individual possible on the earth, and he refers to that day as the "Kingdom of God on Earth." Let us help each other to bring that day nearer.

Iqbal devoted his life to rediscovering the principles of Islam for humanity, and to interpreting them in such a way as to infuse the Muslims of the world with a fresh and vigorous faith, spirit and hope. A better homage cannot

1. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 146-80.

be paid to Iqbal than to interpret his concept of Islamic democracy in the land of his dreams—Pakistan—and to continue the great work of reconstruction of Islamic thought that was started by him in right earnest.

VI

THE MAIN SOURCE OF IQBAL'S
INSPIRATIONS

This is one of the talks given before a group of Muslims, young and old, who have joined hands in serving the cause of Islam in England at the East London Mosque, 448, Commercial Road, E. 1. This organization is known as *Jamiat-ul-Muslimin*—a non-national and truly Muslim association which aims at propagating Islamic teachings, its message of love, peace and service of humanity. In organizing anything from the congregational prayers on Fridays and 'Id days to general lectures on Islam and its Prophet, from visiting the sick in hospitals to the burying of the poor, from the teaching of the children

in the mosque to helping the needy as far as they can, they have only one object in view and that is to seek the pleasure of God. They work with all humbleness and gather to get inspirations from the teachings of Islam and the noble life of its Prophet. It is in this spirit of refreshing Islamic teachings as expressed and understood by Iqbal that they occasionally celebrate the Iqbal Day.

It was in the year 1949 that this talk was given at a meeting under the auspices of this organization. Mr. I. I. Kazi, one of the founder-members of this organization, was in the chair.

Iqbal, the great poet of the East, is renowned not merely as a poet and philosopher like Hafiz or Goethe but is remembered even more as the embodiment of that spirit which revolutionized the Muslims of the East and fanned into flame the last dying spark of the love of Islam and Islamic principles in the hearts of many Muslims of the vast sub-continent, then known as India. To him, poetry was not an end in itself. It was only a means to a higher goal which he ever had in view prominently. The more he thought and studied, the more convinced he became that the one thing which could save the misguided humanity, fast moving towards its own destruction, was the complete acceptance of those basic principles of Islam which were revealed in the Quranic teachings and interpreted in the life of the noble Prophet himself; for Islam as presented by him was the highest evolution of religious thoughts. It no longer remained merely a theoretical principle to direct human beings in the needs of their daily life whether as individuals or as community. Religion to Iqbal—of course the Quranic religion—was not a departmental affair. According to

him, "it is neither mere thought nor mere feeling nor mere action. It is the expression of life as a whole."

It is this complete faith in Quranic teachings right from the simple *dos* and *don'ts* to the very principle of movement in Islamic life which he tried to interpret through his poetry. The sincerity of his emotions convinced Muslims to a great extent that it was 'faith' and faith alone that could lead them to the Good :

یقین افراد کا سرمایہ تعمیر ملت ہے
یہی قوت ہے جو صورتِ نگر تقدیر ملت ہے

Man's faith is the rock for nation's building
Man's faith is the architect of its destiny.

I do not intend to explain the progressive and the dynamic attitude of Islam. I should just like to draw your attention to the question of how his heart, a kind of inner intuition and insight, realized that Truth which made the whole universe reveal itself to his sense-perception. What made him conscious of the glories of Islam? How did he come in touch with the secrets of life?

It is a small incident of his life that may be known to some but perhaps it is worthwhile repeating. Sometimes a small incident changes the

whole outlook of a man, and who knows whether mere mention of this incident may not make someone conscious of his duties and responsibilities, as it did in the case of Iqbal.

The incident was related by Iqbal himself to no less a personality than Allama Suleiman Nadvi. They were going to Kabul when he said to the Maulana :

"I used to read the Holy Qur'an every morning. My father saw me reading and often heard my recitations. It gave him immense pleasure. He came to me once and said how he would like to tell me two things when the occasion arose. I had waited long for the fulfilment of my father's promise when one day, after I had passed my B.A., he came to me. I was then reciting the Holy Qur'an as usual after my morning prayers. He reminded me of his promise but wished to he assured that I would carry out the instructions to the best of my ability. On my promising him to do so, he wanted me to try and feel while reciting the Holy Qur'an that the Almighty God was

talking to me and secondly to try and carry His Message to the humanity.”¹

Maulana Suleiman Nadvi rightly points out that that is really the essence, the “شرح” and the “متن” of all his poetry.

And today his poetry and his writings, be they lectures or letters to friends, stand as evidence of the fact that he tried to fulfil his promise to the best of his ability. He studied the Holy Qur'an in the light of his father's advice and then when he thought of even the humblest followers of the noble Prophet, he cried out :

یہ راز کسی کو نہیں معلوم کہ مومن
قاری نظر آتا ہے حقیقت میں ہے قرآن

None knows the secret that the Believer

Though he seems the reader, is himself the Book,

He tried to absorb in himself those Quranic teachings and to develop in himself those godly attributes that make a man immortal, and immortal he became. Every year we feel that he is nearer to us than he was ever before—perhaps it is the appeal of his poetry that takes us to that spiritual realm where he lives. Death has only changed the evolution of his selfhood. Hidden as

1. Jamia Millia, Delhi, Iqbal Number, Quoted from memory.

he is from our eyes, his melodious voice reaches our ears often.

لحد میں بھی وہی غیب حضور رہتا ہے
اگر ہے زندہ تو دل ناصبور رہتا ہے
فرشتہ موت کا چھوٹا ہے گو بدن تیرا
تیرے وجود کے مرکز سے دور رہتا ہے

There in a grave, too, linger absence and presence,
There if the heart lives, lives it restlessly seeking.

Though the Angel of Death has touched the body,
Yet is he far from the core of thy Being.

In case I am required to state Iqbal's contribution in one word, I will not refer to his idea of Khudi or Be-Khudi—I would rather say that he has given us Faith in Islam and the Quranic teachings. He lifted the veil of narrow-mindedness, superstition, conservatism and made us see the bright light and the dynamic spirit of Islam. His cry to my mind was not merely 'back to the Qur'an' but also 'go ahead with the Qur'an.' He would say, "You have been left behind because you have ceased to take new inspiration from the Book that is there to guide you. You have narrowed down your conception of knowledge and you have become incapable of understanding the Book of Wisdom. You have shut your eyes

to the history of nations, their beginning and their end and the history of such nations is being repeated in you. But there is no need for pessimism. Develop in you that selfhood, that Khudi according to the values assigned by the Book of Light and soon you will be at the helm of affairs again."

Much has been said in all that has yet been written on Iqbal about this theory of Ego. But if we analyze it with care it will only amount to this: "Reform yourself according to the real values of things in your spiritual, intellectual, and physical life as shown by the beloved Prophet in principle and soon you will be master of that immense power with which you will be able to serve humanity—that service which is nobler than any of the noblest positions of a material world. Take the initiative and you will find that in the process of progressive change God becomes a co-worker with you."

"Verily God will not change the condition of men till they change what is in themselves" (The Qur'an, 13-12).

It is not merely sufficient to say that we do believe in Islam—this is acknowledging only

partial truth. What is more important is to say that we do believe in Islam not as we *wish it had been* but *as it is*. We should then act accordingly.

Iqbal always had great faith in Muslim youths and I am sure that he must be looking to them to play their part in making themselves and their country strong and making their elders abandon their petty jealousies and selfish motives. In his letter to Mr. Altaf Husein, the Editor of the Dawn,¹ he says, "Islam above everything is the only cry which will bring them to their senses." It is for this faith in "Islam above everything" that we are indebted to the great poet.

We cannot do better justice to his memory or greater good to ourselves than by keeping in view these two simple injunctions of the Poet's father which made Iqbal immortal in the pages of history.

I would in the end give a short poem² of Iqbal which though it reveals to us our shortcomings yet ends with that beautiful line which is full of prayer for an everlasting "Rahmat"—a line which defies all translation.

1. Dawn, Iqbal Supplement, April 21, 1949. A facsimile of the letter written by Iqbal to Altaf Husein.

2. *Bal-i-Jibril*, pp. 17-18.

لا پھر اک بار وہی بادہ و جام اے ساقی
 ہاتھ آجائے مجھے میرا مقام اے ساقی
 میری مینائے غزل میں تھی ذرا سی باقی
 شیخ کہتا ہے کہ وہ بھی ہے حرام اے ساقی
 شیر مردوں سے ہوا بیشہ تحقیق تہی
 رہ گئے صوفی و ملا کے غلام اے ساقی
 عشق کی تیغ جگردار اڑا لی کس نے
 علم کے ہاتھ میں خالی ہے نیام اے ساقی
 سینہ روشن ہے تو ہے سوز سخن عین حیات
 ہو نہ روشن تو سخن مرگ دوام اے ساقی
 تو سری رات کو مہتاب سے محروم نہ رکھ
 تیرے پیمانے میں ہے ماہ تمام اے ساقی

O SAQI

Bring back the cup and soul-reviving wine,
 Let me rise again to my spire of glory.
 Though lingered in my flask a drain of freedom's wine,
 This too the pious elder dubbed forbidden joy.
 No lion-heart now rides, fearless to the truth,
 None now remains but slaves of creed and sect.
 Who has dared to uplift the soulful sword of love ?
 The hand of knowledge grasps an empty sheath.
 If in the breast a heart illumined beats, then warmth of words
 will breath the fire of life,
 But if no light there be, then words are everlasting dead.
 Ban not my night from the moon-gleams light,
 In thy cup is the full bright-moon, O Saqi.

THE END

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