

IQBAL REVIEW

Journal of the Iqbal Academy Pakistan

Volume: 56

Oct-Dec 2015

Number: 4

Editor: Muhammad Bakhsh Sangi

Associate Editor: Dr. Tahir Hameed Tanoli

Editorial Board

Dr. Abdul Khaliq, Dr. Naeem Ahmad, Dr. Shahzad Qaiser, Dr. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, Dr. Khalid Masood, Dr. Axel Monte (Germany), Dr. James W. James Morris (USA), Dr. Marianta Stepenatias (Russia), Dr. Natalia Prigarina (Russia), Dr. Sheila McDonough (Montreal), Dr. William C. Chittick (USA), Dr. M. Baqai Makan (Iran), Alian Desoulieres (France), Prof. Ahmad al-Bayrak (Turkey), Prof. Barbara Metcalf (USA)

Advisory Board

Munib Iqbal, Barrister Zaffarullah, Dr. Abdul Ghaffar Soomro, Prof. Fateh Muhammad Malik, Dr. Moin Nizami, Dr. Abdul Rauf Rafiqi, Dr. John Walbrigde (USA), Dr. Oliver Leaman (USA), Dr. Alparslan Acikgenc (Turkey), Dr. Mark Webb (USA), Dr. Sulayman S. Nyang, (USA), Dr. Devin Stewart (USA), Prof. Hafeez Malik (USA), Sameer Abdul Hameed (Egypt), Dr. Carolyn Mason (New Zealand)

IQBAL ACADEMY PAKISTAN

The opinions expressed in the Review are those of the individual contributors and are not the official views of the Academy

IQBAL REVIEW
Journal of the Iqbal Academy Pakistan

This peer reviewed Journal is devoted to research studies on the life, poetry and thought of Iqbal and on those branches of learning in which he was interested: Islamic Studies, Philosophy, History, Sociology, Comparative Religion, Literature, Art and Archaeology.

Manuscripts for publication in the journal should be submitted in duplicate, typed in double-space, and on one side of the paper with wide margins on all sides preferably along with its CD or sent by E-mail. Abstracts in English should be typed double-spaced on a separate page. It is assumed that the manuscripts sent to *Iqbal Review* are not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Publication of material in *Iqbal Review* means that the author assigns copyright to *Iqbal Review* including the right to electronic publishing. Authors may, however, use their material in other publications acknowledging *Iqbal Review* as the original place of publication.

In order to facilitate academic review and production, authors must conform to the following: 1) the name of the author, address, phone numbers, title, and name(s) of universities must appear on the title page of the article; 2) footnotes are to be numbered consecutively; 3) all foreign words must appear underlined/Italic with properly placed diacritical marks. Ten off-prints of the articles and two copies of book reviews will be sent to authors.

All contributions should be addressed to the Editor, Iqbal Review, 6th Floor, Academy Block, Aiwan-e-Iqbal Complex, Egerton Road, Lahore, Pakistan.

Tel: 92-42-36314510, 99203573, & Fax: 92-42-36314496

Email. into@iap. gov. pk Website: www. allamaiqbal. com

Published annually: *Iqbal Review* Two issues (April and October)
Iqbalīyat Two issues (January and July)

ISSN: 0021-0773

Subscription

PAKISTAN

Per issue Rs. 150/-
Per year Rs. 600/- (for one year.)
(Postage included)

FOREIGN

Per issue \$ 6. 00
Per year \$ 20. 00 (for one year.)
(Postage included)

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Revelation, Divine Names, and the Universality of Prophetic Guidance in Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Thought <i>Ibn ‘Arabi/William C. Chittick</i> | 5 |
| Balancing Basic Human Rights and Moral Imperatives: A Path Towards Human Progress and Survival <i>Dr. Mohammed Maruf</i> | 23 |
| The Intersection of Faith and Science: A Unified Theory of Consciousness and Inner Religious Experience <i>Dr. M. H. Qazi</i> | 37 |
| Reconciling Modernity, Postmodernism, and Tradition: A Critique of Enlightenment Through an Islamic Lens <i>Muhammad Subeyl Umar</i> | 73 |
| Communicating the Incommunicable: The Nature and Authenticity of Religious Experience in Islamic Sufi Tradition <i>Dr. Tabir Hameed Tanoli</i> | 107 |

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. M. H. Qazi

Ex-Vice Chancellor
University of Lahore,
Lahore

Mohammed Maruf

Ex-Principal
Government Islamia College,
Civil Lines,
Lahore

Muhammad Suheyl Umar

Ex-Director
Iqbal Academy Pakistan
Lahore

Dr. Tahir Hameed Tanoli

Assistant Director (Acads.)
Iqbal Academy Pakistan
Lahore

William C. Chittick

Writer, Philosopher,
Translator
Professor
Department of Asian and
Asian American Studies at
Stony Brook University,
USA

REVELATION, DIVINE NAMES, AND THE
UNIVERSALITY OF PROPHETIC
GUIDANCE IN IBN AL-‘ARABI’S
THOUGHT

Ibn ‘Arabi
William C. Chittick

ABSTRACT

This article explores Ibn al-‘Arabi’s unique approach to understanding divine reality, prophecy, and religious universality, diverging from traditional theological methodologies. Ibn al-‘Arabi emphasizes that all created things are interconnected through their divine origins, with the universe reflecting God’s names. Human beings, uniquely created in God’s image, are endowed with the capacity to embody all of God’s names, but only through the guidance of prophets. Ibn al-‘Arabi critiques the limits of human reason and emphasizes the necessity of revelation, which balances God’s incomparability and similarity, leading to true spiritual knowledge. The article also examines Ibn al-‘Arabi’s views on the universality of revealed religions, arguing that the essential message of all prophets is the same, with particularities defining each tradition. He rejects the notion that Islam abrogates previous religions, instead likening Islam to the sun, which overshadows but does not nullify the stars (other religions). The article delves into a mythic narrative from Ibn al-‘Arabi’s *Futuh al-Makkiyah*, where the divine names, personified as agents of creation, come together to manifest the cosmos. This story illustrates the ontological necessity of revelation and how it establishes order and balance in the universe. Lastly, the article highlights Ibn al-‘Arabi’s appreciation for rational thinkers who follow the prophetic path, distinguishing them from those who engage in philosophical debates without true spiritual insight. Ibn al-‘Arabi’s philosophical and mystical insights offer a profound understanding of divine wisdom, the role of prophets, and the interconnectedness of all creation.

Ibn al-‘Arabi was thoroughly versed in the dry ratiocination of the contemporary doctors of theology, but he avoided their methodological approach. He was more likely to rely on images, symbols, analogies, and allegories derived primarily from “openings” and “tastings” and deeply rooted in the Koran and the sayings of Muhammad. He constantly returns to one basic theme: All things are intimately interrelated through their common roots in the Divine Reality. The universe in its indefinite multiplicity is nothing but the outward manifestation of God’s names, which are the faces that God turns toward creation. The revealed names provide keys that unlock the door to the invisible world. Everywhere we look we see the properties and traces of the names within the created things.

Unique among creatures, human beings display the properties of every name of God, because they alone were created in God’s form and given dominion over all creatures, each of which manifests only some of God’s names. But people cannot actualize the divine names unless they follow the guidance revealed through the prophets. Reason, even in the best of circumstances, provides insufficient knowledge of God. It allows people to understand that God is incomparable and forever unknowable, but it can never tell them anything about His similarity and self-disclosure in the macrocosm and microcosm. In contrast, revelation provides a balanced knowledge of God, for it combines the declaration of incomparability that is grasped by reason with the similarity that answers to imagination. Only when reason works harmoniously with imagination on the basis of the prophetic message can people reach perfection. Those who are able to combine reason and imagination in themselves and God—the People of Unveiling. “The common people stand in the station of declaring similarity proper balance are those who have truly witnessed the lifting of the veils between, the People of Unveiling declare both similarity and incomparability, and the rational thinkers declare incomparability alone. Hence, God combined the two sides in His elect” (II 116. 7).

The Koran pictures revelation as a message sent by God to human beings by means of a “prophet” (*nabi*) or “messenger” (*rasa/*). Revelation is a universal phenomenon, since *Every nation has its messenger* (10:47). It has two complementary dimensions that correspond to the two Shahadahs, the Islamic testimonies of faith:

“There is no god but God” and “Muhammad is the messenger of God.”

All prophets are given a message of *taw/lid*, which declares that experienced reality comes from the One and returns to the One: *And We never sent a messenger before thee save that We revealed to him, saying, “There is no god but I, so serve Me” (21:25)*. Muslims must have faith in every messenger of God, because each confirms the truth (*tasdiq*) of the messages that went before. *And when Jesus son of Mary said, “Children of Israel, I am indeed God’s messenger to you, confirming the Torah that has gone before me” (61:6)*.

Although the basic message of all the messengers is the same, each messenger also brings unique teachings that define the particularities of his message. Thus, if “Muhammad is the messenger of God,” Jesus, for his part, is *the messenger of God and His word that He committed to Mary, and a spirit from Him (4:171)*. Other divine messengers also have specific functions and teachings. *We have sent no messenger save with the tongue of his people (14:4)*.

The general function of the prophets is to guide people to felicity. God sent them to remind people that they were created to be His servants and vicegerents and to warn them of the consequences of shirking their responsibilities. The Koran makes clear that ignoring guidance will lead to wretchedness and prevent felicity. Quoting as it were from the primordial revelation given to human beings, the Koran says that when God sent Adam down from paradise, He said to him, *When there comes to you from Me guidance, then whosoever follows My guidance shall not go astray, neither shall he be wretched; but whosoever turns away from My remembrance, his life shall be a life of narrowness, and on the day of resurrection, We shall raise him blind (20:123-24)*.

In short, the Koran declares that the essential message of every prophet is the same, while the details of each message are unique. Hence the universality of religious truth is an article of Islamic faith. It is true that many Muslims believe that the universality of guidance pertains only to pre-Koranic times, but others disagree; there is no “orthodox” interpretation *here* that Muslims must accept.

One would expect to find among Sufis a clear exposition of the universality of revealed truth without the reservations expressed by most other Muslims. But the Sufis had to take into account the beliefs of their contemporaries. Even Ibn al-‘Arabi, who was not

afraid to attack the limitations of the juridical and theological mentalities, often defends a literal reading of the Koranic criticisms of the People of the Book, without suggesting that by “Christians” or “Jews” the Koran means anyone other than the contemporary practitioners of those religions.

The Koran never criticizes the prophetic messages as such, but it often condemns misunderstandings or distortions by those who follow the prophets. The Shaykh sometimes criticizes specific distortions or misunderstandings in the Koranic vein, but he does not draw the conclusion that many Muslims have drawn—that the coming of Islam abrogated (*naskh*) previous revealed religions. Rather, he says, Islam is like the sun and other religions like the stars. Just as the stars remain when the sun rises, so also the other religions remain valid when Islam appears. One can add a point that perhaps Ibn al-‘Arabi would also accept: What appears as a sun from one point of view may be seen as a star from another point of view. Concerning abrogation, the Shaykh writes,

All the revealed religions [*shara’i*] are lights. Among these religions, the revealed religion of Muhammad is like the light of the sun among the lights of the stars. When the sun appears, the lights of the stars are hidden, and their lights are included in the light of the sun. Their being hidden is like the abrogation of the other revealed religions that takes place through Muhammad’s revealed religion. Nevertheless, they do in fact exist, just as the existence of the light of the stars is actualized. This explains why we have been required in our all-inclusive religion to have faith in the truth of all the messengers and all the revealed religions. They are not rendered null [*hawl*] by abrogation—that is the opinion of the ignorant. (III 153. 12)

If the Shaykh’s pronouncements on other religions sometimes fail to recognize their validity in his own time, one reason may be that, like most other Muslims living in the western Islamic lands, he had little real contact with the Christians or Jews in his environment, not to speak of followers of religions farther afield. He had probably never met a saintly representative of either of these traditions, and he almost certainly had never read anything about these two religions except what was written in Islamic sources. Hence there is no reason that he should have accepted the validity of these religions except *in principle*. But this is an important qualification. To maintain the particular excellence of the Koran and the superiority of Muhammad over all other prophets is not to deny the universal validity of revelation nor the necessity of revelation’s appearing in particularized expressions. Since all revealed religions are true in

principle, the particular circumstances that lead one to suspect that they have been corrupted may change. This is what happened when Sufis like Dara Shikoh in India met Hindu saints. ’

The Divine Names and the Origins of Religion

In Chapter 66 of the *Futuhidit*, the Shaykh provides a highly original account of God’s creating the universe and sending the prophets. He focuses on the divine roots of revelation, which is to say that he sets out to explain what it is in *wujud* that results in the appearance of prophets in the cosmos. Instead of answering in the usual fashion that prophecy is rooted in mercy and guidance, he looks deeper into the Divine Reality. In the process he shows that man-made law—and here he uses the Arabic word *ndmus*, which is derived from Greek *nomos*—manifests the same divine motivations that establish revealed religions.

Ibn al-‘Arabi frequently discusses divine roots by explaining the implications of the divine names in the rational mode of the theologians. But in Chapter 66, he provides an imaginal, even mythic, account of how the divine names exercise their effects in the world. In the process, he personifies the names in a manner that is probably unprecedented in Islamic sources, not least because, if the names of the names were changed, we would have a polytheistic myth. He is completely aware of what he is doing, of course, and he warns the reader at the beginning not to imagine “manyness or an ontological gathering.” He gives the narrative an imaginal slant so that people will be able to grasp in concrete terms the principles that function within the divine things (*ilahiyat*). Otherwise, they would be forced to fall back on the abstract theorizing of the theologians.

What the Shaykh explains in his account should by now be more or less familiar. He states, in brief, that the immutable entities are known by God, but in order to become existent entities, they need both God’s desire to give them existence and His power to do so. Thus he is explaining in mythic fashion the hierarchy of attributes that are found in *wujud*. Creation of the universe depends upon God’s power; His power comes into play on the basis of His desire; His desire depends upon His knowledge of the possible things; and His knowledge depends upon His *wujud*, which the Shaykh sometimes identifies with the divine life. Thus we have the four basic names that are embraced by the name God: Living, Knowing, Desiring, and Powerful. Their order is not haphazard, but depends upon the intrinsic characteristics of *wujud*.

The mythic form of the Shaykh's account suggests one of several resources that Muslims have for bridging the gaps between Semitic monotheism and various forms of polytheism. Are the gods properly to be understood as independent beings, or as personifications of what Muslims know as "divine names"? Certainly Ibn al-'Arabi would choose the latter alternative—there can be no "ontological gathering." He would maintain that any attempt to consider the gods as independent entities represents a human opinion or a distortion of an original prophetic message.

After explaining how the divine names meet together and decide among themselves to bring the cosmos into existence, the Shaykh imagines that God gives them free rein to exercise their effects. The result verges on chaos, for the entities that manifest the effects of the Exalter disagree with those who manifest the Abaser, those who display the Forgiver argue with those who reflect the Avenger, and those who represent the Withholder dispute with those who act on behalf of the Bestower. Hence the creatures have recourse to the names, asking them to establish norms of order. The names in turn refer back to the divine Essence, who appoints the name Lord (*rabb*) to give order to their conflicting properties.

Elsewhere Ibn al-'Arabi explains that the primary divine attribute designated by the name Lord is *islah*, which means to make whole, wholesome, and sound; to put in order; to ameliorate; to remedy; to conciliate and to establish peace. Hence the cosmos has need of the Lord so that it may reach its *maslaha* (a word from the same root), which can be translated as "(means to) wholesomeness." "The cosmos needs the Lord more than any other name, because it is a name for every means to wholesomeness" (II 442. 20). The opposite of *islah* is *if sad*, to corrupt. The fact that the basic attribute designated by Lord is "making wholesome" explains why the angels objected to God's plan to create Adam as vicegerent in the earth and why they said to Him, *What, wilt Thou place therein one who will work corruption and shed blood?* (2:30).

The angels glorify only the praise of their Lord. The Lord is He who makes wholesome. Making wholesome applies only to corruption. God never mentioned that the angels glorify any name other than Lord. . . . Hence the angels knew that it was the name Lord that turned its attentiveness toward the cosmos, because that which dominates over the earth is the authority of caprice, and it is caprice that gives rise to the cor-

ruption of which the angels . . . spoke.' The angels knew what would happen because of their knowledge of the realities. And it did indeed happen as they had said. Their mistake was only that they hurried to pronounce these words without knowing God's wisdom in His act. (II 251. 24)

In the chapter of the *Futubhat* devoted to the name Lord, the Shaykh explains in more detail how God in respect of being the Lord undertakes to establish the wholesomeness and best interest of the things in the cosmos. He looks at the fundamental purpose of each thing's existence, and He gives it the exact situation appropriate for its own nature in order to assure its own specific felicity. In each case, the thing exists for the purpose of praising and glorifying God, or to make manifest the divine names and attributes in the most fitting and appropriate way.

If you look at the possible things in respect of their own essences, there is nothing that would determine the preferability of one of the two sides [that is, existence or nonexistence] over the other. The Lord looks upon the preferability of their existence and nonexistence, their coming into existence at an earlier time or a later time, their place and position, and then He establishes relationships between them and their times, their places, and their situations. He undertakes what is most wholesome for each possible thing and makes it appear within that. For He only makes it appear in order to glorify Him and to know Him with the knowledge that is appropriate for it in keeping with what its capacity can accept. There is nothing more.' This is why you will see some possible things coming at an earlier time than other possible things and some coming later, some being high and some being low. They undergo variations in diverse states and levels, such as rulership and dismissal, craftsmanship and trade, movement and rest, joining and separation, and other such things. Thus the possible things undergo change and fluctuation in the midst of other possible things, not in anything else. (IV 199. 15)

Having discussed in his myth of origins how God chose the name Lord to put the cosmos in order, the Shaykh turns to the human situation in order to explain the ontological necessity of revelation, which brings about the wholesomeness of human beings and allows them to choose their own best interest. The idea of establishing wholesomeness keeps on recurring throughout the passage, reminding us that the basic point of the narrative is to illustrate how God keeps balance in creation in function of the name Lord, whether this takes place on the level of creation as a whole or on the level of the human situation within the cosmos. The Shaykh points out that wise thinkers, left to their own devices, are able to grasp the divine origin of the cosmos. Here his narrative is slightly reminiscent of *Hayy ibn Yagzan*, the famous philosophical tale written by his

contemporary Andalusian Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185).⁴ In the manner of many Muslim philosophers, Ibn Tufayl thought that the rational perception of philosophers could achieve the same level of knowledge as the revelation given to the prophets. Ibn al-‘Arabi disagrees vehemently, as he makes clear throughout his works. In this particular passage, he says that true philosophers will acknowledge the superiority of the prophets and follow them, for they will recognize that the rational knowledge achieved by philosophy pertains only to God’s incomparability. Knowledge of His similarity and of how this functions to bring about salvation and nearness to God is inaccessible to the unaided human reason. However, a sound rational faculty will recognize the truth of the prophetic message and accept it. Toward the end of the passage, Ibn al-‘Arabi turns to criticizing the philosophers and theologians of his own time.

Interestingly, at the very end of the chapter, the Shaykh excludes from criticism the great philosopher Averroes (d. 1198). As mentioned in the introduction, Ibn al-‘Arabi had met Averroes when he was perhaps fifteen, at which time Averroes would have been fifty-five; the present passage makes clear that Ibn al-‘Arabi had a good opinion of him. In the West, Averroes was more influential than any other Muslim thinker except perhaps Avicenna. But the Shaykh portrays Averroes not as a skeptic who questioned the validity of revealed religion—as he has sometimes been described in Western sources—but rather as a great master of rational discourse who defended revelation. Already in the Shaykh’s time Averroes was remembered more as a doctor of the Shariah than as a philosopher. In any case his philosophical works remained largely unstudied in the civilization that nurtured him, while Ibn al-‘Arabi’s teachings spread to every corner of the Islamic world.

In what follows, I translate Shariah (*shari’a*) as “revealed religion.” This term has long since entered the English language to mean the revealed law of Islam, or the individual, social, and ritual regulations of the religion. In this sense, the term is often contrasted with *lariga*, or the spiritual path, the body of teachings that is concerned with transformation of the soul and is codified in many forms of Sufism. Literally, the word *Shariah* means “road (leading to water),” and Ibn al-‘Arabi frequently employs it in a broad sense to refer to all the teachings brought by a divine messenger, not simply the social and ritual regulations. He also employs it in the plural to refer to the religions brought by the prophets, or the divinely instituted paths for reaching the water of life. This then is the chapter:

Chapter 66: On the True Knowledge of the Mystery of Revealed Religion, Outwardly and Inwardly, and On the Divine Name That Brought It into Existence

God says, *Had there been in the earth angels walking at peace, We would have sent down upon them out of heaven an angel as messenger* [17:95]. He also says, *We never chastise, until We send forth a messenger* [17:15].

Know that *divine names* is an expression of a state given by the realities. So pay attention to what you will hear, and do not imagine manyness or an ontological gathering! What we will discuss in this chapter is only a hierarchy of intelligible realities that are many in respect of relationships, but not in respect of entified *wujud*, for the Essence of the Real is one in respect of being the Essence.

We know in respect of our *wujud*, our poverty, and our possibility, that there must be a Preponderator by whom we are supported. We also know that our *wujud* must demand from that Support diverse relationships. The Lawgiver alludes to these relationships as the “most beautiful names.” In respect of being the Speaker He named Himself by them at the level of the necessity of His divine *wujud*, which cannot be shared by anyone, for He is One God, and there is no other God.

After this introduction concerning the origin of this matter and the production of effects and the giving of preponderance within the possible cosmos, I say:

The names gathered together in the presence of the Named. They gazed upon their own realities and meanings and sought the manifestation of their own properties in order that their entities might become distinct through their effects. For Creator—who is Ordainer—Knower, Governor, Differentiator, Originator, Form-giver, Provider, Life-giver, Slayer, Inheritor, Grateful, and all the rest of the divine names gazed upon their own essences. But they found nothing created, governed, differentiated, or nourished. They said, “What can be done so that the entities within which our own properties become manifest may become manifest that thereby our authority may become manifest?”

Hence the divine names—which are demanded by some of the realities of the cosmos after the manifestation of the entity of the cosmos—had recourse to the name Originator. They said to him, “Perhaps you can give existence to these entities so that our properties may become manifest and our authority established, for the presence within which we now dwell does not receive our effects.”

Originator said, “That goes back to the name Powerful, for I am under his scope.”

The root of this is as follows: In their state of nonexistence the possible things asked the divine names—an asking through their state of abasement and poverty—as follows: “Nonexistence has blinded us, so we are not able to perceive one another or to know what the Real requires you to do with us. If you were to make manifest our entities and clothe them in the robe of *wujud*, you would be giving us blessings and we would undertake the appropriate veneration and reverence. Moreover, your ruling authority becomes genuine through our becoming manifest in actuality. Today you possess ruling authority over us only potentially and virtually. What we seek from you is what you should be seeking to an even greater degree from us.”

The names replied, “What the possible things have said is true!” So they fell to seeking the same thing.

When the names had recourse to the name Powerful, he said, “I am under the scope of the name Desiring, so I cannot bring a single one of your entities into existence without his specification. The possible thing itself does not give me the ability to do that. First the command of Commander must come from his Lord. When he commands the thing to enter into engendered existence, saying to it ‘Be!’ then he gives me the ability from himself, and I undertake to bring it into existence and immediately give it engendered existence. So have recourse to the name Desiring. Perhaps he will give preponderance to and specify the side of *wujud* over the side of nonexistence. Then I, Commander, and Speaker will join together and give you existence.”

So the names had recourse to the name Desiring. They said to him, “We asked the name Powerful to bring our entities into existence, but he deferred the command to you. What do you decree?” Desiring said, “Powerful spoke the truth! But I have no news about the property of the name Knowing in respect to you. Does he or does he not have precedent knowledge that you will be given existence, so that we can specify it for you? I am under the scope of the name Knowing. Go to him and mention your situation to him.”

So they went to the name Knowing and mentioned what the name Desiring had said. Knowing said, “Desiring spoke the truth! And I have precedent knowledge that you will be given existence.

But courtesy must be observed. For we have a presence that watches over us, and that is the name God. So we must make ourselves present before Him, for he is the Presence of All-comprehensiveness. ”

All the names gathered together in the presence of God. He said, “What is on your mind?” They told him the story. He said, “I am the name that comprehends your realities and I denote the Named, who is an All-holy Essence described by perfection and incomparability. Stay here while I enter in upon the Object of my denotation. ” So he entered in upon the Object of his denotation and told It what the possible things had said and what the names were discussing. The Essence said, “Go out, and tell each one of the names to become connected to what its reality requires among the possible things. . . . ”

So the name God went out, next to him the name Speaker, acting as his spokesman to the possible things and to the names. He mentioned to them what the Named had said. Knowing, Desiring, Speaking, and Powerful established their connections, and the first possible thing became outwardly manifest through the specification of Desiring and the property of Knowing.

Once the entities and the effects had become manifest in the engendered universe, some of them exercised authority and dominated over others in keeping with the names by which they were supported. This led to quarrel and dispute. Then the possible things said, “We fear lest our order be corrupted and we return to the nonexistence where we used to dwell. ” So they called upon the names through that which was cast to them by the names Knowing and Governing. They said, “O names! If your properties were to follow a known scale, a designated boundary, and a leader to which you all go back, that would preserve our *wujud* for us as well as your effectivity within us for you. That would be more wholesome for both us and you. So have recourse to God! Perhaps He will present to you someone who will set a boundary at which you can stop. If not, we will be destroyed, and you will no longer have any effects!”

The names replied, “This is the right means of wholesomeness and the best opinion!” Hence they did what they were asked. They said, “The name Governor will communicate your situation. ” They informed Governor, and he said, “I will do so. ”

The name Governor entered, and then he emerged with the Real’s command to the name “Lord. ” He said to him, “Do what

wholesomeness demands so that the entities of the possible things may subsist. ” The name Lord took two viziers to help him in what he was commanded to do. One vizier was the name Governor, and the other was the name Differentiator. God says, *He governs the affair, He differentiates the signs; haply you will have certitude concerning the encounter with your Lord* [13:2], who is the “leader. ” So consider how exact is the Word of God, since it employs expressions that fit the state that is demanded by the actual situation!

The name Lord set down for them limits and established for them customs by which the wholesomeness of the kingdom might be established, and *to test them, which one of them is more beautiful in works* [11:7]. God made these limits and customs of two kinds: One kind is called “wise regulation. ” He cast it into the original dispositions of the souls of the great human beings. Hence they set down limits and established laws through a power that they found in their own souls. They did so in every city, place, and clime, in accordance with what was demanded by the constitution and nature of those areas, since they knew what wisdom demanded. Through that they preserved the possessions, lives, families, relatives, and kinship relationships of the people. They named it the “laws, ” a word that means “cause of good, ” since *ndmus* in technical usage is the one through whom good comes, while *jdsus* is employed for evil.

So these were the wise laws established by the rational thinkers as the result of an inspiration from God of which they were unaware for the sake of the wholesomeness, order, and arrangement of everyone in the world where there was no divinely revealed religion. The founders of these laws did not know that these affairs would bring about nearness to God, nor that they would yield a Garden or a Fire, nor [did they know] anything connected with the next world. They did not know that there is a next world and a sensory resurrection within natural bodies after death, or an abode within which there is food, drink, clothing, marriage, and joy, and another abode within which there is chastisement and pain. For the existence of all this is possible, its nonexistence is possible, and they had no proof of the preponderance of one of the possibilities over the other.

And monasticism they invented [57:27]. So their laws and their means to wholesomeness were built upon bringing about the subsistence of wholesomeness in this abode. Then individually, in

their own souls, they came to know the divine sciences, such as *tawhid*, the glorification and veneration worthy of God's majesty, the attributes of incomparability, the lack of any likeness or similarity. Those who knew and understood this called it to the attention of those who did not. They urged people to accept the correct view. At the same time they let the people know that rational faculties are limited in respect of their reflective powers and cannot pass beyond certain bounds; that God effuses His knowledge into the hearts of certain of His servants, thereby teaching them *a knowledge from Him* [18:65], and that this did not seem unlikely in their eyes; and that God has deposited within the celestial world certain commands concerning which some knowledge can be gained by drawing conclusions from the existence of their effects in this elemental world. This is indicated by God's words, *He revealed to each heaven its command* [41:12].

They investigated the realities of their own souls. They saw that when the bodily form dies, nothing is lacking from any of its members. Hence they came to know that the body perceives and moves by means of something added to it. They investigated this added thing and they recognized their own souls. Then they saw that the soul gains knowledge after having been ignorant, so they understood that even though the soul is nobler than the body, it is accompanied by poverty and need. They ascended through rational consideration from one thing to another. Each time they reached something, they saw that it was in need of something else. Finally rational consideration took them to something that was in need of nothing, which had no likeness, which was similar to nothing, and to which nothing was similar. They stopped there and said: This is the First. It must be One in itself in respect of itself, and its Firstness and Unity must not accept a second, since there is nothing like it and nothing comparable to it. So they declared the unity of its *wujud*. When they saw that the possible things in themselves had no reason to come into existence, they knew that this One had given them *wujud*. Hence the possible things have need of the One and venerate it by negating from it everything by which their own essences are described. This is the furthest limit of the rational faculty.

While these rational thinkers were busy with their own affairs, there arose among them a person of their own kind whom they looked upon as having no position in knowledge. They did not believe that he was the possessor of sound reflection or correct rational consideration. He said to them, "I am God's messenger to you. "

They said, “Let us be fair. Look at his claim itself. Does he claim what is possible, or what is impossible? Logical proofs have established for us that God possesses a divine effusion that He may give to whomsoever He wills, just as He has effused it upon the spirits of these celestial spheres and the intellects. All things share in possibility, so no possible thing is more worthy than others in respect of possibility. Hence we must consider the truthfulness or falsity of this claimant. We should not proceed to make either of these judgments without a proof, for that would be discourtesy, given our knowledge.”

They said, “Do you have a proof for the truthfulness of what you claim?” So he brought them proofs and they considered his manner of proving and his proofs. They considered that this person had no reports that reflective thoughts could have reached by drawing conclusions, nor was any such thing known from him. So they came to know that He who *revealed to each heaven its command* [41:12] had revealed to each heaven the existence of this person and of what he brought. Hence they hurried to declare their faith in him and acknowledge his truthfulness. They came to know that God had given him knowledge of the sciences which He had deposited in the celestial world and which could not be reached by their reflective powers, and that He had given him a knowledge of Himself which they did not have.

They saw that this person descended in his knowledge of God to the level of the weak-minded common people, bestowing upon them what would make their rational faculties wholesome; and also to people of great rational faculty and sound consideration, giving them also that which would make their rational faculties wholesome. Hence they knew that this man possessed, through the divine effusion, something from beyond the stage of reason and that God had given him a knowledge of that effusion and a power over it that He had not given to them. They acknowledged his superiority over themselves, had faith in him, declared his truthfulness, and followed him. So he designated for them the acts that bring about nearness to God. He taught them about possible things created by God and hidden from them and about what would come to be among them from Him in the future. He told them about the resurrection, the gathering, the mustering, the Garden, and the Fire.

In this way messengers were sent according to the diversity of the times and the variety of the situations. Each of them confirmed the truth of the others. None of them differed whatsoever in the

roots by which they were supported and of which they spoke, even if rulings differed. Revealed religions were sent down, and rulings came. The governing property belonged to the time and the situation, just as God has declared: *To every one of you We have appointed a right way and a revealed law [5:48]*. So the roots coincided, without disagreeing on anything.

The people distinguished between the prophetic regulations promulgated by God as revealed religion and the wise regulations established by the sages in accordance with their rational consideration. They understood that the [prophetic] command was more complete and that it came from God, without doubt. They accepted what they were told about the unseen things and had faith in the messengers. None of them resisted except him who did not counsel his own soul concerning his knowledge, but followed his caprice and sought leadership over his fellows. He was ignorant of his own soul and its measure and he was ignorant of his Lord.

Hence the root and the cause of the establishment of revealed religions in the cosmos was the search for the wholesomeness of the cosmos and for the knowledge of God of which reason is ignorant, because it does not receive it through its own reflection. In other words, reason cannot discover this knowledge independently in respect of its own consideration. Hence the revealed books came down with this knowledge, and the tongues of the messengers and prophets spoke about it. Then the rational thinkers came to know that there were certain things concerning the knowledge of God in which they were deficient and which the messengers completed for them.

I do not mean by “rational thinkers” those who nowadays speak about philosophy. I mean only those who followed the path of the prophets. In other words, they busied themselves with their own souls and with ascetic discipline, inner struggle, retreats, and preparing themselves for that which enters in upon the heart from the celestial world when the heart is purified, that which has been revealed to the high heavens. These are the ones I mean by “rational thinkers.” As for those who busy themselves with chatter, talk [*kalam*], and debate, employing their reflective powers to analyze the component words that have issued from the first philosophers while remaining oblivious of the affair undertaken by those great men, the likes of these—who are among us today—have no worth in the eyes of any person of intelligence.’ For they mock at religion, show contempt for God’s servants, and have reverence only for those among themselves who stand in the same place. Their hearts

have been overcome by love for this world and the search for position and leadership. So God has abased them, just as they have abased knowledge. He has scorned them and derided them, letting them have recourse to the doors of the ignorant—the kings and the rulers. So the kings and the rulers abase them.

The words of people like this are of no account. God has *sealed their hearts* [2:7] and *made them deaf and blinded their eyes* [47:23], despite the fact that among themselves they claim extravagantly to be the best of the world's inhabitants. Even the jurist—he who gives legal pronouncements in God's religion—is better than they in every respect, in spite of the paucity of his abstinence. After all, people who have faith, even though they acquire it only through following the authority of others, are better than those who consider themselves "rational thinkers." God forbid that any intelligent person have the attributes of such as these!

We have met few people who are true rational thinkers. These are they who have the greatest knowledge of God's messengers. They are among those who follow most carefully the examples [*sunan*] of the Messenger and are most concerned with preserving his examples. They know the veneration demanded by God's majesty, and they are aware of the knowledge of Himself that God singles out for His servants—the prophets and the friends of God who follow them—in respect of a special divine effusion. This effusion is out-side the ordinary learning that is acquired through study and effort and cannot be reached by reason in respect of its own reflective power.

I have listened to the words of one of the great ones among them [i. e., Averroes]. He had seen the knowledge that God had opened up to me without rational consideration or reading, but through a retreat in which I had been alone with God, even though I had not been seeking. He said, "Praise belongs to God, that I should have lived in a time in which I saw *one whom God has given mercy from Him, and has taught him knowledge proceeding from Him* [18:65]. " *God singles out for his mercy whom He will, and God is of bounty abounding* [2:105]. (I 322-25)

BALANCING BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS AND
MORAL IMPERATIVES:
A PATH TOWARDS HUMAN PROGRESS
AND SURVIVAL

Dr. Mohammed Maruf

ABSTRACT

This article delves into the concept of basic human rights, emphasizing their foundation in both biological and intellectual needs. It argues that fundamental human rights stem from essential needs like food, water, and rest, while also highlighting the significance of higher intellectual capabilities that distinguish humans from animals. The article explores the importance of communication, free thought, and expression, essential for human development and societal progress, while acknowledging the challenges posed by political and social systems that restrict these freedoms. Through historical examples and philosophical insights, it critiques the suppression of free thinkers, drawing on the works of Iqbal and other thinkers to assert the necessity of morality in exercising these rights. The article also discusses the deterioration of moral and spiritual values in modern society, advocating for a balanced approach that integrates science, religion, and morality. Ultimately, the author proposes that only a comprehensive system, like Islam, which combines moral, spiritual, and scientific development, can remedy the destructive tendencies of contemporary civilization and lead humanity towards a just, humane future.

According to Essentialism at first sight existence seems to impart being to things. But in actual fact existence is an existence of something. What a thing is matters even more than the fact of being.

I

It is not easy to write on the 'Basic Human Rights', but it is still more difficult to implement them in a human society. In my view, the basic rights of man stem, in the first place, from his basic needs, namely, his organic needs like hunger, thirst, respiratory needs, elimination requirements, the sex motive, the needs for activity and for rest. These are biological needs of man required for the maintenance of the very life of an individual. Even the cave man required food, water, company (temporary or more or less permanent), and even he had to take rest after activity. Even Allah says in *The Holy Quran* that He has created night for the rest and day for work and activity. ¹ These basic requirements must be met in order that the organism should survive for further work and activity; these are the fundamental preconditions for survival and continuance. Thus, every human individual must enjoy the basic rights to nourishment, to drinkable water, to company and an opportunity for fulfilling his sex needs, fresh unpolluted air to breathe in, and an ample opportunity for activity and rest so that he can develop his body and muscles and to save them from atrophy. Both activity and rest are among the basic needs of his life besides food and water.

In the modern times, Explosive Growth of Population has deprived most of the human beings even of these basic organic needs. As the growth of population is getting out of control in most of the countries, we are falling short, sometimes dangerously, of the basic needs like food, drinking water, medication, etc., as in those countries where there is obtaining the condition of famine, e. g., some African states like Ethiopia where 14 children are dying daily due to drought. This situation is leading to a sense of insecurity resulting in the high rate of crimes, suicides, and an alarming growing tendency to drug-addiction; and man is gravely falling a prey to some very deadly physical and mental maladies like cancer, AIDS, liver problems, tuberculosis, etc. as well as insanity, mental disorders, depression, and juvenile delinquency and many other

mental ailments. The modern man is mentally afflicted, and is suffering from anxiety, insomnia, and is highly distracted and discontented. It is a pity that the Holy Prophet (P. B. U. H.) strongly forbade charging money for surplus water,² but we, unfortunately, are purchasing water for ourselves and for our cattle, and this situation has divested man from Allah's blessings.

II

However, these are the physical needs which man shares with all the living organisms, especially the animal world. Man differs from animals in that he does not want to live but to live a better and fuller life. Allah has bestowed on man the capacity to have higher intellectual powers which enable him to have a language and ability to formulate concepts. This is the main distinguishing feature which determines the superiority of man to all other creatures, including angels. One can read the relevant verses of *The Quran* in the chapter "COW" ("Baqara") in which Allah, while announcing the advent of man, asks the angels to name things which they could not as they were not given knowledge thereof. Then He asked Adam to name them which he could on which Allah commanded the angels to prostrate to Adam.³ Accordingly to Allama Iqbal, and very rightly so, "The point of these verses is that man is endowed with the faculty of naming things, that is to say, forming concepts of them",⁴ and forming concepts of them is capturing them. As *The Quran* says, Adam's one folly has placed man in such an environment where he is called upon to exert his physical and mental faculties in order to comprehend his situation in this life and to master it for his own benefit: this is the lesson of the Conquest of Nature (*Taskhira Kainaat*)⁵ which is one of the immediate purposes of his life. All sciences and philosophies are the result of the exercise of the higher mental faculties of man. This need has dragged man out of his solitude and has compelled him to go into communication' with his fellowmen. Aristotle has rightly described man as a social animal also⁶: he wants to live in a community and has an urge to communicate with others. Karl Jaspers, a contemporary thinker, has emphasized that man has the "absolute will to communication"⁷. He rightly says, 'Having its source in the solitude of self-communication, the search for truth pushes toward communication with others'.⁸ Communication, in fact, has become a necessary condition for better and fuller life. It is through mutual communication that all arts, sciences, philosophies, and, in short, culture flourish. This necessitates man's right for Freedom of thought and expression, but for which no

intellectual pursuit and development would have been possible. But, unfortunately, ways and means have since times immemorial been devised to check and curb the freedom of thought and expression in the name of national and international safeguards. What was the reason behind the Court administering a cup of hemlock to the great Socrates;⁹ why was Bruno done away with;¹⁰ and why the Inquisition forced Galileo to recant his findings which were experimentally demonstrable?¹¹ Many a people have either lost their lives or have been forced to recant their positions as a result of search for truth or disseminating it. The question arises was it in the interest of the society or for any danger to the ruling junta? Today more sophisticated methods have been devised to stop the tongue or pen of the “free thinkers” who can jeopardize, not the skein of the social set-up (at least Socrates could not be convicted for that), but the very existence of the rulers who have been self-centred as is obvious from the various scams which are cropping up in almost all the countries of the world today. This proves that the ruling class is not so much concerned about the survival of the society as about the prolongation of their own governance, however wicked and incompetent they may have been. Rather the more incompetent they are, the more cruel and harsh on the free-thinkers. Only those speakers and writers are patronized who produce ‘eulogies’ for their masters and their colleagues, including their policies; no criticism regarding them is going to be tolerated by the people in command anywhere in the world.

Free thinking, in this connection, is to be distinguished from ‘mischievous and destructive’¹² thinking as may be sometimes thought; it, on the contrary, means constructive thinking which is within moral bounds. Some people oppose free thinking on the ground that it may lead to moral and social depravity and destruction; but this will be, properly speaking, demonic and abominable thinking, which is good neither for the society nor yet for mankind. Iqbal has beautifully said in *Derb-i-Kaleem*:

Free thought leads to destruction of those who have
No sense of right and healthy thinking;
If thinking is raw and immature, then it
Transforms man to a beast pure and simple. ¹³

Thus, free thinking has to be within the bounds of morality and social norms. Socrates rightly said that to be a good man one should be a good citizen, and he declined to violate the law of his land in order to save his life though he was provided a chance to flee from the prison and country twice. ¹⁴ He preferred to die rather

than violate the law of his land. Herein lies the true spirit of free thinking which I am advocating in this short paper. Any human activity, which is divorced from morality, is diabolical. As we will see in the sequel, all departments of human life must be bracketed by moral injunctions but for which it renders man devilish; he ceases to be a human being who is naturally a moral agent. Free thinking and expression only within moral jackets is capable of doing any good to the agent himself and to the mankind in general. What Iqbal has pointed out in the above couplet is that only those are capable of free thinking who are well-versed in morality and always think within the moral limits, else they are devoid of mature and healthy thinking and whatever they conceive will play havoc with humanity at large.

Many other rights follow as corollaries from the Right to Freedom of Thought and Expression: e. g., the Right to Education; the Right to a share in the Control of the Conditions of Life;¹⁵ the Right to a share in the Cultural Heritage of the Race,¹⁶ including Art and Literature; Right to adopt a Religion and to Worship accordingly. If a person enjoys the Right to Freedom of Thought and Expression, then he also enjoys a Right to the type of Education he chooses for himself, the Religion he has adopted, and a Right to Culture, Art and Literature which he selects for himself. He also has a Right to Love and to have a Home, which stem from the Right to live a Better and Fuller Life, which also includes his Right to Health which is of immense importance for better life and for effective continued activity.

III

Another Human Right, which stems neither from the basic Organic needs nor yet from the Right to Free Thought and Expression, is the Right to Protection but for which the very elongation of life of an individual shall be in jeopardy. The human situation is replete with amicable as well as inimical factors. The former are used by man for his own benefits, while the latter are to be averted lest the life of an organism should be cut short. Each individual faces a variety of dangers to which he makes either of the two types of responses: (i) the Escape Response and (ii) the Combat Response. Man has to save himself from inimical factors like harmful animals and poisonous shrubs, etc., to prolong his life; and, above all, he has to evade attacks from his fellowmen (maybe in his own society or from some extraneous group). This necessitated producing some type of tools and armaments toward off internal as well as external assaults. In short, man has a right to

safety and amicable law and order situation to be ensured by the society. The cave man used to look after his own protection and he used simple, crude tools, the modern man has to look to his government for ensuring protection in exchange for taxes he pays to the government. The modern society is highly complicated, and where it provides for the needs of an individual falling within its jurisdiction, it has to provide for the law and order situation also which includes his personal safety as well. This justifies defensive measures only which are required for the continuance of life of an individual and that of the social set-up in which he lives. But, unfortunately, the modern man has grown highly ambitious and greedy which has played the main havoc with the modern world. The world today has become “*Overpoliticized*.” The modern world is an excessively political world and modern man is a political creature. This political involvement did not do much harm so long as it worked in unison with religion and morality. The real problem arose when politics was divorced from religion and morality in the West. This separation between politics and morality was initiated by the bloodshed caused by the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings¹⁷ in Europe. The only remedy the West could find was divesting politics more or less completely of religion, which ultimately led to the disappearance of morality from the political scene. Commenting on this situation, Iqbal has very rightly said in *Baal-i-Jibriil*:

‘Be it glory of kingship or a show of democracy
If divorced from religion, politics results in barbarism.’¹⁸

The result of this irreligious approach to the world problems is that the so-called modern civilization has led humanity to depravity, moral degradation, inhumanity and barbarity, which we are experiencing in the world today. As Iqbal has acutely remarked in the *Derb-i-Kaleem*:

‘Rise of civilization is the fall of chastity
Nations are playing havoc in the world;
Every wolf is in search of an innocent kid!’¹⁹

With the destitution of religion and morality, the Nietzschean prediction is coming to be true - it is becoming a stark reality, because with all the values gone to the winds, man is today living for *POWER*²⁰, which is the only value left for him to pursue. Man’s greed and selfishness, his hunger for wealth and riches, his him to Capitalism has forced devise ways and means to destroy his fellowmen, but to save their property and wealth in order to grab them. This is obvious from his devising sophisticated weapons, first

atomic bomb, which could work vast destruction; then hydrogen bomb which is still more destructive, and now the chemical warfare and nerve gas the sole purpose whereof is to devastate human beings, while their belongings remain unhurt and intact: This is nothing but transgressing all bounds (*'musrifeen'*²¹) as *The Holy Quran* says. Thus, the Right for Self-defense has been worst outraged: what was prompting for protection of oneself has been transformed into the worst kind of offensive and aggression. The just- concluded 20th century has witnessed two World Wars beside many devastating battles, wars, etc., and the ensuing 21st century is not promising anything better with the World facing such critical problems as Palestine,²² Kashmir,²³ Chechnya,²⁴ and above all, the US. attacking Iraq with the help of Allies, and under the cover of the U. N.²⁵ I am afraid this international body may meet the same fate which the League of Nations²⁶ met in thirties under almost kindred situation. Kindly let me warn that when World Powers become greedy and selfish, all World organizations, as they become their handmaids, are bound to see their fall, and this, unfortunately, appears to be written on the wall, especially when the sobs and sighs of helpless women and children are involved in it. This situation is the result of separating politics from religion and morality which the West is very proud of having accomplished. It has divested man of all love, sympathy and fraternity in short, it has dried "the milk of human kindness", to use a popular Shakespearean phrase.²⁷ It has rendered man callous, stone-hearted, and nothing beyond a money-monger, the result being that it has become very easy for man to slaughter thousands of fellowmen without the slightest prick or compunction. But what is the remedy for all that, if any?

Only such a system can retrieve the above situation which is complete in all respects; which has a complete moral code to meet the modern requirements; which lays stress on the importance of knowledge, including perceptual and intuitive knowledge; and a comprehensive metaphysical system which can raise man above his mundane requirements into a realm which can satisfy his psychological and spiritual needs. . Such a complete system is afforded by Islam at least: *The Quran*, for one, emphasized the need for the study of nature and natural phenomena, laid stress on the importance of sense organs as the gifts of Allah,²⁸ which had been condemned by the predeceasing philosophical systems, including Greco-Roman philosophy in which the Western philosophy originated. It has given a complete moral code, the only which can save humanity from its so-called free-mixing of man and woman,

its abominable sex-freedom which is leading it nowhere but to brutality and animality.²⁹ Unfortunately, the West is legalizing all sorts of sexual aberrations and perversions in the name of freedom, and only a sane person who has a clear foresight can see where it is leading man to; only the business morality is left which is no more than a segment of total morality which man needs for the retention of humanity which makes man a human being in the real sense. Moreover, the over-rationalism and excessive empiricism are mainly responsible for the “death” of religion and morality in the West, and this has led to a one-sided and exclusive development of science, for the modern world is fond of using scientific method in each and every branch of knowledge, including philosophy which has been balancing the excesses of science uptil now. This one-sided approach has rendered the modern man merely a brute and a greedy “dog” who is out to devastate everybody who can rival him in the acquisition of wealth and property.

What is the main ailment of the present situation? What is the remedy for it? The remedy lies, as said before, in a system which can bring about an amalgamation of science and morality (including religion), of reason and intuition, of Power and Vision. As Iqbal has very acutely remarked: ‘Vision without power does bring moral elevation but cannot give a lasting culture. Power without vision tends to become destructive and inhuman. Both must combine for the spiritual expansion of humanity’.³⁰ Thus, both science and morality are one-sided and inadequate, each by itself. As said before, any system or approach which marks a separation between politics and religion, between science and morality, between reason and intuition, as the West has done quite proudly, is bound to lead to devastation, cruelty and inhumanity. Is there any system which can combine these supposed opposites? Yes, such a system, which can accomplish all these requirements, is Islam As Iqbal has pointed out, ‘Islam is a single unanalysable reality which is one or the other as your point of view varies’.³¹ ‘In Islam’, says he, ‘the spiritual and the temporal are not two distinct domains, In Islam it is the same reality which appears as Church looked at from one point of view and State from another.’³² What is important in Islam is that ‘All is holy ground. As the Prophet so beautifully puts it: “The whole of this earth is a mosque.”’ The state according to Islam is only an effort to realize the spiritual in a human organization.³³ Only such an organic and comprehensive point of view can save humanity from the present perilous situation which, if not properly and timely handled, shall lead to complete annihilation of humanity from the face of the earth. Iqbal regrets

that both East and West are one-sided, the former relying mainly on 'passion' while for the latter 'doth reason furnish all *Accoutrement* of life.³⁴ He concludes in the *Javed-Namah*:

. . . Love-led
Can reason claim the Lord and reason-lit
Love strikes firm roots. When integrated,
These two draw the pattern of a different world.
Let love and reason intermixed be
To chart a world all new. . . .³⁵

I do not agree with Bertrand Russell who writes, 'Intelligence, it might be said, has caused our troubles; but it is not unintelligence that will cure them. Only more and wiser intelligence can make a happier world'.³⁶ What is required is combining intuition with reason, for it is the former which can rectify the ills caused by excessive reason and science. As Iqbal has rightly diagnosed, God has bestowed on man two sources of knowledge, i. e., intuition and senses, and using only one of these sources is Satanic. Those who have read and understood Iqbal properly know that he has very strongly emphasized the need for a unison of these two sources of knowledge, which are by no means antagonistic as is generally thought, and without this amalgamation no remedy for the prevalent situation is possible. I beg to quote here a beautiful Persian verse from his *mathnavi Gulshane Ra'ze Jadeed*,

If he should close one eye, it would be sin:
I t is by seeing with both eyes that he can gain
The path. . . .³⁷

And that Path is the path of humanity, fraternity, justice and love, alongwith scientific advancements a combination which has been promised by Islam. It is a proper understanding of *The Quran* and its teachings which can render man a human being on the one hand, and his scientific achievements which can extol him as the Master of the World on the other. Unless we combine the two, the moral as well as scientific progress, the humanity is bound to head towards barbarity, animality and utter devastation. The globe will present the scene of frenzied dance of the ancient berbers. Thus, morality is an indispensable constituent for living a human life on this earth, and it is our misfortune that we are ignoring the important lessons of morality, the result being that we are fast loosing human kindness, love and justice which are the three pillars of true human life-- perhaps we have already lost them and we are facing nothing but imminent complete extermination of mankind.

Notes and References

- ¹ Yusuf Ali A, *The Holy Quran*, (Eng. Tr & Commentary). (Lahore Sh. Ashraf, 1936), 78:10-11
- ² *Sunan Abu Daud*, Eng. Tr. by Ahmad Hasan, (Lahore: Sh. Ashraf, 1984), Vol. II, p. 990
- ³ *The Holy Quran*, 11:30-34.
- ⁴ Iqbal M., *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (Lahore M. Ashraf, 1978), p. 13.
- ⁵ *The Holy Quran*, 16:12; 31:19.
- ⁶ Thilly F. & Wood L., *A History of Philosophy*, (Allahabad, Central Book Dept., 1958). p. 117.
- ⁷ Schilpp Paul, A., (ed.) *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, (N. Y., Tudor Co., 1957), p. 211.
- ⁸ Ibid
- ⁹ Ibid, Thilly F. & Wood L., Socrates ‘was condemned by his own people, on false charges of atheism and corrupting the youth, to drink the poison hemlock (399) B. C.’, p. 63
- ¹⁰ Ibid, Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) was imprisoned by the Inquisition in 1592 Refusing to renounce his convictions, he was burned at the stake (1600) in Rome after an imprisonment of seven years, p. 271.
- ¹¹ Ibid, Italian astronomer and physicist (1564-1641): ‘Galileo was forced to recant the Copernican theory in 1633, and remained under the surveillance of the Inquisition until his death in 1641’, p. 270.
- ¹² The so-called free-thinking which is meant for sabotaging the whole social system and to destroy order prevailing in the world.
- ¹³ (Lahore: Ahsan Bros., 1st pub. 1936 & 2nd impression 1959), p. 74.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., Thilly F., & Wood L.
- ¹⁵ Titus H. H., *Ethics For Today*, (N. Y., American Book Co., 1957), p. 218.
- ¹⁶ Ibid
- ¹⁷ Divine Right of Kings was very strongly advocated by Sir Robert Filmer, who was knighted by Charles 1. In his Patriarcha he pleaded ‘that originally God bestowed the kingly power upon Adam, from whom it descended to his heirs, and ultimately reached the various monarchs of modern times (Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, NY, Simon & Schuster, 1964) This led to a severe conflict between the church and the state till 1688 when supremacy of the Parliament was finally established, which finished the Divine Right of Kings This resulted in a complete bifurcation of the Church and the State, religion and politics
- ¹⁸ (Lahore Sh. Ghulamali, 1st pub. 1935 & 2nd impression 1976), p. 40.
- ¹⁹ Op. cit. *Derb-i-Kaleem*, p. 147.
- ²⁰ See Frederick Nietzsche’s Thus Spake Zarathustra & Beyond Good and Evil
- ²¹ See *The Holy Quran*, and the Transgressors will be Companions of the Fire! 40 43 The Quran abounds in such verses.
- ²² Palestine is a centuries old problem. As Iqbal has said, ‘In the light of the history of Israel, Palestine ceased to be a Jewish problem long before the entry of Caliph Umar into Jerusalem more than 1300 years ago. Their dispersion, as Professor Hockings has pointed out, was perfectly voluntary and their scriptures were for the most part written outside Palestine. Cf. S. A. Vahid, *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, (Lahore. M. Ashraf, 1964, Rep. 1973), p. 369f. Of late, Palestine was under the Turkish Ottoman Empire and in 1917 it was

taken over by the British who promised for home-rule by both the Jews and the Arabs. After the end of the World War II. Britain handed over the Palestine problem to the United Nations. The UN. General Assembly passed a resolution for the partition of Palestine on Nov. 29, 1947. Thus, the state of Israel was proclaimed on May 14, 1948. The Jews have forcefully occupied a big Arab territory which led to three wars. Like India, Israel has been going back on her commitments and the Arab-Israel enmity has become one of the global explosive issues.

- ²³ Since the 14th century, Kashmir had been under the rule of the Muslims. In 1819, Ranjit Singh conquered it from the Afghans, which in turn was conquered by the British in 1846. The British sold Kashmir to Gulab Singh for Rs. 75 lacs and the State came under the Dogra rule. However, the Kashmir problem assumed a new dimension with the creation of Pakistan. It resulted in the battle between India and Pakistan in 1948 when U. N. O. enforced cease-fire. It was decided that the problem would be solved according to the U. N. Resolutions on the 13th of August, 1948 & the 5th of January, 1949 passed by the Security Council which stressed a need for plebiscite in Kashmir. However, India went back on her promises, the result being two Wars between the two countries in 1965 and 1971, and the threat of still more wars is permanently hanging over the two countries. The World pressure is for talks between the two countries, but no decision can be final which does not have the approval of Kashmiris, who are the real architects of the fate of their homeland.
- ²⁴ Chechnians embraced Islam during the 16th century under the influence of the Muslims of Dagestan. They waged a long war against the Czarist Russia. Their struggle continued from 1634 to 1859. The Chechnians put up 50 years of valient resistance. It was in 1924 that Chechnya was made part of the Russian Empire. This, however, could not quell rebellions against the Communist Russia. They rather alleged to have helped the Germans during the World War II and as a result the entire population of the Republic was expelled to the Central Asia and Siberia during the rein of Stalin. As many as 10 million Muslims were killed during the banishing process. After Stalin died, they were repatriated to the mainland. In September 1991, the government Chechno-Ingushetia supported the hard-liners and in October, USSR Air-Force General Ozhokhar Dudayev became leader of Chechno-Ingushetia, he became the President of Chechnya and declared her independence. Since then Chechnya has been subjected to severest and cruelest attacks by Russia and a fierce civil war is raging in the region. Chechnya is striving for independence like some of the other Central Asian States which have broken loose from the Soviet Union and are now living as independent States, e. g., Ukraine, Uzbekistan, etc. Russian government is using utmost force to suppress them and keep them in their own fold. The Russian troops are perpetrating inhuman war crimes against the Chechnian Muslims.
- ²⁵ 1990 War in which U. S. attacked Iraq and forced U. N. to impose highly strict, rather cruel, sanctions as a result whereof thousands of Iraqi children have died for lack of food and proper nutrition.
- ²⁶ League of Nations was an international body predeceasing the U. N. O.
- ²⁷ Shakespeare's famous phrase used in his great play Hamlet.
- ²⁸ *The Holy Quran*, 32:9,
- ²⁹ Some of the Western countries have legalized gay marriages, homosexuality, and there is every possibility that other countries will follow suit.
- ³⁰ Op. Cit., *The Reconstruction*, p. 154

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid, p. 155.

³⁴ Ahmad S. Mahmud, *The Pilgrimage of Eternity*, an Eng. Tr. Of Iqbal's Javid-Nama, (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1961), p. 54.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *Why I Am Not A Christian*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1957), p. 178.

³⁷ Hussain M. Hadi, (Eng. Tr.) as *The New Rose Garden of Mystery and The Book Of Slaves*, (Lahore: M. Ashraf, 1969), p. 8.

THE INTERSECTION OF FAITH AND
SCIENCE: A UNIFIED THEORY OF
CONSCIOUSNESS AND INNER RELIGIOUS
EXPERIENCE

Dr. M. H. Qazi

ABSTRACT

This article explores the intersection of scientific inquiry and religious experience, seeking a unified theory of consciousness that transcends reductionist materialism. Drawing on Iqbal's metaphysical perspectives, particularly his concept of Directive Energy, it integrates insights from quantum physics, biology, psychology, and religious thought. The discussion emphasizes the non-material nature of the ego (self, consciousness) and its immortality, presenting consciousness as both a product of evolution and a transcendental force influencing the brain and bodily functions. Through a series of premises, the article critiques purely physical explanations of consciousness, suggesting that neural networks and recent scientific discoveries can complement metaphysical views. The role of consciousness is explored in both normal experience and higher states of mysticism, suggesting that religious experiences, like normal ones, can be understood within a holistic framework that includes both physical and non-physical realities. The work culminates in a proposed theory of "monistic spiritualism," which aims to reconcile scientific advancements with spiritual truths, ultimately seeking a more complete understanding of the self and its place in both serial time and divine dimensions.

In our search for a physical, psychological and religious basis for inner religious experience, we have already dealt with a diverse matrix of evidences, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. The reader will appreciate that none of these creeds taken separately can lead us to a fuller understanding of consciousness (ego, self). The case of religion is, however, different. It has its own arena of knowledge, which, in essence, has to be accepted as a matter of faith. Yet, for satisfying the concrete mind, as Iqbal desired, it seems legitimate, that we sift out the fragmented truth unveiled by recent scientific discoveries in support of the revealed knowledge. This is precisely the direction which Iqbal chose in the *Reconstruction* and handled it with admirable ease. For him normal experience and religious experience are subsets of experiential holism, though for the later we are still hunting for sensitive and reliable methods of verification. There are indications, however, that such methods do exist and presently are under intense investigation. Accordingly, this encourages us to find out if it can help us reach a meaningful conclusion with regard to a unified theory of consciousness (self, ego). This we will do now, first by stating a few premises followed by a synthesis that could give us a direction we are seeking with regard to inner religious experience. Accordingly, we begin with the first premise.

First Premise

For soul Iqbal uses the word ego. For him ego (Soul) is not a substance, as understood by theologians. Not being a physical object, it does not occupy space. Yet, it has a personality having peculiar relationship with body; on the one hand, it has the characteristics of dealing with it in serial time appreciative of its sensibilities, and on the other hand, it enjoys the luxury of elevating the body and landing it in Divine time and Divine space mediating its contact with the infinite. The freedom of the ego is its generic property emanating from the Directive Energy (*Amr-e-Rabbi*), and inherent *ab-initio* in all types of matter, living or non-living. Being a product of Directive Energy it is immortal. In this sense one may wonder, whether this concept has similarities with the homogeneous substance of Spinoza? Perhaps Yes, since the word substance used by spinoza implies something beyond the physical being (Durrant, 1933),¹ We may be skeptical about Iqbal's views but the significance of his views about ego can be best appreciated

if his metaphysical dimensions are fortified, to the possible extent, with the available scientific evidences. This takes us to the second premise.

Second Premise

We have already argued that ego, self and consciousness are nearly synonymous. We continue to maintain the same view. Presently, we find a fresh wave of literature on consciousness, which mostly converges on the structure and function of the brain. No wonder, then, that we are now passing through a period of consciousness paradigm. On this subject, the role of prefrontal integration modules (PIMs) located in the frontal lobe of the brain is also significant. The PIMs are the neuronal aggregations which receive all kinds of sensory stimuli, integrate them, and then send appropriate efferent messages for appropriate response (s) warranted by the situation. It has been suggested that in the brain with consciousness (as in humans) the thought products are generated only from the PIMs. How sensory information is represented within the PIMs, within the memory system, and between the two is diagrammatically shown in figure 1.

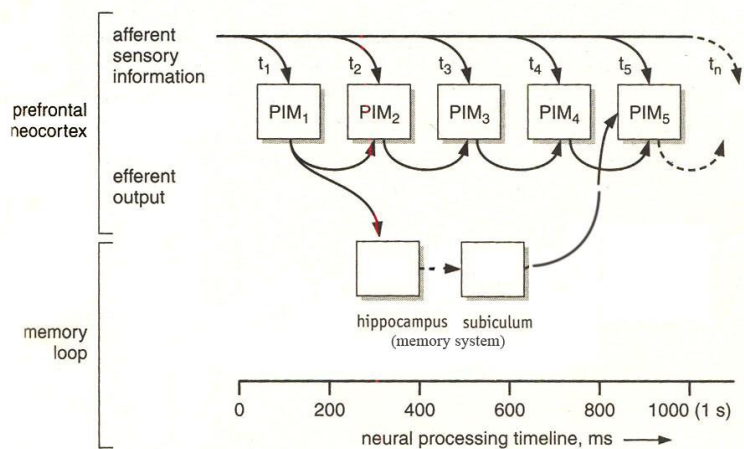


Figure 1: Sensory information through the prefrontal integration modules into the memory system and back again to the prefrontal region. The whole sensory process and its motor response take 200 mili seconds. (Adapted from Pico, M: *Consciousness in Four Dimensions*, 2001).

It may be noted that one cycle of sensory representation within a PIM takes about 200 mili seconds. This results in efferent output to the adjacent PIMs, the memory systems, and other target regions, affecting their activities at the same rate. On the basis of this and much more information about the input/output integration by PIMs; it has been assumed that this region is the site

of thought generation and thus of consciousness. This assumption gives a purely physical basis to consciousness (ego, self) to which it is difficult to agree in view of several other contradictory evidences. However, one can concede that this part of the brain, that is, PIMs can constitute an important link between mind (consciousness, ego, self) and activities of the brain in serial time in periods of sensibility. This takes us to the third Premise.

Third Premise

We derive our third premise from Eccles' work on the electrochemistry of nerve impulse and the transfer of message from the nerve endings to other cells along a gap that is mediated by chemical messengers. For this pioneer work, he was awarded Nobel Prize in 1963. However, being a believer in the revealed knowledge, and ardent supporter of Karl Popper's 'Three Worlds', he could not accept the pure physicalist view of monistic materialism. On the contrary, like Iqbal, he identified self (Consciousness, ego) as an independent entity exercising control over the brain. For this he emphatically argued in his book: 'How Self Controls the brain', published in 1992.² To be able to support his views, which converge upon a kind of "dualism", he proposed the theory of imaginary particles, the Psychons, which he thought were the product of the electrochemical processes, and have a strong nexus with non-material self (consciousness, ego). Indeed, using the medium of Psychons he came out with the concept of 'fields' (field theory) to satisfy the quantum probabilistic interpretation of the phenomenon involved in the control of the brain (material) by the self (non-material). If we compare Eccles' interpretations with that of Iqbal, his field theory continues to be a subject of extensive discussion (see for example, Watson and Williams, 2003).³ On the whole, however, we find considerable merit in Eccles' theory, since it makes an attempt to combine known physics with hitherto unfathomed physical processes supposedly operating below the observable quantum physical levels. This aspect has been neatly emphasized by Penrose (1990)⁴ who suggested that new laws of physics and mathematics have yet to be discovered to answer the difficult questions raised by the biophysics of consciousness. We can comfortably go along with several aspects of Eccles' theory provided that the modifications suggested in some recent studies are kept in view (Watson and Williams)⁵.

Fourth Premise

Our fourth premise is based on the incisive and brilliant critique of Eccles' theory of psychons and electro-chemical fields. (Watson and Williams, *op. cit.*). His views stand in juxtaposition to

the Putative Law of entropy. It is known that the entropy of the world is increasing. Also, it is agreed that better the organization of a system, the lower the entropy and vice versa. However, Watson and Williams (1993, 1997)^{6,7} presented their own theory which they called the “the Theory of Enformed Systems” (TES). This interesting piece of work postulated that ‘there exists fundamental conserved capacity to organize, denoted by the term ‘Enformy’. In this way disorganization is opposed where enformy organizes and sustains the four dimensional fields of a system (enformation). In our opinion, this interesting postulate enriches our understanding of consciousness by further strengthening the psychon field theory of Eccles and of Iqbal’s underpinning of ego (self, consciousness). This theory is likely to provide some justification even for the physicists (reductionists). There is little difference between the SELF of Watson and self of Eccles (Watson 1993).

The SELF of Watson is acronym for Singular, Enformed, Living Fields (SELF). Accordingly, the SELF means the linking of memory of conscious states which are experienced at various times during the life time (linkage with awareness). For our purpose there are three features of this theory, which have attracted our attention. First, the SELFs correspond to the organization inherent in our coherent systems, ranging from photons to humans and beyond, because they are continuous in space-time, but discontinuous in space. Second, the SELF organizes its own state at a given time integrating past and present in space-time. Third, the last named attribute accounts for telepathy, remote viewing, pre-cognition, psychokinesis, and to which may be added even revelation in the mystic state. In many ways this theory solves some of the caveats of Eccles’ theory of psychons, especially the binding problem. Suffice to point out here that according to this theory, unlike that of Eccle’s theory, brain is not necessary for memory content in organized states of higher consciousness. Furthermore, if anything, it enhances the acceptability of Eccles’ field theory when the same is replaced with TES of Watson. This takes us to the fifth premise.

Fifth Premise

This assumption relies on the work presented by Pratt (1977)⁸ in his book *Consciousness, Causality and Quantum Physics*. His most challenging concept lies in the statement that:

it is quite possible that while the quantum theory, and with it the indeterminacy principle are valid to a very high degree of approximation in certain domains, they both cease to have relevance in new domains

below that in which current theory is applicable (Bohm and Hiley, 1993).⁹

In our opinion, expressed elsewhere as well, this statement provides a meeting ground for physics and metaphysics and lends support to the existence of a 'Directive Force' as yet un-explored by the currently known principles of quantum physics, extending at best to Planck's constant. Additionally, the Physicists are aware of the collapse of waves function in a mysterious way –violating the Schrodinger equation. For this reason Bohm's tautological interpretation that wave function gives only ill-defined and unsatisfactory notion of wave function collapse seems valid. It appears that the alternate arguments about particles having a complete inner structure accompanied by a quantum wave field merits serious consideration; the particles are acted upon not only by electromagnetic field, but also by a subtle force-the quantum potential determined by quantum field. Thus, particles guided by quantum potential (perhaps equivalent of 'Directive Force') provide connection between quantum states. It has been claimed, that quantum potential recognized by standard quantum vacuum, underlying the material world has an astronomical energy (of the order of 10^{108} J/cm³). What else this energy could be if not a manifestation of the 'Directive force'? The elegance of quantum physics apart, we cannot escape the conclusion that observation is not necessary for proving the existence of quantum world when it lies beyond its measurable domain, that is below the recognized quantum world. Is it not true of the transcendental as well? Kant's critique of pure reason may be re-examined in this perspective. This now takes us to the sixth premise.

Sixth Premise

Keeping in view the structure and function of the brain we may, without reservation agree to the presence of neural networks, in the form of assemblies and sub-assemblies. It has been estimated that there are about 10^9 neurons in the brain. However, each assembly is comprised of 10, 000 neurons (Dennet, 1967, 1975).^{10, 11} We may accept the electrochemical nature of the stimulus passing through the nerve fiber and reaching the nerve endings evoking response in other cells. The code translating the message at the nerve ending is not known. Certainly, it is not similar to the binary code used in computations performed by a computer. Accordingly, any attempt to formalize artificial intelligence will remain a wild goose chase till such time that the neural code is broken. We have seen that sensory messages are analyzed and integrated in the

prefrontal integration modules (PIMs) and their coordinated action responses are realized through efferent pathways as directed by PIMs. We may agree that this apparatus is necessary for thought production. It has already been argued that thought is a necessary companion of consciousness (ego, self). It perpetuates beyond serial time during higher order consciousness in mystic states. It is our considered view that in spite of mystic stillness neural assemblies are at work in a monolithic thought process, which incessantly feeds the peculiar conscious state divorced from serial time and normal neural sensibilities which are, so obvious in normal experience. We attribute this property to inherent 'Directive Force' which begins to operate from the time of fertilization of the ovum and continues its activity through the law of recapitulation: ontogeny repeats phylogeny. All this happens under the spell of 'Directive Force' unleashed by the genetic code. We are inclined to agree that neural networks and religious experience are catalyzed by self (consciousness, ego) as envisaged in Eccles field theory and Watson's theory of TES. We are also inclined to propose that self (consciousness, ego) is something above and beyond the ordinary physical process. It operates from a higher order of non-physical substratum occupying phenomenal space. Furthermore we do believe that consciousness is a product of evolution reaching its climax in humans, and bestowing high survival value to this species. It has the peculiar characteristics of operating in serial time and beyond, which Iqbal calls Divine time. Not surprisingly, Penrose (1990)¹² has made a strong case for the existence of consciousness, though in a rudimentary form at the lowest level of organic life. His identification of microtubules in paramecium (used for sense perception) with identical microtubules in the neural fibers is a bold attempt to bring quantum mechanical continuity between the lower and higher forms of life. This takes us to the seventh premise.

Seventh Premise

A brief description of phenomenology has already been presented. Here we will take note of two aspects of this philosophy, namely, phenomenological space and phenomenological time. Both are relevant to the theory of ego (self, consciousness). If we accept, as we have done so far, that soul (ego, consciousness) is a non-material entity and does not occupy space, and yet it controls the brain (Iqbal, 1930; Eccles, 1992),^{13,14} then what line of argument can we adopt to show that even non-material consciousness has a spatial character? To some extent this dilemma has been resolved by suggesting the existence of phenomenal space for consciousness

as envisaged in TES. It is to be realized that “space which traditionally has been denied to consciousness is physical space since we have no idea of precise relationship between matter and experience” (Dainton, 2000).¹⁵ It follows from this that we also have no idea of the precise relationship between experience and physical space which the matter occupies. If this be so, as is obvious, then it is logical to conclude that experience does not occupy physical space at all. Yet, there is a strong case for stating that all our experiences, without exception, seem to be located somewhere in the physical space as, for example, occupied by any physical objects. Accepting this later premise we have already insisted that this is applicable to perceptual experience only (the normal experience as stated by Iqbal). Now, a person may be handling a series of physical events, in which case a number of spatially connected co-consciousness experiences are involved in the operational activity within a single unified three-dimensional phenomenal space (Kant, 1980).¹⁶ This level of consciousness, by and large, necessarily has to be unitary because of binding of conscious experiences in the same compact. We have no hesitation in accepting this concept in as much as perceptual conscious experience is concerned.

This, however, does not solve our problem with regard to the implications inherent in inner religious experience. The reason being that in mystic states, all sensations, afferent or efferent, are in a state of suspension (Forman, 1992).¹⁷ Perhaps the memory of such sensations is obliterated. Thus, agreeing with Dainton, (2000),¹⁸ we are inclined to propose that in such states higher levels of consciousness come into operation with a single perpetuating thought, for instance, of the transcendental which is characteristic of the mystic state. This, in our opinion, is what has been called intellectual consciousness. It is this level of consciousness which is the essence of the ego (Iqbal), of the self (Eccles) and of SELF (Watson) which influence the brain whereby, the neural assemblies of Dainton¹⁹ and prefrontal integration modules are made subservient to the influence of self (mind, ego) unleashing electrochemical activity of repetitive nature under a unitary stimulus. It appears that it is on this basis that Eccles has proposed the theory of psychons and Watson has strengthened it with his theory of enformation. This level of consciousness we speculate operates in the space-time paradigm, in which time is non-serial and the spatial dimensions do not conform to Newtonian space or Einstein’s space-time relativity. Clearly, then, there are two levels of consciousness, the normal operating in serial time under the

integrative control of PIMs and the other the higher level of consciousness operating in non-serial time giving possible credence to Iqbal's notion of Divine time and Divine space in the realm of inner religious experience. This takes us to the eighth and last premise.

Eighth Premise

Iqbal (1930),²⁰ and Forman (1999),²¹ both agree that mystic experience, at best, is subjective. Iqbal in fact goes a step further and draws distinction between mystic and a prophetic experiences when he quotes Maulana Abdul Quddus of Gangoh²². Whereas both experiences are subjective, the mystic keeps it to himself, but the prophet shares it with others as ordained through revealed knowledge. Unlike the normal experience, the religious experience is ordinarily non-verifiable. Towing the line of reductionists, any experience, which is non-verifiable, should be rejected out of hand. With a large amount of scientific evidence, which we have been able to put together, the reductionist view point falls apart. Even the physicists now agree that what is not visible or verifiable within the domain of quantum mechanics, cannot necessarily be denied. Accordingly, there is considerable merit in Iqbal's contention that mystic experience is a valid source of knowledge.

The Hypothesis

The eight premises stated in the previous sections essentially summarize our views. We can now use these premises for articulating a unified theory in support of inner religious experience. The hypothesis we are going to construct is essentially based on (a). Iqbal's metaphysical approach in the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1930),²³ especially the Directive Energy (b). Forman's thesis about what mysticism has to teach us about consciousness (1999),²⁴ (c). Eccles theory of how the self controls the brain (1992),²⁵ (d). Watson and Williams theory of enformy (2003),²⁶ (e). Bohm and Hiley's theory of sub-physical quantum activity,²⁷ (f). Karl Poppers theory of 'Three Worlds' as described in his book: 'The Self and its Brain' (1977),²⁸ (g). Alwyn Scott's Stairway of the Mind (1995),²⁹ (h). Hebb's theory of neural networks (1949, 1980),^{30,31} (i). Schrodinger's lectures delivered in Trinity College Cambridge on 'Mind and Matter' (1956),³² (j). Roger Penrose's Book 'Emperor's Mind' (1989),³³ (k). Crick and Kock's Neurobiological theory of consciousness,³⁴ and (m). Dennet's 'Consciousness Explained' (1991),³⁵

Iqbal relies on the distinction between the words: *Khalq* (creation) and *Amr* (Directive Energy) as they appear in the text of the Qur'an in its various sections. However, since 'Directive Energy' will figure prominently in our own thesis on consciousness (Ego, Self), it will be worthwhile to explore the full significance of the term as it appears in an authentic lexicon of Arabic language. For this, we will turn to Leghat-al-Qur'an compiled by Ghulam Ahmed Pervaiz (1960).³⁶ Like Iqbal, Pervaiz refers to Pringle Pettison when he quotes him that – 'it is inadequacy of English language which has only one word for the process of creation (*Khalq*), though it was necessary that two separate words were available for perceptive (physical world) and the non-perceptive (spiritual world). It is in this context that the Qur'an uses two separate words, that is, *Khalq* and *Amr*. It is a matter of common understanding that creation is an act in which a final product, assembled from various elements, appears in complete appreciated form. Yet, the process involved in the act of creation must receive a putsch from some source of energy. This is what Iqbal recognizes as 'Directive Energy'.

It may be noted that various meanings have been assigned to the word '*Amr*' according to the context in which it appears in various sections of the Qur'an. For example: (a) Consultation (Al-Qur'an: 26:35; 7:110; 65:6; 28:30), (b) Abundance of something (Al-Qur'an: 17:16), (c) Command (Al-Qur'an: 2:67; 16:23) and (d) Desire or Accord (Al-Qur'an 18:82), among others. Yet, of particular interest to us is the Ayah 7:54 in which *Khalq* (creation) appears in juxtaposition to '*Amr*' (command). Here, as we have already stated, '*Khalq*' means to create new things by various procedures from an array of elements. '*Khalq*' thus is a stage when things appear before us as perceptive entities. All stages prior to this that is in the planning process inherently belong to the 'Directive Energy' emanating from the transcendental. The '*Amr*' (direction) we are referring to permeates every segment of the universe from the tiniest quarks to the humans. The laws that regulate the universe are the consequence of the same '*Amr*', which preceded the 'big bang'. '*Amr*' is the organizer of these laws, which are being discovered and extended piece-meal by man (see also Al-Qur'an: 45:17 and 65:5). All this means that 'Directive Energy' is a continuous process, and at least in the case of humans, the command is not time related; it, indeed, remains in intimate relation with the soul, though the latter has the freedom to act. The following quote from the Qur'an is illustrative:

Do the (ungodly) wait until the angels come to them or there comes the command of thy Lord (for their doom?) so did those who went but Allah wronged them not: may, they wronged their own souls. (Al-Qur'an 16:33)

We are conscious that the concepts developed in the preceding section will be unacceptable to a physicalist, turned reductionist, who is only accustomed to verifiable propositions through experimental data. It would therefore be difficult for him to digest what he calls the dogmas of religion. A concrete Muslim mind may also fall victim to the same trap. Despite this, we maintain that Iqbal's concept of *Amr-e-Rabbi* has a lot to offer in this regard as we will show by extracting evidences from recent advances in Physics and Psychology. We are also maintaining that ego (soul, consciousness and self) is non-material and immortal. Further, we will argue that it controls the brain in serial time and space, notwithstanding the fact that it can also enjoy the luxury of Divine time and Divine space. For this we will have to shift our focus from metaphysical epistemic state to the world of science.

First, we will look into the origin, nature and application of 'Directive Energy'. **Second**, if soul is a non-material, then, how does it organize the functions of the body in serial time and how do we conceive its existence without occupying space? **Third**, how does higher consciousness (ego, self) come into operation and elevate itself in Divine time and Divine space for contact with the Infinite? **Fourth**, is the universe expanding? **Fifth**, what is the physicalists' view of the nature of matter and, whether the currently discussed unified theory of matter can provide a clue to the nature of the universe? **Sixth**, what significance the process of organic evolution has in relation to the 'Directive Energy'? **Seventh**, do new researches in psychology offer any hope for the authenticity of inner religious experience? **Eighth**, can we accept the reductionists point of view about the relationship of consciousness (ego, self) based on the structure and function of the brain? **Ninth**, what significance Hiesenberg's principle of uncertainty has for consciousness (ego, self) and the collapse of wave function? **Lastly**, how subjective state of inner religious experience can be raised to an acceptable level of objectivity. Presently, we will only synthesize the already expressed views for constructing a unified theory of consciousness (ego, self).

Let us take up the 'Directive Energy'. Obviously a physicalist, as we have already stated may consider it a mere dogma. We do not accept this, since the very statement in itself is a dogma of science.

Penrose (1993),³⁷ the great mathematician from Cambridge is of the view that different laws of mathematics and physics have to be worked out for the conditions prevailing prior to the big bang. The big bang model of the universe is the one, which is generally accepted by physicists, though alternate schemes have also been proposed (for example, the strong anthropomorphic principle). It has been suggested that the early universe must have gone through a period of very rapid expansion (Allan Guth of MIT). According to one estimate the radius of the universe increased by a million, million, million, million, million times (10^{30}), in only a tiny fraction of a second. With this information one may ponder over the allegorical meaning of the Qur'anic verse reproduced below:

We have created heaven and earth in six days. (32:4)

The reason cited for rapid inflationary expansion of universe resides in the fact that at the time of big bang the universe had a very high temperature. At such temperatures the strong force, the weak nuclear forces, and electromagnetic forces were unified into a single force. However, as the universe cooled down past its expansion phase, the particulate energies went down and the symmetry between forces was disengaged, though, it has been claimed that temperature may drop below the critical level without the symmetry of the forces being broken. Such a symmetry of forces was essential, since the aggregation of these forces can act as anti-gravitation force in sympathy with the proposed cosmological constant of Einstein during the rapid inflationary expansion – resulting ultimately in a stabilized model of the universe. The discussion of various inflationary models is beyond the scope of this article. The subject receives excellent treatment in the book: *A Brief History of Time* (Hawking, 1998).³⁸ However, for our purpose, we would like to correlate the implications of this speculative approach with our theme of 'Directive Energy'.

We do understand that the size of the universe was zero at the time of big bang, and as already stated, it was infinitely hot. The only matter that existed at the time comprised the photons, electrons and neutrinos and their anti particles together with some protons and neutrons³⁹. Given this circumstance, we can very well imagine that it was energy all around at that time. This raises some obvious questions: (a) where did the Energy come from? (b) did it have any direction or purpose? (c) was big bang a natural consequence of this energy? (d) unlike the present day universe what type of laws of physics and mathematics were applicable at that time to the matter at large, especially, at a very high

temperature? This was a period when all forces were unified and were inherently capable of working against the gravitational pull. At best a physicist would like to answer these questions within the limitations of his known knowledge of the universe. Beyond this, even his speculative mind fails to keep company with his scientific thoughts, let alone reductionism. In spite of this he would insist that big bang was an accident, and any other source of knowledge presented to man through revelation is no better than a dogma. We are obliged to differ from this simplistic approach. Thus, in agreement with Iqbal, we do accept that religion is certainly a legitimate source of knowledge.

Even if by present standards one is able to sum up the total energy in the pre big bang matter, it would run into trillions of trillions ... of trillions of energy units. Was this to be wasted? Was it purposeless? Was it void of any direction? The answer is no. How do we interpret this? This is possible only if we concede that (a) there is only one direction, which the high-energy particulate matter could take, that is, the creation of the universe, and (b) that what existed in the pre-big bang period was simply a preparatory stage for the creation of the universe. This is what Iqbal identifies as *Amr-e-Rabbi* (Directive Energy). Accordingly, under the spell of Directive Energy what happened was destined to happen. *Amr-e-Rabbi* is a continuum that existed *ab initio* and continues unabated. Soul (ego, self) is a manifestation of the same Directive Energy, indeed, with a modicum of freedom consistent with his characteristics (*Reconstruction*: The Freedom of the Ego and its Immortality). It may be noted as to how the continuity of Directive Energy, even after coming into existence of the universe is supported by the revealed knowledge. The Qur'anic verse: "We add to Our creation what We will" points to the expansion of universe in all directions as maintained by scientists. Interestingly enough, the phenomenon of the expansion of universe was discovered by Hubble only in 1926 using the red shift in the spectrum. Similarly, the discovery of black holes is a recent phenomenon⁴⁰. This may be judged in the light of allegorical meaning of the verse: By the star when it goes down (Al-Qur'an 103:1).

There are other lines of evidence which are consistent with the concept of Directive Energy. For this, we will first cite a few examples from biology and then extend our arguments to the world of physics. We have already referred to the principle of 'ontogeny repeats phylogeny'. This principle is guided by a built in mechanism in the genetic code of a fertilized ovum for developing into a full

organism. Organic evolution as proposed by Darwin (1959)⁴¹ is nothing but a four dimensional evolution of the genetic material (DNA). The rise of consciousness in man, though co-existed with evolution of the neo-cortex in the brain, yet it surpasses the physical structures and takes on a non-physical position designated as ego or self by Eccles (1992)⁴² and Iqbal (1930),⁴³ which regulates and controls the brain activities. Is it not amazing that the single celled fertilized ovum passing through the stages of morula, and blastula reaches a new dynamic state of gastrula? It is at this stage that streams of cells passing over the dorsal lip of the blastopore in the gastrula, take their destined positions in the three germ layers, that is, the ectoderm, the endoderm and the mesoderm. It is from the ectoderm that the neural tube takes its shape in the presence of underlying mesoderm. What forces regulate this organized differentiation of cells is not known. The dorsal lip though is known to be the organizer of the whole process. We attribute these properties of embryonic development to the Directive Energy. Another example comes from the well-known antigen-antibody interaction in living systems. The defense mechanism of the body is so designed that any foreign body (antigen) entering the living system is identified by specialized cells present in circulating blood. These cells secrete antibodies against the foreign antigens, which are captured by antibodies and are inactivated. It is highly revealing to note that these specialized cells have ancient memory extending over a period of millions of years in sympathy with the evolution of human gene pool. This is another illustrative example of the continuity of Directive Energy. Myriads of such examples are extant in biological systems, which have been discovered (not invented). Thus, in agreement with Iqbal, we have no hesitation in stating that all these processes, as we see in biological systems, are happening under the umbrella of Directive Energy, which has been operating even prior to the big bang.

We now take another look on the world of physics. Some of the most intriguing statements made by Bohm (1993)⁴⁴ and Bohm and Peat (1989)⁴⁵ have been discussed here. Here, for the convenience of the reader, we would like to reiterate that according to these workers: it is quite possible that while quantum theory and with it the indeterminacy principle are valid to a very high degree of approximation in a certain domain, they both cease to have relevance in the new domains below that in which current theory is not applicable. This may create a stir amongst quantum physicists; yet, there is little doubt that this line of thought exposes the limitations of quantum theory. Obviously, if this is true then one

has to reject two major assumptions of the theory, namely, absolute indeterminism and objective existence of quantum systems only when they are measurable and observable. Quark, for example, has not been observed as yet. Nor would it be possible unless an accelerator with energy as large as that of the sun is available (Gel Mann 1994).⁴⁶ It is only on mathematical basis that the existence of this fundamental particle has been postulated. This is also true of gluons. It simply means that something which cannot be observed (for instance, anything below the recognized quantum world) or known precisely cannot be said to exist. Is it not a rebuttal of Kant's line of reasoning and the rejection of positivist's view of normal verifiable experience? On the contrary it gives credence to Iqbal's contention that inner religious experience (normally not observable or verifiable) is as much a reality as the normal experience (verifiable). It is by the same token that a metaphysical approach which emphasizes the contact of finite with the infinite through inner religious experience could be accepted with the same conviction as we apply to the normal experience.

We have repeatedly brought under discussion the theory of quantum physics for the reason that it remains a major source of excitement amongst the physicists. Further, it remains a matter of common conviction with the physicists who generally follow reductionism as a creed. They argue that through reductionism it is possible to solve all problems related to natural phenomena including consciousness (mind, ego, self). The difficulty with reductionists is that they have not only reduced nature into smaller and smaller parts, they have reduced science itself to narrower and narrower academic specialties. The world view of these disjointed disciplines is limited to highly constricted horizons that prevent even seeing into other disciplines, much less the whole nature (Watson, 2005: the enformy page-[http://www.enformy.com/\\$enformy.html](http://www.enformy.com/$enformy.html)).⁴⁷ The reductionist approach, in our opinion, is weird, if not absurd. It reduces science to myth. Iqbal pointed this out several decades ago when he called this the dogmas of science (*Reconstruction*)⁴⁸. What appears close to reality is the approach relying on holistic attitude corresponding to the unitary experience advocated by Iqbal.

Recently, Pratt (1997),⁴⁹ following Bohm and his colleagues (op. cit.), has examined the relationship between consciousness, causality, and quantum physics. In essence, he has accepted Bohm's interpretation of quantum theory. Like Bohm, Pratt argues for ontological interpretation of quantum theory, rejecting the

assumption that wave function gives the most complete description of reality possible, avoiding thereby the need to introduce the ill defined and unsatisfactory functions of wave collapse (and all the paradoxes that go with it). Instead he assumes the real existence of particles and fields: particles have a complete inner structure and are always accompanied by wave field; they are acted upon not only by classical electromagnetic forces but also by a subtle force, the quantum potential, determined by the quantum field. The quantum potential carries information from the whole environment and provides direct, non-local connections between quantum systems. This line of thought from the world of physics gives immense support to the concept of Directive Energy and solves the binding problem faced by Eccles theory of psychons when examined in the context of subtler forces in the form of quantum potential. Indeed, it has been suggested that quantum potential is extremely sensitive and complex and is a kind of vast ocean of energy on which physical or explicate world is just a ripple. Unfortunately, such an energy pool, though recognized, has been given little consideration by standard quantum theory. The same theory, however, postulates a universal quantum field – the quantum vacuum or zero potential field which underlies the material world.

From the forgoing analysis it should be clear that (a) one cannot deny the existence of something which is not being observed, measured or precisely known, (b) on this basis the positivist view requires to be revisited so that disengagement between epistemology and ontology is eliminated (Bohm, 1994),⁵⁰ (c) there is an implicate order emanating from the quantum potential (Directive Energy) which carries information from the whole environment and pervades directly the non-local quantum systems, and (e) consciousness is rooted deep in the implicate order and is therefore present to some degree in all material forms. However, one cannot ignore the fact that there might be an infinite series of implicate orders each having a matter aspect and consciousness aspect. The possibility that there are subtler levels of matter cannot be ruled out (Weber, 1990). In the perspective of this vision of neo-physicists, it should now be convenient to understand the views expressed by Iqbal and Eccles on non-materiality of soul (ego, self, consciousness), and the physical and psychological basis of inner religious experience.

We have already provided enough material on the validity of Directive Energy. Suffice to state that there are vast oceans of energy below the presently known physical structures which

represent only a ripple in this vast ocean. At this level even quantum theory fails to operate. This eminently supports the reality of the continuum of Directive Energy from the pre-big bang period. This also lends credence to the non-local origin of activity, for example, from the soul (ego, self, consciousness, mind), thereby regulating the brain under certain physiological states such as mysticism. This, in a way, solves the binding problem between self (ego, consciousness) and the brain, which was difficult to explain by Iqbal in 1930⁵¹ and even by Eccles in 1992.⁵²

The ego and the freedom of the will make an interesting study in the context of present day knowledge of physics and psychology. Quantum theory is said to be indeterministic. However, as we have already argued, it is clearly open to interpretation: it either means hidden causes, or complete absence of causes. In this regard we have to take into consideration a few issues. First, if we are unable to identify a cause, it does not mean that there is no cause. Second, it is generally assumed that quantum events happen spontaneously, having no relationship with everything else in the universe. The latter issue has to be taken with caution, since the opposite view is also available; all systems are continuously participating in an intricate network of causal interactions at many different levels (Pratt, 1997).⁵³ Apparently, though, individual quantum systems can behave unpredictably (if we ignore the non-local influence of the implicate order, meaning the quantum vacuum underlying the material world). It is now being argued that even if everything has a cause, or may be many causes, it does not mean that all our acts and choices are predetermined by purely physical processes. This has been called hard determinism (Thronton, 1989).⁵⁴ The indeterminism seen at the quantum level, in a way, opens a possibility for creativity and free will. This would, however, mean pure chance, and as Pratt (1997)⁵⁵ has remarked that “our choices and actions ‘pop-up’ in a totally random manner, in which case they could hardly be said as our choices” (emphasis – randomness). This line of thought gives us room to return to Iqbal’s notion of free will (*Reconstruction*)⁵⁶. We believe, as Iqbal argued, that there are subtler non-physical forces (ego, self, soul, consciousness) that guide our acts of free will. And what are those subtler forces? Certainly, the Directive Energy, which has provided freedom to the soul (ego, self, consciousness) as advocated by Iqbal. In fact, it is legitimate to state that no pre-determinism in any form is involved (see the Qur’anic verse 16: 33). In all this discussion, we have to assume on physiological and psychological grounds that soul (ego, self, consciousness) is a kind of non-material energy and is a part of

universally penetrating Directive Energy. This has a nexus with oceans of quantum potential permeating the whole universe. Clearly then, like Iqbal (1930),⁵⁷ Eccles (1992)⁵⁸ and Watson (2005),⁵⁹ one cannot escape the conclusion that the soul is immortal and remains intact even after its separation from the body at the time of death.

Now, if we recognize the existence of a sub-physical quantum potential, which can influence every quantum event in this universe, then, it is not difficult to make a distinction between serial time and Divine time. Serial time is a product of human mind appreciable by those inhabiting the planet earth. Einstein's relativity theory makes time the fourth dimension of space. This is a universally accepted preposition. But the time which is integrated with space is the serial time. What about the fact that quantum theory as well as relativity theory break down in areas underlying the known physical space? It has been argued, for instance, that "if two quantum systems interact and move apart, their behavior is correlated in a way that cannot be explained in terms of signals traveling between them at or slower than the speed of light. We are inclined to interpret this in terms of the universal networking of quantum potential (defined above) with the physical world, which may involve signals traveling faster than light (this has implications for Eccle's theory of psychons). It is here, in our opinion, that serial time ceases and Divine time starts. However, appreciation of Divine time can be realized only in a mystic state. By the same token Divine space can be visualized when we consider it in relation to non-local effects of soul (ego consciousness). We do agree that non-local effects occur instantaneously and it is difficult to verify them experimentally, though it can be experimentally falsified (Bohm and Hiley, 1993).⁶⁰ This has not been not done so far. The following statement from the same workers is of significance:

For if non-local connections are propagated not at infinite speeds but at speed greater than that of light through a quantum ether ... a sub quantum domain where current quantum theory and relativity theory break down ... then correlations predicted by quantum theory would vanish if measurements were made in periods shorter than those required for the transmission of quantum connections ... If super luminal interactions exist they would be non-local only in the sense of non-physical.

This takes us to the case of telepathy and clairvoyance (prophetic phenomena). They imply the applicability of non-

locality. A number of investigations in this area suggest that non-locality is the only acceptable mechanism of instantaneous connectedness of the subject and the object in a mind-to-mind transfer. This means that the information would be received exactly at the same time as it is generated, without undergoing any form of transmission. (It may be noted that neuron to neuron passage of stimulus has a delay time of 200 m seconds.) There is, however, one caveat in this scheme from the point of view of physicists. They can argue that information is basically a pattern of energy, which always takes time to travel from the source to the recipient location. This argument can be negated if one takes the case of extra sensory perception (ESP). It involves the use of subtler forms of energy (discussed above) which travel at super luminal speeds through supra physical realms (Pratt, 1987).⁶¹ The time period in such cases is of no consequence; nor can there be any attenuation as in the case of electromagnetic fields, which follow the inverse square law. We believe that during inner religious experience or even during prophetic revelation such subtler forces come into play, provided the mystic makes the necessary physiological preparation of disengaging himself from all sensory stimuli and focuses his full attention on to the infinite for seeking contact with Him. In such cases the period of contact will determine his ecstasy. Prolonged contacts may lead to such utterances as: “I am the creative truth (Mansur Hallaj)”.

The phenomenon of micro-psychokinesis (m-pk) has recently been the subject of several studies. It is of interest to note that in m-pk consciousness is stated to influence directly the atomic particles (Boughton, 1996).⁶² This has been demonstrated experimentally when the shift of quantum events was observed (Boughton, 1991; Jahn and Dunne 1987)⁶³. This has been attributed to the collapse of wave function by consciousness. The problem of macro-psychokinesis (teleportation, levitation, poltergeist activity and materialization) has been studied extensively over the last 150 years (Inglis, 1984; Milton, 1994)^{64, 65}. Yet, it remains a taboo area and therefore does not call for any further discussion.

We are aware that in developing our arguments in support of physical and psychological basis of religious experience, we have leaned heavily on the possible existence of subtler planes for integrating the non-local transmission of information as proposed by Tilner (1993).⁶⁶ This, however, remains open to further investigation. Yet those who are involved in the study of matter are also on equally weak footing when they try to explain the nature of

matter based on super string theory (hypothetical extra dimensions which are said to be curled up in an area of billion – trillion – trillionth of centimeter across and to which no access could be made). For this we may have yet to wait for another few decades. The controversies will however continue. There are some researchers who do not favor a-physical realms such as consciousness (ego, self, mind). In this regard we have referred to the works of several reductionists (Crick, 1994; Hamerof, 1994; Sperry, 1994; Dennet, 1991;).^{67, 68, 69, 70} In spite of this, Mitchell (1995)⁷¹ believes that all psychic phenomena involve non-local resonance between the brain and quantum vacuum for transfer of information. Such considerations bridge the gap between physics and metaphysics, as was the hope of Iqbal. We have, to the extent of our reach, tried to put together current evidences from physics, biology and psychology in support of Iqbal's theme of inner religious experience. There are, however, two more theories, namely, of Eccles (1994)⁷² and of Watson (2005),⁷³ which are related to biophysics of consciousness. We shall again take up these theories in tandem in order to seek further support for Iqbal's thesis on inner religious experience.

Eccles was in complete disagreement with the 'identity theory' which postulates that mental states are identical with physico-chemical states of the brain. While rejecting these theories he has argued that (a) it offers vague generalizations, (b) it promises that problem will be resolved when we have more complete scientific understanding of the brain in a period of another hundred years. This he calls 'promisery materialism', (c) it fails to account for the wonder and mystery of the human self with its spiritual value, with his creativity and with his uniqueness for each of us (How the Self Controls the brain; pp: 33, 176)⁷⁴ and (d) it allows no real scope for freedom. In brief Eccles in his theory of the self argued for non-material mind, which acts upon and is influenced by our material brains; there is a mental world in addition to physical world, and the two interact. However, Eccles rejects Cartesian dualism. A deep study of Iqbal demonstrates that he preempted the views expressed by Eccles in 1992 in his book: "How Self Controls the Brain". Eccles was a physicist of high repute. He received Nobel Prize for his work on 'Chemical Transmission of Message at the Nerve Synapse'. Like Iqbal, being a strong believer in spiritual self and material brain, he formulated the theory of 'psychons'. His hypothetical psychons were supposed to be associated with the nerve endings and mediated the reciprocal interaction of the material brain and the spiritual self. However, in order to place his

psychons within the ambit of the worldview of physics, he assigned quantum probabilistic role to psychons. He conceived that the psychons have complete inner structure and are always accompanied by quantum wave fields, which, as we understand today, are not only acted upon by electromagnetic forces but also by subtler forces (discussed earlier). The influence of psychons on nerve endings as proposed by Eccles (acting as quantum fields) also provided support to the notion that the strength of the message varied with the strength of the quantum potential and thus opened the way for interpreting the neural code, though this remains elusive so far. Whatever the merit of this theory, there is one difficulty, which has been repeatedly pointed out by his critics. For example, Pratt (1995),⁷⁵ generally agreeing with the basic arguments of this theory expressed skepticism about Eccles acceptance of the standard interpretation of the conservation of energy. Further, if interaction between brain and mind is conceived as flow of information, then, how can it be explained without involving energy? In his opinion these two aspects actually limit his theory. This criticism can be overcome by resorting to subtler, etheric type of force or energy acting at the quantum and sub-quantum levels. Perhaps Eccles argument that “more direct action of the will precludes conservation law” may help meet this criticism. Even then, what about Para psychological phenomena? In conclusion, one can state that the scheme of events proposed by Eccles and Popper (1972)⁷⁶ and Eccles (1992)⁷⁷ about the characteristics of the soul (ego, self) formulated by them fits neatly into the meta-physical scheme proposed by Iqbal seventy years ago in the *Reconstruction*. It is worth noting, however, that both the schemes are upgraded when examined in the light of quantum potential operating at levels below the known physical structures (Bohm, 1994).⁷⁸ In view of these studies, we continue to maintain that soul (ego, self, consciousness) is non-material and immortal by design (as we have argued elsewhere as well) and is an extension of the transcendental energy permeating all kinds of matter, living or non-living. The linkage of soul with Directive Energy should leave no doubt about its immortal nature. In as much as its freedom is concerned, this is implied, in a way, in Hisenberg’s Principle.

Any discussion about consciousness (ego, self, mind) would be incomplete if a reference is not made to the theory of Enformed Systems (TES) proposed by Watson (1997, 1998);^{79, 80, 81, 82} Watson *et. al.* (1998, 1999); and Watson and Williams (2003)⁸³. Here, we will focus only on those ramifications of this theory, which are of significance for our theme of inner religious experience. This

innovative theory stands in contrast to both, monistic materialism and reductionism. Indeed, there are several features of the theory, which can be accepted, of course, with a few reservations.

First, Enformism is a set of concepts that are based on the premise that organization is fundamental to everything including matter and spirit. Accordingly, Enformism means the inherent capacity of the whole system to organize. This is claimed to be a non-material, pre-physical property ingrained in all physical systems, living as well as non-living, when considered in wholes and not in parts of the whole. The sentient organization stands in contrast to the well-known physical principle of entropy (Watson 1997, 1998).^{84, 85} Interestingly enough, hypothetical Maxwell's Demon is said to operate in case of a mixture of gas particles at various levels of energy, enclosed in the system, which rather than mixing up, as expected, randomly forms a gradient of energy. This phenomenon, unexplainable through the laws of physics lends support to the principle of inherent self-organization postulated under TES. Nowhere else is this principle more relevant than in living systems. An organism coming into existence following the development of a fertilized ovum through successive stages of transformation under the spell of pre-physical phenomenon (what Iqbal calls coming together of sub-egos), is not subject to laws of entropy. Why? Because as the physicists say the entropy of the world is increasing. Here in mother's womb or a bird's egg, within a restricted cosmos, with every growth cycle, if anything, the entropy is decreasing. Obviously, then, one can infer that the implicate force, which drives the process is universal in nature and can be well designated as a process of Enformy. This eliminates both monistic materialism and reductionism, though the same may play a role in living organisms in periods of sensibility.

Second, commenting on Eccles theory of psychons, Watson uses the acronym- SELF- meaning Singular Enformed Living Fields as a replacement of psychons to solve the binding problem between, 'self' (of Eccles and Iqbal) and the brain. From spiritualistic point of view we find great merit in this approach, since it eliminates the presence of entities in the form of psychons. Now does it require a quantum physical support to explain the behavior of psychons? The most interesting part of the SELF lies in the fact that it itself behaves like a field, without having physical existence as ordinarily conceived.

Third, the Enformed systems according to TES have a collective memory gained from experiences ordinarily in serial time.

This collection of experiences prepares the consciousness (ego, self, soul) to exercise its influence on the body in periods of sensation, thus regulating efferent activity of the brain when it is receiving sensory stimulations. On the contrary the same system behaves differently in the event of a mystic state, when the subject is cut off from all sensory stimulations (a period of stillness identified by Iqbal, 1930⁸⁶; Forman, 2000⁸⁷). Accordingly, the SELF of Watson, it can be easily argued, leads the mystic to a spell of unitary experience, fully concentrating on the Infinite, and thus navigating him to the Divine environment of space and time. The time being non-serial, and space not representing the Newtonian space. This, we believe, is a period of illumination, which we are inclined to attribute to hypothetical particles, the luminons to replace the psychons. Indeed, there are indications of the transfer of non-local information having nexus with quantum potentials at the sub-physical level. In our opinion this is the only way to accept the validity of TES in spiritual terms.

Fourth, it is unfortunate that intellectual of Watson's caliber takes us to the non-spiritual arena when he uses TES to disapprove the existence of a Creator. We may call this non-material agnosticism or more appropriately spiritual agnosticism. The line of argument he uses is more semantic than realistic. For instance, he makes a rather erroneous distinction between the words, 'creating' and 'Creator', the former he interprets as a process, and the later as an entity. According to him the word process is sufficient to describe all natural phenomena including organic evolution, thus, precluding the need for a Creator. The difficulty with Watson is that unlike Pratt (2003)⁸⁸ he has not given thought to implicate order in the vast oceans of energy below the sub-physical world, which we have related to the Directive Energy as proposed by Iqbal (1930)⁸⁹. Nor has he been able to speculate on the physiological state of mind of a mystic in periods of absolute calm and stillness. Disagreeing with Watson's negation of the Creator, we would like to emphasize the distinction which Iqbal has drawn between *Khalq* (Creation) and *Amr* (Direction).

In essence, then, without prejudice to the authenticity of science and religion, we have made an attempt to reinforce Iqbal's metaphysical approaches with fresh evidences drawn from the worldviews of science and religion.

Yet this is not all. The more we study Iqbal the more we realize that Iqbal neither subscribes to monistic materialism nor to classical dualism. He was a proponent of the unity of life. As such,

we intend to explore further those aspects of our unified theory which can be assigned to Iqbal's vision of holistic experience and which could find universal acceptance by students of meta-physics (within the ambit of the expanded world view of Islam) and those relying on the infallibility of quantum physics. This is discussed in the following paragraphs.

For physicists, whether reductionists or dualists, quantum physics is so sacrosanct that it enjoys a focal position for all sources of knowledge related in one form or the other with the material world. There is nothing wrong about it. Yet, in recent times, students, in particular of particle physics have pointed out a number of caveats in the theory. Foremost amongst them are Bhom (1935), Neumann (1955), and Stapp (1973, 1993, 1999, 2001). Stapp, a particle physicist, at Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory, University of California, has developed interesting ideas about the "Quantum Theory and the Role of Mind in Nature". In his article-"The Hard Problem: A Quantum Approach" he concedes that "all our behavior and all of internal processing that occurs in the bodies could be deduced, at least in principle, from classical mechanics and appropriate boundary conditions". Yet, he is not convinced that classical mechanics can find a suitable solution for experience, that is, streams of consciousness that constitute the selves. The same ambiguity confronted Iqbal when he turned to Newtonian physics or relativity (classical physics) and even Heisenberg's wave function. Nor was Iqbal able to extract beingness and consciousness from classical physics. This meant that there remained incompleteness in dealing with the full description of nature. To understand where does the incompleteness of quantum theory lie, we examine how Stapp approaches the problem vis-à-vis that proposed by the Copenhagen group (Bohr, Dirac and Heisenberg).

According to Newton's theory every part of the universe is instantly linked, causally, to every other part of the universe (for example, if a person were to kick a stone, and send it flying off in some direction, every particle in the entire universe would immediately begin to feel the effect of the kick). This idea is mind-boggling. However, relativity theory of Einstein, banished it from classical physics. It resurfaced with quantum theory. Whereas Einstein objected to this, Bohr, the proponent of quantum theory, defended the same. This resulted in renunciation of classical idea of causality, and revision of our attitude towards the problem of physical reality. This is what Iqbal calls the revolt of physics against

its own foundations. This was however, not to be the case. The rise of new physics (quantum theory) was a natural imperative of intellectual manifestations, since the classical theories of Newton and Einstein did not take into account the role of experience and consciousness in understanding the reality of nature around us.

To overcome this difficulty Bohr introduced the idea of observer in the quantum theory. He claimed, “quantum theory, regarded as a theory about human knowledge, is a complete description of physical reality”. Yet, Einstein was not convinced and remarked, “What I dislike about this kind of argument is the basic positivistic attitude, which from my view is untenable and seems to me to come to the same thing as Berkley’s principle, *esse est percipi* (to be is to be perceived)”. In recent years Gell-Mann (op. cit.) has expressed similar views. He believes that “in order to understand the evolutionary process of living organisms one needs to have a coherent theory of the quantum mechanical reality in which these organisms are imbedded”. It is precisely because of these difficulties that Stapp (1991, 2001) started a search for a complete quantum theory keeping in view the concept of non-locality (quantum theory is non-local; Tittle, *et al*, 1988). Of course, Stapp’s major concern has been to bring human experience and consciousness into our understanding of reality. While articulating his views in quest for a complete theory, he critically examines the inadequacies in the Copenhagen model of quantum theory. In his view, the theory is “only a halfway house: it brings in human experience, but at the stiff price of excluding the rest of reality”. His major objection lies in the fact that if the theory was to present the whole science, how should it be possible to “leave out the physical world”. It is agreed that we can never know for sure that any proposed theory of the world around us is true. Yet, there is no reason that “one should not attempt formulating a coherent idea of what the world could be and the rules by which it could work”. His main argument rejecting the Copenhagen model revolves around the concept of non-locality for which he cites the photon experiments. A pair of photons was sent in two different directions ten miles apart along optical fibers. The two particles reached their destinations at the same time. Experiments were performed on each of them separately. The observed connections between the outcomes of these experiments clearly defied the nature of the physical world based on directly observable objects ;(physical letters 1).

Given this introduction, we now pass on to the specific analysis of quantum theory undertaken by Stapp (1991, 1996, 2001). His arguments run like this: **First**, quantum theory according to the (Orthodox, Copenhagen) interpretation, involves a huge conceptual shift from the classical ideal; it brings experiences of observers into the physical theory. In as much as the observer is concerned, his experience of observing the data emerging from the system, at best, remains subjective. Bohr, himself stated that “In our description of nature the purpose is not to disclose the real essences of phenomena but only to track down as far as possible relation between the multifold aspects of experience” (Bohr, 1934). **Second**, in accepting this interpretation we only offer rules of calculation for the deduction pertaining to observations obtained under well defined conditions specified by classical mechanical concepts (Bohr, 1958; Stapp, 1993). **Third**, in contrast to classical mechanics human experiences occupy a basic primitive place in quantum mechanics, notwithstanding the fact that rules of calculations pertaining to these experiences enable us only to look for matter like properties that occur in classical mechanics. The mathematical rules are therefore only generalizations of those used in classical mechanics. **Fourth**, Einstein thought that physics is an attempt to conceptually grasp reality as it is thought independently being observed. This may be true; however, the introduction of experiences into atomic physics is not only accepted by the scientific community but is considered as the correct way of comprehending atomic phenomena. **Fifth**, the crux of the problem is that “the quantum state and the form of our experience (limited to observer in the Copenhagen model) represent not the full reality itself but rather the probabilities for our perceptions to be various possible specified perceptions”. **Sixth**, using this line of argument Stapp concludes that “*in the context of mind / brain problem the most orthodox interpretation of quantum theory brings the experiences of the human observers into the basic physical theory on at least a co equal basis with the physical or matter like aspects of description: and it thus gives only half of the dynamical and ontological story*”. From this critique of orthodox quantum theory, Stapp, proceeds to analyse the ontological basis of the theory as proposed by Bohm (1984), Heisenberg (1976), Neumann (1952).

As early as 1952, Bohm postulated that real ontological basis for quantum theory can be realized only by segregating the ‘particle’ and wave function as proposed by Heisenberg. He suggested that particle rides like a surfer on the wave. In this theory one finds a huge gap between the information contained in the wave and

information contained in our experience. In physical jargon both waves and particles may be considered as material. Yet, wave describes all the possibilities for what our actual experience might be. This means that the waves represent potential beingness. On the other hand, the path of surfer specifies the actual choice from amongst the various possibilities. This represents the actuality of beingness of the particle. Accordingly, as Stapp writes “the wave generates all the possible experiences; whereas, trajectory defined by the surfer specifies which of the possible experiences actually occurs”. Furthermore, Bohm’s model does not account for the empty branches which form the part of the Heisenberg model, though Heisenberg proposes a sudden change which causes collapse of the wave function to differentiate between actual events and objective tendencies. At best, Bohm’s surfer represents only the actual event. The major problem with the Heisenberg theory however, is to find a reasonable criterion for the occurrence of these actual events.

After having examined the difficulties in the interpretation of Bohr (op. cit.) and that of Heisenberg (op. cit.), Stapp proceeds to re-examine the quantum theory in the light of a dramatically different perspective presented by Neumann (1952). He finds merit in Neumann’s suggestion that “*there is nothing in the purely material aspects of nature that singles out where the actual events occur...these events occur where **consciousness** enters, that is, in conjunction with conscious event*”. This approach which includes consciousness gives complete ‘ontologicalization’ to the Copenhagen interpretation. In this way, the subjective Copenhagen interpretation is transformed into objective reality. Stapp reinforces this argument by citing the example of ‘survival of the species’ in which actual events occur in the human brain under the spell of consciousness. It is important to note that in the Von-Neumann scheme there is no sudden collapse of wave function (as proposed by Heisenberg). All the wave branches continue to exist thereby allowing the streams of consciousness to perpetuate. In fact, each different branch does not affect the other accompanying branches, therefore, each wave can be considered as a different ‘self’ or ‘psyche’.

In essence, all that we have stated so far means: (a) that classical mechanics is unable to give a rationally coherent description of the world itself. The classical principles are simply too impoverished to serve as a basis for description of all of nature including the felt experiences (for example pain etc). Nor do the principles of classical mechanics explain the property of the

materials from which the living brains are made. (b) The introduction of quantum mechanics gave a new impetus to our understanding of reality by introducing the concept of observer. Even this has been identified as controversial because of the subjectivity involved. (c) All alternate explanations which do not include experiences and consciousness have the same shortcomings. (d) The mathematical rules introduced for calculating the probabilities of actuality of events to occur are mere expectations pertaining to these experiences. (e) The wave function as proposed is the quantum analog of the corresponding classical equation of motion. The part dealing with mind enters into the scheme only to the extent that it may pick out 'reality' from an enormous mass of potentialities. (f) Consciousness of self involves streams of thought. Each part of which can remember those events that went before (note that memory of past events resides in consciousness). When an event is to take place, all past experiences are recalled. And only that event which is actualized to occur is realized by collapse of other wave functions; the collapse of waves is, as suggested, caused by consciousness. One can say that "each conscious event is a new entity that arises from the ashes of the old".

This brings the updated interpretation of quantum theory closest to Iqbal's vision of consciousness (ego). The above discussion leads us to suggest that quantum theory itself is converted from a 'half house' (as proposed by the Copenhagen group) to 'full-house' (completeness) when consciousness is injected into the particle-wave as has been repeatedly proposed. For us in terms of unified theory it would mean that neither dualism nor monistic materialism provides a full explanation for the role of consciousness (self) neither in verifiable experience nor in inner religious experience. Iqbal's thesis on the subject in the *Reconstruction* points in same direction.

In support of the updated version of quantum theory, Pauli's remarks are worth consideration – "element of pure chance to embark on ontological discussion of the cause of the actualization entails assuming that the element of pure chance that occurs in contemporary quantum theory is merely a mass of ignorance of the true cause, which must necessarily be highly non local (Mermin, 1994)". The only way to locate the cause lies in the fact that actualizations must come from the experiential aspect of things. In the same vein Arthur Eddington observed: "the quantum world is more like a 'giant mind' than like the 'giant machine' described by

classical mechanics. For, the evolving state represents vector not ‘substance’, but rather a ‘probability’ for something to happen, and probability is normally considered to be a subjective or mental sort of thing, not a material reality. The second part of quantum reality is the ‘actual’ event, which Heisenberg contrasts with the ‘potentia’ from which the event arises. The ‘actual’ specifies what is able to be experienced: only the actualized branches can be experienced. This connection of the actual to experience is strengthened by the Wigner-von-Neumann proposal, which is essentially to *identify* the actual with experience. “

All that we have stated about the relationship of consciousness and quantum theory (Stapp’s version) has important bearing on Iqbal’s vision of ‘inner religious experience’. For the first time in the history of physics Von-Neumann – Stapp inclusion of consciousness in the quantum theory opens the way for interpreting Iqbal’s consciousness– ego scheme accommodating to the possible extent the view point of quantum physicists. It is becoming increasingly obvious from the recent works of particle physicists like Bohm, Von-Neumann and Stapp (op. cit) that (a) consciousness (ego, mind) is a non material entity, (b) like the self it controls the brain (see also Eccles, (1994), (c) whereas, Stapp’s work is an attempt to develop a complete quantum theory, yet, it remains confined to the understanding of the physical reality of the world but does not include the genesis of mystic experience. Agreeing with Iqbal we postulate that experiences whether verifiable (normal) or non-verifiable (inner religious experience) are holistic and subject to same parameters as identified for a complete quantum theory. This, in our opinion, as Iqbal has stated, brings science and philosophy closer together. In terms of unified theory which we are proposing, it can be gain said that neither dualism nor monistic materialism provides complete answer for interpreting inner religious experience. What then should be the answer?, For this we are proposing that explaining all types of experiences, the only holistic approach lies in introducing the concept of **monistic spiritualism**. This fits into the scheme of Iqbal when all his views as expressed in the *Reconstruction* are related to major advances made in the field of particle physics and thus in the updated quantum theory. The accompanying diagram summarizes our concept of unified theory (monistic spiritualism) in the light of Iqbal’s views supported by recent researches.

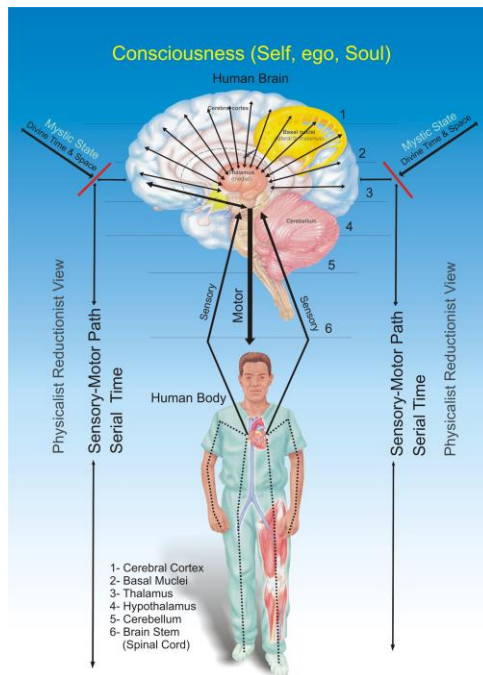
To conclude this article it would be appropriate to present a summary of the views expressed here. **First**, we maintain with Iqbal

the non-materiality and immortality of ego (Soul, Consciousness, Self); meaning thereby that there is no spiritual death. **Second**, ample evidence has been provided for the freedom of ego as a modicum of transcendental emanation of Directive energy which permeates all living and non-living matter and was in place even prior to the big bang. For this we have relied heavily on new physical approaches, for instance the existence of sub-physical oceans of energy (10^{108} J/ cm^3), which is not subject to Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty, nor to Einstein's relativity paradigm. The nexus between sub-physical energy and Directive energy has been postulated, yet much more is required to be discovered about its influence on non-local phenomenon witnessed in psycho-kinesis, that is, passage of thought from one human to another or even to other living organisms. Such evidences from the sub-physical world do have implications for the separation of serial time and space from Divine time and space, as well as for the non-physical ego (Soul, Consciousness, Self), endowed with property of non-local influence on the brain. **Third**, on the Biological side we have further strengthened Iqbal's concept of creative evolution under the spell of Directive energy, inherent in the principle of "ontogeny repeats phylogeny" or in the structure and function of DNA, and ancient memory of antibodies. **Fourth**, Inner religious experience whether taken subjectively or objectively clearly stands on the same legitimate grounds as the normal experience (verifiable). Thus, unlike Kant, it can now be argued that what cannot be observed or measured does not mean that it does not exist. This aspect receives support from such examples as the theoretical existence of quarks and even gluons. **Fifth**, the viewpoint of reductionists that every act, including consciousness (Ego, Self, Soul), can be explained through a process of reduction of physical structures of the brain, has been shown to have little relevance. Balance of evidence indicates that monistic materialism is not a theory of choice in as much as mind-body relationship is concerned. Same is true of dualism in the form put up by Descartes. Certainly, the concepts of Popper, Eccles and Iqbal are more germane to the validity of mind-body problem. Similarly, Watson's theory of Enformy provides high support for the existence of consciousness (Ego, Self); as a non-physical entity, (provided that its agnostic spiritualism is held back). **Sixth**, There is abundant direct evidence that brain in company with consciousness plays a dominant role in the activity of the body through the thalamus, cortex and more importantly the PIMs, when sensory-motor pathways are in operation. **Seventh**, it is hypothesized that

in mystic states when the subject is in a period of stillness (a period in which sensory-motor activity is suppressed), consciousness plays its unique role, elevating the mystic into Divine time and space under unitary experience for contact with the Infinite. **Finally**, our analysis undertaken so far assigns a dual role to consciousness (Ego, Self) integrating sensory-motor stimuli on the one hand and performing a unique role in the mystic state under the spell of Directive energy on the other hand as is hypothetically imaged in 2.

Legend to figure 2. The picture is imaginary and depicts the relationship of human consciousness in two modes. In mode A consciousness regulates the activity of the brain in sensory-motor responses. In mode B, for example, during inner religious experience (mystic state) when all motor sensory stimuli are eliminated, higher consciousness comes into play and the state of the mind is elevated to Divine time Divine Space. This is a possible period of contact between the finite and the infinite. Note the flow of sensory and motor messages during the activity of the brain in periods when normal verifiable experience is operative. Note also that in mode B the level of experience is different. Yet the picture reflects the holistic experience repeatedly emphasized by Iqbal in the *Reconstruction*.

Figure 2



Notes and Reference

- ¹ Durrant, W., *The Story of Philosophy*, Washington, Square Press, New York. 1933.
- ² Eccles, J. C., *How Self Controls Its Brain* Springer-Verlag, Berlin. 1994.
- ³ Watson, D. E. and Williams, O., *Eccle's Model of Self Controlling the Brain*, Neuroquantology, 1:19, 2003.
- ⁴ Penrose, R., *Shadows of Mind*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989.
- ⁵ Watson, D. E. and Williams, O., *op. cit.*, 2003.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Pratt, D., Consciousness, Casualty and Quantum Physics, *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 11:1, 1997.
- ⁹ Bohm, D. Hiley, B. J., *The Undivided Universe: An Ontological Interpretation of Quantum Theory*, Routledge, New York. 1997.
- ¹⁰ Dennet, D. C., *Consciousness Explained*, Little Brown, Boston, 1991.
- ¹¹ Dennet, D. C., *Ibid.*, 1991.
- ¹² Penrose, R., *op. cit.*, 1989.
- ¹³ Iqbal, M., *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam: Edited by M, Saeed Shaikh*. Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore: 2003.
- ¹⁴ Eccles, J. C., *op. cit.*, 1994.
- ¹⁵ Dainton, B., *Stream of Consciousness*, Routledg, New York, 2000.
- ¹⁶ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, Trans. Kemp Smith. Macmillan, London, 1982.
- ¹⁷ Forman, R. K. C What does Mysticism Have to Teach us About Consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Sciences*, 5:2, 1998.
- ¹⁸ Dainton, B., *op. cit.*, 2000.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Iqbal, M., *op. cit.*, 2003.
- ²¹ Forman, R. K. C., *op. cit.*, 1998.
- ²² Iqbal, M., *op. cit.*, 99.
- ²³ Iqbal, M., *op. cit.*, 2003.
- ²⁴ Forman, R. K. C., *op. cit.*, 1998.
- ²⁵ Eccles, J. C., *op. cit.*, 1994.
- ²⁶ Wason, D. and Williams, O., *op. cit.*, 2003.
- ²⁷ Bohm, D. and Hiley, B. J., *op. cit.*, 1993.
- ²⁸ Popper, K. R. and Eccles, J. C., *The Self and Its Brain*, Sringer-Verlag, Berlin, 1977.
- ²⁹ Scott, A., *Stairway to the Mind*. Springer-Verlag, New York, 1995.
- ³⁰ Hebb, D. O., *The Organization of Behavior*, Wiley, New York, 1949.
- ³¹ Hebb, D. O., *Essay on Mind*, Lawrance Erlbaum Associates, New York, 1980.
- ³² Schrodinger's, Lectures delivered in Trinity College Cambridge on Mind and Matter, 1956.

-
- 33 Penrose, R., *The Emperor's New Mind*, Oxford University, Oxford, 1989.
- 34 Krick, F. and Koch, C., Towards Neurtobiological Theory of Consciousness. *Semin, Neurosc*, 2:263, 1990.
- 35 Dennet, C., *op. cit.*, 1991.
- 36 Pervaiz, G. A., *Lughat Al-Arabi*.
- 37 Penrose, R., *op. cit.* (1989).
- 38 Hawkins, S., *Brief History of Time*, Barton Books, 1988.
- 39 Hawkins, S., *Ibid.*, 1988.
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 Darwin, C., *The Origin of Species*, 1859.
- 42 Eccles, J. C., *op. cit.*, 1994.
- 43 Iqbal, M., *op. cit.*, 2003.
- 44 Bohm, D. and Hiley, B. J., *op. cit.*, 1993.
- 45 Bohm, D and Peat, F. D., *Sciences Oder and Creativity*, Routledge, London, 1989.
- 46 Gell-Mann, M., *Quark and the Jaguar*, W. H. Freeman and Company, New York, 1994.
- 47 Watson, D., The Enformy Page (See web page: [http:// www.enformy.com/\\$enformy.html](http://www.enformy.com/$enformy.html)).
- 48 Iqbal, M., *op. cit.*, 2003.
- 49 Pratt, D., Consciousness, Casualty and Quantum Physics, *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 11:1, 1997.
- 50 Bohm, D., Causality and Chance in *Modern Physics*, *Routledge and Kegan Paul*, 1984.
- 51 Weber, R., *Dialogues with Scientist and Sages: Research for Unity*. Arkana, London, 1990.
- 52 Eccles, J. C., *op. cit.*, 1994.
- 53 Pratt, D., *op. cit.*, 1997.
- 54 Thronton, M., *Do We Have Free Will?* Classical Press, Bristol, 1989.
- 55 Pratt, D., *op. cit.*, 1997.
- 56 Iqbal, M., *op. cit.*, 2003.
- 57 *Ibid.*
- 58 Eccles, J. C., *op. cit.*, 1994.
- 59 Watson, D. E., *op. cit.*, 1993.
- 60 Bohm, D. and Hiley, B. J., *op. cit.*, 1993.
- 61 Pratt, D., *op. cit.*, 1997.
- 62 Boughton, R. S., *Parapsychology: The Controversial Science*, Vallantine Books, New York, 1991.
- 63 John, R. G. and Dunne, B. J. *Margins of Reality: The Role of Consciousness in Physical World*, Harcourt Brace, New York, 1987.
- 64 Inglis, B., Science of Parascience, *A History of Para-normal*, Hoddr and Stoughton, London, 1984.
- 65 Milton, R., *Forbidden Science: Suppressed Research that could Change our Life*, Forth Estate, London, 1994.
- 66 Tilner, W. A., What are Subtle Energies? *Journals of Scientific Exploration*, 7:3,

- 293, 1993.
- ⁶⁷ Crick, F., *The Astonishing Hypothesis: Scientific Search for Soul*, Scribner's Sons, New York, 1994.
- ⁶⁸ Hamer of, S. R., Quantum Coherence in Microtubules: Neural Basis of Emergent Consciousness, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 1:1, 91, 1994.
- ⁶⁹ Sperry, R. W., Holding Course among shifting paradigms, in *New Metaphysics Foundation of Science* Ed. W. Harman with J. Clark. Institute of Neotic Science, 1994.
- ⁷⁰ Dennet, D. C., *op. cit.*, 1991.
- ⁷¹ Mitchell, E. and Williams, O., *The Way of the Explorer: An Apollo Astronaut's Journey through the Material and Metaphysical Worlds*, Putman, New York, 1996.
- ⁷² Eccles, J. C., *op. cit.*, 1994.
- ⁷³ Watson, D., *op. cit.*, 1993.
- ⁷⁴ Eccles, J. C., *op. cit.*, 1994.
- ⁷⁵ Pratt, D., *op. cit.*, 1997.
- ⁷⁶ Popper, K. R and Eccles, J. C., *op. cit.*, 1977.
- ⁷⁷ Eccles, J. C., *op. cit.*, 1994.
- ⁷⁸ Bohm, D., *op. cit.*, 1984.
- ⁷⁹ Watson, D., *op. cit.*, 1993.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ⁸¹ Ibid.
- ⁸² Ibid.
- ⁸³ Watson, D. and Williams, O., *op. cit.*, 2003.
- ⁸⁴ Watson, D., *op. cit.*, 1993.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ⁸⁶ Iqbal, M., *op. cit.*, 2003.
- ⁸⁷ Forman, R. K. C., *op. cit.*, 1998.
- ⁸⁸ Pratt, D., *op. cit.*, 1997.
- ⁸⁹ Iqbal, M., *op. cit.*, 2003.

RECONCILING MODERNITY,
POSTMODERNISM, AND TRADITION: A
CRITIQUE OF ENLIGHTENMENT
THROUGH AN ISLAMIC LENS

Muhammad Suheyl Umar

ABSTRACT

The intellectual and cultural transition from Modernity to Postmodernism in the late twentieth century is often seen as a response to growing relativism and the erosion of traditional values. Postmodernism challenged the Enlightenment's faith in reason, replacing it with skepticism and relativism, but this shift had deeper roots. Even before Postmodernism took center stage, thinkers diagnosed the decline in traditional metaphysical and moral frameworks, proposing critiques and remedies aimed at spiritual and intellectual reform. Their efforts called for a renewed examination of metaphysics, traditional sciences, and spiritual traditions, stressing the importance of intellectual discernment and spiritual realization. The article by Basit, "Studying the Western Other, Understanding the Islamic Self: A Qur'anically Reasoned Perspective," offers a unique integration of Western modern experiences with Islamic spiritual outlooks. This critique of the Enlightenment's paradigm invites a reconsideration of settled convictions, particularly regarding the Enlightenment's rejection of transcendence and its consequences for human rationality and spiritual life. Basit's work encourages dialogue between Islamic and Western intellectual traditions, advocating for a synthesis of Enlightenment values, like individualism and universalism, with Islamic principles. This discourse leads to a re-evaluation of how Postmodernism, while critical of Modernity, also falls short in addressing metaphysical truths and spiritual dimensions. The article argues that contemporary thinkers must engage with the Enlightenment critically, rejecting its flaws while acknowledging its contributions. Ultimately, the call is for a "redeem-reform-embrace" approach, aiming to reconcile the best of Modernity, Postmodernism, and Islamic tradition, fostering an enriched understanding of both the self and the 'Other.' This synthesis could lead to a more balanced, spiritually rooted intellectual outlook that transcends the limitations of both Modern and Postmodern paradigms.

Postmodernism took hold of the intellectual scene during the later half of the twentieth century. It was well before its occupying the centre stage, while Modernity held its sway, that, amidst an erosion of earlier cultural values as well as a blurring of the distinctive characteristics of the world's traditional civilizations—giving rise to philosophic and moral relativism, multiculturalism, and dangerous fundamentalist reactions—many thinkers diagnosed these tendencies and suggested various remedies. Best among these were characterized by a foundational critique of the modern world coupled with a call for intellectual reform; a renewed examination of metaphysics, the traditional sciences, and symbolism, with special reference to the ultimate unanimity of all spiritual traditions; and finally, a call to the work of spiritual realization. It was in the wake of Postmodernism that we hear a sage saying the following:

... it should be pointed out that if the West needs the East, the latter also has need of the West— not of the West as such, of course, but of such few thinkers in the West as have managed to integrate their experiences of the modern world in a traditional and spiritual outlook that might, if one likes, be described as “oriental” or “mediaeval”. When in contact with the West, Orientals generally display an astonishing lack of suspicion and this can be explained by the fact that the modern world, while being a “necessary evil”, is not a normal possibility. Now the Western elite to which we are referring is endowed with a “discernment of spirits” and a sense of proportion that often are lacking in Orientals; the latter, however, today stand greatly in need of these particular qualities, not on the still uncontaminated soil of their own civilisation where they understand what they are doing, but outside it in a chaotic world that violates every framework and insinuates itself everywhere.”¹

Basit is an Oriental by lineage but living in the West and receiving his entire education in the Western Academic world has given him the opportunity to “integrate his experiences of the modern world in a traditional and spiritual outlook.” The recent outcome, his article “Studying the Western Other, Understanding the Islamic Self: A Qur’anicly Reasoned Perspective” has offered me the possibility to reconsider and re-evaluate certain settled convictions about the Enlightenment paradigm and the issue of the Western Other and to revisit the ‘half-truths’ that used to create obstacles to an appreciation of the point in question. I would have

preferred to begin my response on a non personal note but since his article has held a mirror to my thinking and has challenged the mode of interpretation used for studying Modernity, I have been goaded into responding otherwise. It has changed the frontiers of my views on the matter and, in some cases at least, has pulled down the isolating walls that separated one perspective from another. The destruction of such walls may be an evil; but the virtues it helped to promote are indispensable and must be supported by other means. In what follows I have tried to explore these other means. But first let me mention a host of questions that assailed me during reading his article and think loudly about some of the premises which inform Basit's vision and see if these lead to a few complications, at least from my lights.

Basit speaks of "the twin tasks of dissension and affirmation from within *the reality of the modern world*"² (Basit, p. 4) that Islam has to undertake for successfully "squaring of the circle." As could be surmised from the general thrust of the argument in the article *the reality of the modern world* is equated with the Enlightenment paradigm and its social program that was "most consistently and systematically institutionalized in the modern, secular West." (Basit, p. 9) Can we refer to *the reality of the modern world* as a monolithic whole or there is a need to differentiate between the conceptual shifts that distinguish Modernity from the Postmodern and "beyond-Postmodern"³ paradigms? According to my lights a distinction needs to be made on at least two counts; the obsessive concern with *society* that is a hallmark of Postmodernism as well as its radical departure from "Enlightenment philosophy's categorically rejects the limited and relational character of the human mind/reason" and "enshrinement of reason" (Basit, p. 5, 21) espoused by the Enlightenment paradigm to a position that could be termed as "the collapse of faith in reason's power, thus to hold court."⁴ This would entail, for the obvious reason, that we take a different and perhaps more challenging set of "difficulties inherent" into consideration that arise with Postmodernism and its aftermath. I will have the occasion to say something more on this point later.

The same remark holds good for philosophy. "Concern with wisdom, illumination and the Divine" (Basit, p. 4) was shared by pre-modern religious traditions and classical philosophy and "philosophy as a means of "attaining wisdom" was seen as being inseparable from the choice of a particular way of life (Basit, p. 5).⁵ Both the Enlightenment paradigm and its Postmodern and beyond-

Postmodern conceptual shifts profoundly differ from this shared vision of the entire pre-Modern world. They are, however, not similar in their disagreement, hence cannot be subsumed under a single disclaimer. If the Enlightenment paradigm revolted against the pre-Modern in the name of a Promethean humanism resulting in an “enshrinement of autonomous human reason” and claimed that there is an objective, universally applicable court of appeal that can adjudicate between worldviews, determining their truth or falsity, Postmodernism is relativistic, nihilistic and signifies loss of faith in reason’s power.⁶ This remark allows for a digression.

Somewhere, during the course of its historical development, western thought took a sharp turn in another direction. It branched off as a tangent from the collective heritage of all humanity and claimed the autonomy of reason. It chose to follow that reason alone, unguided by revelation and cut off from the Intellect that was regarded as its transcendent root.⁷ Political and social realms quickly followed suit. Autonomous statecraft and excessive individualism in the social order were the elements that shaped a dominant paradigm that did not prove successful.⁸ A few centuries of unbridled activity led Western philosophy to an impasse.⁹

Commenting upon the situation, Huston Smith remarked, “the deepest reason for the crisis in philosophy is its realization that autonomous reason— reason without infusions that both power and vector it— is helpless. By itself, reason can deliver nothing apodictic. Working, as it necessarily must, with variables, variables are all it can come up with. The Enlightenment’s “natural light of reason” turns out to have been a myth. Reason is not itself a light. It is more than a conductor, for it does more than transmit. It seems to resemble an adapter which makes useful translations but on condition that it is powered by a generator.”¹⁰ The nature and direction of these “infusions” is still being debated.¹¹

Clearly aware of reason’s contingency, medieval philosophy attached itself to theology as its handmaiden. Earlier, Plato too had accepted reason’s contingency and grounded his philosophy in intuitions that are discernible by the “eye of the soul” but not by reason without it. In the seventeenth century, though, responding to the advent of modern science with the controlled experiment as its new and powerful way of getting at truth, philosophy unplugged from theology. Bacon and Comte were ready to replug it at once, this time into science, but there were frequencies science still couldn’t register, so philosophy took off on its own.

Modern philosophy took off in the seventeenth century by declaring its independence from theology; Descartes set it on its course by dedicating it to the proposition that reason, its instrument, can stand on its own. An important reason for thinking that modernity has come to an end is that its faith in autonomous reason has now collapsed. Recent developments in beyond-Postmodern (or reversionary Postmodern) theology indicate that, finding the Modern (read Enlightenment) position untenable, it now claims that its reason should not be called autonomous and therefore Modern, for it insists that it is not autonomous: reason in their view must be supplemented by vision. But this *augmented reason* still continues to look Modern to my lights in claiming the power to winnow the visions that supplement it, accepting or rejecting them by the standards it imposes.¹²

This brings us to the core issue of the *shared ground*. If Tradition, Modernity and Postmodernism are so radically apart on the question of reason and human rationality how can we safely speak of a *shared ground*? “Because of the Enlightenment’s rejection of the traditional religious/philosophical understanding of wisdom, illumination and the Divine *human reason/mind*¹³ are left as the only *shared ground*¹⁴ on which the dissenting voice and the dominant paradigm can relate to each other. Consequently, if the squaring of the circle is to be done as a dissenting voice from within the modern world then the following conditions will have to be met: a) human mind/reason be the court of appeal for all critique/complaints and b) human mind/reason be the foundation on which all principles are affirmed/stand.” (Basit, p. 7) All religious/wisdom traditions and almost all pre-modern philosophy drew a sharp distinction between *ratio* and *intellectus* inasmuch as the latter operates intuitively and directly and were unanimous that reason operated in the restricted region of the mind’s domain. Modernity, Postmodernism and, to a large extent,¹⁵ beyond-Postmodern theology (or reversionary Postmodern) are at the antipodes of this view. I need not go into the details of the issue here as we are all well aware of the problem. The point I like to register is that it is difficult to see how, in the absence of a shared definition of reason and human rationality and with the collapse of faith in a universally applicable court of appeal, critiques/complaints could be addressed meaningfully and how the dissenting voice and the dominant paradigm can relate to each other?

Citing the examples of “squaring the circles in the past” in the case “of numerous non-Arab cultural configurations” (Basit, p. 8) he has mentioned the pre Islamic Arab civilization as well where “... the prophetic witness offers a revelatory affirmation of some of the real but dormant aspirations and potentialities at the very heart of its socio-cultural environment, whose emergence and maturation is being forestalled by neglect and forgetfulness.” (Basit, p. 9) The argument culminates in saying that “there has to be an Islamic affirmation of some of the deepest aspirations that are at the heart of the Enlightenment project.” (Basit, p. 9) According to my lights this seems to be a problematic analogy. No socio-cultural environment in the pre-Modern times had turned its back on Transcendence in the systematic way that characterized Modernity. The Arabs of the times of the Prophet had many dormant virtues and they had principles. Their principles were lacking in height, confined to the horizontal plane, without any consciousness of the relationship between human virtues and the Divine Qualities of which they are the reflections. None the less, human virtues cannot exist without their archetypes, which is another way of saying that in these men the apparently missing link was not absent but dormant; and inevitably the degree of dormancy varied from man to man. The prophetic witness triggered its awakening. It derives its legitimacy from the inherent principles and practice of the Islamic Tradition itself. Islamic Tradition, from its vantage point of being the summer-up, incorporated— obviously with alterations, amendments, abrogations and adaptations— the “Judeo-Christian” elements; especially the legal (or Shariite, in the technical sense of the word) aspects of the Mosaic code and the esoteric elements of the Christian message. These elements were brought to perfection in addition to the specifically Islamic aspects of the new faith in the Islamic revelation. This process, as it was accomplished on a purely vertical plane, had the stamp of divine sanction on it which distinguished it from any subsequent attempts that the Islamic community may had envisaged in the same direction. Nevertheless it had the significant role of setting the example for integrating ideas and symbols of pre-Islamic origin into the unitary perspective of Islam and its general framework. This could not be the case of a mindset which is woven out of a rejection of Transcendence. Enlightenment paradigm rejected Transcendence or a certain interpretation of it that denied human reason its legitimate rights and refused to meet its demands. This is a question that defies neat solutions and needs further deliberations to which I would return later.

Let me begin with an important clarification because my observations noted above may have led the readers to believe that I see the Enlightenment paradigm flawed on all counts. That is not the case. I have voiced my reservations about one, albeit a fundamental and very important, aspect of the Enlightenment project. I will rely on Huston Smith to make the point for me.

A worldview is an inclusive outlook, and it is useful to distinguish its social, cosmological, and metaphysical components. The social component of past worldviews included, at times, justifications for slavery and the divine right of kings, while its cosmological components described the physical universe as understood by the science of the day— Ptolemaic astronomy or whatever. The contents of those two components obviously change, so are not perennial. The perennial, unchanging philosophy is metaphysical, or more precisely, ontological. It concerns such matters as the distinction between the Absolute and the relative, and the doctrine of the degrees of reality that is consequent thereon.¹⁶

Following this threefold criteria I would like say a few words about the Metaphysical, Cosmological and Sociological achievements/shortcomings of Tradition, Modernity and Postmodernism, respectively. In doing so I am responding to Basit's assertion "it must be the case that the Enlightenment has two sides— one pointing to God and the other pointing away from Him." (Basit, p. 23) This is a very pertinent question because if the Enlightenment paradigm has its virtues and human virtues cannot exist without their archetypes how did Enlightenment come to possess these virtues without any consciousness of the relationship between human virtues and the Divine Qualities of which they are the reflections? Is that a phenomenon similar to the pre Islamic Arabia? Before we say anything on it let us have a brief overview of the Metaphysical, Cosmological and Sociological achievements/shortcomings of Tradition, Modernity and Postmodernism.¹⁷

When we align these problems with the three¹⁸ major periods in human history: the traditional period,¹⁹ the Modern period,²⁰ and Postmodernism,²¹ it is obvious that each of these periods poured more of its energies into, and did better by, one of life's inescapable problems than did the other two. Specifically, Modernity gave us our view of *nature*,²² Postmodernism is tackling *social injustices* more resolutely than people previously did. This leaves *worldviews*—metaphysics as distinct from cosmology, which restricts itself to the empirical universe— for our ancestors, whose accomplishments on

that front have not been improved upon.²³ Let us shuffle the historical sequence of the periods and proceed topically— from nature, through society, to the Big Picture, tying each topic to the period that did best by it. Modernity first, then Postmodernity, leaving the traditional period for last.

Cosmological Achievements of Modernity

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Europe stumbled on a new way of knowing that we refer to as the *scientific method*. It centres in the controlled experiment and has given us modern science²⁴ which adds proof to generic science by its controlled experiment. True hypotheses can be separated from false ones, and brick by brick an edifice has been erected from those proven truths. We commonly call that edifice the *scientific worldview*, but *scientific cosmology* is more precise because of the ambiguity of the word *world*. The scientific edifice is a *worldview* only for those who assume that science can in principle take in all that exists. The scientific cosmology is so much a part of the air we breathe that it is hardly necessary to describe it.²⁵ Taught from primary schools onward, this story is so familiar that further details would only clutter things.

Tradition's Cosmological Shortcomings

That this scientific cosmology retires traditional ones with their six days of creation and the like goes without saying. Who can possibly question that when the scientific cosmology has landed people on the moon?²⁶ And there is another point. There is a naturalism in Taoism, Zen Buddhism, Islamic Cosmological doctrines and tribal outlooks that in its own way rivals science's calculative cosmology, but that is the naturalism of the artist, the poet, and the nature lover²⁷ not that of Galileo and Bacon. For present purposes, aesthetics is irrelevant. Modern cosmology derives from laboratory experiments, not landscape paintings.

Postmodernism's Cosmological Shortcomings

With traditional cosmology out of the running, the question turns to Postmodernism. Because science is cumulative, it follows as a matter of course that the cosmology we have in the twenty-first century is an improvement over what we had in the middle of the twentieth, which on my timeline is when modernity phased into Postmodernity. But the refinements that postmodern scientists (it is well to say postmodern *physics* here) have achieved have not affected life to anything like the degree that postmodern social thrusts have, so the social Oscar is the one Postmodernists are

most entitled to.²⁸ Be that as it may, Postmodernism's discoveries (unlike modern discoveries in physics— the laws of gravity, thermodynamics, electromagnetism, relativity theory, and quantum mechanics, which continue to be used to make space shuttles fly and to help us understand how hot electrons behave in semiconductors) have concerned details and exotica.²⁹

Outranking the foregoing reason for not giving the cosmological Oscar to Postmodernism is the fact that the noisiest postmodernists have called into question the very notion of truth by turning claims to truth into little more than power plays.³⁰ This relativizes science's assertions radically and rules out even the possibility of its closing in on the nature of nature.³¹ As there are no neutral standards by which to judge these paradigms, Kuhn's thesis (if unnuanced) leads to relativism among paradigms that places Hottentot science on a par with Newton's. Kuhn himself phrased his thesis carefully enough to parry such relativism, but even taken at its best, it provides no way that science could get to the bottom of things. This demotes the whole enterprise of science as understood by Modernity, and in doing so provides a strong supporting reason for not giving Postmodernism the cosmological prize. It does better with social issues so now we discuss Postmodernism's achievements on the social front.

Postmodernism's Fairness Revolution

The magic word of Postmodernism is society. This is not surprising. With the belief that there is nothing beyond our present world, nature and society are all that remain, and of the two, nature has become the province of specialists.³² This leaves society as the domain that presses on us directly and the one in which there is some prospect of our making a difference. And changes are occurring.³³ A quick rehearsal of some changes that have occurred in a single lifetime makes it clear that social injustices are being recognized and addressed more earnestly today than they were by our ancestors.³⁴

Tradition's Social Shortcomings

These signs of progress acquire additional life when they are set against the unconcern of earlier times regarding such matters. This is another way of saying what Basit has put forward in his question: "Why is it that the modern, secular West has succeeded in institutionalizing these ideals with a degree of consistency than traditional Muslim society?" There is no reason to think that traditional peoples were more callous than we are, but on the whole

they saw their obligations as extending no further than to members of their primary communities: Buddhism's *dana* (gifts), Jesus' "cup of water given in my name," Islam's "pure due" and their likes. Encountered face-to-face, the hungry were fed, the naked were clothed, and widows and orphans were provided for as means allowed, but there human obligations ended. Injustices that were built into institutions (if such injustices were even recognized) were not human beings' responsibility.³⁵

Modernity changed this attitude. Accelerating travel and trade brought encounters between peoples whose societal structures were very different from one another, and these differences showed that such institutions were not like natural laws after all; they were humanly devised and could therefore be critiqued. The French Revolution put this prospect to a historic test; scrapping the divine right of kings, it set out to create a society built on liberty, equality, and fraternity. The experiment failed and the backlash was immediate, but its premise— that societies are malleable— survived.

Modernity's Social Shortcomings

Modernity deserves credit for that discovery, and (if we wished) we might excuse it for its poor handling of its discovery on grounds that it was working with a new idea. The record itself, however, is by Postmodern standards, deplorable. Under the pretext of shouldering "the white man's burden" to minister to "lesser breeds without the law," it ensconced colonialism, which raped Asia and Africa, hit its nadir in the Opium Wars of 1841-42, and ended by subjecting the entire civilized world to Western domination.³⁶

Having dealt with nature and society, let us turn now to the third inescapable issue that human beings must face: the Big Picture.

Modernity's Metaphysical Shortcomings

Modernity was metaphysically sloppy. Ravished by science's accomplishments, it elevated the scientific method to "our sacral mode of knowing" (Alex Comfort), and because that mode registers nothing that is without a material component, immaterial realities at first dropped from view and then (as the position hardened) were denied existence. In the distinction registered earlier, this was metaphysics reduced to cosmology.³⁷ Modernity's Big Picture is materialism or (in its more plausible version) naturalism, which acknowledges that there are immaterial things—

thoughts and feelings, for example— while insisting that those things are totally dependent on matter. Both versions are stunted when compared with the traditional outlook. It is important to understand that neither materialism nor naturalism is required by anything science has discovered in the way of actual facts. We have slid into this smallest of metaphysical positions for psychological, not logical, reasons.

Postmodernity's Metaphysical Shortcomings

As for Postmodernity, it sets itself against the very idea of such a thing as the Big Picture. It got off on the right foot by critiquing the truncated worldview of the Enlightenment, but from that reasonable beginning it plunged on to argue unreasonably that worldviews (often derisively referred to as *grand narratives*) are misguided in principle.³⁸ Stated in the in-house idiom Postmodernists are fond of, worldviews “totalize” by “marginalizing” minority viewpoints. They are oppressive in principle and should be resolutely resisted. If hardcore Postmodernism were accurate in this charge one should stop in one's tracks, but it has not proved that it is accurate— it merely assumes that it is accurate and rests its case on examples of oppression that, of course, are not lacking. What has not been demonstrated is the impossibility of a worldview that builds the rights of minorities into its foundations as an essential building block. There is irony here, for the very Postmodernism that is dismissing the possibility of a comprehensive humane outlook is working toward the creation of such through its fairness revolution— its insistence that everybody be given an equal chance at the goods of life. The deeper fact, however, is that to have or not have a worldview is not an option, for peripheral vision always conditions what we are attending to focally, and in conceptual “seeing” the periphery has no cut off. The only choice we have is to be consciously aware of our worldviews and criticize them where they need criticizing, or let them work on us unnoticed and acquiesce to living unexamined lives.

Tradition's Metaphysical Excellence

Neither Modernity nor Postmodernism handled the metaphysical problem well. It is, of course, no proof that Tradition handled it better. The traditional worldview is so out of favour today that the only possible way to gain a hearing for it is to ease into it, so to speak, by suggesting plausibilities wherever openings for them appear. Describing the traditional worldview and

defending its merits, therefore, comes close to being the object of an entire book.³⁹ I will not try to compress it into a page or two here. The present audience, I presume, agrees that with regard to the Postmodernism's religious alternative, we can speak of it in the singular and simply assume that a common metaphysical "spine" underlies the differences in the theologies of the classical languages of the human soul, the world's great religions. This is coupled with the claims of Tradition that people need worldviews, that reliable ones are possible, and that they already exist.

If mainline and polemical Postmodernism were to recede, the obsession with life's social dimension that they saddled us with would relax and we would find ourselves able to think ontologically again. An important consequence of this would be that we would then perceive how much religious outlooks have in common. For one thing, they all situate the manifest, visible world within a larger, invisible whole.⁴⁰ The further unanimous claim of religious cosmologies, though, finds no echo in science, for (being a value judgment) it is beyond science's reach. Not only is the invisible real; regions of it are more real and of greater worth than the visible, material world.

The inclusive, presiding paradigm for Tradition is the Great Chain of Being, composed of links ranging in hierarchical order from meagre existents up to the *ens perfectissimum*; and the foremost student of that concept, Arthur Lovejoy, reported that "most educated persons everywhere accepted [it] without question down to late in the eighteenth century."⁴¹ To that endorsement, Ken Wilber has added that the Great Chain of Being is "so overwhelmingly widespread... that it is either the single greatest intellectual error ever to appear in humankind's history— an error so colossally widespread as to literally stagger the mind— or it is the single most accurate reflection of reality yet to appear."⁴²

An obvious moral emerges from what has been said. If we run a strainer through our past to lift from each of its three periods the gold it contains and let its dross sink back into the sands of history what do we get? Modernity's gold i. e. science is certain to figure importantly in the third millennium, and Postmodernity's focus on justice likewise stands a good chance of continuing. It is the worldview of Tradition that is in jeopardy and must be rehabilitated if it is to survive. Being more specific, the present challenge to the Muslim world is reversed in the sense that it must learn to be tolerant of a world which threatens its very existence without losing its identity and the secularised West must learn the very difficult

lesson that its Modern and Postmodern understanding of man and the world is not universal. Moreover, since religion does not acknowledge any principles higher than its own, not even the survival of the human race, if asked to establish peace, it will do so in its own way or not at all.

This brings me back to the initial question of the virtues of Enlightenment paradigm. Basit points out that “The Enlightenment break with traditional religion is as much tied to the affirmation of individualism, universalism and materialism as to the rejection of the notions of wisdom, illumination and the Divine” (Basit, p. 10) and “The Enlightenment affirmation of the dignity of the individual, equality before the law and the value of the material/profane world provides Islam with a unique opportunity to be an affirming witness from outside the modern world” (Basit, p. 11) and “This annual circling (Hajj) of the square is the Islamic affirmation of the irreducible dignity of the individual, the equality of all human beings before the law and the spiritual value of the material world and profane acts” (Basit, p. 11) “there are strong elective affinities between the Qur’anic notion of the human being as an individual, humanity on a universal level and the material/profane worlds and the Enlightenment ideals of individualism, universalism and materialism” (Basit, p. 13). This brings us face to face with certain questions: Did in any epoch ever a worldview (and its translation into practice) achieve these “Enlightenment ideals of individualism, universalism and materialism” without turning its back on wisdom, illumination and the Divine? If Islam succeeded in achieving these ideals without paying its price of rejecting Transcendence (Hajj being a palpable example) what was the saving grace? Moreover Hajj is an Abrahamic ritual predating Islam and the Jews only stopped visiting the outlying Meccan Tabernacle of God when the corruption of its custodians had brought crude idolatry to the sacred precinct. Is it true that early Muslim society and, before that, other human collectivities, had achieved these Enlightenment ideals without severing their roots? A negative inference also imposes itself. If these ideals could be achieved without the burden of “wisdom, illumination and the Divine” why bother? If human reason is not autonomous and it needs objective data to operate effectively, what provided the Enlightenment project with its “infusions” with its rejection of wisdom, illumination and the Divine? Iqbal’s “inductive intellect” (Basit, p. 12) is not relevant here as it proceeds in the presence of a revealed knowledge and within the parameters of a wisdom tradition. Do we commit a mistake when we attribute

“rejection of the notions of wisdom, illumination and the Divine” to the Enlightenment paradigm? Is it only a reaction to the social side of the issue, the mixed bag of history that Modernity and, more resolutely, Postmodernity has manifested? As religions are worldviews or metanarratives— inclusive posits concerning the ultimate nature of things— its custodians cannot accept polemical Postmodernism’s contention that on balance they oppress. We have observed that “the magic word of Modernity and of Postmodernity is society.” Our present question bears on it, for it is almost entirely for their social repercussions that Postmoderns fault worldviews. In applying that measuring rod both Modernity and Postmodernity simply assume (they do not argue) that religion does more harm than good.⁴³ Whether this concern with society of Modernity and of Postmodernity is modern or instead modernly conceived, one cannot be sure— the Stoics and Prophets were fairly good on the subject. But we cannot have enough of the concern itself.⁴⁴

Basit continues: “This means that the circling of the square requires a rejection of the uncritical affirmation of tradition (or a particular school within tradition) just as the squaring of the circle requires a rejection of the blind negation of tradition by the zealots and the liberals” the Qur’anic critique of Islamic tradition for its failure to fully express key Islamic ideals in institutional form.” (Basit, p. 17) This is a task which, according to my lights, is innate to the Islamic tradition, its principle of movement. Do we require a reference to the Enlightenment paradigm to be alerted to its importance? If that is the case and we need awakening calls there is no problem with it.

The section dealing with “the Qur’anic treatment of Judaism and Christianity as informing the rationale underpinning the squaring the circle” (Basit, p. 17 *passim*) is very illuminating and I cannot agree more. I would offer only a few brief comments. Firstly, with reference to what has been said about the “shared ground” earlier it should be pointed out here that the critique/affirmation of Judaism and Christianity is the case of two sister wisdom traditions which share the common ground of wisdom, illumination and the Divine with Islam. In the case of Enlightenment no such sharing on principles seems to exist. Secondly his reading of the Qur’anic texts would not please a large number of his coreligionists who are prone to making an exclusivist reading of the inclusivist verses of the Qur’an. The danger of excluding those who can only open up to religious Other on the

basis of upholding the normativity of one's own faith was vividly brought to light by the controversy over the book by the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Jonathan Sacks. The manner in which Dr. Sacks was compelled by senior theologians in his own community to retract certain sentences from his latest book, *The Dignity of Difference*⁴⁵ highlights well the intellectual challenge involved in reaching out to the Other without alienating one's own community. I pray that Basit is spared that fate.

Basit has emphasised the need for “a reasoned/rational critique of the Enlightenment rejection of wisdom, illumination and the Divine” (Basit, p. 17) and accused perennialism and traditionalism of the “most egregious offence” of insinuating that “the Enlightenment is an absolutely unique phenomenon in human history in the sense that it has only one side and that side points away from God” and has emphasized the “most pressing demands of the day to face this paradigm squarely and engage with it constructively.” (Basit, p. 22) My assessment is rather different. It is not because I have deep sympathies or even affinities with some of them. I genuinely believe that the task of facing this paradigm squarely and producing “a reasoned/rational critique of the Enlightenment rejection of wisdom, illumination and the Divine” has been successfully done, to a large extent, by the authors of the same school.⁴⁶ Moreover, the “Perennialists” (Universalist is a better denominator!) are not the only ones who criticize Modernity/ Enlightenment in this vein.⁴⁷ This is also the verdict “beyond-Postmodern” or “reversionary Postmodernism” has passed on Modernity/Enlightenment paradigm. I will let David Ray Griffin make the point for me. David says, “Modernity paradigm, rather than being regarded as the norm for human society toward which all history has been aiming and into which all societies should be ushered— forcibly if necessary— is instead increasingly seen as an aberration. A new respect for the wisdom of traditional societies is growing as we realize that they have endured for thousands of years and that, by contrast, the existence of modern society for even another century seems doubtful. Likewise, Modernity as a worldview is less and less seen as The Final Truth, in comparison with which all divergent worldviews are automatically regarded as “superstitious.” The modern worldview is increasingly relativized to the status of one among many, useful for some purposes, inadequate for others.”⁴⁸

With the “Perennialists” and their ‘crime record’ out of the way we can now turn to “The need for “a reasoned/rational

critique of the Enlightenment rejection of wisdom, illumination and the Divine” (Basit, p. 17). S. H. Nasr, a prominent Perennialist, has time and again argued for the need emphasizing the rational approach and mode of engagement. “Today in the West, as well as in the Islamic world itself, there is an ever greater need to study both the principles and manifestations of Islam from its own authentic point of view and a manner comprehensible to contemporary man, or at least to one who possesses sufficient intelligence and good intentions. Moreover, this needs to be achieved by using methods of analysis and description which are at once logical and in conformity with the Islamic perspective; for this latter places the highest value upon intelligence (*al-'aql*) and logic, which is inseparable from it, although of course the transcendent realities cannot be reduced to logical categories. This type of writing which can ‘translate’ Islamic teachings into a contemporary idiom without betraying it is very important not only for non-Muslims who wish to learn about Islam but most of all for young Muslims, who are now mainly products of modern educational systems.”⁴⁹

Demands of reason should be satisfied— both the Perennialists and the “beyond-Postmodernism” or “reversionary Postmodernism” agree, but where they part company is in defining reason and its role/function in creating “a reasoned/rational critique of the Enlightenment rejection...” Huston Smith makes the point in the following remarks. “Whitehead’s categories are demanding, but they *do* in the end fit into our three dimensional reason, from which it follows that to fit God into them is to position her inside our limited understanding. This translates into putting God in a cage. Religion must, to be sure, be intelligible in certain ways, but to try to make it *rationaly* intelligible, fully so, is to sound its death knell. (In keeping with Perennialists generally, I draw a sharp distinction between *ratio* and *intellectus* inasmuch as the latter operates intuitively and directly.) It is to squeeze the *pneuma*— a word usually translated as *spirit*, but etymologically deriving from *breath* or *air*— out of it, leaving us with what someone has called “flat-tire” theology. I realize that my rejection of Whitehead’s “onto-logical principle” here will sound like mystery-mongering to process theologians, but, apart from the pejorative in the word mongering, I welcome the charge. *Vis-a-vis* most modern and postmodern theology, I side with Sir Thomas Browne, who complained in his *Religio Medici* that the religion he typically heard preached did not contain sufficient impossibilities, adding that it is “no vulgar part of

faith” to believe things not only above but contrary to reason and against the evidence proper to our senses.”⁵⁰

In the present context we are concerned with the preliminary stage of removing obstacles which make it difficult or impossible for the mind to understand. Intelligence has its rights, and these have not always been upheld by the representatives of religion. Agreed. The mental faculties need to be appeased and re-assured; and to this end religion has no option but to sacrifice certain half truths, not to speak of mere suppositions and conjectures, which in the past were considered as powerful motives for loving God ‘with all thy soul and with all thy strength’ and a lack of which lead the Enlightenment thinkers to the revolt mentioned so often in this paper.⁵¹

I am also troubled by the thought that if Enlightenment could be considered as “a post-traditional expression of monotheistic ideals” (Basit, p. 11) and “the Enlightenment offered a more rational and comprehensible description of human will, human freedom and human consciousness than was possible prior to it” (Basit, p. 25) What kept Providence waiting so long to actualize its ideals and that only through an instrument which ostensibly rejected “wisdom, illumination and the Divine”? Basit’s assertion, according to my lights, needs a strict qualifier here. I would read it as “the Enlightenment reasserted a more rational and comprehensible description of human will, human freedom and human consciousness than was possible in its milieu.” According to my lights, it would be more accurate to say that Enlightenment was a case similar to that of Islamic science which influenced the West and provided it with foundations for its scientific enterprise but had a different trajectory in the West and resulted in a very different ethos.⁵² Deliberation on this aspect of the issue may give us insights about the two faces of the Enlightenment paradigm.

This entails that while correcting Enlightenment on its rejections and claims of autonomous reason and emphasizing the essential requirement of “vectored reason”, legitimate demands of reason should also be upheld. This does not mean— we add by way of a word of caution— that consciousness should be reduced to rationality alone i. e. discursive thought⁵³ or reason severed from its transcendent noetic roots,⁵⁴ since, to borrow the words of Iqbal, “The Total reality..... has other ways of invading our consciousness”⁵⁵; there are “non-rational modes of consciousness”⁵⁶; “there is the possibility of unknown levels of consciousness”⁵⁷ and “there are

potential types of consciousness⁵⁸ lying close to our normal consciousness”.⁵⁹

On the practical level we are dealing with a received body of thought and praxis which, despite the Postmodern critiques of its conceptual foundations, continues to hold its sway in many ways. By head count the West is still Modern. Not only that; Enlightenment, its “rejection of the notions of wisdom, illumination and the Divine” and claims of autonomous reason, have perpetuated, in “reified/dogmatic assertions” (Basit, p. 27). We are dealing, not with Voltaire but, to use John Ralston Saul’s term, with “Voltaire’s bastards” responsible for dissolution of human values and the rejections mentioned above.⁶⁰

Karen Armstrong has a very pertinent remark in her chapter on “Enlightenment” in *A History of God*. Concerning Voltaire she observed:⁶¹

The philosophers of the Enlightenment did not reject the idea of God, however. They rejected the cruel God of the orthodox who threatened mankind with eternal fire. They rejected mysterious doctrines about him that were abhorrent to reason. But their belief in a Supreme Being remained intact. Voltaire built a chapel at Femey with the inscription ‘Deo Erexit Voltaire’ inscribed on the lintel and went so far as to suggest that if God had not existed it would have been necessary to invent him. In the *Philosophical Dictionary*, he had argued that faith in one god was more rational and natural to humanity than belief in numerous deities. Originally people living in isolated hamlets and communities had acknowledged that a single god had control of their destinies: polytheism was a later development. Science and rational philosophy both pointed to the existence of a Supreme Being: ‘What conclusion can we draw from all this?’ he asks at the end of his essay on ‘Atheism’ in the *Dictionary*. He replies:

*That atheism is a monstrous evil in those who govern; and also in learned men even if their lives are innocent, because from their studies they can affect those who hold office; and that, even if it is not as baleful as fanaticism, it is nearly always fatal to virtue. Above all, let me add that there are fewer atheists today than there have ever been, since philosophers have perceived that there is no vegetative being without germ, no germ without design etc.*⁶²

Voltaire equated atheism with the superstition and fanaticism that the philosophers were so anxious to eradicate. His problem was not God but the doctrines about him which offended against the sacred standard of reason.

The question of reason in the Enlightenment paradigm and its subsequent reification could be read in a different light too. Schuon has remarked:⁶³

In speaking of the great theophanies— Beyond-Being, Being and Divine Centre of Existence, or Self, Lord and Logos-Intellect— mention has also been made of the human intellect (this being referable to the Logos), which is ‘neither created nor uncreated’: it is thus possible, if desired, to distinguish a fourth theophany, namely, the Logos reflected in the microcosm; this is the same Divine Logos, but manifesting itself ‘inwardly’ rather than ‘outwardly’. If ‘no man cometh unto the Father but by Me’, this truth or this principle is equally applicable to the pure Intellect in ourselves: in the sapiential order— and it is only in this order that we may speak of Intellect or intellectuality without making implacable reservations— it is essential to submit all the powers of the soul to the pure Spirit, which is identified, but in a supra-formal and ontological manner, with the fundamental dogma of the Revelation.

Its degeneration is what is relevant to our present discussion. He says:⁶⁴

When the Ancients saw wisdom and felicity in submission to reason, both human and cosmic, they were referring directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, to the one Intellect. The proof of this lies precisely in the fact that they linked reason to Universal Nature; *in practice many committed the error of reducing this Nature to human reason*,⁶⁵ after having reduced God to Nature. This double reduction is the very definition of Greco-Roman paganism, or of the Greco-Roman spirit in so far, as it was pagan, and not Platonic; it may be added that only the Man-Logos or Revelation ‘resuscitates’ and gives full importance to reason,⁶⁶ and only an exact notion of the Absolutely Real and of its transcendence gives a meaning to Nature.

It is not difficult to see where does Enlightenment stand in this perspective and the way it has to be redeemed! “Beyond-Postmodernism” or “reversionary Postmodernism” would also like to see the Enlightenment paradigm humbled in many ways and it insists on “reason supplemented by vision.”⁶⁷ Its vision statement could be summarised in Griffin. David Ray Griffin concludes his statement, in *Primordial Truth and Postmodern Theology*, with a prophetic call for a new, postmodern science that will support rather than oppose theology. It is a bracing summons, but it rides a crucial oversight. To the extent that science moves in the direction Griffin wants it to, it will relax its effort to control and will content itself with trying to describe, because most of the things Griffin wants it to add to its repertoire— the immaterial, qualities, final causes, freedom, downward and divine causation— cannot be manipulated. There is nothing wrong with describing, of course, or anything sacrosanct about control. Quite the contrary; the most valuable aspect of Heidegger’s entire corpus is his analysis of the way Western civilization has drifted toward calculative reason and

the disaster portended by that drift. The question is not whether we should correct this drift, as Griffin and Basit are both convinced we should; the question concerns division of labour and what Confucius called “the rectification of names.” I see “reversionary Postmodernism” as still wedded to the modern conviction that science is the privileged mode of knowledge. If this conviction be true, it stands to reason that all knowing should enter its camp. And so “reversionary Postmodernism” would have it: “science. . . means knowledge,” he Griffin us, so “even the modern boundary between science and theology will... be overcome.”⁶⁸ Basit parts company with the “reversionary Postmodernism” at this point as could be surmised from his argument developed in his fine comparative study of Ghazali and Ibn Rushd on the issue of reason and revelation.⁶⁹

On the question of “interpretation of the mythic Fall from Eden” (Basit, p. 22) it is difficult to see eye to eye with Basit. I do not see the Fall in the same light as presented here and my interpretation of Iqbal also departs from that of Basit. A few remarks would suffice at the moment. He says, “Fall.... also made human culture, goodness, and faith possible.” (Basit, p. 23) Goodness is a different affair; but it made human culture and faith possible; faith by way of a compensation not an improvement. Qur’anic narrative is very clear that the Fall was a part of the Divine scheme and outward revelation necessitated in the wake of the Fall was not adequated to a higher state of consciousness, as Basit gives us to understand, but rather an adjustment to the needs of a fallen humanity. When the “vision is face to face”⁷⁰ there is no question of faith, naïve or otherwise. Expressions like “naïveté and lack of consciousness”, “instinctive appetite [and we can say naïve faith]” hardly make any sense in that context. Moreover, Iqbal is not the first to have noted the two sides of the Fall. The “fortunate sin” (*flex culpa*) “brings with it the possibility of a qualitatively different human affirmation of the Divine” but not a qualitatively better affirmation. Insisting on that would tantamount to denying the state of perfection that all religious traditions have unanimously looked back to and ignoring everything that is implied in the idea of the Centre and the Origin dominating all pre-Modern civilizations.

The formal world being made up of dualities, the Intellect, once it has been projected by virtue of its ‘fall’ into material and psychic substances, is split into two poles, the one intellectual and the other existential; it is divided into intelligence and existence,

into brain and body. In the Intellect, intelligence is existence, and inversely; distinction of aspects does not in itself imply a scission. Scission occurs only in the world of forms.⁷¹

A comparison of Iqbal's narrative of the Fall with Milton⁷² would yield interesting insights here but that would carry us too far afield. I am pressed to content myself with a quote which comes from a very different kind of book, *The Secret of Shakespeare*.⁷³

Shakespeare, unlike Milton, has no illusions about the scope of reason. He knew that since reason is limited to this world it is powerless to 'justify the ways of God'. Milton may have known this in theory, but in practice he was very much a son of the Renaissance, very deeply under the spell of humanism. *Paradise Lost* cannot be called an intellectual poem. Milton portrays the next world by sheer force of human imagination. His God the Father, like Michelangelo's, is fabricated in the image of man; and the purely logical arguments which he puts into the mouth of God to justify His ways inevitably fail to convince us. Now Shakespeare also seeks to justify the ways of God to man. That is, beyond doubt, the essence of his purpose in writing. But his justification is on an intellectual plane, where alone it is possible; and this brings us back to the theme of his plays, for the intellect is none other than the lost faculty of vision which is symbolized by the Holy Grail and by the Elixir of Life.

Here I would like to quote the leading Iqbal scholar of India, S. R. Farooqi, on the issue. Farooqi says:⁷⁴

Under no pressure to rationalize, Iqbal is not much preoccupied with the Fall. Even his famous observation in the "Reconstruction" that the fall is "man's transition from simple consciousness to the first flash of self consciousness, a kind of waking from the dream nature with a throb of causality in one's own being" leaves Satan entirely out of the reckoning and is borrowed from St. Augustine without much critical examination. Cleanth Brooks quotes from Augustine's *City of God* and states that "self consciousness" was the "knowledge conferred by the act of plucking and eating the fated apple". Iqbal makes use of this argument to further his thesis of self-awareness.

Looking at the issue of the Fall from a Sufi perspective illustrates how Islamic anthropology and psychology are rooted in the divine attributes. A primary goal of the Sufis, after all, is to assume the character traits of God, or to actualize the divine form in which human beings were created. All the discussion of the "stations" that must be traversed on the path to God refer to the character traits that need to be brought out from latency. The models of the perfected divine form are the prophets, and the father of all the prophets is Adam himself. All the perfections,

virtuous qualities, and stations that have come to be realized by human beings were already present in Adam. Understanding Adam's story allows us to see how the mutuality of divine and human love brings about the full flowering of human possibility and actualizes God's goal in creating the universe.

Since God is infinite, the possible modes in which the knowledge of His names can be realized are also infinite. This means that it is not enough for the first human being to know God's names. Each of his children must also know the names in his or her own unique way. Only then can every potential of the original human disposition come to be actualized. One implication of this is that hell demands human existence in the world. Hell is nothing but a domain that is ruled almost exclusively by the names of wrath and severity, just as paradise is ruled by the names of mercy and gentleness. The fact that God is both All-merciful and Wrathful demands that both paradise and hell exist. Hence, Ahmad Sam'ani (died 1140) tells us, God addressed Adam as follows when He wanted to explain to him why He had to send him down out of paradise:⁷⁵

Within the pot of your existence are shining jewels and jet-black stones. Hidden within the ocean of your makeup are pearls and potsherds. And as for Us, We have two houses: in one We spread out the dining-cloth of good-pleasure, entrusting it to [the angel] Ridwan. In the other We light up the fire of wrath, entrusting it to [the angel] Malik. If We were to let you stay in the Garden, Our attribute of severity would not be satisfied. So, leave this place and go down into the furnace of affliction and the crucible of distance. Then We will bring out into the open the deposits, artifacts, subtleties, and tasks that are concealed in your heart.

Basit concludes, "As a final word I'd like to explicitly articulate this logic. The logic underpinning both of the approaches offered above with respect to the ultimate goal of Islam in its encounter with the modern West is not to critique-condemn-replace but to redeem-reform-embrace."..... "In the final analysis if there is one unredeemable part of the Enlightenment tradition it is the fact that it allowed its critique of illumination, wisdom and the Divine turns into an outright rejection because of the reification of the critique.... . To adopt the position that the Enlightenment tradition has to be abandoned in its entirety in response to its shortcomings is to exhibit the worst characteristics of that which one is critiquing and rejecting. This basically means that one has adopted the same attitude towards the Enlightenment paradigm that the Enlightenment paradigm had adopted towards traditional religion

and classical philosophy. This is not only a modernist move in the most negative sense, but also one that is unlikely to bear fruit. A more sane approach “albeit a more courageous, complex and nuanced one” and one that is built on scripturally (Qur’anicly) reasoned grounds is redeem-reform-embrace— an approach that will lead to enhanced understanding on the part of a troubled and alienated self, as a result of its critical but empathetic study of the alien other. (Basit, p. 26-28) While agreeing with him “to redeem-reform-embrace” I would offer the following remarks as my conclusion.

The view advocated by Basit could be termed as a Postmodernism, which in contrast to its deconstructive predecessor,⁷⁶ be called *constructive* or *revisionary*. It seeks to overcome the Modern worldview not by eliminating the possibility of worldviews as such, but by constructing a Postmodern worldview through a revision of Modern premises and traditional concepts. This constructive or revisionary Postmodernism involves a new unity of scientific, ethical, aesthetic, and religious intuitions. It rejects not science as such but only that scientism in which the data of the modern natural sciences are alone allowed to contribute to the construction of our worldview.

The constructive activity of this type of postmodern thought is not limited to a revised worldview; it is equally concerned with a postmodern world that will support and be supported by the new worldview. A postmodern world will involve postmodern persons, with a postmodern spirituality, on the one hand, and a postmodern society, ultimately a postmodern global order, on the other. Going beyond the modern world will involve transcending its individualism, anthropocentrism, patriarchy, mechanization, economism, consumerism, nationalism, and militarism. Constructive postmodern thought provides support for the ecology, peace, feminist, and other emancipatory movements of our time, while stressing that the inclusive emancipation must be from Modernity itself. It however, by contrast with *premodern*, emphasizes that the modern world has produced unparalleled advances that must not be lost in a general revulsion against its negative features.⁷⁷

This revisionary postmodernism is not only more adequate to our experience but also more genuinely Postmodern. It does not simply carry the premises of Modernity through to their logical conclusions, but criticizes and revises those premises. Through its return to organicism and its acceptance of nonsensory perception,

it opens itself to the recovery of truths and values from various forms of Premodern thought and practice that had been dogmatically rejected by Modernity. This constructive, revisionary Postmodernism involves a creative synthesis of Modern and Premodern truths and values.

But to work out such a creative synthesis is a challenging task. I would conclude with three reminders. First, finding Enlightenment thought useful to Islamic thought does not mean following it blindly or swallowing it uncritically. Neither in intention nor in result are they Islamic thinkers. Second, the kind of appropriation Basit is proposing is possible just to the degree that various postmodern critical analyses are conceptually separable from the secular, atheistic contexts in which they are to be found. Finally, I hope that by now it is clear the very thin soup one finds in Postmodernism is not the only piety that one could call “postmodern”. Rather, some postmodern critiques open the door for a kind of Islamic thought that is robustly theistic and quite specifically Islamic. Perhaps one of the most important Islamic uses to which secular Enlightenment/Postmodernism can be put is to help contemporary Islamic thinkers sort the wheat from the tares in our own traditions. The Postmodern can lead back to the Premodern, or, more precisely, a critically appropriated Postmodernism can lead to a critical re-appropriation of Premodern resources.

The characteristic features of this epoch very definitely correspond with the indications supplied from time immemorial by the traditional doctrines when describing the cyclic period of which it forms a part; and this will at the same time serve to show that what appears as anomalous and disorderly from a certain point of view is nevertheless a necessary element in a wider order and an inevitable consequence of the laws governing the development of all manifestation. However, let it be said forthwith, this is not a reason for consenting to submit passively to the confusion and obscurity which seem momentarily to be triumphing, for in such a case there would be nothing else to do but to remain silent; on the contrary, it is a reason for striving to the utmost to prepare the way of escape out of this “dark age”, for there are many signs that its end is approaching, if it be not immediately at hand. This eventuality also is in accordance with order, since equilibrium is the result of the simultaneous action of two contrary tendencies; if one or the other could entirely cease to function, equilibrium would

never be restored and the world itself would disappear; but such a supposition cannot possibly be realized, for the two terms of an opposition have no meaning apart from one another, and whatever the appearances may be, one can rest assured that all partial and transitory disequilibrium's will finally contribute towards the realization of the total equilibrium itself.

Notes and Reference

-
- ¹ Frithjof Schuon,
 - ² Emphasis my own.
 - ³ David Ray Griffin has termed it “reversionary Postmodernism”. See David Ray Griffin and Huston Smith, *Primordial Truth and Postmodern Theology*, State University of New York Press, 1989.
 - ⁴ Huston Smith, *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*, Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, 1989; repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000, pp. 133-142.
 - ⁵ For a representative narrative, elucidating the long standing position of definition, function and purpose of philosophy in Islam, see M. S. Umar, (Comp.), “*From the Niche of Prophecy*”—*Nasr's Position on Islamic Philosophy with in the Islamic Tradition*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2000.
 - ⁶ A quick overview of the course of philosophy would elucidate the point. I have selected Huston Smith to make the point for me. “If logic isn't philosophy's essence (Quine) and language isn't either (Davidson), the question “what essence remains?” cannot be avoided. We can argue over whether “essence” is the right word here, but let us come to the point. The deepest reason for the current crisis in philosophy is its realization that autonomous reason—reason without infusions that both power and vector it —is helpless. By itself, reason can deliver nothing apodictic. Working (as it necessarily must) with variables, variables are all it can come up with. The Enlightenment's “natural light of reason” turns out to have been a myth. Reason is not itself a light. It is more like a transformer that does useful things but on condition that it is hitched to a generator.
 - ⁷ See Martin Lings, “Intellect and Reason” in *Ancient Beliefs and Modern Superstitions*, repr. (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1988, 57-68; F. Schuon, *Gnosis Divine Wisdom* London: J. Murray, 1978, 93-99; S. H. Nasr, “Knowledge and its Desacralization” in *Knowledge and the Sacred* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981, 1-64; Huston Smith, *Forgotten Truth* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1992), 60-95. Also see his *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*, Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, 1989, repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000).
 - ⁸ See René Guenon, “Individualism” in *Crisis of the Modern World*, (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1981, 51-65. Also see Social Chaos” in the same document.
 - ⁹ For a few representative writings that indicate this situation, see “Scientism, Pragmatism and the Fate of Philosophy, *Inquiry*, No. 29, p. 278, cf. Huston Smith, *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*, loc. cit. p. 142, repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004; Hilary Putnam, “After Empiricism” in *Behaviorism*, 16:1 (Spring 1988); Alasdair MacIntyre, “Philosophy; Past Conflict and Future Direction, ” *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, Supplement to 16/1, (September 1987); also see *Proceedings of the American Philosophical*

Association, Vol. 59 (1986), and Kenneth Baynes et al., *Philosophy: End or Transformation?* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987).

- ¹⁰ Huston Smith, "Crisis in Modern Philosophy", in *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*, Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, 1990; repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004, p. 137.
- ¹¹ Huston Smith has pointed towards the possibility of accepting these "infusions" from *Philosophia Perennis* or *Religio-Perennis*, the sapiential doctrines of mankind. See his "Two Traditions and Philosophy" in *Religion of the Heart—Essays Presented to Frithjof Schuon on his 80th Birthday*, (Washington, D. C. : Foundation for Traditional Studies, 1991, 278-296. In this regard also see F. Schuon, "Tracing the Notion of Philosophy, " *Sufism Veil and Quintessence* Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1985, 115-128; *Logic and Transcendence*, trans. Peter N. Townsend (New York: Harper and Row, 1975; repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004.
- A similar awareness could be discerned in the arena of politics, humanities, and social sciences. The impasse, though with different implications, was reached by the parallel paradigm of autonomous politics and social sciences which had refused to accept any "infusion" from a higher domain.
- ¹² In this regard see the important debate between David Ray Griffin and Huston Smith, *Primordial Truth and Postmodern Theology*, State University of New York Press, 1989.
- ¹³ Emphasis my own.
- ¹⁴ Emphasis my own.
- ¹⁵ I say so because that which the beyond-Postmodern theology calls "*prehensions*" is what comes closest to Tradition's "*intellection*".
- ¹⁶ David Ray Griffin and Huston Smith, *Primordial Truth and Postmodern Theology*, State University of New York Press, 1989, p. 62.
- ¹⁷ I summarize it from Huston Smith, *Religion—Significance and Meaning in an Age of Disbelief*, repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2002, pp. 11-22.
- ¹⁸ For the present discussion I have left out the beyond-Postmodern paradigm and its conceptual shift.
- ¹⁹ Which extended from human beginnings up to the rise of modern science.
- ²⁰ Which took over from there and continued through the first half of the twentieth century
- ²¹ Which Nietzsche anticipated, but which waited for the second half of the twentieth century to take hold.
- ²² It continues to be refined, but because modernity laid the foundations for the scientific understanding of it, it deserves credit for the discovery.
- ²³ The just entered distinction between cosmology and metaphysics is important here, so I shall expand it slightly. *Cosmology* is the study of the physical universe— or the world of nature as science conceives of it— and is the domain of science. *Metaphysics*, on the other hand, deals with all there is. (The terms *worldview* and *Big Picture* are used interchangeably with *metaphysics* in the present discussion.) In the worldview that holds that nature is all there is, metaphysics coincides with cosmology. That metaphysics is named *naturalism*.
- ²⁴ Generic science (which consists of careful attention to nature and its regularities) is as old as the hills— at least as old as art and religion.
- ²⁵ Some fifteen billion years ago an incredibly compact pellet of matter exploded to launch its components on a voyage that still continues. Differentiation set in as hydrogen proliferated into the periodic table. Atoms gathered into gaseous clouds. Stars condensed from whirling filaments of flame, and planets spun off

from those to become molten drops that pulsated and grew rock-encrusted. Narrowing our gaze to the planet that was to become our home, we watch it grow, ocean-filmed and swathed in atmosphere. Some three and a half billion years ago shallow waters began to ferment with life, which could maintain its inner milieu through homeostasis and could reproduce itself. Life spread from oceans across continents, and intelligence appeared. Several million years ago our ancestors arrived. It is difficult to say exactly when, for every few years palaeontologists announce discoveries that “set the human race back another million years or so,” as press reports like to break the news.

- ²⁶ Our ancestors were impressive astronomers, and we can honour them unreservedly for how much they learned about nature with only their unaided senses to work with.
- ²⁷ Of Li Po, Wordsworth, and Thoreau.
- ²⁸ I need to support my contention that postmodern science does not measure up to modern physics in the scope of its discoveries. It says nothing against the brilliance of Stephen Hawking, Fred Hoyle, John Wheeler, Freeman Dyson, Steven Weinberg, and their likes to add that they have discovered nothing about nature that compares with the discoveries of Copernicus, Newton, Maxwell, Planck, Einstein, Heisenberg, Bohr, Schrödinger, and Born. In molecular chemistry things are different. DNA is a staggering discovery, but—extending back only several billion years compared with the astrophysicists billions of *light* years— it does not pertain to nature’s foundations. The fact that no new abstract idea in physics has emerged for seventy years may suggest that nothing more remains to be discovered about nature’s foundations.
- ²⁹ The billions of dollars that have been spent since the middle of the twentieth century (and the millions of papers that have been written on theories that change back and forth) have produced no discoveries that impact human beings in important ways. All are in the domain of the meta-sciences of high-energy particle physics and astronomy, whose findings— what is supposed to have happened in the first 10-42 seconds of the universe’s life, and the like—while headlined by the media have no conceivable connection to human life and can be neither falsified nor checked in normal ways. This allows the building blocks of nature— particles, strings, or whatever— to keep changing, and the age of the universe to be halved or doubled every now and then. Roughly 99.999 percent of science (scientist Rustom Roy’s estimate) is unaffected by these flickering hypotheses, and the public does not much care about their fate.
- ³⁰ According to this reading of the matter, when people claim that what they say is true, all they are really doing is claiming status for beliefs that advance their own social standing.
- ³¹ The most widely used textbook on college campuses for the past thirty years has been Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and its thesis— that facts derive their meaning from the paradigms that set them in place— has shifted attention from scientific facts to scientific paradigms.
- ³² We seldom confront it directly anymore; mostly it comes to us via supermarkets and cushioned by air-conditioning and central heating.
- ³³ Post colonial guilt may play a part here, and so much remains to be done that self-congratulation is premature.
- ³⁴ In 1919 the Brooklyn Zoo exhibited an African American caged alongside chimpanzees and gorillas. Today such an act would be met with outrage anywhere in the world.

- The civil rights movement of the 1960s accomplished its major objectives. In the United States and even in South Africa today, people of different races mix where they never could before— on beaches, in airline cabin crews, everywhere.
 - In the 1930s, if a streetcar in San Francisco approached a stop where only Chinese Americans were waiting to board, it would routinely pass them by. By contrast, when (fifty years later) I retired from teaching at the University of California, Berkeley, my highly respected chancellor was a Chinese American who spoke English with a Chinese accent.
 - No war has ever been as vigorously protested as was the war in Vietnam by United States citizens. When things were going so badly that military leaders advised President Nixon to use nuclear weapons, he declined because (as he said) if he did that, he would face a nation that had taken to the streets.
 - The women’s movement is only a blink in the eyes of history, but it has already scored impressive victories. Until long after the Civil War, American women really had no civil rights, no legal rights, and no property rights. Not until 1918 did Texas alter its law that everyone had the right to vote except “idiots, imbeciles, aliens, the insane, and women.”
 - Arguably, the most important theological development of the latter twentieth century was the emergence of the theology of liberation, with its Latin American and feminist versions in the vanguard.
 - In an unprecedented move, in March 2000 the pope prayed to God to forgive the sins his church had committed against the people of Israel, against love, peace, and respect for cultures and religions, against the dignity of women and the unity of the human race, and against the fundamental rights of persons. Two months later, two hundred thousand Australians marched across Sydney Harbor Bridge to apologize for their treatment of the aborigines while the sky written word SORRY floated above the Sydney Opera House.
- 35 Perhaps because for those institutions were considered to be God-given and unalterable. People regarded them in the way we regard laws of nature— as givens to be worked with, not criticized.
- 36 David Hume is commonly credited with having the clearest head of all the great philosophers, but I (Huston Smith) read that somewhere in his correspondence (I have not been able to find the passage) he wrote that the worst white man is better than the best black man. What I can report firsthand is signs posted in parks of the international settlements in Shanghai, where I attended high school, that read, “No dogs or Chinese allowed.” With a virgin continent to rape, the United States did not need colonies, but this did not keep it from hunting down the Native Americans, continuing the institution of slavery, annexing Puerto Rico and Hawaii, and establishing “protectorates” in the Philippines and several other places.
- 37 When Carl Sagan opened his television series, *Cosmos*, by announcing that “the Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be,” he presented that unargued assumption as if it were a scientific fact.
- 38 In *The Postmodern Condition*, Jean Francois Lyotard goes so far as to define postmodernism as “incredulity toward meta-narratives,” a synonym for metaphysics. The incredulity takes three forms that grow increasingly shrill as they proceed. Postmodern minimalism contents itself with pointing out that we have no consensual worldview today; “we have no maps and don’t know how to make them.” Mainline Postmodernism adds, “and never again will we have a consensual worldview, such as prevailed in the Middle Ages, Elizabethan England, or seventeenth century New England; we now know too well how

little the human mind can know.” Hardcore Postmodernism carries this trajectory to its logical limit by adding, “good riddance!”

- ³⁹ See Huston Smith, *Religion— Significance and Meaning in an Age of Disbelief*, repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2002; Huston Smith, *Forgotten Truth, The Common Vision of the World’s Religions*, Harper San Francisco, San Francisco: 1992 (repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1984, 2002). Also see his *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*, Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, 1989 (repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2002).
- ⁴⁰ This is of particular interest at the moment because currently science does the same. Dark matter doesn’t impact any of science’s detectors, and the current recipe for the universe is “70 parts cold dark matter, about 30 parts hot dark matter, and just a pinch for all the rest the matter detectable to scientific instruments.” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 October 1992, A 16.)
- ⁴¹ Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 59. Ernst Cassirer corroborates Lovejoy on this point: “The most important legacy of ancient speculation was the concept and general picture of a graduated cosmos” (*Individual and Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, p. 9).
- ⁴² Ken Wilber, “The Great Chain of Being,” *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, vol. 33 no. 3 (summer 1993), p. 53.
- ⁴³ That this runs counter to social science functionalism, which holds that institutions don’t survive unless they serve social needs, is conveniently overlooked, but the deeper point is that the vertical dimension— the way religion feeds the human soul in its inwardness and solitude— gets little attention.
- ⁴⁴ For details see Huston Smith, “Postmodernism and the World’s Religions”, in this issue.
- ⁴⁵ Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference— How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (London & New York, 2002)
- ⁴⁶ To prove my point I invite the readers to have a look at a few of the following works. Frithjof Schuon, *Logic and Transcendence*, trans. Peter N. Townsend (New York: Harper and Row, 1975; repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004; S. H. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*; Huston Smith, *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*, Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, 1989; repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000; Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters?* Harper and Row, 2002; repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004 (as *Religion –Significance and Meaning in an Age of Disbelief*); David Ray Griffin and Huston Smith, *Primordial Truth and Postmodern Theology*, State University of New York Press, 1989; Titus Burckhardt, *Mirror of the Intellect*, repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004. The Perennialists are, after all, not that bad either.
- ⁴⁷ The criticisms we have in mind are well represented by the books cited by Lawrence E. Sullivan in his masterly study, *Icanchus Drum: An Orientation to Meaning in South American Religions* (New York: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 884-85. What he says in the passage leading up to the suggested reading applies also to Western perceptions of Islam: “One of the great disservices to our understanding of South American religions [read: Islam] has been the perception of tribal peoples [read: Muslims] as slavishly dedicated to an unchanging order revealed in the images of myth and handed down unquestioned and unmodified from one generation to the next. This attitude accompanies the evaluation of ‘myth’ as a banal and inane narrative. Tribal peoples (representing ‘archaic’ modes of thought) childishly cling to their myths, infantile fantasies, whereas mature contemporaries jettison

myths with the passage of 'historical time' and the entrance' into 'modernity.' It would be fascinating to study these and other justifications proffered for avoiding a serious encounter with the reality of myth [read: Islamic thought] and symbolic acts.... This is not the place to carry out a history of the 'modern' ideas of myth and religion. It is enough to suggest that the Western cultural imagination turned away when it encountered the stunning variety of cultural worlds that appeared for the first time in the Age of Discovery. Doubtless this inward turn sparked the appearance of all sorts of imaginary realities. The Enlightenment, the withdrawal of Western thinkers from the whirling world of cultural values into an utterly imaginary world of 'objective' forms of knowledge, and its intellectual follow-up coined new symbolic currency. These terms brought new meanings and new self-definition to Western culture: 'consciousness/ unconsciousness,' 'primitive/ civilized,' 'ethics/ mores,' 'law/ custom,' 'critical or reflective thought/ action.'

- 48 David Ray Griffin and Huston Smith, *Primordial Truth and Postmodern Theology*, State University of New York Press, 1989, p. xi.
- 49 S. H. Nasr, "Introduction," *Islamic Life and Thought*, Unwin, London, 1976; repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2001, pp. 161-176.
- 50 David Ray Griffin and Huston Smith, *Primordial Truth and Postmodern Theology*, State University of New York Press, 1989, p. 81.
- 51 St. Mark, XII, 30. In Deuteronomy VI, 5, to which this is a reference, the element 'mind' is not mentioned, which makes no fundamental difference since the mind is strictly speaking a psychic faculty, and is therefore implicit in the word 'soul'. In St. Matthew, XXII, 37, on the other hand, the element 'strength' is absent which again makes no difference inasmuch as physical energy and endurance are dominated by the will, which is also a psychic faculty.
- 52 S. H. Nasr, O' Brian, (Eds.) "Islamic Science, Western Science— Common Heritage, Diverse Destinies" in *In Quest of the Sacred*, repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2001, pp. 161-176.
- 53 Which is, as if, a reflection of the Intellect on the mental plane.
- 54 In the words of Rumi, "*'aql i juz'i 'aql ra badnam kard*", *Mathnawi*, (ed. Nicholson) Vol. III, p. 31, line, 8. Also see Vol. II, p. 352, line, 11, Vol. I, p. 130, line, 4.
- 55 Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan/Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1989, p. 13.
- 56 *Ibid.* p. 14.
- 57 *Ibid.* p. 37.
- 58 *Ibid.* p. 146.
- 59 How do these "other ways of invasion "relate to poetry"? Iqbal tells us that the questions that call for an intellectual vision of reality for their answers are, "common to religion, philosophy and higher poetry". His complete statement reads as follows. "What is the character and general structure of the universe in which we live? Is there a permanent element in the constitution of this universe? How are we related to it? What place do we occupy in it, and what is the kind of conduct that befits the place we occupy? These are the questions that are common to religion, philosophy and higher poetry. But the kind of knowledge that poetic inspiration brings is essentially individual in its character; it is figurative, vague and indefinite. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit. p. 1.
- 60 For a powerful argument showing the intimate links between reason and the dissolution of human values in the modern world, see John Ralston Saul,

Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reasoning the West (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

- ⁶¹ Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, Mandarin, 1993, pp. 352.
- ⁶² *Philosophical Dictionary* (tr. T. Besterman) London, London, 1972, p. 57.
- ⁶³ Frithjof Schuon, *Dimensions of Islam*, Unwin, 1969; repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1985, p. 76.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Emphasis added.
- ⁶⁶ This is the essence of Basit's thesis in both of its negative and positive aspects.
- ⁶⁷ See note 13 above.
- ⁶⁸ See David Ray Griffin and Huston Smith, *Primordial Truth and Postmodern Theology*, State University of New York Press, 1989. p. 49.
- ⁶⁹ See Basit B. Koshal, "Ghazzali, Ibn Rushd and Islam's Sojourn into Modernity: A Comparative Analysis." *Islamic Studies*. Summer, 2004. Also see, S. H. Nasr, "Falsafey ka Mukhaalif Falasafi" (*Ghazzali—A Philosopher's Critique of Philosophy*), *Iqbalīyat*, IAP, 1987, p. 126, 128
- ⁷⁰ Bible I Cor. 13. 12.
- ⁷¹ Human life unfolds on three planes simultaneously, or rather, the *ego* is subject to three centres of attraction to which it responds in different ways, according to its own nature or value. We live at the same time in the body, the head and the heart, so that we may sometimes ask ourselves where the genuine is situated; in fact, the *ego*, properly speaking, the empirical 'I', has its sensory seat in the brain, but it gravitates towards the body and tends to identify itself with it, while the heart is symbolically the seat of the Self, of which we may be conscious or ignorant, but which is our true existential, intellectual, and so universal centre. It is, in a sense, the old triad *anima, animus, Spiritus*, with the difference however that *anima*—the 'spouse' of *animus*—is rather the vegetative and animal psychic entity than the body itself; but there is no clear line of demarcation here, since the body cannot be dissociated from its sensations, which in fact constitute our lower and de-centralized *ego*, with its downward drag and dispersive tendency.
- The brain is to the body what the heart is to brain and body taken together. The body and the brain are as it were projected into the current of forms; the heart is as it were immersed in the immutability of Being. Body and brain are so to speak the heart exteriorized; their bipolarization is explained by the fact of their exteriorization.
- ⁷² Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, Mandarin, 1993, pp. 352. "Coercing people to believe in orthodox doctrines seemed particularly appalling to an age increasingly enamoured of liberty and freedom of conscience. The bloodbath unleashed by the Reformation and its aftermath seemed the final straw. Reason seemed the answer. Yet could a God drained of the mystery that had for centuries made him an effective religious value in other traditions appeal to the more imaginative and intuitive Christians? The Puritan poet John Milton (1608–74) was particularly disturbed by the Church's record of intolerance. A true man of his age, he had attempted, in his unpublished treatise *On Christian Doctrine*, to reform the Reformation and to work out a religious creed for himself that did not rely upon the beliefs and judgments of others. He was also doubtful about such traditional doctrines as the Trinity. Yet it is significant that the true hero of his masterpiece *Paradise Lost* is Satan rather than the God whose actions he intended to justify to man. Satan has many of the qualities of the new men of Europe: he defies authority, pits himself against the unknown

and in his intrepid journeys from Hell, through Chaos to the newly-created earth, he becomes the first explorer. Milton's God, however, seems to bring out the inherent absurdity of Western literalism. Without the mystical understanding of the Trinity, the position of the Son is highly ambiguous in the poem. It is by no means clear whether he is a second divine being or a creature similar to, though of higher status than, the angels. At all events, he and the Father are two entirely separate beings who have to engage in lengthy conversations of deep tedium to find out each other's intentions, even though the Son is the acknowledged Word and Wisdom of the Father.

It is, however, Milton's treatment of God's foreknowledge of events on earth that makes his deity incredible. Since of necessity God already knows that Adam and Eve will fail— even before Satan has reached the earth— he has to engage in some pretty specious justification of his actions before the event. He would have no pleasure in enforced obedience, he explains to the Son, and he had given Adam and Eve the ability to withstand Satan. Therefore they could not, God argues defensively, justly accuse

*Thir maker, or thir making, or thir Fate;
As if Predestination over-rul'd
Thir will, dispos'd by absolute Decree
Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed
Thir on revolt; not I: if I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on thir fault,
Which had no less prov'd certain unforeknown. . .*

*I formed them free, and free they must remain,
Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change
Thir nature, and revoke the high Decree Unchangeable, Eternal, which ordain'd
Thir freedom; they themselves ordain'd that fall.*

Not only is it difficult to respect this shoddy thinking but God comes over as callous, self-righteous and entirely lacking in the compassion that his religion was supposed to inspire. Forcing God to speak and think like one of us in this way shows the inadequacies of such anthropomorphic and personalistic conception of the divine. There are too many contradictions for such a God to be either coherent or worthy of veneration.

The literal understanding of such doctrines as the omniscience of God will not work. Not only is Milton's God cold and legalistic, he is also grossly incompetent. In the last two books of *Paradise Lost*, God sends the Archangel Michael to console Adam for his sin by showing him how his descendants will be redeemed. The whole course of salvation history is revealed to Adam in a series of tableaux, with a cinnebtary by Michael: he sees the murder of Abel by Cain, the Flosland and Noah's Ark, the Tower of Babel, the call of Abraham, the Exocus from Egypt and the giving of the Law on Sinai. The inad quay of the Torah, which oppressed God's unfortunate chosen people tar countries, is, Michael explains, a ploy to make them yearn for a more spiritual law. As this account of the future salvation of the world progresses— through the exploits of King David, the exile to Babylon, the birth of Christ and so forth— it occurs to the reader that there must have been an easier and more direct way to redeem mankind. The fact that this tortuous plan with its constant failures and false starts, is decreed in advance can only cast grave doubts on the intelligence of its Author. Milton's God can inspire little confidence. It must be significant that after *Paradise Lost* no other major English creative writer would attempt to

describe' the supernatural world. There would be no more Spensers or Miltons. Henceforth the supernatural and the spiritual would become the domain of more marginal writers, such as George MacDonald and C. S. Lewis. Yet a God who cannot appeal to the imagination is in trouble.

At the very end of *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve take their solitary way out of the Garden of Eden and into the world. In the West too, Christians were on the threshold of a more secular age, though they still adhered to belief in God. The new religion of reason would be known as Deism. It had no time for the imaginative disciplines of mysticism and mythology. It turned its back on the myth of revelation and on such traditional 'mysteries' as the Trinity, which had for so long held people in the thrall of superstition. Instead it declared allegiance to the impersonal 'Deus' which man could discover by his own efforts. Francois-Marie de Voltaire, the embodiment of the movement that would subsequently become known as the Enlightenment, defined this ideal religion in his *Philosophical Dictionary* (1764). It would, above all, be as simple as possible.

Would it not be that which taught much morality and very little dogma? that which tended to make men just without making them absurd? that which did not order one to believe in things that are impossible, contradictory, injurious to divinity, and panicious to mankind, and which dared not menace with eternal punishment anyone possessing common sense? Would it not be that which did not uphold its belief with executioners, and did not inundate the earth with blood on account of unintelligible sophism?. . . which taught only the worship of one god, justice, tolerance and humanity?

⁷³ Martin Lings, *The Secret of Shakespeare*, Quinta Essentia, England, 1996, p. 178.

⁷⁴ For a perceptive analysis of the subject see, S. R. Farooqi, "The Image of Satan in Iqbal and Milton".

⁷⁵ For a detailed account of the Sufi hermeneutics of the issue see W. C. Chittick, "The Fall of Adam", *Sufism— A Short Introduction*, One World, Oxford, 2000.

⁷⁶ Prone to assume that maps must be believed fanatically if they are to be believed at all, polemical Postmoderns condemn religions for fomenting disharmony. But it is useful here to refer back to a characteristic of post-modernity, which includes its being "paired with ethno-religious fundamentalism". Postmoderns over-look that pairing. They do not perceive the extent to which their styles of thought (with the dangers of relativism and nihilism they conceal) have produced fundamentalism; which fundamentalism is the breeding ground for the fanaticism and intolerance they rightly deplore.

⁷⁷ From the point of view of deconstructive postmodernists, this constructive postmodernism is still hopelessly wedded to outdated concepts, because it wishes to salvage a positive meaning not only for the notions of the human self, historical meaning, and truth as correspondence, which were central to modernity, but also for Premodern notions of a divine reality, cosmic meaning, and an enchanted nature.

COMMUNICATING THE
INCOMMUNICABLE: THE NATURE AND
AUTHENTICITY OF RELIGIOUS
EXPERIENCE IN ISLAMIC SUFI
TRADITION

Dr. Tahir Hameed Tanoli

Abstract

This paper examines religious experience in the Sufi tradition, highlighting its role as a bridge between human effort and divine grace. It argues that reliance solely on intellect can cause distress, while immersion in divine grace brings peace. Through the practice of remembrance (*dhikr*), individuals can transcend personal attributes and deepen their awareness of the Divine. The paper contrasts the states of *sukr* (intoxication) and *sahw* (sobriety) in divine encounters, suggesting that true religious experience arises from balancing outer struggle and inner devotion, with visible effects on the world. It emphasizes the importance of being attentive to God's presence and critiques the suspension of consciousness as a potential spiritual weakness. Utilizing Qur'anic narratives like those of the People of the Cave and the Battle of Badr, the paper illustrates how spiritual observers can perceive various possibilities within the same temporal context. It discusses the challenges of articulating profound spiritual experiences, which, though often seen as incommunicable, can be symbolically expressed and validated through tangible outcomes. Iqbal's reflections further explore the relationship between spiritual experience and scientific inquiry, emphasizing the importance of three stages of awareness—self-awareness, awareness through others, and awareness of the Divine. The conclusion asserts that true religious experience leads to steadfastness and stability, aligning individuals with divine truth and reinforcing their moral integrity.

In the Sufi tradition, religious experience is seen as a deeply personal encounter with the Divine, characterized by states of heightened awareness that defy conventional language. This paradox lies at the heart of Sufi mysticism, where practitioners seek to convey the ineffable nature of their experiences through symbolic expressions, poetry, and metaphors. Figures like Allama Iqbal emphasize that while spiritual insights may appear incommunicable, they can still serve as powerful evidence of divine truths when expressed authentically. Authenticity in religious experience is rooted in its transformative effects on the individual and their moral integrity, reflecting a harmony between inner experiences and observable outcomes in the external world. Thus, the challenge of communicating these sacred experiences not only highlights the limitations of language but also reinforces the deep connection between personal revelation and communal understanding within the Sufi path.

According to the Sufis, religious experience is a bridge between human effort and divine grace. They rely solely on intellectual and practical effort leads to distress, while receiving divine guidance and blessings brings peace.¹ Immersing one's actions in divine grace through religious experience is a way to safeguard oneself from the potential pitfalls of one's own efforts and struggles. This is because, in this state, the divine attributes dominate the senses and qualities of the individual. Through the mental state² achieved by remembrance (*dhikr*), the individual's personal and human attitudes, goals, and attributes fade away. In this way, they reach a state of being absorbed in the mental attitude of the remembrance of God.

In other words, when the majesty of God overwhelms human consciousness, the individual becomes annihilated in their self and experiences an enduring awareness of the presence of the Divine. When the love of God or the awareness of His presence overcomes a person, they lose control over their own actions because their conscious mind cannot handle the intensity of this experience. However, this is not a psychological disorder. Instead, it is an experience of a superhuman being's control over the individual's actions, the effects of which are observable in the external world. Wherever the Qur'an attributes an action either to the human level or to the level of divine influence, the results and consequences are different. This means that it is possible for an action performed by

a human to be beyond human capability. In such instances, due to the individual's absorption in the Divine, the action that emerges from the human is essentially a divine act. Actions performed on an ordinary level are human, while those that occur at an extraordinary level are an expression of divine union.³ For example, the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) Ascension (*Mi'raj*) was not an ordinary event but a divine act. The experience of intense love or the overwhelming presence of God penetrating human consciousness is not simply a state of intoxication or incapacitation. Rather, it is an active awareness of God's presence, whose effects and results are observable in the external world.

Religious experience is the act of seeing the Divine with the inner eye, meaning perceiving the manifestation of the Divine in the heart, whether in solitude or in company, without any need for analysis. There are two aspects to achieving this observation: one is attained through firm belief, and the other through the overwhelming love of God. In one case, a person sees an object or action with their physical eyes and notices the actor behind it. In the other case, the person, absorbed in the love of the actor, overlooks everything else and sees only the actor. The first aspect of observation relates to reasoning, while the second pertains to inner passion. Through reasoning, one proves the existence of God with evidence, while in the second state, the seeker is enraptured and overwhelmed by longing.⁴ Here, reasoning and facts become veils for the seeker. The seeker's own self becomes a conscious sign of the presence of the Divine.

According to scholars, the inner vision's observation is connected to the struggle of the outer self. If the struggle of the outer self does not form the foundation for inner observation, the experience remains limited to delusion and imagination. When inner observation results from outer struggle, it leads to steadfastness in the struggle and the manifestation of its effects in the external world. Scholars argue that the form of observation produced by *dhikr* and contemplation, which remains merely in the realm of imagination, cannot be considered as the true observation of the Divine with the inner eye.⁵ This is because whatever enters human intellect about the Divine is purely conjecture. The only authentic observation of the Divine is one that results from a deep-rooted integration of external and internal ethics, leading to observable effects and results in the external world. The characteristics of religious experience according to the Islamic mystical tradition are outlined here below:

1. Physical Effects of Religious experience

The beginning of religious experience is marked by the effects it has on the human body, states, and conditions. In Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 83, the Qur'an describes how, when the faithful hear the words of Allah and recognize them as divine, they are overwhelmed with sorrow and begin to weep, with tears flowing from their eyes. Upon recognizing the truth of Allah's message, they long to become among those who have witnessed this reality. A similar sentiment is expressed in Surah Az-Zumar, verse 22, where it is mentioned that the Qur'anic verses have meanings and effects that resonate and reinforce each other. When believers hear them, they recognize their truth, feel a deep reverence for Allah, and are so affected that their skin shivers. Their hearts and minds become softened and inclined toward the remembrance of Allah.

The Qur'an describes this as a step toward guidance. In other words, this is a step towards the state of openness and inner expansion (*sharh al-sadr*), a stage of guidance described in the previous verse (22) of the same Surah.

2. *Sukr* (Intoxication) and *Sahw* (Sobriety)

During religious experience, it is natural for the observer to experience the states of *sukr* (intoxication) and *sahw* (sobriety). *Sukr* refers to a state of unconsciousness, while *sahw* refers to a state of being conscious. When the intense spiritual experiences of the observation cause the observer to fall into a state of *sukr*, it results in the suspension of human reasoning, contemplation, and even the sense of self (*khudi*) disappearing. If *sukr* is based on a strong moral and spiritual foundation, then only the forces beyond the limits of human nature remain active when the individual's normal faculties are suspended, and this state is quite rare.⁶

However, in the state of *sahw*, the observer, despite being absorbed in the observation, retains stability and continuous awareness. Syed Ali Hujwiri explains the difference between these two states by giving the example of the renowned Sufi Abu Othman al-Maghribi. Early in his spiritual journey, he spent twenty years in such deep solitude that he didn't even hear a human voice, and his physical appearance changed significantly. After twenty years, when he returned to human society and met the spiritual leaders in Mecca, they asked him: "How did you spend these twenty years? Why did you remain in solitude, what did you gain, and why did you return?" Abu Othman al-Maghribi replied: "I left

in a state of *suker*. I experienced the afflictions of *suker*, fell into despair, and returned out of helplessness. ” The spiritual leaders responded: “Bravo! You have clarified the difference between *suker* and *sabw* so clearly that further discussion on the matter is unnecessary.”⁷

3. The Descent of Meanings

During religious experience, the observer experiences the revelation of mysteries and meanings. According to the observer’s capacity, perseverance in spiritual struggle, steadfastness, and moral firmness, the meanings of divine speech descend upon the observer’s inner self. Eventually, they find confirmation, interpretation, and further guidance for their spiritual growth through divine words in every state. A clear explanation of this is provided by Sheikh al-Akbar Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi in his *Futubat al-Makkiyah*:

. . . . العارف المحقق الذي لقيه بعض إخوانه فقال له: يا أخي اذكرني في خلوتك بربك، فأجابته ذلك العبد فقال: إذا ذكرتك فلست معه في خلوة، فمثل ذلك عرف قدر نزولي إلى السماء الدنيا بالليل ولماذا نزلت ولمن طلبت، فأنا أتلو كتابي عليه بلسانه وهو يسمع فتلك مسامرتي وذلك العبد هو الملتذ بكلامي، فإذا وقف مع معانيه فقد خرج عني بفكره وتأمله، فالذي ينبغي له أن يصغي إلي ويخلي سمعه لكلامي حتى أكون أنا في تلك التلاوة كما تلوت عليه وأسمعته أكون أنا الذي أشرح له كلامي وأترجم له عن معناه فتلك مسامرتي معه، فيأخذ العلم مني لا من فكره واعتباره، فلا يبالي بذكر جنة ولا نار، ولا حساب ولا عرض، ولا دنيا ولا آخرة، فإنه ما نظرها بعقله ولا بحث عن الآية بفكره، وإنما ألقى السمع لما أقوله له وهو شهيد حاضر معي أتولى تعليمه بنفسه فأقول له: يا عبدي أردت بهذه الآية كذا وكذا، وهذه الآية الأخرى كذا وكذا، هكذا إلى أن ينصدع الفجر فيحصل من العلوم على يقين ما لم يكن عنده فإنه مني سمع القرآن، ومني سمع شرحه وتفسير معانيه.⁸

The realized knower, whom some of his brothers met and said to him: ‘O my brother, remember me in your solitude with your Lord.’ The servant answered him: ‘If I remember you, then I am no longer in solitude with Him.’ Similarly, only the realized knower understands the nature of my descent to the lowest heaven during the night, why I descend, and whom I seek. I recite My Book to him through his tongue, and he listens to it. This is my intimate conversation with him. He is the servant who takes delight in My words. If he begins to ponder over the meanings of My words, he becomes distanced from Me through his thought and contemplation. What is necessary for him is to listen attentively to Me and focus entirely on My words so that I become fully present in that recitation, just as I was when I recited it to him and made him hear it. Then I will be the One to explain My words to him and interpret their meanings. This is My nightly conversation with him. He takes knowledge from Me, not from his own thoughts or

reflections. He no longer cares for the mention of paradise or hellfire, nor for the mention of judgment, accountability, this world, or the next. He does not contemplate them with his intellect nor examine the verse through his thought. Instead, he listens attentively to what I say to him, being present and attentive with Me. I personally oversee his learning process and tell him, 'O My servant, this is what I meant by this verse and that by the other.' This continues until dawn breaks, and he gains knowledge with certainty that he never had before. He heard the Qur'an from Me, and he heard its explanation and the interpretation of its meanings from Me.

This passage illustrates how the meanings of divine speech are revealed to the observer during religious experience, not through intellectual contemplation but through direct divine instruction and guidance. The observer becomes a witness to the truths of the Qur'an, gaining knowledge from the Source itself.

4. Suspension of Consciousness

The suspension of consciousness during religious experience occurs due to human limitations or sometimes human shortcomings. However, this suspension of consciousness is temporary. While the observer may unveil truths during this state—truths that do not typically manifest during normal circumstances—the suspension of consciousness is not considered favorable. Scholars have viewed such suspensions of consciousness as spiritual shortcomings, defects, or even signs of illness. For example, in his book on Iqbal's *Lectures*, Professor Muhammad Usman recounts an incident involving Shah Ji at the beginning of the first lecture to explain spiritual states and observations. However, scholars do not consider this to be true religious experience or a model to follow.

A spiritual state in which the observer describes truths or details about unseen realms while their own consciousness is suspended is not reliable. This is why, despite the affirmation of Mansur's claim of "*Ana al-Haqq*" (I am the Truth), many of his ideas were not accepted by Sufi scholars, and even Junayd Baghdadi categorized Mansur as one of the *abl al-junoon* (people of madness).

Sufi scholars have classified the suspension of consciousness or the state of *suker* (intoxication) during religious experience as a form of madness. Allama Iqbal, when discussing Nietzsche's spiritual states, wrote that Nietzsche's spiritual experiences overwhelmed him to the extent that his senses became disturbed, and he could not channel his spiritual states in a way that would allow him to accomplish something positive or significant for

humanity. It was as if the intensity of the melody exceeded the musician's capacity, and the force of the song broke him.⁹

5. Steadfastness and Stability

One of the characteristics of religious experience is the development of steadfastness and stability in the observer. This means that as a result of the spiritual states experienced during observation, the observer becomes protected from outward slips and inward disorder or turmoil. After such an experience, neither the body becomes involved in sin and error, nor does the inner self suffer from any disturbance or affliction, even in the midst of life-threatening situations such as gunfire. The inner stability remains unaffected.¹⁰

This can be described as the firmness and stability of faith, where the individual's moral and spiritual beliefs remain unwavering, and they increasingly turn away from external causes, focusing solely on the Divine. Every person who undergoes a true religious experience becomes firmly connected with the Divine and loses hope in anything other than Him. However, this state is only achieved when the person remains steadfast in this quality and committed to their purpose. In other words, a healthy religious experience is one that reveals the eternal truth of the Divine.¹¹

6. Awareness of Multiple Dimensions of Time

During religious experience, the observer experiences a reality beyond the ordinary confines of time and space. Without gaining awareness and understanding of realms that transcend the usual dimensions of time and space, no true religious experience can occur. The Qur'an's mention of the People of the Cave (*Ashab al-Kahf*) and the detailed account of the Prophet Uzair also point to this concept. Additionally, the Qur'an provides examples of this from the Battle of Badr, where it is mentioned that prior to the battle, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was shown a smaller number of enemies in a dream to prevent the Muslims from becoming discouraged. Similarly, during the battle, the believers were shown a smaller number of enemy soldiers, and vice versa, leading both armies to engage fully. The results unfolded as Allah willed. This account is detailed in Surah Al-Anfal, verses 39 and 40. This demonstrates that the perception of different possibilities and realities in the same time and place is a characteristic of religious experience.

7. Communication of Spiritual Experience

Spiritual experiences cannot be regarded as entirely incommunicable. In the history of Islamic mysticism, not only have the religious experiences of Sufis been communicated, but they have also been used as evidence to support various concepts. For example, Allama Iqbal in his *Lectures* referred to Mansur's proclamation of *Ana al-Haqq* (I am the Truth) as an argument for the validity of spiritual experience.¹²

Even if religious experience is considered incommunicable, this applies only to the nature of its occurrence, as the observation is an inner quality and its expression is a form of articulation. When language, becoming attuned to the inner self, converts the experience into words, it is a claim of observation, not the actual observation itself. Since the nature of the experience transcends reason, language cannot fully encapsulate it. Any time language expresses such experiences, it is only a symbolic representation. In essence, religious experience is a state where the heart is present, and language is limited. Thus, the expression of religious experience is often conveyed through silence and the influence of the observer's state rather than through spoken words.¹³

Authenticity of Religious experience

The authenticity and reliability of all spiritual feelings, experiences, and states are contingent upon their external outcomes and effects. The foundation of religious experience or religious experience is moral, because it is through moral maturity and steadfastness that a person can become part of the divine plan for society. Every individual, as an ego, reflects the Absolute Ego, and becoming part of this divine social plan is the first step. Once a person proves their worth according to the standards of higher moral values, only then can they become a participant in the divine social plan. For a person, as a microcosm in this universe, to play a significant role in the macrocosmic universe, the foundation is God's pleasure, capability, understanding, and, in Sufi terminology, "determination" (*himma*).¹⁴

Allama Iqbal writes that, according to the Qur'an, the primary purpose of observing nature is to awaken in humans an awareness of reality, for which nature has been designated as a sign. In light of Surah Ar-Rum, verse 22 ("Indeed, in that are signs for those of knowledge"), nature is a sign for all worlds, for all realms, or for all people of knowledge to reach the truth. The Qur'an's empirical approach instilled in Muslims a respect for reality and the understanding that mere concepts, unless they correspond to and

align with external realities, hold no significance. This, ultimately, led Muslims to become pioneers of modern science. The historical importance of this aspect of Islamic civilization and the Qur'an should not be overlooked—that Islam fostered a spirit of experimentation and the need to observe external outcomes in a time when, in the search for God, visible phenomena were disregarded as insignificant.

According to the Qur'an, the universe has a purpose, and its ever-changing realities compel us to adapt to new forms. Our intellectual efforts overcome the challenges of this path, enabling us to understand the subtle and delicate aspects of human observation. This Qur'anic emphasis on the relationship between truth and its manifestation in the external world should not be ignored, for truth reveals itself through observable phenomena.¹⁵

When the movement of time intensifies, it is through the relationship with objects that awareness and insight about the existence beyond time are developed. In other words, humans cannot, in any form, disregard the tangible. This is why the Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes the reality of change and tells us that if we want to build a lasting civilization, it is essential to understand and master change. Allama Iqbal explains that the ancient civilizations of the world failed because they considered reality to be solely internal and did not acknowledge its necessary connection with the external world. They viewed reality as something that moved from the internal to the external. By doing so, they arrived at a concept that lacked power, and no sustainable civilization can be founded on a powerless concept.¹⁶

Through these details—such as the connection between the internal and external as described in the verses of the Qur'an, the attitudes of past civilizations, and the analysis of their survival or decline—Allama Iqbal demonstrates the truth that any spiritual experience can only be considered authentic if it produces external results and if its outcomes align with observable external phenomena.

While discussing religious experience with a Westernized mindset, Allama Iqbal used Sufi experience as a foundation to establish the authenticity of prophetic experience, i. e., *wahy* (revelation). Although prophetic and Sufi experiences cannot be identical, Iqbal still adopted an approach to create a connection between the two in order to foster acceptance. He wrote that Sufi states are more feelings than thoughts. Thus, both prophets and

Sufis communicate the content of their spiritual and intuitive insights in the form of statements to others. However, they cannot fully convey all the contents of their spiritual and intuitive understanding to their audience.¹⁷

To support his point, Allama Iqbal referenced a verse from the Qur'an, which, according to him, explains the psychology behind spiritual and intuitive experiences rather than their content. The translation of the verse is:

It is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him directly, except through revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger (an angel) to reveal by His permission what He wills. Indeed, He is Most High and Wise. (Ash-Shura, 42:51)

However, we observe that this verse speaks about how spiritual experience occurs and the process by which it takes place, rather than addressing the psychology behind spiritual experiences. The verse clearly indicates that the initiation of spiritual or intuitive awareness in matters of faith or connection with Allah does not originate from the servant but from Allah. Moreover, this verse applies exclusively to prophetic experience and cannot be applied to non-prophetic experiences.

In support of this perspective, Allama Iqbal further references the verses from Surah An-Najm. These verses provide a detailed account of how the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) received, absorbed, understood, and transmitted revelation in its entirety, integrity, and accuracy. The verse "ما كذب الفواد ما رأى" "The heart did not lie about what it saw" reflects the unique prophetic role, which cannot be applied to a Sufi experience. The verses from Surah An-Najm (1-18) negate the notion that the contents of prophetic experience cannot be transmitted. If such a claim were true, it would contradict the direct meaning of these verses. The verses clearly state that when the Prophet receives the revelation from Allah, his personal desires, individual qualities, or flaws do not influence it, and there are no deficiencies in his ability to understand or transmit it.

Allama Iqbal writes that the primary reason Sufi observations are considered incommunicable is that they are fundamentally based on emotions rather than rational reasoning, meaning they are directly revealed from the source of divine grace without any intellectual process. However, Iqbal also states that he firmly believes there is an element of cognition in Sufi experiences, and this cognitive element is what allows them to be shaped into

knowledge.¹⁸ If this is true, then the initial point that Sufi experiences cannot be communicated is proven wrong.

Iqbal further explains that it is in the nature of emotion to transform into thought, meaning every reality that is directly observed can be articulated as an intellectual analysis. Here, while distinguishing between Sufi observation and intellectual, rational knowledge, Allama Iqbal makes a key point: emotion and thought are both expressions of the unity of internal observation, with the difference that the non-temporal aspect of internal observation is emotion, and its temporal aspect is thought.

When observation transforms into external results and aligns with the external world, it also takes on a temporal, intellectual, and communicable aspect. Additionally, when external realities are regarded as signs of the Divine, as described in the Qur'an, and used as a bridge to reach the Divine essence, this serves as their non-temporal, spiritual, and internal aspect or dimension.

While distinguishing between religious or spiritual experience and intellectual, rational, and scientific matters, Allama Iqbal explains that religion or spirituality is not like physics or chemistry, where facts are uncovered through the principle of cause and effect. Rather, it represents a completely different realm of human experience. In other words, religious experience cannot be equated with a scientific experiment.

Here, Iqbal introduces a new idea, despite previously stating that the contents of religious experience can be examined similarly to scientific and other rational experiments. However, in this distinction, he highlights a fundamental, conscious, and "nuclear" difference between the two types of experiences: intellectual consciousness and religious or spiritual consciousness are fundamentally different in their nature.

Allama Iqbal did not overlook the differences and commonalities between religion and science, clarifying that both initially rely on concrete experience, but the nature and essence of their experiences differ. Religion aims to access a specific kind of truth related to human emotions and experiences. Religious consciousness is neither like sexual feelings nor like intellectual or scientific awareness, as their characters, purposes, and methods are entirely different from one another. It is only religious consciousness that acquaints us with a reality that, in a certain sense, exists beyond the narrow confines of our self.¹⁹ Therefore, despite being different from scientific and other experiences, the

authenticity of religious experience or religious experience lies in the shared point between them—the production of external results.

Allama Iqbal, in his *Javid Nama*, refers to this as the process of seeking confirmation through three witnesses:²⁰

زنده یا مردہ یا جاں بلب
از سہ شاہد کن شہادت را طلب
شاہد اول شعورِ خویشتن
خویش را دیدن بنورِ خویشتن
شاہد ثانی شعورِ دیگرے
خویش را دیدن بنورِ دیگرے
شاہد ثالث شعورِ ذاتِ حق
خویش را دیدن بنورِ ذاتِ حق
پیش این نورِ اربمانی استوار
حی و قائم چوں خدا خود را شمار
برمقام خود رسیدن زندگی است
ذات را بے پردہ دیدن زندگی است
مردِ مومن در نشازد با صفات
مصطفیٰ راضی نشد الا بذات

Alive, dead, or at the brink of death, seek testimony from three witnesses.

The first witness is self-awareness: seeing yourself by the light of your own being.

The second witness is the consciousness of others: seeing yourself through the light of others.

The third witness is the awareness of the Divine: seeing yourself through the light of the Divine.

If you stand firm in the light of God, consider yourself alive and enduring by God Himself.

Reaching your true position is life, and seeing the Divine essence without veils is life.

The true believer is not satisfied with attributes alone; the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was content only with the vision of the Divine essence.

In this passage, Iqbal illustrates that in order to verify one's spiritual experience, one must rely on three stages of awareness: self-awareness, awareness through others, and finally, awareness through the Divine. Life's true meaning is realized when one reaches their rightful place and witnesses the Divine essence without any veils. The true believer, like Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is not content with merely knowing God's attributes but is satisfied only with the direct vision of the Divine.

Notes and References

-
- ¹ *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*, p. 336.
 - ² In order to achieve this intimacy thought must rise higher than itself, and find its fulfilment in an attitude of mind which religion describes as prayer. *Reconstruction*, p. 49
 - ³ *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*, p. 337, 342.
 - ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 430.
 - ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 433.
 - ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 254.
 - ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 255, 256.
 - ⁸ Ibn-'Arabi, *Futubat-i-Makkiyah*, Chapter 41, vol. 1, p. 305.
 - ⁹ *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal* (Persian), p. 741.
 - ¹⁰ *Reconstruction*, p. 88
 - ¹¹ *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*, p. 71.
 - ¹² The development of this experience in the religious life of Islam reached its culmination in the well-known words of Hallaj - 'I am the creative truth. ', *Reconstruction*, p. 77
 - ¹³ *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*, p. 433.
 - ¹⁴ *Futubat-i-Makkiyah*, Chapter 42, vol. 1, p. 306.
 - ¹⁵ *Reconstruction*, pp. 11-12.
 - ¹⁶ This procedure gave them theory without power, and on mere theory no durable civilization can be based. *Reconstruction*, p. 12
 - ¹⁷ *Reconstruction*, pp. 16-17.
 - ¹⁸ Religious experience, I have tried to maintain, is essentially a state of feeling with a cognitive aspect *Reconstruction*, p. 21
 - ¹⁹ *Reconstruction*, pp. 20-21.
 - ²⁰ *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal* (Persian), p. 607.