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RELIGION AND POSTMODERNISM: CHALLENGING THE FRAGMENTATION OF WORLDVIEWS

Huston Smith

ABSTRACT

This article explores the relationship between Postmodernism and religion, contrasting Postmodernity's pluralistic and media-driven lifestyle with the deeper philosophical outlook of Postmodernism. It contrasts traditional, modern, and Postmodern worldviews, highlighting how traditional societies turned to sacred texts for understanding, while modernity embraced science. However, Postmodernism, having recognized the limitations of the scientific worldview, now rejects overarching narratives or "metanarratives." The article critiques this rejection, particularly through the lens of Jacques Derrida's deconstructionism, arguing that while Postmodernism dismisses the possibility of a universal worldview, religious traditions still affirm the need for such perspectives. The author contends that religious worldviews offer a holistic understanding of reality that Postmodernism lacks, emphasizing the human need for coherence and meaning. The article concludes by advocating for a renewed appreciation of the metaphysical insights shared by the world's great religions, proposing that these offer a more constructive alternative to the fragmented and relativistic stance of Postmodernism.

In the wake of its Traditional and Modern periods, the Western world is now generally regarded as having become Postmodern.[1] And as the entire world is still (at this stage) westernizing, I propose to think about religion's relation to Postmodernism. Dr. Akbar S. Ahmed of the University of Cambridge has written a book about *Post modernism and Islam*,[2] but my statement differs from his in two respects. I shall not limit my remarks to Postmodernism's relationship to Islam, and I shall give "post-modern" a different twist from the one he gives it. Because Dr. Ahmed approaches the subject sociologically, his book is really about Postmodernity as a life-style. Postmodernism, by contrast, suggests an outlook: the basic sense of things that gave rise to Postmodernity in the first place and now reflects its way of life.

Of the two, it is (as I say) Postmodernism that is my concern, but because it has become deeply implicated with Postmodernity, I shall summarize Dr. Ahmed's depiction of the latter before I turn to my own project. Instead of defining Postmodernity, he describes it by listing what he takes to be eight of its features.[3]

1. It is animated by a spirit of pluralism, a heightened scepticism of traditional orthodoxies, and a rejection of a view of the world as a universal totality

2. It is powered by the media which provide its central dynamic.

3. It is paired with ethno-religious fundamentalism, which it exacerbates where it has not actually generated it.

4. It is bound to its past, even if mainly in protest.

5. It centres in the metropolis.

6. It presupposes democracy, but has a class element. Urban yuppies are its core.

7. It thrives on the juxtaposition of discourses, an exuberant eclecticism, and the mixing of images and media.

8. It is not given to plain and simple language.

In the context of Postmodernity thus described, I proceed now to target Postmodernism, the position that has conceptually parented it.

Contrasts tend to throw things into relief, so I shall define Postmodernism by contrasting it with the traditional and modern outlooks that preceded it, using epistemology as my point of entry.

Even today, when traditional peoples want to know where they are– when they wonder about the ultimate context in which their lives are set and which has the final say over them– they turn to their sacred texts; or in the case of oral, tribal peoples (what comes to the same thing), to the sacred myths that have been handed down to them by their ancestors. *Modernity* was born when a new source of knowledge was discovered, the scientific method. Because its controlled experiment enabled scientists to prove their hypothesis, and because those proven hypotheses demonstrated that they had the power to change the material world dramatically, Westerners turned from revelation to science for the Big Picture. Intellectual historians tell us that by the 19th century Westerners were already more certain that atoms exist than they were confident of any of the distinctive things the Bible speaks of.

This much is straightforward, but it doesn't explain why Westerners aren't still modern rather than Postmodern, for science continues to be the main support of the Western mind. By headcount, most Westerners probably still *are* modern, but I am thinking of frontier thinkers who chart the course that others follow. These thinkers have ceased to be modern because they have seen through the so-called scientific worldview, recognizing it to be not scientific but scientistic. They continue to honour science for what it tells us about nature, but as that is not all that exists, science cannot provide us with a worldview– not a valid one. The most it can show us is half of the world, the half where normative and intrinsic values, existential and ultimate meanings, teleologies, qualities, immaterial realities, and beings that are superior to us do not appear.[4]

Where, then, do we now turn for an inclusive worldview? Postmodernism hasn't a clue. And this is its deepest definition.[5] In placing Postmodernism's "rejection of the view of the world as a universal totality" first in cataloguing its traits, Dr. Ahmed follows the now generally accepted definition of Postmodernism that Jean-Francois Lyotard fixed in place a decade ago in *The Postmodern*

Condition: "incredulity toward metanarratives".[6] Having deserted revelation for science, the West has now abandoned the scientific worldview as well, leaving it without replacement. In this it mirrors the current stage of Western science which leaves *nature* unimaged. Before modern science, Westerners accepted Aristotle's model of the earth as surrounded by concentric, crystalline spheres. Newton replaced that model with his image of a clockwork universe, but Postmodern, quantum-and-relativity science gives us not a third model of nature but no model at all. Alan Wallace's *Choosing Reality* delineates eight different interpretations of quantum physics, all of which can claim the support of physics' proven facts.[7]

An analogy can pull all this together. If we think of traditional peoples as looking out upon the world through the window of revelation (their received myths and sacred texts), the window that they turned to look through in the modern period (science) proved to be stunted. It cuts off at the level of the human nose, which (metaphysically speaking) means that when we look through it our gaze slants downward and we see only things that are inferior to us.[8] As for the Postmodern window, it is boarded over and allows no inclusive view whatsoever. The current issue of *The University of Chicago Magazine* features on its cover a photograph of Richard Rorty announcing that "There is no Big Picture."

This conclusion admits of three versions that grow increasingly shrill. *Minimal*, descriptive Postmodernism rests its case with the fact that today no accepted worldview exists. *Mainline*, doctrinal Postmodernism goes on from there to argue for the permanence of this condition. Never again will we have a worldview of which we can be confident– we know too well how little the human mind can know. Members of this camp disagree as to whether reality has a deep structure to be known, but they agree that if it has, the human mind is incapable of knowing it. *Hardcore*, polemical Postmodernism goes a step further by adding "Good riddance." Worldviews oppress. They totalize, and in doing so marginalize minorities.

These three Postmodern stances set the agenda for the rest of my paper, for I want to argue that the world's religions question the last two, and qualify importantly the first.[9] Negatively, they deny that inclusive views necessarily and preponderantly oppress. Positively, they affirm that the human mind is made for such views, and that reliable ones already exist. Before I enter upon these constructive points, however, I want to take a quick look at recent

French philosophy. For though it was mostly the unbridled historicism of German philosophers– Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger– that paved the way for Postmodernism, as our century closes,[10] it is the French who have taken the lead. There is time to mention only one of them, and Jacques Derrida is the obvious candidate for being Postmodernism's most redoubtable spokesman. His deconstructionism is said already to be a mummy in Europe, but in America no one has been able to topple it from its pedestal where it presides, more or less, over the Postmodern scene.

The French Connection: Derrida and Deconstruction

Dr. Ahmed rounded off his characterization of Postmodernity by noting that it is "not given to plain and simple language," and deconstructionist prose reads like a caricature of that point. Derrida calls "stupid" the view that deconstruction "amounts to saying that there is nothing beyond language,"[11] but whose fault is this when he ensconces "*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*"[12] (there is nothing outside the text) as the veritable motto of his movement. Even sympathetic interpreters have trouble explaining that motto. John Caputo, for example, assures us that Derrida does not "trap us inside the 'chain of signifiers,' in linguistic-subjective idealism, unable to do anything but play vainly with linguistic strings;" but a page or two later he tells us that "there are no things themselves outside textual and contextual limits, no naked contact with being which somehow shakes loose of the coded system which makes notions like the 'things in them-selves' possible to begin with and which enables speakers to refer to them."[13] Small wonder satirists have a field day. "Deconstruction goes well beyond right-you are-if-you-think-you-are" Walt Anderson reports. "Its message is closer to wrong you are whatever you think, unless you think you're wrong, in which case you may be right– but you don't really mean what you think you do anyway."[14]

I mention this because the costiveness of Derrida's prose makes one wonder if it serves, not to camouflage a leaky theory; I do not say that, but to make it pretentious. Where there is so much mystery, can profundity be lacking? Let us see.

Derrida insists that, contrary to its public image, deconstruction is an affirmative project,[15] for its essence consists of its "openness to the other."[16] John Caputo (upon whom I rely as a helpful inter-preter of Derrida) glosses that definition as follows: [17]

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Derrida's thought is through and through a philosophy of "alterity,"...a relentless attentiveness and sensitivity to the 'other.' [It] stands for a kind of hyper-sensitivity to many "others"; the other person, other species, "man's" other, the other of the West, of Europe, of Being, of the "classic," of philosophy, of reason, etc. [The list goes on].

This understanding of deconstruction helps to situate it in the context of Postmodernism, for if Postmodernism is "incredulity toward metanarratives," Derrida's "openness to the other" fuels that incredulity. For metanarratives brook no alternatives, so that to side finally with "others" is to renounce worldviews.[18]

Let's look, then, at "sensitivity to others" as deconstruction's hallmark. Advancing it as such makes the position attractive, immensely so, for if God is included among the "others," deconstruction (in this reading) sounds a lot like religion, for surely religion's object is to deliver us from narcissistic self-centeredness into the otherness of God and, through God, to other people.[19] Deconstructionist prose swells with virtue, which places its critics in the position of seeming to be either personally insensitive or politically reactionary– the latter, deconstructionists frequently explicitly charge. But the question is: does deconstruction do more than *preach* the empathy we all aspire to? Do its claimed "skills" help us *develop* and *deploy* that virtue? Its theological enthusiasts see in it "a rich and vigorous catalyst for religious thought [for being] an open ended call to let something new come:...an approach that lets faith function with an enhanced sense of advent, gladdened by the good news of alterity by which we are summoned."[20] But this sounds like using the Christian connotations of Advent to bless modern enthusiasms for quantity, the thrill of novelty, and the prospect of progress– the more new arrivals the better. What if the newly welcomed guest turns out to be the Devil in disguise? Should skinhead Neo-Nazis and the Klu Klux Klan be given the same hearing as widows and orphans? Our hearts invariably go out to the "others" that deconstructionists name, but have they discovered techniques to help us winnow hard cases? A countless number of possible contrasts to (or negations of) the present situation obviously exist. Which ones deserve our attentions?

This is no small question, but the deeper point is this. Deconstruction is first and foremost a theory of language. This should temper our expectations right off, for those theories come and go– structuralism, generative grammar; what will be next? Two things, though, characterize the constant parade. First, the deeper

theorists dive into language, the bigger their problems become. A review of Randy Harris' recent book, *The Linguistic Wars*, concludes by quoting a linguist as saying, "You know, language has got us licked. The score is language, one billion, linguists, zero."[21]

The second constant in the ongoing procession of language theories is that it has little effect on the ideas that people use words to shape.[22] Caputo grants this, at least in part.

> To the age old dispute between belief and unbelief, deconstruction comes equipped with a kind of armed neutrality. [It] neither includes nor excludes the existence of any positive entity. There is nothing about deconstruction...that affirms or falsifies the claims of faith; nothing that confirms or denies the claims of physiological reductionists who see there only the marvellous promptings not of the Spirit, but of certain neurotransmitters.[23]

This claimed neutrality, though, is deceptive, for in our materialistic age, deconstruction's "heightened sense of suspicion about the constructedness of our discourse" (Caputo) works more against intangibles than against neurotransmitters. Practically speaking, this places Derrida in the camp of the massed powers of cognition that oppose the human spirit today. When Saul Bellow tells us that[24]

> the value of literature lies in "true impressions." A novel moves back and forth between the world of objects, of actions, of appearances, and that other world, from which these "true impressions" come and which moves us to believe that the good we hang on to so tenaciously– in the face of evil, so obstinately– is no illusion.

When (as I say) an artist expresses such views, religionists take him at his word, but not Derrida. His "heightened sense of suspicion" will not allow "presences"– his word for Bellow's "true impressions"– to be accepted at face value.[25]

Some things do need to be deconstructed. Scientism needs all the deconstructing it can get, and the Buddha's deconstruction of the empirical ego by showing it to be a composite of *skandas* that derive from *pratitya-samutpada* (co-dependent origination) is a marvel of psychological analysis. But the Buddha tore down in order to rebuild; specifically to show that "utter [phenomenal] groundlessness (nonbeing) is equivalent to full groundedness (being)."[26] Likewise Pseudo-Dionysius. No one saw more clearly than he that "the intelligence must interpret, correct, straighten out, 'reduce', and deny the images, forms, and schemes in which are materially represented the divine realities they are unable to

contain." But this "radical critique and rejection by the intelligence of each of the [Divine] names that are more or less accessible to it indicate definite steps *forward* of this same intelligence *in the direction of its own divinization*.[27] One looks in vain for anything approaching such exalted issues from Derrida's dismantlings. They look like the latest brand of our century-long hermeneutics of suspicion, mounted this time linguistically.

I fear that in giving the space that I have to Derrida my wish to come to grips with at least one instance of Postmodernism may have drawn me too far into his circle, for hand to hand combat never avails against these philosophers; their minds are too agile. So before proceeding to Postmodernism's religious alternative, I shall drop my dirk, back off a distance and aim a javelin at the premises from which the philosophers work. For in Yogi Berra's aphorism, they make the wrong mistake. Misjudging what our times require, they provide brilliant answers to the wrong question.

Already at the opening of this century Yeats was warning that things were falling apart, that the centre didn't hold. Gertrude Stein followed him by noting that "in the twentieth century nothing is in agreement with anything else," and Ezra Pound saw man as "hurling himself at indomitable chaos"– the most durable line from the play Green Pastures has been, "Everything that's tied down is coming loose." It is not surprising, therefore, that when in her last interview Rebecca West was asked to name the dominant mood of our time, she replied, "A desperate search for a pattern." The search is desperate because it seems futile to look for a pattern when reality has become, in Roland Barth's vivid image, kaleidoscopic. With every tick of the clock the pieces of experience come down in new array.

This is what we are up against, *this* is what Postmodernity is: the balkanization of life and thought. Perpetual becoming is preying on us like a deadly sickness, and (deaf to E. M. Forster counsel, "only connect") Postmoderns think that more differences, (and the increased fragmentation, distractions and dispersions these produce) is what we need. If we could replay at fast speed a videotape of our century's social and conceptual earthquakes, we would see the deconstructionists scurrying around like madmen in hardhats, frantically looking for places where a little more demolition and destabilization might prove useful.[28] Here Dr. Ahmed's analysis of Postmodernity fits perfectly, for after defining it as "a rejection of the world as a universal totality," he proceeds

immediately to note that "the media provide its central dynamic" Postmodernism and the media reinforce each other through their common interest in difference, for novelty– sequential difference– is the media's life blood. Nothing is so important but that in three days it will not be replaced by headlines reporting what happens next, however trivial it may be. Is anything more interesting than what's going on!

In turning now to Postmodernism's religious alternative, I shall continue to speak of it in the singular and simply assume what I argued in *Forgotten Truth*; namely, that a common metaphysical "spine" underlies the differences in the theologies of the classical languages of the human soul, the world's great religions.[29] Tackling in reverse order the three modes of Postmodernism that I delineated earlier, I shall report as straightforwardly as I can– there won't be much time for supporting arguments– the religious claims that people need worldviews, that reliable ones are possible, and that they already exist.

Religion's Response to Post modernism

1. Worldviews are needed

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. George Will has observed that "the magic word of modernity is 'society;'" and the present case bears him out, for it is almost entirely for their social repercussions that Postmoderns fault worldviews.[30] In applying that measuring rod they simply assume (they do not argue) that religion does more harm than good. That this runs counter to social science functionalism, which holds that institutions don't survive unless they serve social needs, is conveniently overlooked,[31] but the deeper point is that the vertical dimension– the way religion feeds the human soul in its inwardness and solitude– gets little attention.

When the personal and private dimension of life (which intersects the vertical) is validated, it is not difficult to see the function that worldviews serve. Minds require echoniches as much as organisms do, and the mind's echoniche is its worldview, its sense of the whole of things, however much or little that sense is articulated. Short of madness, there is *some* fit between the two, and we constantly try to improve the fit. Signs of a poor fit are the sense of meaninglessness, alienation, and in acute cases anxiety,

which Postmodernity knows so well. The proof of a good fit is that life and the world make sense. When the fit feels perfect, the energies of the cosmos pour into the believer and empower him to startling degree. He knows that he belongs, and this produces an inner wholeness that is strong for being consonant with the wholeness of the All. The very notion of an All is a red flag to deconstructionists for seeming to disallow alterity; and in a sense it does disallow it, for, being whole, God cannot be exclusive. But as God's inclusiveness is unique in including all the "otherness" there is– God's infinity is all-possibility– alterity is allowed as much room as it can logically have.

One would think that Postmodern theologians, at least, would honour this sense of ultimate belonging that religion bestows. Heirs, though, to modernity, they too have adopted "society" as their watchword, allowing social considerations to upstage ontological ones. Both absolutism and relativism have bright and shadow sides. The virtue of the Absolute is the power it offers the soul; its danger is the fanaticism into which the power can narrow. In the case of relativism, its virtue is tolerance, and nihilism is its shadow side. Where social considerations predominate it is the dark side of absolutism (fanaticism) and the bright side of relativism (tolerance) that are noticed, these being their social components. In both cases, the vertical dimensions– which would reverse our estimates of the two– are underplayed if not ignored.

2. Worldviews are Possible

In proceeding from the need for worldviews to their possibility, I have in mind of course the possibility of *valid* worldviews, not castles in the air. The religious claim that the human mind has access to such views challenges *mainline* Postmodernism in the way its preceding claim– that worldviews are needed– challenged Postmodernism's polemical stance.

Mainline Postmodernism takes its stand on human finitude, arguing that as finite minds are no match for the infinite, there can be no fit between the two. What gets overlooked in this disjunction is the subtleties that finitude admits of: its degrees, modes, and paradoxes. With its *fana, anatta, and may*a, religion ultimately denies that finitude, as such, exists. Postmodernism cannot comprehend that, any more than it can comprehend the other side of the paradox: that finitude hosts the Atman, Buddha-nature, *imago dei*,

Uncreated Intellect, and Universal Man. God alone exists, and everything that exists is God.

These are difficult concepts, so I reach for analogies. A wisp of spray is not the ocean, but the two are identically water. Or if we imagine an infinite lump of clay that tapers into tentacles and then into filaments that dwindle toward nothingness, the final tips of those filaments are still clay. To the religious spirit, such thoughts can serve as powerful spring-boards in suggesting our connectedness to God. Which connectedness– this is the immediate point– has epistemic implications. Postmoderns burlesque those who protest the cramped, Postmodern view of the mind, charging them with claiming that the human mind is capable of a God's eye-view of things, as if omniscience were the only alternative to Kant's categories. Worldviews are human views, which means that they conform to human modes of thought in the way a bird's-eye view of the world honours its modes. But Blake's dictum is decisive here: "I see through my eyes, not with them." That the world, taken as the whole of things, looks different to God and other species than it does to us does not prevent there being better and worse, right and wrong ways that human beings take it to be. In a subordinate sense, the right way includes many right ways– as many as appropriately different ways of being human decree. Differences in the world's great theologies provide an important instance of this, but here the point is that mistakes are possible and do occur, Postmodernism being one of them.

The components of Postmodern epistemology that work most heavily to obscure the realization that there can be valid overviews are two: perspectivalism carried to the point of absurdity; and a mundane, humdrum conception of knowledge.[32]

Perspectivalism becomes absurd when the obvious fact that we look at the world from different places, hence different angles, is transformed into the dogma that we therefore cannot know things as they actually are. For Kant, it was our human angle (the categories of the mind) that prevents us from knowing "things in themselves;" and when psychological, cultural, temporal, and linguistic filters are added to this generic, anthropological one, we get constructivism, cultural relativism, historicism, and cultural-linguistic holism respectively. What dogmatic perspectivalism in all these modes overlooks is that to recognize that perspectives are such requires knowing to some extent the wholes that demote them to that status. Without this recognition, each "take" (as they say in

movie making) would be accepted as the thing in itself. Visually, we need only move around the room to get a sense of the whole that shows our perspectives to be no more than such; but the mind is a dexterous instrument and can put itself "in other peoples' shoes," as we say.[33] When the shoes belong to strangers, we transcend cultural relativism; when they are removed in time we transcend all-or-nothing historicism. When this is pointed out to Postmoderns they again burlesque, charging their informants with claiming to be able to climb out of their skins, or (in the case of time) hopping a helicopter for past epochs. Both images are self-serving by pointing their spatial analogies in the wrong direction. The alternative to perspectivalism is not to get out of one-self or one's times, but to go into oneself until one reaches things that are time*less* and elude space altogether.

As for Postmodern epistemology, this too was initiated by Kant who argued that knowledge is always a synthesis of our concepts with something that presents itself to those concepts. (We can think of a tree as an object without knowing whether there is such an object until we confront something that fits our concept of a tree). An important question for worldviews is whether human beings have faculties, analogous to their sense receptors, for detecting immaterial, spiritual objects. Kant thought not, and epistemology has largely gone along with his opinion; but religion disagrees. There is no objective way of adjudicating the dispute, for each side has its own definition of objectivity. For science, common sense, and Postmodernism, objective knowledge where it is countenanced is knowledge that commends itself to everyone because it turns, finally, on sense reports that people agree on. Religious epistemology, on the other hand, defines objective knowledge as adequation to the real. When the real in question is spiritual in character, special faculties are required. These need to be developed and kept in working order.

Unencumbered by run-of-the-mill epistemology and perspectivalism gone haywire, religions accept their worldviews as their absolutes, which is to say, as true. That word is no more acceptable to post-moderns than "all" is; Wittgenstein prefigured the shift from modernity to Postmodernity when he characterized his turn from his early to his late period as a shift from truth to meaning. Here again the post-modern preoccupation with social matters obtrudes, for the fanatical impulse to cram truth down other people's throats leads Postmoderns to back off from truth in

general, especially if it is capitalized. In so doing they overlook the fact that truth is falliblism's prerequisite, not its alternative. Where there is no via (way, truth) to deviate from, mistakes have no meaning.[34]

Working my way backwards through Postmodernism's three versions, I come lastly to its minimal claim which simply reports that we have no believable worldview today. "We have no maps, and we don't know how to make them" is the way one of the author's of *The Good Society* states the point.[35]

Whereas the two stronger versions of post-modernism need to be challenged for interfering with the human spirit, this minimalist position, being at the root a description, poses no real problem. The description can, though, be qualified somewhat. In saying that we have no maps, the "we" in the minimalist's assertion refers to Western intellectuals. Peoples whose minds have not been reshaped by modernity and its sequel continue to live by the maps of their revelations.

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 for a last time to Dr Ahmed's characterizations of Postmodernity, which include 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.

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. 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."[36] The further unanimous claim of religious cosmologies, though, finds no echo in science, for (being a value judgement) 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 traditional cosmologies 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."[37] To that endorsement, Ken Wilber has recently 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."[38]

Conclusion

To propose that religions cash in their theological metanarratives for metaphysical similarities they share would be as absurd as to urge people to peel off their flesh so the similarities of their skeletons could come to light. But if the warfare between science and religion could wind down, religions might find themselves co-existing relatively happily within a minimally articulated metanarrative of faith that encompassed them all in the way the eight current models of the quantum world share the context of what quantum physicists in general agree on. Or in the way in which, in the modern period, competing scientific theories shared the metanarrative of the scientific worldview.

Were this to happen, the atmosphere would be more salubrious, for I know no one who thinks that the Postmodern view of the self and its world are nobler than the ones that the world's religions proclaim. Postmoderns acquiesce to their dilapidated views, not because they like them, but because they think that reason and human historicity now force them upon us.

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Notes and References

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1   I am indebted to Professor M. L. Vanessa Vogel for her helpful suggestions after reading an early draft of this essay.

2   Akbar S. Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

3   *Ibid*. pp. 10-28.

4   This important point is not generally recognized, so I shall spell it out. The death-knell to modernity, which had science as its source and hope, was sounded with the realization that despite its power in limited regions, six things

slip through its controlled experiments in the way sea slips through the nets of fishermen:

1. *Values.* Science can deal with descriptive and instrumental values, but not with intrinsic and normative ones.
2. *Meanings.* Science can work with cognitive meanings, but not with existential meanings (Is X meaningful?), or ultimate ones (What is the meaning of life?).
3. *Purposes.* Science can handle teleonomy– purposiveness in organisms– but not teleology, final causes.
4. *Qualities.* Quantities science is good at, but not qualities.
5. *The invisible and the immaterial.* It can work with invisibles that are rigorously entailed by matter's behaviour (the movements of iron filings that require magnetic fields to account for them, e.g.) but not with others.
6. *Our superiors, if such exist.* This limitation does not prove that beings greater than ourselves exist, but it does leave the question open, for "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence".

[5] Ernest Gellner defines Postmodernism as relativism– "*relativismus über Alles*" (*Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*)– but relativism is not an easy position to defend, so postmoderns do everything they can to avoid that label; Clifford Geertz's "anti-antirelativism" is a case in point. The T-shirts that blossomed on the final day of a six-week, 1987 NEH Institute probably tell the story. Superimposed on a slashed circle, their logo read, "No cheap relativism". By squirming, postmoderns can parry crude relativisms, but sophisticated relativism is still relativism. Postmoderns resist that conclusion, however, so I shall stay with their own self-characterization.

[6] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1984), pp. xxiv, 3ff.

[7] Alan Wallace, *Choosing Reality* (Boston and Shaftsbury: Shambala, 1989).

[8] No textbook in science has ever included things that are intrinsically greater than human beings. Bigger, of course, and wielding more physical power, but not superior in the full sense of that term which includes virtues, such as intelligence, compassion, and bliss.

[9] To highlight the opposition between Postmodernism and religion, I am intentionally tabling in this statement the differences among religions that I explored in my *Essays on World Religions* (New York: Paragon House, 1992).

[10] This article was written by the author in 1994. (Ed.)

[11] In Richard Kearney, *Dialogue with Contemporary Continental Thinkers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 123-24.

[12] One has to read quite a way to learn that this does not mean what it says. It means [per Rodolphe Gasche, *Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 281] that "nothing outside the text can, like a last reason, assume a *fulfilling function*," which in itself is not the plainest way of saying that there is nothing outside a text that determines that it has only one plausible meaning.

[13] John Caputo, "Good News about Alterity: Derrida and Theology" in *Faith and Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 453.

[14] Walt Anderson, *Reality Isn't What It Used to Be* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), p. 87.

[15] See Jacques Derrida, "A Number of Yes," translated by Brian Holmes, *Qui Parle* 2 (1988), pp. 120-33.

[16] In Richard Kearney, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

[17] John Caputo, ibid.

[18] Metanarratives (or worldviews) other than the one in question can exist, but not as such; which is to say, not (from the position of the one in question) as true. Worlds are not made for one another. The words Worldviews, Absolute, and Truth are mutually implicated.

[19] Caputo develops this connection. "Although Derrida is not a religious writer, and does not, as far as I know, hold any religious views, his thought seems to me in no small part driven by a kind of biblical sensitivity, let us say a hyperbolic hypersensitivity, to the demands of the other, to the claims laid upon us by the different one, of the one who is left out or cast out, who lacks a voice or hearing, a standing or stature" (ibid., p. 466).

[20] John Caputo, ibid., p. 454, 457.

[21] In David Berreby's review of Randy Allen Harris, *The Linguistic Wars* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) in *The Sciences*, January/February, 1994, p. 49.

[22] There was a dramatic moment in the December 1980 meeting of the American Philosophical Association when Richard Rorty pressed his critics to offer examples of cases "where some philosophical inquiry into conceptual foundations of X provided any furtherance of our understanding of X." Many think that his challenge has not been met, and it is time (it seems to me) to put the same challenge to deconstruction. Confining our self to this essay's concern, is there a single passage in the Hebrew canon (say) whose religious message can be deepened by deploying skills that Derrida possesses, but rabbis through the ages lacked?

[23] John Caputo, *op. cit.*, p. 463.

[24] Saul Bellow, *It All Adds Up* (New York: Viking, 1994), p. 97.

[25] This exaltation of method over intuitive discernments is an academic disease of our times: in the case at hand, "presences" are rendered suspect, and confidence is shifted to the deconstructive method. But "if the optic nerve has to be examined in order to be sure that vision is real, it will be necessary to examine that which examines the optic nerve; an absurdity which proves in its own indirect way that knowledge of suprasensible things is intuitive and cannot be other than intuitive." (Frithjof Schuon).

[26] David Loy, "Avoiding the Void: The Lack of Self in Psychotherapy and Buddhism," *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology,* vol. 24, no. 2, p. 153.

[27] Rene Roques, preface to *Pseudo-Dionysius* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 7, 6). Emphasis added.

[28] "The point of deconstruction is to loosen and unlock structures...to allow [things] to function more freely...open-endedly. It warns against letting [things] close over or shut down, for this would imprison something in systems which struggles to twist free" (Caputo, 456-57). What, specifically?

[29] Huston Smith, *Forgotten Truth, The Common Vision of the World's Religions,* Harper San Francisco, San Francisco: 1976/1992 (repr. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1984, 2002)

[30] The break up of colonialism following World War II got mixed up with Marx's hermeneutic of suspicion in a curious and unfortunate way. Marx was able to show quite convincingly that much of what capitalists took for truth was actually ideology– but his successors slipped into assuming that because the capitalists thought their truth was objective and they oppressed people, belief

in objective truth must be a cause of oppression. No Descartes, no imperialism. There is great irony here, for Marx mounted his hermeneutics of suspicion to clear the ground for his view of things which he considered objective. His stratagems, though, were powerful and took on a life of their own. Eventually, (with help from Nietzsche, Freud, and others) they turned against their fathers by undermining confidence in objective truth generally.

Parenthetically but importantly: that knowledge (to the degree that it is such) is objective, and that objectivity is not fully such if the context that insures it is less than inclusive are momentous points; but in this essay I can only assume them, there being insufficient space to argue for them.

[31] On survival, we have Clifford Geertz's report that "though it is not logically impossible for a people to have [no] metaphysics, we do not seem to have found such a people" ("Ethos, World-View and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols", *Antioch Review* [1957], p. 338).

[32] For a reasoned presentation of these two important points which I can only mention here, see the section titled "Two Dogmas of Scepticism Concerning Spiritual Reality," in Donald Evans, *Spirituality and Human Nature* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993).

[33] This, of course, is precisely what Postmodern anthropologists deny. The discipline that began as the effort to learn about other peoples and cultures now obsesses over the impossibility of that project. Anthropologists now evidence their seriousness by recognizing that "facts" about other peoples are only superficially such. When the ever-shifting, culture-bound, contradictory and deserving-of-deconstruction meanings of the natives interface with the anthropologists' meanings that partake of the same problems, what hope is there for minds to meet? Those who seek such meetings are reduced to reporting the anguish of their field experiences in which they and their subjects try to break out of their respective islands and reach out to one another, with failure built into the project from its start.

[34] Robert Kane's *Through the Moral Maze: Searching for Absolute Values in a Pluralistic World* (New York: Paragon House, 1994) makes this point convincingly.

[35] Richard Madsen, one of the authors of *The Good Society*, Robert Bellah et al. (New York: Knopf, 1991).

[36] *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 October 1992, A 16.

[37] 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).

[38] Ken Wilber, "The Great Chain of Being," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, vol. 33 no. 3 (summer 1993), p. 53.

Exploring the Convergence of Knowledge, Intuition, and Reality- A Comparative Study of Iqbal and Mulla Sadrā's Philosophical Thought

Dr. Atya Syed

ABSTRACT

This article explores the striking similarities between the philosophical views of Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Mulla Sadrā, particularly in their understanding of the relationship between knowledge, religious experience, and reality. Iqbal, in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* emphasizes that both thought and intuition spring from the same source, complementing one another in grasping reality. Similarly, Sadrā, a prominent Muslim philosopher, believes that intuitive experience, or *mushahada 'aqliya*, is a higher form of intellectual truth, transcending pure rationalization. Both thinkers agree that rational methods alone cannot fully capture the truth and that intuition is necessary for a complete vision of reality.

The article also discusses the dynamic nature of reality in Iqbal and Sadrā's thought, highlighting their shared belief in change as a fundamental principle of the universe. Iqbal's view of dynamic reality aligns with Sadrā's theory of *al-haraka al-jawhariyya* (substantial motion), where existence is seen as continuously evolving towards higher forms. Both thinkers stress that intuition and reason are not opposed but are complementary, each serving to enhance the understanding of reality.

Furthermore, the article compares Iqbal's and Sadrā's approaches to Sufism and mysticism. While both are inclined towards intuitive experience, they do not advocate for a purely mystical approach without philosophical grounding. The article concludes by reflecting on the convergence of ideas between Iqbal and Sadrā, particularly their shared emphasis on the cognitive aspect of intuitive experience and the evolution of existence, despite differences in their engagement with Sufism.

Sadrā and Iqbal

Iqbal in his first lecture of T*he Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* describes the relationship between knowledge and religious experience. He points out that religion stands in greater need of a rational foundation of its ultimate principles than even the dogma of science. He continues, "But to rationalize faith is not to admit the superiority of philosophy over religion……Nor is there any reason to suppose that thought and intuition and essentially opposed to each other."[1]

According to Iqbal, they spring up from the same source and complement each other. One grasps Reality piecemeal, the other grasps it in its wholeness. The one fixes its gaze on the eternal, the other on the temporal aspect of Reality. Both seek vision of the same Reality which reveals itself to them in accordance with their function in life. Iqbal confirms Bergson's view that intuition is only a higher form of intellect.

Iqbal's view is that in order to secure a complete vision of Reality, sense-perception must be supplemented by the perception of *Qalb* (قلب), i.e., the heart. The heart is a kind of intuition or insight which brings us into constant aspects of Reality other than open to sense-perception. However, it is not a mysterious faculty, it is rather a mode of dealing with Reality in which sensation, in the physiological sense, does not play any part. Yet the experience is as concrete as any other experience. The total Reality which invades our consciousness as an empirical fact has other ways of entering our awareness. Religious experience is a fact like any other fact of human experience

Iqbal proceeds to describe the characteristics of mystic experience. It is immediate, unanalysable , highly objective and incommunicable like all feeling, untouched by discursive intellect. But like all feeling, it has a cognitive element. It is the nature of feeling to seek expression in thought. Feeling and idea are non-temporal and temporal aspects of the same experience. According to Iqbal, "Feeling is as much objective fact as is the idea".[2] At the same time he says, "Thought or idea not alien to the being."[3]

(The above-mentioned views of) Iqbal has striking resemblance with Sadrā concept of intuitive experience. Sadrā al-lin al Shirazi (979/80—1571-72A.D), more commonly known as Mulla Sadrā, was a great and original thinker. According to the list of Sadrā's works given by the editor of his book—*Al-Asfār Al-Arba* (vol. I, ehran, 1958) in his introduction to the work, Sadrā wrote 32 to 33 treatises.

His contribution to Muslim philosophy is immense, and his influence in Persia, Afghanistan and Indo-Pak subcontinent cannot be ignored. Iqbal has mentioned his name in his writings.

Sadrā like Iqbal was trained to be a philosopher. He retired to seclusion partly because he was not sure about the philosophical truths. He regarded purely rational method as superficial and extrinsic. He was, therefore, in search of a method that would transform merely rational propositions into experienced truths. In his "confession"[4] he expressed this desire to reach certainty.

Sadrā emphasizes the point that the nature of existence and its uniqueness can only be experienced, the moment you conceptualize it, it ceases to be existence and becomes an essence. Yet Sadrā has employed a number of sophisticated rational arguments to prove the above-mentioned view. This leads us to the conclusion that for him, mystic truth is essentially intellectual truth and mystic experience is a cognitive experience. But this intellectual truth has to be lived through to be fully realized. If intellectual truth is only entertained as rational propositions, it will lose its essential character.

Sometimes the afore-mentioned point of view leads to the impression that in order to understand Sadrā's philosophy an understanding of Sufism is a must. However, Sadrā no-where asserts that one should be a Sufi in order to be a philosopher. Sadrā unlike Ibn Arabi (who otherwise, is a model for him) adopts a thorough-going rational and philosophical method. In fact, he disapproves of philosophy without intuitive experience, but at the same time does not like pure Sufism without philosophical training.

The question arises: What does Sadrā means by experience? He is no talking about Sufi or mystic experience, which is only ecstatic or ethico-estatic, but about an intuitive apprehension of truth or rational experience (مشاهده عقلیہ). This he opposes to pure rationalization, superficial logical reasoning and rational

disputation. He insists that purely logical reasoning cannot dispute direct perception or intuitive experience.

Sadrā says, "Demonstration, indeed, the way of direct access and perception in those things which have a cause. This being the case, how can demonstration and direct perception can contradict each other? Those Sufis who have uttered (in defence of experiences of man like Ibn Arabi) words like 'If you disprove them by arguments, they have disproved you by their experience' are actually saying, 'if you disprove them by your so-called arguments……;, otherwise, correct rational proofs cannot contradict intuitive experience." [5]

This shows that intuition for Sadrā does not mean denial of reason. It is higher form of reason—a more positive and constructive form than formal reasoning.

To sum up, there seems to be a close resemblance between Iqbal and Sadrā's point of view. In this respect we should keep in mind the following affinities:-

(1) For both of them intuitive experience is a cognitive experience Here they differ from the thinkers like Ghazali, for whom mystic and intuitive experience is ethico-ecastatic, i.e., without any intellectual content.

(2) Both Iqbal and Sadrā believe that the purely rational method is not sufficient to achieve the knowledge of truth and Reality.

(3) Both search for a method to attain certainty.

(4) Iqbal and Sadrā do not reject reason altogether. Sadrā, for example, gives a number of rational arguments, in order to support the content of his intuitive experience. Similarly, Iqbal maintains that religion stands in need of rational foundation of its ultimate principles. Iqbal also proposes the philosophical test, in order to prove the significance of the religious experience.

(5) Both Iqbal and Sadrā agree that intuition and reason are not opposed to each other. Iqbal compares them to great rivers which have the same source. Similarly, for Sadrā intuition is a higher form of intellect. But he asserts that reason without intuitive experience is empty and superficial. Thus Iqbal and Sadrā maintain that reason and intuition complement each other.

(6) Both have an ambivalent attitude toward Sufism. Some

consider Sadrā a Sufi. But he was not a Sufi or a supporter of Sufism in the usual sense of the word. Iqbal also seems to have an inclination towards Sufism; because, mystics experience is intuitive, yet he does not approve of all forms of Sufism.

So far we have been discussing the affinity between Iqbal and Sadrā in respect of their views about intuition and reason. But another significant analogy can be drown. Iqbal in his lecture— "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam", says, "The ultimate spiritual basis of all life, as conceived by Islam, is eternal and reveals itself in variety and change." [6] He also maintains that change is one of the greatest sign of God. Similarly, in "The conception of God" while discussing atomism he arrives at the conclusion that nothing has stable nature. In the very first lecture Iqbal points out that the Muslim rejected the Greek concept of the universe; because, it was fixed and determined. There were no creative possibilities in their conception. Iqbal believes that the Islamic concept of the universe is dynamic.

A similar dynamism is present in Sadrā's theory of existence. He asserts that movement not only occurs in the qualities of things but in the very substance. He calls it substantial movement (الحرکة الجوہریہ). This doctrine of Sadrā is an important contribution to the Muslim philosophy. It transforms the fixed grades of al-Suhrawardi into systematic ambiguity of existence. The reason is that grades of being are no longer static and fixed, but more continuous and achieve higher forms of existence in time.

The driving force of this movement is *'Ishq'* or cosmic love, which impels everything towards a more concrete form. Sadrā believes that each of the intellectually and spiritually perfected members of the human species will become a species unto himself in the hereafter.

Sadrā[7] thinks that in the Quran itself there are a number of verses establishing the thesis of change in substance. For instance, "When you see the mountains, you think they are stable, but they are fleeting just like clouds." (Quran, XXVII, 88). In order to illustrate the perpetual flux, [8] he quotes the following Quranic verses: He (God) is everyday in a new mode." (Quran, LV, 29).

The similarity between Iqbal and Sadrā's afore-mentioned doctrines of concept of change, and *'Ishq'* as the driving force of evolution and perfect man's emergence is obvious. Iqbal as we

know, believes in the dynamic nature of reality, leading to the evolution of a more spiritual selfhood of men and the great potential of '*Ishq*' in stimulatory the inner sources of spiritual energy which finally leads to creativity and evolution. Iqbal also quotes the above-mentioned second Quranic verse in "*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*" to establish change as the ultimate principle. His exact words are: "The Quranic view of the alternation of day and night as a symbol of the ultimate Reality which appears in a fresh glory every moment, shows the tendency in Islamic metaphysics to regard time objective."[9] However, Iqbal[10] more often presents another verse in support of the thesis of change, and that is related to the phenomenon of the succession of day and might.

To sum up, there is a thought-provoking resemblance between some of the views of Iqbal and Sadrā. The question arises: Is it shear coincidence or does it show the influence of Sadrā on Iqbal? The latter possibility does not seem plausible; because, in Iqbal's writings the references to Sadrā are rare.

No doubt he is acquainted with his name and with some of his views. In *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia,* he does not attach much importance to him. The study of this book shows that he has not studied Sadrā seriously and thoroughly; because, for Iqbal Sadrā's most important doctrine concept is "identity of subject and object." He does not appear to be aware of Sadrā's theory of existence, the principle of systematic ambiguity of existence and the idea of substantial change— Sadrā's most revolutionary notions. This leaves with the former possibility, i.e., the affinity between Iqbal and Sadrā may be due to the fact that sometimes two minds working independently reach the same conclusion or conclusions in their intellectual search. In the field of psychology James—Lange theory of emotions, is an example of the he phenomenon.

Sadrā and Ibn Arabi

Ibn Arabi (July 28, 1165–November 16, 1240) is considered one of the greatest theosophist and mystic whose full-fledged philosophical expression of the esoteric mystical dimension of Islamic thought is incomparable. His birthplace is *Tai.* His early education centre was Sevilla, which was considered centre of Islamic culture and learning. Ibn Arabi stated there for thirty year the studies with various mystic masters who found in him a young man of great spiritual inclination and extraordinary intelligence. During this period he traveled a lot to various cities of Spain and

North Africa in search of great Sufis. One of those trips he had the dramatic encounter with the great Muslim Aristotlean philosopher—Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) at the city of Cordoba. Ibn Rushd asked for this meeting, for he had heard a lot about the brilliant young Ibn Arabi. It was arranged and according to the traditions, he was highly impressed by his intellect and mystical depth.

In 1198, he had a vision and was commanded to travel to the East. Thus he began his pilgrimage first to Mecca (1201) where he received the divine command to write his major work *"Al-Fatuhat"*, which was completed much later in Damascus. The full title of the book was— *"Al Fatuhat al-Makkiyyah"* (The Meccan Revelation). The book is not only an encyclopedia of esoteric Islamic sciences as he understood them but also revelation of his own inner life. His conclusions were based on his mystical experience. In Mecca he also compiled his *diwan* (collection of poems— *"Tarjuman al Ashwaq"*, with a mystical commentary.

After Mecca Arabi visited Egypt and Anatolia (*Qonya)* and from there he traveled to Baghdad and Aleppo (Syria). However, he settled down in Damascus, teaching and writing and stayed there will his death. In Damascus he started and completed his another well-known work— *Fusus-al-hikam* (The Bezels of wisdom) in 1129. The book consists of twenty-seven chapters.

Main Doctrines (A Comparative Review)

The fundamental thesis of his philosophy is the doctrine of unity of being (*wahdat-ul-wajud).* However, he makes distinctions between *"haqq"* (Truth) and self-manifestation (*Zuhur*) or creation (*khalq*) which is ever new (*jadeed*) and in perpetual movement. Thus it unites the whole creation in a process of constant renewal. At the core stand dark cloud (*amā*) or mist *(bukhār)* as the ultimate principle of things and forms, intelligences, heavenly bodies, elements and their mixtures that culminate in Perfect man. God flows throughout the universe and manifests Truth. He also mentioned the primordial principle of potentiality which generates archetypes and then the actually existing things in the universe. He names this principle as *"unsur"* (matter).

It is said that Ibn Arabia has more impact on subsequent Muslim philosophy than Suhrawardi. Therefore, in latter Muslim thought the effort is to sysnthesize Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi's philosophy. This syncreticism spreads to Asia Minor and Indo-Pak subcontinent.

Mulla Sadrā superimposed Ibn Arabi's mystical thought on Aristotlean Illuminationist synthesis of Mir Damad who was the favourite teacher of Sadrā even when in later period of his life Sadrā had difference of opinion with him in philosophical views. Sadrā's emphasis was on the priority of being. Al-Arabi argument for the unity of being within which being differ only according to perfection and imperfection. All beings are graded manifestation of the Pure Being. All beings possess His attributes with varying degree of intensity. For Sadrā like Arabi existence of Being is pure and absolute, and manifest itself in different beings. He considers it "systematic ambiguity"; because, existence is not static but in perpetual movement from the less perfect to the more perfect.[11]

Sadrā's doctrine of Nature asserts that everything except God has been generated temporally as well as eternally. According to some historians of Muslim thought the above-mentioned doctrine is an elaboration of what al-Arabi calls Nature or Prime matter. Both the thinkers seem to agree that the matter of the corporeal things has the power to regenerate and to assume new forms. For them Nature is permanent activity which links the eternal and the temporal. For Sadrā the flow of Nature is upward. Al Arabi in a slightly different way and terms maintains that the flow of Nature unites everything by its continuous movement. In short, Sadrā and Ibn Arabi introduce the dynamic dimensions to their system of thought.

As it has been mentioned in the previous section of this work that Sadrā's theory of existence presents the thesis that nothing is real except existence or being. To repeat his own words, "To sum up, the fact that in reality nothing exists except being."[12] This thesis can lead to the conclusion that; "everything which exists is the reality or the Ultimate reality which in theistic philosophical terms means that, "All things are Divine or parts of the Divine or the Ultimate Reality." In short, assertion of the philosophy of Pantheism. But we have already discussed while narrating his life story that he has to face such an uproar and devastating criticism from the Ulema,[13] that he decides to reflect and to reconstruct his thought, which can be categorized as—Existential Monism, instead of pantheism.

Ibn Arabi is also one of chief exponents of unity of being or *Wahdat-ul-Wajud*. According to him only God is pure and absolute Being. He created (*Khalq*) existents or beings from within. Therefore, the later are not separate from Him in reality. They exist

within Him. They are manifestations of His Being. Whatever we observe in the universe is God Himself. Ibn Arabi thinks that the world and the objects within it are the reflections of the light of God. These objects do not exist in themselves. These creations are Time (*Dehr* دہر) or the world or universe. The universe is the apparent form of the Absolute Being and it is the universe of possibilities and perpetual creation. Ultimately, for him God, world and man become just three aspects of the same concept.

The above-mentioned views of Ibn Arabi clearly indicate that he is an upholder of Monism, but his Monism is not Sadrā's Existential Monism. It is clearly Pantheistic Monism. Therefore, inspite of his great caliber as a theosophist, thinker and literary figure, he is considered the most controversial personality in the world of Muslim thought. [14]

The idea of the Perfect man has been discussed by most of the Muslim philosophers and mystic thinkers. Most[15] of them have firm belief that the Holy Prophet (Pbuh) Muhammad was the Perfect man. This idea is very old and followed continuously by the Muslim thinkers. Perhaps inspired by Ibn Miskawaih. Ibn Arabi and Al-Jili have also described the personality attributes of the Perfect Man. Jalal-ud-Din Rumi however, criticized Ibn Arabi's concept of the Perfect Man. According to Ibn Arabi the first emanation from the *Haqq* (Absolute Being) is reality or truth of Muhammad (Pbuh) or the light of Muhammad (Pbuh) and that is *Kalma Tauheed*.

In Ibn Arabi's scheme of emanations; though, reality of Muhammad (Pbuh) is considered the genus of all objects, connecting them with the Absolute Being. But as Dr. S. M Abdullah[16] has pointed out he makes the distinction between reality (*haqq*) of the Holy Prophet and self of the Prophet. Therefore Rumi's objection against his view seems justified that He becomes just a metaphysical reality.

It is further pointed out that the universe, man, and God creates the impression that all three are separate entities, but actually those three are not separate for Arabi, because; the Absolute Being is the sole reality, the self is only emanation or manifestation of Ultimate Reality or the Absolute. The Perfect man, for Ibn Arabi, [17] is an idea which he has cut off from that of the Prophet and has done it at the beginning of his system. Hence the Perfect saint can also identify himself with the Perfect Man completely and becomes himself the Vicegerent Lord of the Universe.

Sadrā also presents the idea of Perfect Man who is the end product of the dynamic movement of the existence which is upward. In the Perfect Man the contingent and the Eternal meet. It does not mean, however, that the mixture of the contingent Eternal being become God or the Absolute Pure Being.

While discussing the epistemology of Sadrā, it has been pointed out that philosophical truths has to be experienced. Here the question arises: What is meant by experience according to Sadrā? Definitely it is not mystic experience, but an intuitive apprehension of truth. He insists that when something has been Known by intuitive experience it cannot be disputed by purely logical reasoning. It may not bestow new knowledge, but bestows intuitive certainty to the thought content.

On account of the afore-mentioned view Sadrā's attitude is very different from those Sufis who claim that their experience has no thought content. They do not deal with philosophic or intellectual propositions. Therefore, they end up in ethico-ecstastic ideal. This is not Sadrā's point of view. According to Fazal-ur-Rehman, [18] here he differs from Ghazali in theis respect. Sadrā's model is Ibn Arabi who has used Sufi terminology, but has thorough intellectual content.

In the world of Fazal-ur-Rehman[19], "Under the influence of Ibn Arabi, Kalam, philosophy and Illuminationism was synthesized in Sadrā."

Still Ibn Arabi's method is not strictly speaking—philosophical. He uses analogies, images, symbols and stories in order to describe his thoughts. Sadrā, on the other hand, uses philosophical and even rational method which is called by him, 'Rational Perception" (مشاهده) (عقلیہ. He condemns philosophy without intuitive certainty and Sufism without philosophic training.

Concluding the comparison between Sadrā and Ibn Arabi it would be appropriate to observe that in certain respects both the thinkers' doctrines and concepts are convergent, but on certain issues divergence is obvious, and it is divergence which makes them genuine and original.

Notes and References

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1   Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* 1962, p. 2, 3.

2   Ibid., p. 21, 22.
3   Ibid., p. 31.
4   Sadrā, Mulla; *Al Asfar al Araba,* Tehran, ed. M. Rida al Muzaffar), p. 8, lines 3-8.
5   Ibid., I, 1, p. 307, lines 15ff.
6   Iqbal, M., *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 148-148.
7   Sadrā, Mulla, *Al Asfar*, I, 3, p. 108, line 3; p. 109, line 1.
8   Ibid., I, 3, p. 116, line 14.
9   Iqbal, M., *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 1962, p. 142, line 2.
10 Ibid., pp.14-16.
11 In this context of study Sadrā's theory of Existence in this book's first part.
12 *Sadrā had to face opposition from Shia clergy.*
13 Sadr-ud-Din Shirazi, *Al Asfar al Ara'bah,* Part I, Vol. I, Trans. Urdu by Manazar Ahsan Gilani, Osmania University, Deccan, 1941, p. 19
14 Dr. S.M. Abdullah, Ibn Arabi and Iqbal in the book *Ijaz-e-Iqbal*, 2004, Sang-e-Meel, Lahore, p. 152
15 Ibid., p. 155
16 A. Schiemmel, *Gabriel's Wings*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963, p. 120
17 Fazal-ur-Rehman, *The Philosophy of Sadrā,* State University of New York Press, 1975
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.

THE STATUS OF INTERFAITH HARMONY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ALLAMA MUHAMMAD IQBAL

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the life and works of Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) within the context of interfaith harmony, emphasizing his deep commitment to Islam and respect for other religions, particularly the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism and Christianity. Iqbal's religious upbringing in Sialkot, his lifelong attachment to the Qur'an, and his intellectual openness shaped his philosophical outlook, which blended tradition with modernity. While deeply devoted to Islamic principles, Iqbal valued interfaith understanding and humanistic ideals. His friendships and intellectual exchanges spanned diverse communities, reflecting his belief in the importance of religious and cultural pluralism. Iqbal's intellectual journey, including his studies in Europe, reinforced his universalist tendencies, making him a bridge between Eastern and Western thought. Through his poetry and philosophical writings, Iqbal advocated for ijtihad (independent reasoning) and spiritual democracy, rooted in equality, freedom, and the transformation of Islamic ideals into a dynamic and just society. The article highlights Iqbal's vision for a pluralistic, egalitarian Islamic state, inspired by the Prophet Muhammad's model of Medina and centered on spiritual democracy, tolerance, and social justice.

Two matters are clearly evident from a study of the life and works of Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), the poet-philosopher of Pakistan, in the context of interfaith harmony: first, that he was a highly conscious Muslim – devout by many measures – with an open and receptive mind, and, secondly, that he subscribed to the Islamic teaching of respecting all other religions of the world, particularly the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism and Christianity.

Iqbal's parents had, as was the norm in Muslim households in nineteenth-century India, made him start his formal education in a local mosque in his native town of Sialkot at the tender age of four years, where he was taught how to read, recite, recognize and repeat the words and sounds of the Qur'an.[1] This virtual upbringing with the Qur'an – Iqbal never parted with the daily practice of reciting its verses in solitude right until his death – coupled with the spiritual leanings of his pious and simple parents, had given Iqbal a profoundly religious and mystical orientation, which he preserved for the rest of his life. All recognized biographers of Iqbal narrate, as Iqbal had himself recounted in later life, that Iqbal's father, once upon seeing his young son habitually reciting the Islamic scripture in an early morning vigil, advised Iqbal to read the Qur'an as if it were being revealed to him directly from God, for only then, according to the father, would his son truly understand it.[2] This not only left a deep impression on Iqbal, it also conditioned his outlook and attitude towards the Qur'an as that of "maximum receptivity, with a mind that is open and willing to be shaped by whatever it happens to receive, as a necessary condition for untangling the knotty problems and questions both of scriptural interpretation and of human existence itself."[3]

Iqbal's love for the Qur'an and the inspiration he constantly derived from it, are thus well known from his life and works. In his poetic expression, which undeniably serves as the medium through which he presents his thought processes, Iqbal pleads to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, "If indeed the mirror of my heart is without lustre, and if indeed there is anything in my words other than the Qur'an, then, O Prophet, rend the fabric of my thoughts, sweep clean the world of my offending thorn, choke in my breast the breath of life, remove my wicked mischief from the community of your followers, do not nurture the life of my

seed, do not provide me any portion from spring's fecund showers, disgrace me on the day of reckoning, and do not allow me the honour of kissing your feet."[4]

In equal measure, the life and works of Iqbal are also reflective of how deeply devoted he was to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, not just as one who had brought the Qur'an to the Muslims as Divine revelation, but also as one who was the perfect personification of the Qur'an that his community could follow. One of the innumerable expressions of this devotion is set out in Iqbal's renowned Urdu work Bal-i Jibril ('Gabriel's Wing', 1936) to the following effect:

> He – the one who knew the ways of the truth,
> Was the seal of the prophets,
> And was the lord of all –
> The one who endowed the pathway's dust
> With the brilliant light of the Valley of Sinai.
> In the eyes of love and ecstasy, he is the First and the Last –
> He is the Qur'an, and he the Criterion.
> He is the Ya-Sin, and he the Ta-Ha!

Reference to 'the First and the Last' in the line above the penultimate one is taken from God being described as such in the Qur'an 57:3, Ya-Sin and Ta-Ha are the names of the thirtysixth and the twentieth Qur'anic suras respectively, and 'the Criterion' is one of the names of the Qur'an in 25:1.[5]

Iqbal's fundamental commitment in life was undoubtedly to the ideals of Islam, both from an intellectual as well as an emotional perspective. This commitment originated in his earliest training, and only grew with time, but he cannot be classified as a religious obscurantist.

His acceptance of humanity at large is widely acknowledged, his closest friends extended beyond Muslims to include Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs, and his poetry contains acknowledgement or praise of numerous well-known ancient and modern religious Others, including Rama and Guru Nanak, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Goethe, Nietzsche, Bergson, and Einstein, and Napoleon, Marx, Lenin, and Mussolini. [6]

When Iqbal lost his wife in 1935, and, as an ailing man, was left behind with a young son aged eleven years and a little daughter aged five years, he had no qualms about appointing a German woman of Christian faith as his children's governess. Ironically, when that governess, upon a visit to the missionary school in

Lahore which Iqbal's daughter was attending, came to know that Muslim children were being taught the Bible in one of the classes, protested against it and pressed upon Iqbal to withdraw his daughter from that school, Iqbal overruled the governess, saying that his daughter should understand the basic principles of other religions, and directing that a Muslim teacher could be employed to teach the Qur'an to his daughter at home. [7]

For the sake of biographical completeness, after his initial training in the Qur'an school, Iqbal completed his (what would now be the equivalent of) high school education at the Scotch Mission College in Sialkot in 1895, and, at the age of eighteen, moved to Lahore's famous Government College, from where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1897, studying English, philosophy, and Arabic, and thereafter a master's degree in philosophy in 1899, culminating in his appointment as reader and researcher in the same institution, all under the tutelage of Sir Thomas Arnold (1864–1930), who was a key early influence on Iqbal's intellectual orientation. By 1905, when Iqbal embarked on a three-year sojourn to Europe for further studies, he had already gained recognition as an accomplished poet and thinker in pre-independence India, and, in these three intense years, he remarkably earned three degrees from three prestigious institutions – a master's degree from Trinity College, Cambridge, a doctorate from the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, and a bar-at-law from Lincolns Inn, London (which none of his famous contemporaries like Jinnah, Gandhi, or Nehru could accomplish in such short time). The notable scholars with whom Iqbal interacted while in Europe included Reynold A. Nicholson (1868–1945), who specialized in Islamic literature and mysticism (and also translated one of Iqbal's Persian works later), and the metaphysician John McTaggart (1866–1945). It was thus only after his return from Europe that Iqbal's work started to show its universalistic tendencies "that make it the perfect bridge between the East and the West." [8]

While some would choose to highlight a so-called "fruitful paradox" that Iqbal was neither a conservative nor a liberal (because he can be classified as both) due to his opening up of ossified conservative thought by expounding liberal ideas on the one hand, and his opposition to the corrosive effects of extreme liberalism on the other hand,[9] it is perhaps more apt to call Iqbal a "re-constructionist" or being "one who seeks to blend tradition with modernity in an effort to reform society."[10] Hence, Iqbal's interpretations of the Qur'an tend to be inspired and original,

without being contrived, and while he benefited from classical explanations, he was comfortable enough in his deep familiarity with the Qur'an to be able to argue for fresh, dynamic meanings with a confidence that never ventured into dogmatism – his approach being "based on personal realization and insight (tahqiq) as opposed to conformity to authoritative teachings or interpretations (taqlid)." [11]

In the historical address that Iqbal delivered at Allahabad in 1930 wherein he presented the idea of a separate homeland for the Muslims of India (which later came about in the shape of Pakistan in 1947), he forthrightly proclaims, "A community which is inspired by feelings of illwill towards other communities is low and ignoble. I entertain the highest respect for the customs, laws, religious and social institutions of other communities. Nay, it is my duty, according to the teaching of the Qur'an, even to defend their places of worship." [12] Although Iqbal makes no direct reference, this statement is based on the Qur'an in 20:40, where God declares, "If God had not created the group (of Muslims) to ward off the others from aggression, then churches, synagogues, oratories and mosques where God is worshipped most, would have been destroyed."

Iqbal also hastens to add, "Yet I love the communal group which is the source of my life and behaviour, and which has formed me what I am by giving me its religion, its literature, its thought, its culture, and thereby recreating its whole past as a living operative factor, in my present consciousness." [13] This, the supposed opposite, contrasting from the defence and respect of the places of worship of other communities, to the love and devotion involving a specific and exclusive community, is also derived from the Qur'an in, among others, 5:28, which reads, in relevant part, "For each of you, We have established a law and a path, and had God willed, He could have made you one community, but He willed it thus in order to test you by means of that which He gave you. So compete with one another in goodness, unto God is your return, and He will tell you about those things over which you differed."

In his earlier writings, Iqbal also rejects violence, sectarianism, and class distinctions in terms as categorical as the foregoing rejection of ill-will towards other religions:

> The truth is that Islam is essentially a religion of peace…All the wars undertaken during the lifetime of the Prophet were defensive…Even in defensive wars he forbids wanton cruelty to the vanquished…The ideal of Islam is to secure social peace at any cost. All methods of violent change in society are condemned in the most unmistakable language…[14]

Religious adventurers set up different sects and fraternities, ever quarrelling with one another; and then there are castes and sub-castes… …we are suffering from a double caste system – the religious caste system, sectarianism, and the social caste system… …I condemn this accursed religious and social sectarianism; I condemn it in the name of God, in the name of humanity, in the name of Moses, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in the name of him – a thrill of emotion passes through the very fibre of my soul when I think of that exalted name – yes, in the name of him who brought the final message of freedom and equality to mankind……Fight not for the interpretations of the truth when the truth itself is in danger. It is foolish to complain of stumbling when you walk in the darkness of the night. Let all come forward and contribute their respective shares in the great toll of the nation. Let the idols of class distinctions and sectarianism be smashed forever…[15]

Iqbal defines Islam as a philosopher as opposed to a theologian, and in this perception Islam, as a religion and as a culture, is humanistic and egalitarian. Critically appreciative of early Islamic history, Iqbal firmly believes that the City State of Medina, as established and led by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the exemplar of the original purity of Islam and an embodiment of the model Islamic state. By bringing together the *Muhajirin* (those who migrated) from Makkah and the *Ansar* (the helpers) of Medina into his *Ummah*, he laid the foundations of "Muslim nationality" centered around a common spiritual aspiration instead of a common race, language, and territory. [16]

The valley of Yathrib, which formed part of the City State established in Medina, had, in addition to a Muslim population, Jewish, Christian and pagan inhabitants. In order to keep the City State strong and independent, the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, deemed it necessary to maintain equality among all of its citizens so that they could assist each other in defending their common territory. Accordingly, the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, after consulting with the other communities, issued *Mithaq-e-Madina* (the Covenant of Medina) as the first known written constitution in the world. Comprised of forty-seven articles, the first twenty-three of which govern the rights and duties of Muslims inter se, and the remaining twenty-four of which deal with relations of Muslims with Jews and other inhabitants of the City State of Medina, *Mithaq-e-Madina* on the one hand joined the *Muhajirin* and the Ansar into a bond of common faith, and on the other hand gave the non-Muslims freedom of their respective religions and properties, thereby joining them together into the Ummah on the basis of humanity, patriotism and the need for the combined defence of a common territory.

Mithaq-e-Madina, as conceived by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was not only an attempt on his part to establish a pluralistic society, it also brought into existence a "federal" state as the conduct of the non-Muslim tribes was governed by their own laws, just as that of the Muslims was governed by the Shari'a – the Islamic laws – and the non-Muslims enjoyed complete political and religious autonomy in their own regions.

In Iqbal's view, while the model Islamic state under the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and his immediate successors did produce the desired results, it later went off course, with disastrous consequences, even though, occasionally, the model was partially revived, leading Muslims to make remarkable achievements in diverse areas. As the political system degenerated from Caliphate to kingship, justice-based Shari'a was replaced with a system of treachery and palace intrigues. The resultant decadence and barrenness of the Ummah thus becomes Iqbal's main pre-occupation. [17] His writings acknowledge that both Judaism and Christianity have a place within the Islamic civilization, and Muslims are obliged to protect the synagogues and churches and other Jewish and Christian sanctuaries – it was a calamity for the Spanish Jews when the Christians re-conquered Spain. [18]

Among his series of lectures comprising his pioneering work and profoundly original synthesis of ideas, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, the lecture titled "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam" alludes to the modern day Islamic polity that would be consonant with Iqbal's reform agenda. Iqbal posits that since the Divine Reality in Islam – God – expresses itself in variety and change as the eternal spiritual ground of all life, an Islamic society must therefore also reconcile eternal principles with the possibilities of change, for which purpose it must have a mediatory principle of movement. [19] In Islam, that principle of movement is Ijtihad or the exercise of independent reasoning, which, by definition, is a dynamic process rendered static in practice. In furtherance of his ideas, Iqbal asserts, "Let the Muslim of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam." [20]

Iqbal furnishes his explanation of this polity in the same lecture as neither being secular nor theocratic in nature, but one that is driven by spirituality, equality, and humaneness:

The essence of Tauhid, as a working idea, is equality, solidarity, and freedom. The State, from the Islamic standpoint, is an endeavour to transform these ideal principles into space-time forces, an aspiration to realize them in a definite human organization. It is in this sense alone that the state in Islam is a theocracy, not in the sense that it is headed by a representative of God on earth who can always screen his despotic will behind his supposed infallibility. The critics of Islam have lost sight of this important consideration. The Ultimate Reality, according to the Qur'an, is spiritual, and its life consists in its temporal activity. The spirit finds its opportunities in the natural, the material, the secular. All that is secular is, therefore, sacred in the roots of its being. The greatest service that modern thought has rendered to Islam, and as a matter of fact to all religion, consists in its criticism of what we call material or natural - a criticism which discloses that the merely material has no substance until we discover it rooted in the spiritual. There is no such thing as a profane world. All this immensity of matter constitutes a scope for the self-realization of spirit. All is holy ground. As the Prophet so beautifully puts it: 'The whole of this earth is a mosque.' [21] The State, according to Islam, is only an effort to realize the spiritual in a human organization. But in this sense all State, not based on mere domination and aiming at the realization of ideal principles, is theocratic. [22]

In practically elaborating upon this Iqbalian concept of spiritual democracy, the basic model of *Mithaq-e-Madina* invariably serves as guiding light, and the main features of Iqbal's modern Islamic state are expressed to be: (a) a democracy; (b) Parliament to legislate through Ijtihad; (c) functional separation between religious establishment and State Organs; (d) Islamic criminal law need not be enforced dogmatically; (e) interest free banking need not be enforced so that free market economy is promoted; (f) the State must protect the economic rights of landless tenants and workers, and impose tax on agricultural produce; (g) the State must also protect and determine the minimum wages of industrial workers and provide them medical care and assure compensation upon retirement; (h) to strengthen national integration in a Muslim majority state, the principle of joint electorates can be adopted; and (i) while spiritual democracy remains undefined, it is meant to stand for equality of citizens regardless of their race, religion, or creed. [23]

Concluding in the words of Mustansir Mir, a study of Iqbal's life and works reveals that "he was interested in practically everything that life had to offer. He read much, he thought much, he dreamed much, and he hoped much; he corresponded with many people, and he had made close friendships with many people from many different communities and nationalities, and, above all, he was open

to new ideas. His readers find his works inspiring. No less inspiring to them is his decidedly positive attitude to life."[24]

Notes and References

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Islam's Cosmopolitan Vision: Historical Engagement with World Religions and the Qurʾānic Doctrine of Religious Universality

Seyyed Hossein Nasr

ABSTRACT

This article explores Islam's unique historical engagement with nearly all major world religions and its cosmopolitan, pluralistic religious perspective, which was grounded in the Qurʾānic doctrine of religious universality. Before modern times, Islam interacted directly with Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and African and Chinese religions, among others. This engagement fostered a global religious worldview that contrasted with the narrower scope of medieval European thinkers. Islam, as the third Abrahamic faith, shares theological and ethical bonds with Judaism and Christianity, acknowledging the sacred figures of both religions, including the prophets and the Virgin Mary. The article emphasizes Islam's rejection of exclusivism, affirming that the Abrahamic traditions share common values, such as monotheism, eschatology, and ethical principles, while recognizing the differences between the religions as divinely ordained. Furthermore, the article discusses the Qurʾānic categorization of believers and non-believers, challenging simplistic interpretations of "infidels" and highlighting Islam's inclusive understanding of faith. It also examines how modern issues, such as Christian missionary activity and the legacy of colonialism, have complicated interfaith relations. Despite the rise of fundamentalism and exclusivism in some circles, the article underscores that the majority of Muslims maintain a deep commitment to the universal vision of revelation and the plurality of prophets. This view is further supported by contemporary interest in religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue across the Islamic world, particularly in countries like Iran, Turkey, and Malaysia. Ultimately, the article argues that Islam's relationship with other religions is characterized by a fundamental respect for shared divine truths and a recognition of religious diversity as part of God's plan.

In light of what has been said of the Islamic conception of revelation and religious diversity, it is important to mention that before modern times Islam was the only revealed religion to have had direct contact with nearly all the major religions of the world. It had met Judaism and Christianity in its birthplace in Arabia and afterward in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt; the Iranian religions such as Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism after its conquest of Persia in the seventh century; Hinduism and Buddhism in eastern Persia and India shortly thereafter; the Chinese religions through the Silk Route as well as through Muslim merchants who traveled to Canton and other Chinese ports; the African religions soon after the spread of Islam into Black Africa some four-teen hundred years ago; and Siberian Shamanism in the form of the archaic religions of the Turkic and Mongolian peoples as they descended into the Islamic world. Centuries ago Zoroaster and the Buddha were common household names among Muslims of the eastern lands of the Islamic world, especially Persia. Indian Muslims had come to know of Krishna and Rama a thousand years ago. The Persian polymath al-Biruni had composed a major work on India in the eleventh century, one that is still a valuable source of knowledge for medieval Hinduism. Furthermore, numerous works of classical Hinduism and some of Buddhism were translated into Persian centuries ago, including the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Chinese Muslim scholars knew the Confucian classics and many considered Confucius and Lao-Tze prophets.

The global nature of the religious knowledge of a learned Muslim sitting in Isfahan in the fourteenth century was very different from that of a scholastic thinker in Paris or Bologna of the same period. On the basis of the Qurʾānic doctrine of religious universality and the vast historical experiences of a global nature, Islamic civilization developed a cosmopolitan and worldwide religious perspective unmatched before the modern period in any other religion. This global vision is still part and parcel of the worldview of traditional Muslims, of those who have not abandoned their universal vision as a result of the onslaught of modernism or reactions to this onslaught in the form of what has come to be called "fundamentalism."

Within this global religious context, it is, of course, the Jewish and Christian traditions with which Islam has the greatest affinity. The Hebrew prophets and Christ are deeply respected by Muslims. The Virgin Mary is considered by the Qurʾān to hold the most exalted spiritual position among women. A chapter of the Qurʾān is named after her, and she is the only woman mentioned by name in Islam's sacred scripture. Moreover, the miraculous birth of Christ from a virgin mother is recognized in the Qurʾān. Respect for such teachings is so strong among Muslims thattoday, in interreligious dialogues with Christians and Jews, Muslims are often left defending traditional Jewish and Christian doctrines such as the miraculous birth of Christ before modernist interpreters who would reduce them to metaphors and the sacred history of the Hebrew prophets to at best inspired stories.

The sacred figures of Judaism and Christianity are often mentioned in the Qurʾān and even in prayers said on various occasions. The tombs of the Hebrew prophets, who are also Islamic prophets, are revered and visited in pilgrimage by Muslims to this day. One need only recall the holiness for Muslims of the tomb of Abraham in al-Khalil, or Hebron, in Palestine, of that of Joshua in Jordan, and of Moses' resting place on Mt. Nebo, also in Jordan. Some Muslims have occasionally criticized intellectually and also engaged militarily Jews and Christians, but they have not criticized the Jewish prophets or Christ (even if certain theological differences with followers of Judaism and Christianity did exist), at least not those who have heeded the call of the Qurʾān and understood its message. Islam sees itself as the third of the Abrahamic religions, which are bound together by countless theological, ethical, and eschatological beliefs even though they are marked by differences willed by God.

To speak of the Judeo-Christian tradition against which Islam is pitted as the "other" is an injustice to the message of Abraham and also theologically false, no matter how convenient it might be for some people. There is as much difference between Judaism and Christianity as there is between Christianity and Islam. In certain domains Judaism is closer to Islam than it is to Christianity: it has a sacred language, Hebrew, like Arabic in Islam, and it has a sacred law, the *Halakhah*, corresponding to the *Sharīʿah*.

Furthermore, they share an opposition to all forms of idolatry and to the creation of iconic sacred art, which would allow an image of the Divinity to be painted or sculpted. In certain other

ways Islam is closer to Christianity: both emphasize the immortality of the soul, eschatological realities, and the accent on the inner life. Then there are those basic principles upon which all three religions agree: the Oneness of God, prophecy, sacred scripture, much of sacred history, and basic ethical norms such as the sanctity of life, reverence for the laws of God, humane treatment of others, honesty in all human dealings, kindness toward the neighbor, the application of justice, and so forth. Islam is an inalienable and inseparable part of the Abrahamic family of religions and considers itself to be closely linked with the two monotheistic religions that preceded it. Islam envisages itself the complement of those religions and the final expression of Abrahamic monotheism, confirming the teachings of Judaism and Christianity, but rejecting any form of exclusivism.

Who Is A Believer And Who Is An Infidel?

With this framework in mind, it will be easier to understand the categorization in Islam of people into believers (*muʾmins*) and what has been translated in the West as "infidels" or "nonbelievers" (*kāfirs*), which means literally "those who cover over the truth." Every religion has a way of distinguishing itself from the other religions. Judaism speaks of Jews and Gentiles, and Christianity of the faithful and the heathens or pagans. Each of these categorizations has both a theological and a popular and historical root related to the self-understanding as well as the history of that religion. In the case of Islam, the distinction is based more on the question of faith, or *īmān*, and less on the more general term *islām*. In the Qurʾān faith implies a higher level of participation in the religion, and even today only those who take their religion very seriously and are virtuous are called *muʾmin* (or possessors of *īmān*). And yet the Qurʾān does not limit the term *muʾmin* only to those who follow the Islamic religion; it includes the faithful of Islam along with followers of other religions, as is evidenced by the Qurʾānic assertion, "Verily, those who have faith [in what is revealed to the Prophet] and those who are Jews and Christians and Sabaeans–whosoever has faith in God and the Last Day and does right–surely their reward is with their Lord, and no fear shall overcome them and neither shall they grieve" (2:62). In this verse as well as verse 69 of Surah 5 ("The Table Spread"), which nearly repeats the same message, recognition of other religions is extended even beyond Judaism, Christianity, and Sabaeanism to include "whosoever has faith in God," and the possibility of salvation is also made explicitly universal. Likewise, the boundary between the

Muslim faithful and the faithful of other religions is lifted. One could therefore say that in the most universal sense whoever has faith and accepts the One God, nor the Supreme Principle, is a believer, or *muʾmin*, and whoever does not is an infidel, or a *kāfir*, whatever the nominal and external ethnic and even religious identification of that person might be.

As a result of this explicit universality of the Qurʾānic text, the use of the terms "believer" or "faithful" and "infidel" or "nonbeliever" is much more complicated than what we find in Christianity. In Islam there is, first of all, the Sufi meta-physical view of absolute Truth, which is seen to be beyond all duality, even beyond the dichotomy of *īmān* and *kufr*, or faith and infidelity; yet, to reach that transcendent Truth beyond all duality one must begin with faith and start from the formal foundations of Islam, which distinguishes itself clearly from *kufr*. The esoteric understanding of *kufr* and *īmān*, so prevalent in classical Sufi poetry, especially among the Persian poets such as Rūmī, Shabistarī, and Ḥāfiẓ must not, therefore, be confused with the prevalent idea in certain Western circles that one can reach the absolute Truth by simply avoiding the world of faith as well as infidelity. On the levels of external religious forms, *īmān* has to do with truth and *kufr* with falsehood. This dichotomy is not destroyed by the exhortation of the Sufis to go beyond *kufr* and *īmān*, which means to reach *tawḥīd*, or oneness beyond all oppositions and dichotomies.

On the formal and popular plane, traditional Muslims have often used the category of "believer" or "faithful" for Muslims as well as followers of other religions, especially Christians and Jews. But there have been also historical periods in which the term "faithful" was reserved for Muslims and *kāfir*, or "infidel," was used for non-Muslims, as in the Ottoman Empire, where Europeans were called *kuffār*, infidels. The situation is, however, made even more complicated by the fact that throughout Islamic history certain Muslim groups have called other Muslim groups infidels, some even going to the extent of treating them in practice as enemies. For example, during early Islamic history the Khawārij, who opposed both the Sunnis and Shiites as infidels, attacked both groups physically and militarily. Later, Ismāʿīlis were considered *kuffār* by many Sunni scholars, and even in mainstream Islam over the centuries some Sunni and Twelve-Imam Shiite scholars have called each other *kāfir*. In the eighteenth century the Wahhabi movment, which began in Najd in Arabia, considered orthodox Sunnis and Shiites both not to be genuine Muslims, and often cast

the anathema of being infidels, or what is called *takfīr*, upon them, while many Ottoman Hanafi scholars considered the Wahhabis themselves to be *kuffār*.

The prevalent image in the West that all Muslims are united as the faithful against the infidels– even if some well-known Christian preachers repeat to their flocks this assertion made by some extremists within the Islamic world– is simply not true. There have always been those who have spoken of the necessity of the unity of Muslims as the faithful, and in a certain sense that unity has been always there despite diversity on many levels. But the whole question of who is a believer, or a person of faith, and who is an unbeliever, or infidel, requires a much more nuanced answer than is usually given in generally available sources.

Moreover, the term *kāfir* has both a theological and judicial definition and a popular political and social definition, and the two should not be confused. In the conscience of many devout Muslims, a pious Christian or Jew is still seen as a believer, while an agnostic with an Arabic or Persian name is seen as a *kāfir*. And the anathema of *kufr*, far from involving only outsiders, has also concerned various groups within the Islamic world itself. Today, even while some Muslims hold "infidels" responsible for the onslaught of a secularist culture from the West, they also use the same characterization for those within the Islamic world itself who, while still formally Muslim, accept and preach secularist ideas that negate the very foundations of the Islamic rev-elation. As a matter of fact, secularism is the common enemy of all the Abrahamic traditions, and the erosion of moral authority in secular societies that we observe today, poses as many problems for Jews and Christians as it does for Muslims.

Islam and Religious Pluralism Today

Muslims today continue to experience the presence of other 1 religions in their midst as they have done over the centuries. In the middle part of the Islamic world there are Christian minorities, the largest being in Egypt, and still some Jews, especially in Iran and Turkey, although most of the Jews ;' from Arab countries migrated to Israel after 1948. There are still Zoroastrians in Iran, and Muslims live with Hindus in India, of course, but also in Bangladesh, Nepal, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and with Buddhists in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Ladakh, Burma, China, and elsewhere. They also live with Confucians and Taoists not in only China, but also in Malaysia and Indonesia. By and large, through most periods of

Islamic history, the relation between Muslims and religious minorities living in their midst has been peaceful. Exceptions have arisen when severe political issues, such as the partition of Palestine or India, have altered ordinary relations between Muslims and followers of other religions. Today, despite some abuses here and there issuing from so-called fundamentalist currents in various Islamic countries, religious minorities in the Islamic world usually fare better than Muslim minorities do in other lands, except in America and some Western countries, where they have been able to practice their religion until now without manifest or hid-den restrictions. All one has to do is to compare the situation of the Christian minorities of Syria, Iraq, and Iran, three states not known for their leaning toward the West, with Muslim minorities in China, the Philippines, India, and the Russian Caucasus, not to speak of the Balkans, where the horror inflicted by Christian Serbs upon Muslim Bosnians and Kosovars is still fresh in everyone's memory.

The peaceful presence in the Islamic world of various religious minorities, especially Christians, has been upset to a large extent in recent times by Western missionary activity, which has caused severe reaction not only among Muslims, but also among Hindus, Buddhists, and others. This question of Christian missionary activity (of the Western churches, not Orthodoxy) is a complicated matter requiring an extensive separate treatment, but it must be mentioned briefly here. Suffice it to say that, as far as the Islamic world is concerned, this activity was from the be-ginning of the modern period combined with colonialism, and many Western Christian missionaries have preached as much secularized Western culture as Christianity. Many of them have tried and still try to propagate Christianity not through the teachings of Christ alone, but mostly by the appeal of material aid such as rice and medicine, given in the name of Christian charity, but with the goal of conversion. Many of their schools have been happy if they could wean the Muslim students away from firm belief in Islam, even if they could not make them Christian. It is not accidental that some of the most virulent anti-Western secularized Arab political leaders of the past decades have been graduates of American schools in the Middle East first established by missionaries, schools where these students were religiously and culturally uprooted.

To understand current Islamic reactions to Christian missionary activity in many countries, one should ask how the people of Texas and Oklahoma, where many American evangelists come from, would respond to the following scenario. Suppose that, with vast

oil money from the Islamic world, Islamic schools were to be established in those states. Because of their prestige, these schools attracted the children of the most powerful and well-to-do families, and these future leaders, in attending these schools, underwent a systematic process of cultural Arabization even if they did not participate in the encouraged formal conversion to Islam.

Western missionary activity is not like that of medieval Christian preachers of the Gospels, or like the Orthodox missionaries among the Inuits of Canada, who would adopt the language of the Inuits and even their dress. Most modern Western missionary activity throughout Asia and Africa has meant, above all, Westernization and globalization combined with the cult of consumerism, all in the name of Christianity. Were there not to be such a powerful political, economic, and even military pressure behind the presence of these missionaries, then their presence would be in a sense like that of Tibetan Buddhists or Muslims in Canada or the United States and would not pose a danger to the very existence of local religions and cultures. But the situation is otherwise, and therefore Christian missionary activity, especially in such places as Indonesia, Pakistan, and sub-Saharan Africa, plays a very important role in creating tension between Islam and Christianity and indirectly the West, which gives material and political support to these missionaries even if, as in France, the state is avowedly secularist.

Of course, this identification with modern Western secularist and now consumerist culture has not always been the case with all missionaries. The French Catholic Pere de Foucault lived for a long time among Muslim North Africans as a humble witness to Christ and was greatly respected by his Muslim neighbours, as were a number of other monksand priests. There have also been humble Protestants who came to Muslims to represent a presence of Christ's message without aggressive proselytizing through material enticement of the poor. Such exceptions have certainly existed. Nevertheless, Western Christian missionary activity, supported as it is directly or indirectly by all the might of the West, poses a major problem for contemporary Muslims' dealings with Western Christianity, in contrast to local forms of Christianity with which Muslims have lived usually in peace for centuries. One need only recall in this con-text that while Baghdad was being bombed during the Persian Gulf War, no Iraqi Muslims attacked any local Iraqi Christians walking down the street, whereas the reverse has not been true since the tragic September 11 terrorist acts; a number of American and European Muslims have been attacked and harassed

as a result of the religious, racial, and ethnic xenophobia that has been created in certain circles by that great tragedy.

In speaking of missionary activity, it is necessary to say something about Islamic teachings concerning apostasy (*irtidād*), which has been criticized by missionary circles and others in the West. According to classical interpretations of the *Sharīʿah*, the punishment for apostasy for a Muslim is death, and this is interpreted by many Westerners to mean the lack of freedom of conscience in Islam. To clarify this issue, first of all, a few words about conversion. The Qurʾān says, "There is no compulsion in religion" (2:256), and in most periods of Islamic history there was no forced conversion of the "People of the Book." In fact, forced conversion is an affront to God and the dignity of the human conscience created by Him. Arabia at the time of the Qurʾānic revelation was an exception. There the pagan Arabs who practiced a most crass form of polytheism were given the choice of either becoming Muslims or battling against them. It was very similar to the choice offered by j Christian to European "pagans" once Christianity gained power on that continent. But even in Arabia, the Jews and Christians were not forced to become Muslims.

The *Sharīʿite* ruling on apostasy may therefore seem strange in light of Islam's attitude toward other heavenly inspired religions. The reason for such a ruling must be sought in the fact that attachment to Islam was related before modern times to being a member of the Islamic state as well as community, and therefore apostasy was seen as treason against the state, not just religious conversion. Today when the state is no longer Islamic in the traditional sense in most Islamic countries, many religious scholars have spoken against capital punishment for apostasy. More over, in practice, although the law is still "on the books," in many places it is hardly ever applied, as can be seen by the presence of several million Christians converted from Islam by Western missionaries in recent times in such countries as Indonesia, Pakistan, and several West African nations. In practice this law is somewhat like laws against adultery that are still "on the books" in England, but not applied. Sectarian fighting between Muslims and newly converted Christians still occurs in Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, the Sudan, and a few other places, but these have more to do with local political, economic, and social issues than with the traditional *Sharīʿite* ruling about apostasy.

The traditional *Sharīʿite* ruling, which is now being amended by some legal authorities and for the most part ignored because of changed conditions, must be understood not in the context of the modern West, where religion has been to a large extent marginalized and pushed away from the public arena, but in the framework of the Christian West. One only has to think what would have happened to Christians in medieval France or seventeenth-century Spain if they had converted to Islam. In any case, the question of apostasy raised so often by those who ask about Islam's relation to other religions must be under-stood in both its classical context and the present-day situation, when it is largely overlooked because of changed conditions and is, in fact, being reinterpreted by a number of important Islamic legal experts.

Another issue often raised in the West when discussing Islam's relation to other religions is that Islam does not allow the presence of non-Muslims in a certain area around Mecca while Christianity allows non-Christians even into the Vatican. Now, it must be understood that each religion has its own regulations concerning sacred spaces. In Hinduism certain areas in Benares are closed to all non-Hindus, and Muslims respected those rules even when they ruled over that city and did not force their way into the Monkey Temple or other sacred sites. Like Hinduism and several other religions, Islam has a sacred space around Mecca whose boundaries were designated by the Prophet himself and where non-Muslims are not allowed.

That has never meant that the rest of the Islamic world has been closed to the presence of other religions and their houses of worship. Churches dot the skyline of Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, and many other cities, and synagogues are also found everywhere a Jewish community lives from Tehran to Fez. Within the Ottoman Empire in many places in the Balkans where Jews, Christians, and Muslims lived together, synagogues, churches, and mosques were built next to each other. To this day this harmonious presence of different houses of worship is visible in Istanbul itself. Outside of the *ḥarīm*, or sacred precinct, in Arabia, it is the duty of the Muslim state, according to the *Sharīʿah*, to' allow the building and maintenance of houses of worship of the "People of the Book," and any order to the contrary is against the tenets of Islamic Law and traditional practice, of course, during Islamic history there were occasions is when after a major triumph a church was converted into a mosque, as happened with the Hagia Sophia, but the reverse also took place often, as when the Grand Mosque of Cordova was

converted into a cathedral. Altogether for Islam, the general norm is the one established by `Umar, who, when he conquered Jerusalem, ordered the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to be honoured and protected as a church. Otherwise, most of the churches in the Islamic world that later became mosques were those abandoned by Christian worshipers, somewhat like what one sees in some cities in Great Britain these days.

On the intellectual plane, there is a great deal of interest in the Islamic world today in religious dialogue, the impetus for which originated in Christian circles mostly after World War II. In many countries, such as Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Malaysia, and Indonesia, religious dialogue has even been encouraged by governments as well as by individuals and religious organizations. Numerous conferences have been held in many parts of the world with Protestants, Catholics, and more recently Orthodox Christians; with Hindus in India and Indonesia; and with Buddhists and Confucians in Malaysia. Because of the Palestinian-Israeli problem, the dialogue with Judaism has been somewhat more difficult, but even that has also continued to some extent in both the Middle East and the West. In these dialogues scholars from many different schools of thought have participated, both those within the Islamic world and those Muslims living in the West. There have been some exclusivists who have opposed such dialogues, as one sees also among Christians and Jews, but the activity of religious dialogue has gone on for decades in the Islamic world and is now an important part of the current Islamic religious and intellectual landscape.

Even on the more theoretical and philosophical level, what has come to be known as religious pluralism has become a matter of great interest and a major intellectual challenge in many Islamic countries today, including some of those called "fundamentalist" in the West. There is no country in the Islamic world in which there is greater interest in the theological and philosophical questions involved in the issue of religious pluralism than Iran. There works of such famous Protestant and Catholic writers on the subject as John Hick and Hans Kung have been translated and are being discussed even in the public media; there the views of traditionalist metaphysicians such as Frithjof Schuon, who speaks of the "transcendent unity of religions," a view that is also my own, are part and parcel of the general intellectual discourse. The same keen interest is also to be found in countries as different as Turkey, Pakistan, and Malaysia.

Faced with the danger of loss of identity and the enfeeblement of religion as a result of the onslaught of modernism with its secularist bias, some Muslims, many very active and vocal, espouse a radical exclusivist point of view when it comes to the question of the relation of Islam to other religions. But for the vast majority of Muslims, the Qurʾānic doctrine of the universality of revelation and the plurality of prophets under the One God still resonates deeply in their hearts and souls, and they remain ever mindful of the many verses of the Qurʾān concerning the reality of One God and the multiplicity of revelations sent by Him. When they think of their beloved Prophet, they are mindful of these words of God:

> We inspire thee [Muhammad] as We inspired Noah and the prophets after him, as We inspired Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and as We imparted unto David the Psalms;
> And messengers We have mentioned unto thee before and messengers We have not mentioned unto thee; and God spoke directly to Moses;

Messengers of good news and warning; in order that mankind might have no argument against God after the messengers. God is Mighty, and Wise. (4:163–65)

Divine Creativity and Pluralism in Allama Iqbal's Philosophy: A Comparative Study of Egos, Atomism, and Leibnizian Monads

Dr. Abdul Khaliq

Abstract

This article explores Allama Iqbal's philosophical pluralism, particularly in his understanding of the universe as composed of egos, or self-revealing entities, grounded in his monotheistic faith. Iqbal, through his critique of the Ash'arite atomism and engagement with Leibniz's monads, proposes that all reality, from matter to human consciousness, is a manifestation of the Divine Ego or "Great I Am." His concept of God as a creative, self-revealing entity aligns with an evolving universe, wherein all egos—whether material or spiritual—progress toward self-consciousness, culminating in humanity's unique capacity for individual selfhood. By synthesizing metaphysical insights from the Qur'an with contemporary Western philosophies like Leibniz's monadology, Iqbal refutes static dualism and suggests a dynamic interaction between mind and body, and between God and creation. His ideas emphasize the non-material nature of the self and its potential for spiritual evolution, challenging reductionist materialism and highlighting the continuous, creative process of existence driven by Divine energy. Ultimately, Iqbal's thought reflects a theistic framework that integrates both religious and philosophical perspectives on the nature of reality and the self.

In his philosophical framework, Allama Iqbal presents a pluralistic view of the universe, grounded in his monotheistic belief, where all entities, whether material or spiritual, are manifestations of the Divine Ego or "Great I Am." He conceives the universe as a dynamic and evolving system composed of egos, each reflecting different degrees of self-awareness and creativity. Drawing from the Ash'arite doctrine of atomism, Iqbal critiques the notion of static material substances, proposing instead that all matter is an aggregation of atomic acts perpetuated by God's creative energy. Iqbal aligns his philosophy with Leibniz's concept of monads—spiritual entities that mirror the universe—suggesting that egos are not isolated, static beings but dynamic forces in constant interaction with their environment. This comparative study highlights the synergy between Iqbal's notion of egos and Leibniz's monads, as both envision a universe filled with self-contained, evolving entities. However, unlike Leibniz's pre-established harmony, Iqbal emphasizes a creative, interactive relationship between egos, where higher-order egos emerge from lower ones, leading to spiritual evolution. Iqbal's thought challenges reductionist materialism by emphasizing the non-material, spiritual nature of the self, suggesting that the ultimate reality is a creative, rationally directed life, which is continually unfolding through Divine creativity.

Allama Iqbal, in spite, or rather because, of his declared commitment to monotheism in regard to his faith in God, is a pluralist insofar as his view of the constitution of the universe is concerned. In the second chapter of his *Reconstruction*, he has undertaken a comprehensive philosophical criticism of all the facts of experience on its efficient as well as appreciative side and has been led to the irresistible conclusion that 'the Ultimate Reality is a rationally directed creative life', [1] whom he conceives as an Ego, a Person, a 'Great I Am'. To interpret this life as an Ego, he, of course, hurriedly points out,

> is not to fashion God after the image of man. It is only to accept the simple fact of experience that life is not a formless fluid but an organizing principle of unity, a synthetic activity which holds together and focalizes the dispersing dispositions of the living organism for a constructive purpose.[2]

Now, nature and laws of nature being habits of God — a sort of self-revelation of His person—the entire furniture of the universe, from its lowest state of existence to the highest one, does, of necessity, comprise egos and egos alone. Creative activity of God functions as ego-entities because 'from the Ultimate Ego only egos proceed, '[3]

Iqbal attempts to further define the salient features of his ego philosophy against the context of a critical appreciation of the Ash'arite doctrine of *Jawahir*. The Ash'arites, in opposition to the Mu'tazilite emphasis on human freedom, had laid maximum stress on the sovereignty of God, His supreme authority and omnipotence. This amounted for them to a denial of the natural powers of secondary agents: the particular material objects as well as animals and human beings have no efficacy and no qualities inherent in them. They have, in fact, no nature whatsoever. As substances exist only by dint of qualities so when qualities are explained away, the substances are dismissed as well and so fail to have any durable existence. Tangibility of substances having thus been rejected, the Ash'arites were led straight to a doctrine of atomism which, Iqbal observes, was 'the first important indication of an intellectual revolt against the Aristotelian idea of a fixed universe'.[4] According to the Greek atomists' view, in general, the atoms were determinate in number whereas for the Ash'arites they are infinite because the creative activity of God is ceaseless. Fresh atoms are coming into existence every moment and the universe is becoming newer and newer every moment. The Ash'arite atom, unlike its Greek counterpart, can be destroyed as well. Its essence is independent of its existence insofar as existence is a quality imposed on the atom by God: if He withdraws this quality, the atom loses its spatio-temporal character. In fact no atom has the characteristic of continuing for two consecutive moments. If a thing does appear to endure for some time what really happens is that God creates, annihilates, creates, annihilates and so on, the accidents of existence and duration in a quick, perpetual sequence. If God wished to destroy a body, it was sufficient that He stops to create in it the accident of existence as well as the other accidents appropriate to it.

The very important fact emphasized by the Ash'arites that the atom appears as materialized and spacialized when God grants it the quality of existence necessarily implies, according to Iqbal, that before receiving that quality — and, thus, basically and essentially–– it is nothing but a phase of Divine energy. Its spatio-temporal

existence is only Divine activity rendered visible. Iqbal, in this connection, quotes[5] with approval the remark of Ibn Hazm that the language of the Qur'an makes no distinction between the act of creation and the thing created. And so a material object is nothing but an aggregation of atomic acts perpetrated by God. It is only mind's search for permanence that has created the world of physics. Thus conceived, the material atom is essentially spiritual. It is for these spiritual atoms comprising the whole cosmos that Iqbal uses the term 'egos':

> The whole world in all its details from the mechanical movement of what we call the atom of matter to the free movement of thought in the human ego is the self-revelation of the 'Great I Am'. Every atom of Divine energy, however low in the scale of existence, is an ego.[6]

Iqbal further points out that, corresponding to the different levels of phenomenal existence, viz, material, spiritual and conscious, there are degrees of reality which are nothing but degrees in the expression of egohood. "Throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of egohood until it reaches its perfection in man".[7] The Ego, that God is, is the most Supreme, the most Independent, Elemental and Absolute.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, the German philosopher, with whose cosmology Iqbal has greater affinity than is recognizable by a casual observer, was also a spiritual pluralist. He also conceived the universe as an hierarchy, an ascending order of spirit- or force-atoms which are variously named by him; 'metaphysical points' 'substantial forms' or 'monads'. At the apex of this hierarchical structure, according to him, stands God, the Monad of all monads. The number of monads is infinite and no two of them are exactly alike. As God is pure activity, the clearest consciousness, the Soul *par excellence*, so all monads exhibit conscious activity more or less. Each monad is a microcosm— the universe in miniature — as it reflects, mirrors or 'perceives' the universe from its own point of view. There are obscure, confused and obfuscated perceptions— the small perceptions— at the lowest level. These become clearer and clearer as we go up the scale. In man they become apperceptions comprising a 'reflexive knowledge of the inner state' or, what we call, self-consciousness. They are the clearest in God, the Original Monad. Permitting no leaps in nature there is a continuous line of infinitesimal differences from the inorganic matter through plants, animals, human beings onwards to God.

One consequence of faith in the selfsame unitary principle and ground of the universe to which both Leibniz and Iqbal, in their

respective ways, subscribe is that mind and body are to be considered essentially the same. If that is really so, how would the difference between organic and inorganic bodies be understood. Both, of course, are composed of monads, according to Leibniz, and of egos, according to Iqbal, but an organic being, they say, has the distinction of having a central monad or ego. Inorganic bodies are not centralized in this way. They are a mere jumble, a heap of the constituting units. The higher a body is in the scale of being, the more organized and centralized it is.

Answering the question as to how is the central monad, i.e. the mind or the soul related to the peripheral or inferior monads comprising the body of an organism, Leibniz summarily rejects interactionism, the popularly recognized theory about mind-body relationship. Monads, in general, cannot influence one another, he says because 'they have no windows'.[8] Every one of them is self-contained and has in itself the ground of its various states and movements. It is in fact perpetually in a process of evolution and goes on realizing its nature by an internal necessity. He writes:

> I do not believe, that any system is possible in which the monads inter-act, for there seems no possible way of explaining such action. Moreover such action would be superfluous for why should one monad give another what the other already has, for this is the very nature of substance that the present is big with the future.[9]

Anyway, some account must be given of the fact that changes in one thing seem to be connected by definite laws with the changes in others. Apparent mind-body relationship, particularly, can be explained, according to Leibniz, by the theory of a pre-established harmony between monads. The states of each and every monad are internally engineered in such a way that they happen to synchronize with the states of all other monads. The law of natural harmony has been woven into their very respective natures:

> Souls act according to the laws of final causes, by means of desires, ends and means. Bodies act according to the laws of efficient causes or notions. And the two realms are in harmony with one another.[10]

The possibility of such a phenomenon can be explained by an analogy. Suppose there are two perfect clocks whose machines have been so set that when one of them strikes an hour, say, exactly one second later, the other strikes that hour too. To a layman it may appear that one clock exercises a sort of influence over the other and makes it behave in a particular way. However, the fact, as we know, is that the harmony between them has been pre-established

by the mechanic who made them, in the first instance. Similarly, the visible harmony between any two monads, and particularly between the monads comprising the mind and the body respectively in an organism, has been pre-established by God, their Creator. When, I will to raise my hand and my hand is actually raised, between these two events there is no causal relationship whatsoever. They happen independently but, of course, in such a way that they would be in a relationship of mutual fittingness. Leibniz agrees with the Occasionalists in their rejection of interactionism. However they sharply differ between themselves also insofar as, according to the latter, God is the only direct and immediate agent of every event in the world, whereas, according to the former, every individual substance evolves in accordance with its own nature which was determined once for all when God created the world. Thus, although Leibniz did not subscribe to transient causality between ordinary monads, he upholds that this causality does operate between God and the universe. This operation took place not only initially as He eternally established harmony between monads but also it continues to happen now and for all times. The clock or the machine that the universe is 'needs to be conserved by God and it depends on Him for its continued existence'. The Supreme Monad would not be windowless to that extent. The source as well as ground of the mechanics of the universe lies in metaphysics.[11]

Iqbal, in general, rejects the dualist theory in regard to mind-body relationship. He specially refutes the doctrine of pre-established harmony because it practically reduces the soul to a merely passive spectator of the happenings of the body.[12] Nor are mind and body entirely separate substances having their mutually exclusive sets of attributes and entering into a relationship of mutual interaction as was, for instance, emphasized by Descartes. They rather belong to the same system, says Iqbal. Both are egos. "Matter is spirit in space-time reference".[13] It is "a colony of egos of a low order out of which emerges the ego of a higher order."[14] The physical organism reacting to environments gradually builds up a systematic unity of experience which we call the human ego. Mind and body become one in action. The Qur'an says:

> Now of fine clay We created man. Then We placed him, a moist germ in a safe abode; then made We the moist germ a clot of blood; then made the clotted blood into a piece of flesh; then made the piece of flesh into bones; and we clothed the bones with flesh: then brought forth man of yet another make.[15]

This, however, does not obliterate the distinction between mind and body so that the former may essentially stand reducible to the level of the latter. Iqbal says:

> It is not the origin of a thing that matters, it is the capacity, the significance and the final reach of the emergent that matters. Even if we regard the basis of soul-life as purely physical, it by no means follows that the emergent can be resolved into what has conditioned its birth and growth. The emergent… is an unforeseeable and novel fact on its own plane of being.[16]

Here expressly is a reference to the doctrine of cosmic evolution to which Iqbal subscribes. All higher forms of existence, he holds, evolve out of the lower forms because there is a "gradually rising note of egohood in the universe".[17]

Incidentally, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in one of his articles[18], recently published in Pakistan, has emphasized that evolutionism –– specially, the concept of biological evolution that was popular in the West of Iqbal's times — is anti-Islamic in its metaphysical implications and is in contradiction with the teachings of the Qur'an.** Iqbal and other Muslim thinkers of the Subcontinent specially, he in general complains, do not recognize this fact because of the apologetic attitude that they have almost been forced to adopt under the impact of over-all strong influences of Western culture. Here the accusation of being apologetic is, however, I believe, difficult to substantiate adequately at least in case of Iqbal who seems to be fully conscious of the limitations of his contemporary Western science and culture and the inadequacy of the materialistic, reductionist, type of attitude towards life and values that it generated. Anyway, Iqbal is firmly of the opinion that the doctrine of evolution has nothing un-Islamic about it. The verse from the Qur'an quoted above clearly indicates, according to him, that man did evolve out of the lower forms of existence. The orthodox, by applying a literalist approach to some of the verses of the Qur'an, have always held that man is a special creation and is not the result of a long evolutionary process. The human race, according to them, started from Adam, the first human being who was directly and specially created by God. Iqbal, like Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), resorts to a symbolic interpretation of the descriptions of the Qur'an in this regard. He says:

> The Qur'anic legend of the fall does not describe the episode of the first appearance of man on the earth. Its purpose is rather to indicate man's rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self capable of doubt and disobedience. The fall …

is man's transition from simple consciousness to the first flash of self-consciousness, a kind of waking from the dream of nature with a throb of personal causality in one's own being.[19]

God is not a mere contriver working on alien matter as one might get the impression form the Qur'anic verse referred to above. He, in fact, caused man to grow 'from earth', meaning thereby 'in the normal evolutionary course of nature operating in the spatio-temporal world'.

> There is no purely physical level in the sense of possessing a materiality elementally incapable of evolving the creative synthesis we call life or mind and needing a transcendental deity to impregnate it with the sentient and the mental.[20]

In fact, God Who makes the emergent emerge is in a way immanent in nature: 'He is the First and the Last; and the Manifest and the Hidden.'[21]

Not only in the Qur'an, Iqbal also traces his views on evolution in various Muslim thinkers. It was Jahiz (776-869), he points out, who first observed changes in animal life caused in general by migrations and environments. The Brethren of Purity further elaborated these observations. Miskawaih (942-1030) was, according to him, the first Muslim philosopher who presented the theory in a regular and systematic form. He gave concrete examples of the evolutionary process from the world of minerals, plants and animals. On the basis of his views on evolution, he seeks ultimately to justify the emergence of prophets and to build up a system of his ethical views. Jalal al-Din Rumi (1208-1274), the spiritual guide of Iqbal, too gave an evolutionary interpretation of the emergence of man. However, for him, this evolution does not end with man. It may go beyond him to a level which it is not possible for us to imagine now. "The formulation of the theory of evolution in the world of Islam, says Iqbal, brought into being Rumi's tremendous enthusiasm for the biological future of man".[22]

The views of all these Muslim thinkers have remarkable affinities with the concept of evolution as advocated, and made popular in modern times, by Charles Darwin (1809-1882). However, there is one essential respect in which they differ from him. Darwin, we know, is a naturalist. He holds that all changes in the process of evolution occur due to forces in nature itself *viz*, struggle for existence, chance variations and natural selection. These changes have no exterior causes. Miskawaih and Rumi, on the other hand, are spiritualists. The source and ground of

evolution for them is not dead matter but God, Who is the Ultimate Creator of everything. Matter for them is only one of the emanations from God which starting from the First Intelligence become more and more materialized as we go down the scale till we reach the primordial elements. So even matter is not dead and inert. It is constituted of dimly conscious elements. It is the expression of Divine Reality and the objectification of soul. "The universe is nothing but the outward and opaque form of the ideal. When God wanted to manifest Himself, he created a mirror whose face is the soul and whose back is the universe".[23] Iqbal too is a spiritualist: it is not from dead matter but from God Himself ultimately that everything originates. And it is to Him that all returns.[24] He is the Goal, the Ideal *par excellence*.

Leibniz, we have seen, also believed in evolution although the kind of evolution that he conceives is entirely indigenous and internal to monads. Development of each monad into newer and newer states is, in the last analysis, a sort of elf-revelation, pure and simple, not determined from without, because monads have no windows through which any influence may come in or go out. This, in general, is the doctrine of preformation or incasement according to which all future states of a particular object are prefigured or contained in it already. Every monad, it is said, is 'charged with the past' and 'big with the future'. Iqbal, in contradistinction to this, is of the opinion that egos have genuine mutual contacts. Those of a higher order evolve out of those of a comparatively lower order when the association and interaction of the latter reaches a certain degree of co-ordination. Talking of the human person specifically, he says:

> The life of an ego is a kind of tension caused by the ego invading the environment and the environment invading the ego; the ego does not stand outside the arena of this mutual invasion. It is present in it as a directive energy.[25]

Personality is a state of tension which is to be maintained as a valued treasure with the help of a perpetual encounter with partly sympathetic and party antagonistic environments. I must be vigilant and active all the time so as not to give myself in to a state of relaxation and so undo my personality.

Thus human ego is dynamic in its essential nature. Iqbal, in this connection, rejects the views of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (and of the entire school of Muslim theology which he represents), according to whom self of man is something static and unchangeable: 'It is a simple, indivisible and immutable-soul substance entirely different

from the group of our mental states and unaffected by the passage of time'. These theologians wanted to vouchsafe two objectives, a psychological one and a metaphysical one. Psychologically, they wanted to establish that the individual must continue to be the same throughout the diversity of his mental states which are related to the soul-substance as the physical qualities are related to the material substance. Metaphysically, they thought, their doctrine established personal immortality of man. However, Iqbal believes, they have been able to achieve neither of the objectives set before them. Neither are the various conscious experiences related to the ego as physical properties are related to a material object, nor does the simplicity of the ego guarantee its unending existence.

Just as Ghazali and others laid stress on the unity and given-ness of the human ego at the expense of its dynamic character, so does William James, in his conception of self stress its dynamic character at the expense of its unity. According to the latter, consciousness is a stream of thought and the ego is nothing but 'the appropriation of the passing impulse by the present impulse of thought and that of the present by its successor'. Iqbal ridicules this idea of appropriation of one bit of experience by the other, holding it to be an impossible state of affairs. For him, human ego is neither over and above our experiences nor is it simply various experiences themselves reporting to one another. Its life, as said above, is rather a state of tension caused by the mutual invasion of the ego and the environments and held in unicity by a sense of direction. I-amness is not a thing; it is an act.

> You cannot perceive me like a thing-in-space, or a set of experiences in temporal order; you must interpret, understand and appreciate me in my judgements, in my will-attitudes, aims and aspirations.[26]

The question arises 'What is the principle involved in the emergence of the human ego? Henry Bergson, the French philosopher and biologist, had believed that it was the principle of *elan vital*, the vital dash, which is entirely arbitrary, undirected, chaotic and unpredictable in its behavior. It is a free creative impulse. "The portals of the future", he remarked, "must remain wide open to Reality".[27] Teleology — like mechanical causation — would make free creativeness a mere delusion and would make time unreal. Iqbal, on the other hand, resorts to the theistic hypothesis. God is not only transcendent. He is, in a sense, the immanent force also, Who is constantly causing within the spatio-temporal order newer and newer emergents like the human ego. "Soul is the

directive principle from God", [28] says the Qur'an. Iqbal does agree with Bergson insofar as the latter says that:

> If teleology means the working out of a plan in view of a pre-determined end or goal, it does make time unreal… all is already given somewhere in eternity; the temporal order of events is (then) nothing more than a mere imitation of the eternal mould.[29]

According to this view there would be no really free creation and growth in the universe. Anyway, aside this criticism, Iqbal is firmly of the opinion that our activities are goal-directed, purposiveness being essential to the human self. "The ends and purposes, whether they exist as conscious or sub-conscious, form the warp and woof of our conscious experience."[30] This is because, he points out, there is a sense of teleology available other than the one conceived and rightly rejected by Bergson. As I act I do not do so because there is a grand plan of action already determined for me. I, in fact, go on creating my own purposes in life. "Though there is no far off distant goal towards which we are moving, there is a progressive formation of fresh ends, purposes and ideal scale of values as the process of life grows and expands. We become by ceasing to be what we are; life is a passage through a series of deaths".[31] God, the Ideal, inseminates the entire universe and, specially, the life of man with goal-directed behavior at every step during its tenure of existence. The essence of this insemination is, according to Iqbal, love or *ishq*. He says:

> Beneath this visible evolution of forms is the force of love which actualizes all strivings, movement and progress. Things are so constituted that they hate non-existence and love the joy of individuality in various forms. The indeterminate matter, dead in itself, assumes, or more properly, is made to assume by the inner force of love, various forms, and rises higher and higher in the scale of beauty.[32]

The ego is individual. There are, of course, degrees of individuality, as pointed out by Bergson also. Most perfect individuality, says Iqbal, belongs to God, the Ultimate Ego, "Who begets not, nor is He begotten and there is none like Him".[33] But man too is an individual, more or less, insofar as the Qur'an has a clear picture of him as one who is responsible for his own deeds alone and who has his unique future that awaits him: "No bearer of burdens bears the burden of another."[34] Further, the Qur'an visualizes that in the life hereafter every resident of heaven or hell will have a clear remembrance of his past life for which he will be rewarded or punished. Psychologically speaking too, the I-amness of man is absolutely private. My experiences, my thoughts and

feelings, are all unique with me and unsharable with others. Even my experience of a table or a chair which are, to all appearance, public facts, is strictly my own and cannot be confused with anyone else's experience of the same objects.

The ego or self in man has two aspects which may be termed as the noumenal aspect and the phenomenal aspect. Bergson calls them the 'fundamental self' and the 'social self', respectively. Iqbal makes a more or less corresponding distinction between the 'appreciative self' and the 'efficient self' of man. The former lives in pure duration while the latter deals with serial time. In our day to day life we are so much absorbed with the world i.e. with the sereality of time and the spread-outness of space that we entirely lose sight of the fundamental or the appreciative 'I' within. It is almost incumbent upon us to recognize this not only because that would qualify us for an encounter with the 'Great I-am' and prepare us for authentic social relations with other human beings, but also because it would make one a 'human person', in the full sense of the term. Iqbal says:

> To exist in pure duration is to be a self and to be a self is to be able to say 'I am'. Only that truly exists which can say 'I am'. It is the degree of intuition of I-amness that determines the place of a thing in the scale of being.[35]

Mystics of all times have laid a special emphasis on the true self-awareness of man.

How do I know myself? Iqbal's answer is that, being most simple, fundamental and profound, I-amness is neither an object of perception nor an idea pure and simple to be logically inferred and rationally conceived. It can in the final analysis only be known through a flash of intuitive insight. David Hume, for instance, is the philosopher well-known for his attempt to reach the self through purely sensory, empirical channels. He said:

> When I enter most intimately into what I call myself I always stumble on some particular perception i.e. some particular mental content or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch myself at any time without a perception… And were all my perceptions removed by death… I should be entirely annihilated.[36]

He thus concluded that there is no such thing as 'I' or 'self' and that a person is 'nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions'. Hume's supposition here is that all knowledge is to be furnished by sense experience alone and sense experience being a temporal affair leaves no scope for a permanent, non-successional

being. Descartes, on the other hand, represents those who followed the course of reason. Being himself a brilliant mathematician and a discoverer of Analytical Geometry, he was firmly of the opinion that for philosophy a method could be discovered on the analogy of the one used in mathematical sciences where we start with certain simple and self-evident principles, rising by degrees to the complex ones — thus building up an entirely foolprooof system of thought. So he set out in search of the indubitable and the self-evident. This he did by a grand process of elimination. He doubted away everything he could possibly doubt: the testimony of his senses, his memory, the existence of the physical world, his own body and even the truths of mathematics. One thing, however, he found, he could not possibly doubt and that was the fact of his own existence, his own self, his I-amness. It is he after all who had been performing the activity of doubting all the time. Doubting is a form of thinking. "I think", he concluded "therefore I am", meaning to say, 'I exist'. This argument, the critics have pointed out, is fallacious on grounds more than one. For one thing, the conclusion to which the entire reasoning leads could only be that 'there is a state of doubt' and that's all. At the most a logical 'I', which in fact is the subject of all propositions that are made, can be asserted. From this to skip over to the factual existence of an 'I', as Descartes really does, is a leap which cannot at all be justified.

Iqbal is thus right when he holds that both sense-experience as well as reason, forms of perception as well as categories of understanding, are meant to equip us for our dealings with the spatio-temporal world: they are not made to reach the core of my being. In fact "in our constant pursuit after external things we weave a kind of veil round the appreciative self which thus becomes alien to us. It is only in the moments of profound meditation", he goes on to say, "when the efficient self is in abeyance, that we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner centre of experience".[37] So neither the *mutakallimun* (theologians) nor the philosophers but the devotional *sufis* alone have truly been able to understand the nature of the human soul. The meditation, referred to here, is either pure meditation through which I imaginatively remove from myself all that is not essentially 'me' i.e. all that I possess due to my particular 'historical' and 'geographical' situation, in the broadest sense of these terms, or it may be the meditation charged with activity in which case I practically eradicate from my nature exclusive love for, and involvement with, the world which is the cause of my alienation from the source and ground of my existence. The second meaning is accepted particularly by the

mystics of Islam. The Muslim mystic's path, in fact, starts with the inculcation of the virtue of *tawbah* (repentance or turning about) which signifies purification of soul and the deliverance of it from all extraneous material so that the Divine within it stands realized. It can thus positively prepare itself for an encounter with God because such an encounter can take place only in case a person realizes the Divine in himself and like Him dispenses with all determiners. "The adherents of mystical religions", says G.S. Spinks, "feel compelled to empty their psychical life… in order to achieve by personality-denying techniques an emptiness that will prepare the way for the incoming of the Divine".[38] Anyway, realization of the true self through meditation is not at all an end in itself. It is a means for the improvement of our behavior and for the cementation and confirmation of our personalities:

> The ultimate aim of the ego is not to see something but to be something. The end of the ego's quest is not emancipation from the limitations of individuality; it is, on the other hand, a more precise definition of it.[39]

Now as the essential nature of the human ego is his quest for purposes and ideals, he cannot afford to be mechanical and stereotyped in his behavior. He must be free. Positive scientists – psychologists, physiologists and others –have sometimes tried to understand human behaviour on the pattern of the behavior of the physical world which, they think, is characterized by causal necessity. But the determinism of the physical world, Iqbal rightly observes, is not definitive, objective and final. It is, he says, an "artificial construction of the ego for its own purposes". Indeed, he goes on to observe, "in interpreting nature in this way the ego understands and masters its environment and thereby acquires and amplifies its freedom".[40]

Tracing the historical development of the problem of freedom, Iqbal makes a distinction between ordinary fatalism and higher fatalism. The latter which is the result of a living and all-absorbing experience of God is, however, commendable, though very rare: "strong personalities alone are capable of rising to this experience".[41] The experience is so total that its recipient has a strong feeling of resignation. As the Infinite is absorbed into the loving embrace of the finite, the will of the individual is — though temporarily — held in abeyance. Hopes, desires and aspirations of man, freely exercised by him, become identical with the will of God because of his being thoroughly saturated in Divine colour.[42]

As to the mutual relationship of God, the Ultimate Ego, and the universe, — and specially as to how did God produce the world— there appears to be a close affinity between the respective standpoints of Iqbal and Leibniz. Iqbal regards creativeness as one of the important elements in the Qur'anic conception of God. But as we follow his argument into details it transpires that he does not hold on to the strictly orthodox position in this regard. The act of creation, he says, was not a specific past event; nor is the universe a manufactured article having no organic concern with the life of its maker and confronting Him as his other. The universe, according to him, is rather to be conceived as a free creative energy that 'proceeds' from God. It is one continuous act which thought breaks up into a plurality of mutually exclusive things and interprets it as space, time and matter. Here the word 'proceeds' is very important. It spontaneously brings to one's mind the doctrine of emanation that was so popular with the earliest Muslim thinkers who philosophised under the aegis of neo-Platonism. 'Proceeds' does have other meanings; for instance, corollaries following from a geometrical definition or rays radiating from the sun or smell from a flower or melodies from a musical instrument or as habits and modes of behavior are exhibited by the personality of an individual. Now God being a Person Himself, the last meaning appears to be the one closest to the mind of Iqbal. That is why he declares the world to be a self-revelation of the 'Great I am.' Incidentally the Qur'an's insistently repeated statement that 'there are pointers to the being of God spread out in the various phenomena of nature' sufficiently bring out the revelatory character of God, on the one hand, and, correspondingly, the representative character of the universe, on the other.

Earlier, Leibniz too hand vacillated between creativeness and expressionism. He, like Iqbal, avoided the phrase 'creation out of nothing' for describing the origination of the universe. Also, he instead used a term which is as ambiguous as —— if not more than — the term 'proceeds'. He describes monads as substances co-eternal with God and calls them 'fulgurations' or 'manifestations' of Him. As it has been shown above, monads comprising the universe are, according to Leibniz, in general self-contained and independent. The entire life of everyone of them consists purely in the development of its own internal nature. There is, however, at least one property of each monad of which the ground lies not in itself but in God *viz.* its actual existence. From the point of view of Leibniz, it may be ingrained as an additional predicate added by the creative act of God to those already contained in the concept of the

world as 'possible'. This view comes close to the metaphysical position of the Ash'arite theologians which was very much appreciated by Iqbal himself.

The last-mentioned closeness between Leibniz and Iqbal points to a deeper metaphysical ambivalence that is mutually shared by them. Creativeness, in general, we know goes with a theistic view of God whereas emanationism implies pantheism. Controversies have raged regarding each one of the thinkers whether he belongs to one of these metaphysical camps or the other. And, further, in either case majority of the writers have agreed that— specially as we go by their overtly declared positions— they must be taken to be more in sympathy with theism than pantheism. A detailed discussion on this subject will not, however, be undertaken here as it will take us a little beyond the scope of the present article. It needs a treatment independent by itself.

Notes and References

1   Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p.48

2   *Ibid.*

3   *Ibid.* p.57.

4   *Ibid.* p.54, 56, 109.

5   *Ibid.* p.55.

6   *Ibid.*p.57.

7   *Ibid.*

8   G. W. Leibniz, *The Monadology And Other Philosophical Writings*, translated by Robert Latta, section 7, p.219.

9   Quoted and translated by Bertrand Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, p.134

10   G.W. Leibniz, *op, cit.*, section 79, p. 263.

11   G.B. Duncan (ed.), *The Philosophical Works of Leibniz*, p.241.

12   Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.84.

13   *Ibid.* P. 122.

14   *Ibid.* p.84.

15   Qur'an, 23:12-14.

16   Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.85

17   *Ibid.* P.57

18   *Al-Hikmat*, A Research Journal of the Department of Philosophy, University of the Punjab, Lahore. Vol. 6, 1975, pp.45-70.

   **For a detailed exposition of Nasr's views on biological evolution, Darwinism, transformist theory and its reductionist implications, see his *Knowledge and the Sacred*, Edinburgh, 1981, Lahore, 1985 pp.169-71, 234-42; *Islamic Life and Thought*, Lahore, 1983, p. 136. Also see his *Science and Civilization in Islam* Cambridge and Lahore, 1992 and *An Introduction to the Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, Albany, 1992, pp 71-4. Apart from giving an exposition of the essentially different nature and significance of the views expressed by the Islamic thinkers (Brethren of Purity, Ibn Miskawaih, Rumi etc.) as compared to the Western evolutionism, Nasr has also pointed out the way in which the texts

of these Islamic thinkers have been misinterpreted by modernist Muslim writers by reading their own ideas in their texts which were often cited and used with a total disregard for their immediate context and over-all perspective and governing paradigm. (Editor, 'Iqbal Review' 36:1 in which this article was initially published).

[19] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 67-8. Also see Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Maqalat*, Vol. 1, pp 216-234.

[20] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p.85.

[21] Qur'an, 57:3.

[22] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p.147.

[23] Khalifa Abdul Hakim, *Metaphysics of Rumi*, p. 31.

[24] Qur'an, 96:8.

[25] Allama Muahmmad Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

[26] *Ibid,* p.83.

[27] Qur'an, 17:85.

[28] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.43.

[29] *Ibid,* p.43.

[30] *Ibid,* p. 42

[31] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit* pp. 44.

[32] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p.46

[33] Qur'an, 112:3-4.

[34] *Ibid,* 6:164.

[35] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, op. cit., p.45.

[36] *A Treatise on Human Nature*, Book I, part IV. P.252.

[37] Allama Muhamdmad Iqbal, *op.cit.,* p.38.

[38] G. Stephens Spinks, *Psychology and Religion*, p.

[39] Allama Muhamdmad Iqbal, *op.cit.,* p.86.

[40] *Ibid,* p. 87.

[41] Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.87.

[42] The Qur'an says:(We take) Allah's colour, and who is better than Allah at colouring and we are His worshippers (2.138).