

Last but not least, the testimony of Ali Shariati sums it all:

"[Iqbal] is a man of religion and a man of this world, a man of faith and knowledge, a man of intellect and emotions, a man of philosophy and literature, a man of God and people. A devotee during the night and a lion during the day."⁽¹⁾

Iqbal is a figure much needed in these times when the image of Islam is so often confused, to put it mildly, even in the eyes of its followers. His thought and literature can play a positive and an enriching role in the education of our young generations.

(1) Khan, Ahmed S., "Gabriel's Wing: Dr. Annemarie Schimmel's Masterpiece on Iqbal." Online <http://www.angelfire.com/zine2/tribute911/Gabriel.pdf> Accessed 20/12/2010

culture, and thereby recreating its whole past as a living operative factor, in my present consciousness."⁽¹⁾

Conclusion

As philosopher and poet Iqbal uses a universal language; even when he addresses fellow Muslims he stresses the international and universal openness of the faith, which is mercy for the whole world, not a narrow ideology that seeks dominion. For this kind of discourse, a discourse of combined love and rationality, Iqbal has been admired by Muslim and Western scholars alike: Reynold A. Nicholson, Arthur J. Arberry, Annemarie Schimmel, Nadwi, Ali Shariati and many others, all and each served his thought one way or another. It is significant how they justify this admiration: Nadwi, for instance, writes,

"I admire Iqbal particularly as a champion of human equality and brotherhood, as envisaged in Islam, and a believer in the essential nobility of the Muslim. I also admired him as a fearless critic of Western materialistic civilization and a valiant fighter against narrow nationalism and crude parochialism."⁽²⁾

Viewed objectively, Iqbal, far from advocating a "clash of civilizations", was on the contrary intent on obviating it by promoting instead harmony and mutual respect between the East and the West whose compatibility rather than opposition he endeavoured to foreground.⁽³⁾ Arberry too, who translated into English Iqbal's *Rumuz-e-Bekhudi* (The Mysteries of Selflessness) and other works, honestly recognizes the same, saying in his preface to the epic,

"This group of poems has as its main themes the ideal community, Islamic ethical and social principles and the relationship between the individual and society. Although he is true throughout to Islam, Iqbal recognises also the positive analogous aspects of other religions."⁽⁴⁾

(1) Iqbal, "Presidential Address."

(2) Nadwi, p. 12.

(3) Dharampal.

(4) Arberry, Arthur J., "Introduction" to *The Mysteries of Selflessness* (*Rumuz-i-Bekhudi*). Online:

http://www.allamaiqbal.com/poet/poetry/persian/poet_introrumuz.html. Accessed 22/12/2010.

"As *qaum* is no law or religion, it was of no use calling upon people to follow and to adhere to it. A group, whether it be a tribe or a race, a band of dacoits or a company of businessmen, the dweller of a city or the inhabitants of country, as a geographical unit is a mere group either of men or of both men and women."⁽¹⁾

Islam on the other hand is a social order that definitely rejects the claims of racial and geographical factors to dictate and circumscribe people's loyalties. Iqbal stresses the fact that the exaggerated emphasis laid in this age on territorial nationalism and aggressive patriotism is mischievous because it militates against the international outlook of Islam and disrupts the essential solidarity of mankind. Iqbal looks upon geographical and racial groupings as, at best, a temporary and makeshift political organization and, at worst, as responsible for all sorts of political evils, oppressions and conflicts.⁽²⁾

"Now Brotherhood has been so cut to shreds
That in the stead of the community [nation]
The Country has been given pride of place
In men's allegiance and constructive work;
The Country is the darling of their hearts,
And wide humanity is whittled down
Into dismembered tribes."⁽³⁾

Iqbal had to make it clear to the Muslim community of India that in propagating this cultural nationalism on the bases of Islam they were not replacing one idol with another. A community which is inspired by feelings of ill-will towards other communities is low and ignoble; he further explains:

"I entertain the highest respect for the customs, laws, religious and social institutions of other communities... Yet I love the communal group, which is the source of my life and my behaviour; and which has formed me what I am by giving me its religion, its literature, its thought, its

(1) Iqbal, "Islam and Nationalism."

(2) Schimmel, p. 137.

(3) Iqbal, The Mysteries of Selflessness.

what he considered as decadence and decline in the East and the rise and expansion of the West.(1) The mission is the struggle to revive a dormant spirit and reconnect it with its history. To the Iqbal of The Reconstruction lectures, history is very much alive, more real and true than the present. Revisiting the past, reliving the past is a Qur'anic methodology of acquiring true knowledge: memory is a dynamic element in the making of who we are. If contemporary Muslims cannot identify with their problematic and contrary situations, like those Iqbal found himself in, there is the historical reality, the fourth dimension of time; spatial not linear, where one feels at home. His utopia is a world where the past is synchronized with the future: "I keep before my eyes that glorious period, and I see tomorrow in the mirror of yesterday"⁽²⁾

For Iqbal, to follow the route of revival does not imply remoteness, and it is not at the expense of the "extension of contacts" one critic proposes.⁽³⁾ It is not an either/or point: the making of Iqbal's legacy is his ability to extend his contact, to construct an East/West dialogue on egalitarian terms; he was not an imitator, a taker, and at the same time he was humble enough to proclaim his indebtedness to those Western cultural and intellectual icons, – certainly the greatest sign of maturity and freedom from the anxiety of influence. The very broad scope of his epistemological achievement testifies to that. Muzheruddin Siddiqi writes,

"His dynamism and humanism were both essentially modern but they were reinforced by the culture of early Islam. At the philosophic level he admitted that modern Western culture was essentially an extension and farther development of Islamic Culture."⁽⁴⁾

In order for the individual to belong to any entity, culture or group, that individual must find a rationale behind it all. Faith always transcends logic and extends beyond it; yet there are always rationales that come with it and make possible some common discourse. In his article entitled "Islam and Nationalism" Iqbal explains,

(1) Bhatti, p. 2.

(2) Quoted in Beg, 188.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 9.

(4) Siddiqi, p. 11.

Iqbal was a great lover of past traditions and his 'credo' was justifiable, since the perpetual life of a nation depends on clinging fast to national traditions. About this he metaphorically writes:

"Yea, it is true, I keep my eyes on ancient times,
And tell the assembly the old story."⁽¹⁾

In stipulating these principles, Muhammad Iqbal represents a school of thought that is well entrenched in modern Islamic history. In the nineteenth century it was revived by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and its torch has since been upheld by a chain of thinkers and activists of whom Iqbal is a pivotal link. For, while the others have been thinking and working for an Islamic state, he was the one to bring such a state into reality (at least as he saw it then), staunchly believing that it is absolutely necessary for the survival and preservation of the Muslim identity of his people. In his *Jawid Nama* Iqbal imagines a meeting with Jamal al-Din al Afghani and complains to him that the *Umma* suffers from this confusion of its priorities:

"In the heart of a nation that once transformed the world
I have seen a conflict between religion and country."⁽²⁾

And later in the same epical poem and under "Afghani: Religion and Country," he writes,

"A grass-blade is of the earth, and yet rises from the earth;
alas, if the pure soul should die in the dust!
Although man sprang out of water and clay
from water and clay rose-like drew colour and sap,
alas, if he wanders forever in water and clay,
alas, if he soars not higher than this station!"⁽³⁾

Yet, this complaint is not passive; the melancholy which is associated with loss of power is however only a passing moment in Iqbal's mood. It is replaced by a sense of mission. Iqbal, like Afghani, inherits a sense of history in which memories of past Islamic glory are confronted with

(1) Quoted in Beg, p.188.

(2) Iqbal, *Jawid Nama*, lines 1025-1026

(3) *Ibid.*, lines 1043-49

3 – It has a code, in the Muslim case the Qur'an, and a centre, Mecca. "Al-Kaaba in his poetry is the ultimate symbol of unity: in prayer as well as in pilgrimage, two acts that externalize the deep, profound inner experience of coming very close to God"⁽¹⁾

4. It applies itself to the acquisition of scientific knowledge in order to harness the forces of nature. Iqbal himself is described as "combin[ing] in his teachings the spirituality of the East and the dynamism of the West and this to him is true Islam,"⁽²⁾ but of course the 'dynamism' of the West is based on principles borrowed from the medieval Islamic civilization as Iqbal elucidates in his seminal lectures published under the title of *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.⁽³⁾ Dynamism is an essential feature of the Islamic faith:

"If a Muslim is an unbeliever,
He is subject of his destiny,
But if he is a true believer
He himself is God's destiny."⁽⁴⁾

He also says :

"God is displeased with the soulless body,
The living God is God of the living."⁽⁵⁾

5 – It maintains traditions which are a factor of stability. Tradition is part of the national heritage, of a community's distinctive culture; but to continue to inherit it generation after generation without re-examining its verities is a mistake: "If to follow tradition had been a virtue, the Prophet [peace be upon him] would have also walked in the footsteps of his ancestors."⁽⁶⁾

(1) Schimmel, p. 162.

(2) Shahid, p. 25.

(3) Published in Lahore by Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1951.

(4) From *The Wings of Gabriel*, quoted in Saiyidain, K.G., *Iqbal's Educational Philosophy*, Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 5th edition, 1960, p. 198.

(5) From *The Wings of Gabriel* quoted in Beg, p. 148.

(6) Maitre, pp. 15-16.

To the Community, and they to him."⁽¹⁾

This community is a vision based on historical reality of the 'perfect society' which fulfils the following primary conditions:

1 – It has a spiritual basis provided by the principle of monotheism:

"There is no god but God: this is the soul
And body of our pure Community,
The pitch that keeps our instrument in tune,
The very substance of our mysteries,
The knotted thread that binds our scattered thoughts."⁽²⁾

The new culture finds the foundation of world-unity in the principles of *Tawhid*. Islam, as a polity is only a practical means of making this principle a living factor in the intellectual and emotional life of mankind; it demands loyalty to God, not to thrones.⁽³⁾

2 – It is centred on a leader or a prophet; that is to say, for Muslims, around Muhammad (peace be upon him). Iqbal, aware of 'ideal' men constructed by Western philosophers such as Emerson and Nietzsche, presents the Prophet as the Perfect Man: "Muhammad is the preface to the book of the universe; all the worlds are slaves and he is the Master."⁽⁴⁾ Iqbal further elaborates,

"Prophethood is the basis of our organization, our religion and our law. It creates unity in our diversity and makes us into a well-knit community, which is meant to bring a message of peace for mankind. If we let go our hold of this unifying, life-giving conception, it will be our death as a nation; for, it is this centre that has given us a dynamic unity of outlook and purpose."⁽⁵⁾

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Maitre, p. 15.

(4) Iqbal, Muhammad, *The Secrets of the Self* (Asrar-i-Khudi), translated by Reynold A. Nicholson, Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, revised edition 1940, reprinted 1975, p. 36.

(5) Iqbal, *The Mysteries of Selflessness*.

– **Belonging: faith first**

Iqbal's answer to the fundamental question: what is it that man should belong to? Geographical space? Community, small or large? One's tribe? Or one's ego? is best explicated in his epical poem *Rumuz-e-Bekhudi* (Mysteries of Selflessness) which he begins with these lines addressing the Muslim:

"You, who were made by God to be the Seal
Of all the peoples dwelling upon earth,
That all beginnings might in you find end;
Whose saints were prophet like, whose wounded hearts
Wove into unity the souls of men;
Why are you fallen now so far astray."⁽¹⁾

He addresses Muslims, merging together what they were in the past in the early history of Islam, what they are now, 'fallen' from that phenomenal historical achievement and what they should be in their immediate future. Iqbal chose to pour his communication in verse, the form that addresses the heart and the mind; after all it is a message of faith rather than cold philosophy.

"Lay love's foundation-stone in your own soul,
And to the Prophet pledge anew your troth."⁽²⁾

To pledge loyalty to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is paramount; Iqbal yearns to belong to a community that elevates him to the rank of "Kinsman to Omar, aye, and Abu Dharr". The crux holding the community together and unifying its ranks is not material, it is the mercy that God has sent to the universe:

"The link that binds the individual
To the Society is Mercy;
His truest Self in the Community alone
Achieves fulfillment. ...
The individual a Mirror holds

(1) Iqbal, *The Mysteries of Selflessness*.

(2) *Ibid.*

This may sound contradictory, coming from the mind that struggled for the establishment of a homeland for his people, for a geographical space that they can call their own; but his action did not belie his word: to him geography is indivisibly bound to faith because there one has the freedom to live that faith. It is clear that he objects to secular patriotism mainly because it upsets the logical hierarchy of human loyalties. For him "Islam is only an effort to realize the spiritual in a human organization."⁽¹⁾ Naturally, he endeavors to assimilate his contemporary situation of Muslim–Hindu conflict in the sub–continent with the experience of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

"Our Master, fleeing from his fatherland,
Resolved the knot of Muslim nationhood.
His wisdom founded one Community—
The world its parish—on the sacred charge
To civilize, ...
Why fled he, then, from his ancestral home?
Supposest thou he ran before his foes?
The chroniclers, ill understanding what
The Flight portends, have hid the truth from us
Flight is the law that rules the Muslim's life,
And is a cause of his stability
Its meaning is, to leap from shallowness,
To quit the dew, the ocean to subdue."⁽²⁾

According to Iqbal, Muhammad's message "restored the full status of citizenship to those who had been deprived of their human rights on grounds of race, colour, sex or social and economic circumstances."⁽³⁾ It was a living affirmation of faith in social democracy in its true sense; i.e., justice and equality, rather than in the Western use and abuse of the term.

(1) Khatana, Manzoor H., *Iqbal And Foundation of Pakistan Nationalism*. (Lahore, 1992), p. 110.

(2) Iqbal, *The Mysteries of Selflessness*.

(3) Schimmel, 135

is the religion of Islam alone which sustains a nation in its true cultural or political sense. It is for this reason that the Quran openly declares that any system other than that of Islam must be deprecated and rejected (Quran, 3, 84).⁽¹⁾ In his Presidential Address at the Muslim Conference in Lahore in 1932, Iqbal stated unequivocally that he was opposed to the concept of nationalism as presented by Europe, for he detected in it the menace of materialism and atheism which, in his opinion, would be hazardous for humanity. There is healthy, productive patriotism and there is mischievous, destructive patriotism. Patriotism as an uncompromising political ideology which believes in "My country – right or wrong" and denies the wider claims of the world community and the internationalism for which Islam stands is not acceptable at all.⁽²⁾ Nobody can deny the great love Iqbal carried for India, yet as Brutus said: "I loved Caesar, but I loved Rome more!" Iqbal loved India but he loved Islam more:

"Speak again of the Indians and of India—
one blade of her grass no garden can outmatch;
speak of her in whose mosques the tumult has died,
of her in whose temples the fire is quenched,
of her for whose sake I gave my blood,
whose memory I have nursed in my soul.
From my grief you may guess at her grief;
alas, for the beloved who knows no more the lover!"⁽³⁾

Iqbal continues to say in that presidential address, "Patriotism is a perfectly natural virtue which has a place in the moral life of man. Nevertheless, what really matters most to man is his faith, his culture, his historical traditions. These are the things which in my view are worth living for and dying for"⁽⁴⁾

(1) Iqbal, Muhammad, "Islam and Nationalism," n.d. Online: <http://www.koranselskab.dk/profiler/iqbal/nationalism.htm> Accessed 14/12/2010. Henceforth, Iqbal, "Islam and Nationalism."

(2) Schimmel, 141.

(3) Iqbal, Javid Nama, lines 3321–28.

(4) Iqbal, Muhammad, "Presidential Address" delivered at the annual session of the All-India Muslim Conference (Lahore, 21st March 1932). Online <http://www.koranselskab.dk/profiler/iqbal/address2.htm> Accessed 16/12/2010. Henceforth, "Presidential Address."

"Thy wings are overlaid with the dust of colour and race –
Bird of the sanctuary, shed clean thy wings before soaring high!"⁽¹⁾

The narrowness of race and geography is replaced by the openness of faith:

"I am a rose from the Paradise of Kashmir
My heart comes from the sacred land of Hijaz
And my voice from Shiraz."⁽²⁾

Islam is vehemently opposed to the idea of racial superiority which is the greatest obstacle in the way of international unity, cooperation and peace.⁽³⁾ Instead, the term proposed by Iqbal is some kind of 'cultural nationalism'; that is, our sense of belonging issues basically out of our culture, Iqbal understood culture in this more recent definition of the term:

"[Culture] is a foundation for human growth. It is about values, beliefs, ways of living, identity and expression. As such, it is fundamental to everyone's living experience. It is not, as many policymakers believe, a 'soft' issue, but the bedrock of quality of life. And in the context of assisting with the process of the adaptation by and to refugees and asylum seekers – and other migrants – culture is rooted right at the heart of the process. Not an end, or an outcome, or a by-product, but a starting point, a rationale, and a means by which it can be achieved."⁽⁴⁾

However, culture in this sense is just another name for the faith which Muslim community professes as "din-i-qayyim", to quote Iqbal, in which term lies concealed a remarkable Quranic point, namely, that it is this religion alone in which is vested the responsibility of sustaining the present and future life of a group of people which surrenders its individual and social life to its system. In other words, according to the Quran, it

(1) Quoted in Maitre, p. 18.

(2) Quoted in Shahid, p. 87.

(3) Quoted in Maitre, p. 18.

(4) Gould, Helen G, *A Sense of Belonging: Arts and Culture in the Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*. London: Creative Exchange, the Network for Culture and Development, 2005. Online:
<http://cultureartsrefugees.creativexchange.org/files/SenseofBelonging.pdf>. Accessed 5/12/2010.

by their colonizers, and to reawaken the *Umma*, proclaiming to the world that Islam is the liberating force that supersedes all these narrow and earth-bound ties:

"The man of love takes his guidance from God
He is kind to the infidel and the faithful alike."⁽¹⁾

So, religion is not a dividing force; it simply reshuffles and rearranges man's affiliations. At the same time Iqbal distinguishes between one's love for one's country and native land, which he believes to be a natural instinct and requires no impressions to nourish it, and the bigoted nationalism which he envisioned as irreligious and territorial. He rejects the latter as 'Western politics' "based on what is ultimately not a rational choice or any kind of choice by man; one's race is not a matter of will."⁽²⁾ He writes,

"The main endeavour of Islam as a religion has been to solve this very problem (of race) and if modern Asia wishes to avoid the fate of Europe there is no other remedy but to assimilate the ideals of Islam."⁽³⁾

Islam does not tolerate any divorce between the moral and the religious on one hand and the political and patriotic on the other.

In his critique of European nationalism Iqbal was ahead of his time: almost a century has passed after he first expressed his views, and one cannot help reflecting on the way political conceptions are being transformed. The newly emerging phenomenon is the common grounds on which vast nations of great diversity are being melted in their melting pots: Europe, forgetting or attempting to forget its scars, and the United States with its multiple ethnicities and races; two examples that demonstrate the tremendous shift in the nature of the principles of nationhood and identity. Political principles are replacing blood and racial ties, – ties of "mere dust and water" to borrow Iqbal's phrase.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Vahid, p. 38.

(2) Schimmel, Annemarie. *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*, Leiden: Brill, 1963, p.196. Henceforth, Schimmel.

(3) Quoted in Schimmel, p. 197.

(4) Schimmel, p. 164.

and to elevate the moral and intellectual level of mankind have, in their hunger for dominion and imperial possessions, shed the blood of millions and reduced millions to servitude simply in order to pander the greed and avarice of their own particular groups."⁽¹⁾

The emptiness and falsehood of those labels, such as democracy, nationalism, etc., the modern idols of Lat and Uzza, as Iqbal calls them,⁽²⁾ which he witnessed firsthand, opened his eyes to the reality and truth both of Europe and Islam. That the spirit of Europe is antithetical to that of Islam became crystal clear. In his *Javid Nama* and in the form of a message from Jamal al-Din al-Afghani to Communist Russia, Iqbal writes:

"The goal of the Qur'an is something else, the custom and principle of Muslims is something else. You have laid the basis for a new departure. You have rejected the old way of life. Like the Muslims, you have demolished despotism. Take lesson from our history, if you are to light a new torch. You have given a short shrift to false gods. Now pass beyond 'no' to a 'yes.' O you who yearn for a new world order! Seek a stable basis for it."⁽³⁾

The dawning of this truth brings with it the requirement of taking action.

"This our world', they asked of me,
"Is't congenial to thee?"
"Nay", I answered; and they cried,
"Break and strew it far and wide!"⁽⁴⁾

Whether 'They' here refers to people of the West or of the East makes no difference; both worlds need revision and enlightenment though the predicaments from which they suffer are very different. Consequently, Iqbal took up this not so imaginary challenge and throughout his remaining life he struggled to 'upset' the alien trends imposed upon Muslim nations

(1) Sherwani, Latif Ahmed, ed., *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1977, pp. 249-50.

(2) Quoted in Nadvi, p. 47.

(3) Iqbal, *Javid Nama*, quoted in Siddiqi, p. 59

(4) Iqbal, Persian Psalms.

transform his thought in that short period. In addition to the first-hand experience of Europe, other factors contributed to this evolution; such as certain Western scholars, Muslim scholars, and gaining more insight into the sciences of Islam. Iqbal reached his ultimate destination not only geographically but also spiritually and intellectually, anchoring his roaming ship at the rock of Islam.

On one level, given that as a cosmopolitan poet and philosopher he transcended spatiotemporal constraints, it is not surprising that from a political perspective he denounced the narrow, parochial notions of the nation-state and nationalism, dismissing them as antithetical to the broader mandate of the Muslim community or *umma*. On another level, from a Muslim perspective, Iqbal considered that the modern Western separation of politics from religion and ethics had left Europe deprived of a sound source of knowledge and inspiration. Furthermore, inspired by the Islamic vision of a universal fraternity, he felt the need to vociferously criticize Western political developments.⁽¹⁾

– **The cultural force of Islam**

When Iqbal returned to India after three years in England and Germany he showed a strong inclination towards Pan-Islamism, repudiated his earlier Sufi pantheism and Indian nationalism and became more interested in Islam as a cultural force.⁽²⁾ Iqbal moved away from the European type of nationalism as its incompatibility with the broad human outlook of Islam unfolded itself to him. In a historic broadcast on All India Radio, Lahore, on January 1st, 1935, Iqbal declaimed:

"...The tyranny of imperialism struts abroad, covering its face in the masks of democracy, nationalism, communism, fascism and heaven knows what else besides. Under these masks, in every corner of the earth, the spirit of freedom and the dignity of man are being trampled underfoot in a way of which not even the darkest period of human history presents a parallel. The rulers whose duty it was to protect and cherish those ideals which go to form a higher humanity, to prevent man's oppression of man

(1) Dharampal.

(2) Siddiqi, p. 7.

teach us to harbour grudges between us Indians we all are; India, our motherland;" a tone echoed by the Arab nationalist poet, Fakhri al-Barudi:

بلاد العرب أوطاني... من الشام لبغدان...
فلا حد يباعدنا... ولا دين يفرقنا
لسان الضاد يجمعنا... بغسان وعدنان

Arab land is my homeland... from Damascus to Baghdad
No border separates us...and no religion divides us
The language of dhad [Arabic] unites us...with Ghassanids and Adnanids

Iqbal's conception of unity is transformed into an emphasis on the universal brotherhood imbued by the faith rather than by ethnic origin. Indian nationalism does not automatically signify acceptance of Hindu domination, some critics of Iqbal comment, but for him setting it first on his priority list creates a tremendous ethical dilemma, for the nationalism the West introduced into the east was the one that dominated Europe in that particular epoch: it was crude nationalism, devoid of human values and built on bonds of race, colour, superiority of blood, and detestation and marginalization of the Other; it was the cause of two world wars waged by Europe against itself, dragging the whole world with it to a universal suicide attempt. Iqbal expresses his view of Europe in his *Payam Ishk* ("The Message of Love") and how it has been plundering his country:

"O dwellers of the West! God's earth is not a shop;
The gold which you believe to be pure will turn
out to be spurious.
Your civilization is going to commit suicide
with its own dagger."⁽¹⁾

As Nadwi's statement quoted above indicates, to experience the West was an eye-opening process, and in the case of Iqbal it helped to

(1) Quoted in Maitre, p. 31.

Some critics blatantly suggest that a fundamental in Iqbal's thought is his rejection of the West, but what does the word 'rejection' actually stand for here? If we understand Iqbal correctly, it is his keen sense of belonging to a culture that is ontologically different from the West; it is Europe's Other. Like his historical predecessors, he had to be consciously selective in his dealing with the Western matter. He was not hindered by the colonial situation as those critics say. Avicenna and Averroes before him were not colonized, yet still, they did not appropriate the Classical heritage wholesale. When such critics say, "Iqbal continues a tradition of looking upon Goethe in the context of 'wisdom'"⁽¹⁾ one cannot but agree with them. To him, as well as to his precursors of great scholars, civilization is by nature nomadic, following and seeking pasture; Europeans relied on Islamic civilization in the past, and there is no shame in Muslims' learning from it in the present. Still, by gazing on the other, one discovers his own identity.

– Territorial nationalism

Iqbal's earlier spiritual and intellectual roaming landed him first on the modern concept of nationalism, a nineteenth, early twentieth-century European paradigm which came to the East with the advent of colonialism. Secular nationalism was very much in vogue in Europe when Iqbal travelled there in the first decade of the twentieth century. In fact he went there filled with Indian nationalism acquired no doubt under colonial British influence. The poetry Iqbal wrote for India prior to his actual taste of the West was noted for its nationalistic and pantheistic flavor. He seemed to champion the cause of Indian nationalism.⁽²⁾ This nationalist phase of his intellectual development is poetically documented in his anthem glorifying India, his homeland, which begins with these words: "Of all the world, our Hindustan is the best; we are its nightingales of mirth, and it is our garden abode."⁽³⁾ And in which he significantly continues to say: "Religion does not

(1) Bhatti, pp. 9,10.

(2) Siddiqi, Muzheruddin, *The Image of the West in Iqbal*, Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1964, p. 19. Henceforth, Siddiqi.

(3) Shahid, p. 69.

"an eighteenth-century mind [such as Goethe's] could breach the doctrinal walls erected between the West and Islam and see hidden elements of kinship between himself and the Orient."⁽¹⁾

Goethe is famous as well for the Qur'anic diction he employed in his poetry; for instance, the lines

God's is the East!
God's is the West!
Northern and Southern lands
Repose in the peace of His hands,⁽²⁾
are paraphrasing the Qur'anic verse:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ [البقرة: 115]

"To Allah belong the East and the West: Whithersoever you turn, there is the presence of Allah. For Allah is all-Pervading, all-Knowing." [Al-Baqarah: 115]

However, not all Western figures receive Iqbal's respect: Bergson is judged as a negative influence on the minds of young men:

If you had not lost your own self,
You would not have been a follower of Bergson.⁽³⁾

Reciprocally, Iqbal intended to introduce to the West glimpses of the religious thought of the East. So he decided to write his doctoral dissertation (presented at Munich University) on "The Development of the Metaphysics in Persia," a topic about which he had this to say:

"...My knowledge of Arabic and Persian and my acquaintance with European philosophy (the study of which I began 12 years ago) suggest to me that I might make a contribution to the knowledge in the West, of some branch of [Islamic] Philosophy ..."⁽⁴⁾

(1) Said, p. 118.

(2) Quoted in Said, p. 167.

(3) Quoted in Beg, Abdulla Anwar, *The Poet of the East*, 2nd edition, Lahore: Khawar Publishing Cooperative Society, 1961, p. 197.

(4) Shibli, Siddiq, "Iqbal's Doctoral Thesis". Online: <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr89/3.htm>. Accessed 5/1/2011.

Iqbal's soul was discovering itself. He also benefited from his acquaintance with Western thought in the establishment of a trans-cultural discourse, most obviously in his reception of Goethe, whose "Muhammad's Hymn" he first adapted then included in his own *Javid Nama*. He attributes his great reception of Goethe, in whom he has found a kindred spirit, to the latter's universality;⁽¹⁾ it is the universality that enabled Goethe to harbor the greatest affection for the Orient in general and Islam in particular. Some observer finds that Goethe's *West-Eastern Divan* bears testimony to the fact that the West, being dissatisfied with its own spiritual life, is turning to the bosom of the East for spiritual warmth,⁽²⁾ which confirms Iqbal's opinion. Iqbal initiates a dialogue of civilizations and a cultural reciprocity with the profound mind of the German poet who is not abashed to declare his testimony to the universality of Islam:

من حماقة الإنسان في دنياه
 أن يتعصب كل لما يراه؛
 إن كان الإسلام هو التسليم لله
 فإننا أجمعون، نحيا ونموت مسلمين.

"Stupid that everyone in his case
 Is praising his particular opinion!
 If Islam means submission to God,
 We all live and die in Islam." (3)

Iqbal's respect for Goethe can also be attributed to the latter's deep love for Islam and the beautiful poetry he wrote in praise of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), all documented in Abd al-Rahman Sidqi's *The Orient and Islam in Goethe's Literature* (in Arabic). Edward Said elucidates how

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- (1) Dharampal-Frick, Gita, "The Contours of Muhammad Iqbal's Cosmopolitan Engagement with the West: Shades of Judicious Criticism and Constructive Emulation." Lecture presented at the Symposium on *Muhammad Iqbal's Approach to Modernity and Islam* (Beirut: the Orient Institute, 9 November, 2010). Online <http://www.orient-institut.org/Library/Files/ConferenceIqbal.pdf>. Accessed 6/12/2010. Henceforth, Dharampal.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Lines quoted and translated into Arabic by Abd al-Rahman Sidqi in his *Al-Sharq wa al-Islam fi Adab Goethe* ("The Orient and Islam in Goethe's Work") (Cairo: Dar al-Qalam, n.d.), p.25.

And have reckoned the ecstatic mad.

...

Would that he had lived in Ahmad's time."⁽¹⁾

Iqbal undoubtedly had in mind Nietzsche's well-known eulogy of Islam. In his *The Antichrist* Nietzsche expresses his great admiration of Muslim civilization in Spain.

"The wonderful culture of the Moors in Spain, which was fundamentally nearer to us and appealed more to our senses and tastes than that of Rome and Greece, was *trampled down* (I do not say by what sort of feet). Why? Because it had to thank noble and manly instincts for its origin – because it said yes to life, even to the rare and refined luxuriousness of Moorish life!... The crusaders later made war on something before which it would have been more fitting for them to have groveled in the dust – a civilization beside which even that of our nineteenth century seems very poor and very 'senile.' What they wanted, of course, was booty: the orient was rich.... Let us put aside our prejudices! The crusades were a higher form of piracy, nothing more!"⁽²⁾

If Iqbal's relation with Nietzsche was a point of contact and departure as Syed Abdul Wahid demonstrates in his book *Iqbal: His Art and Thought* (1959), his relation with Goethe was of a far-reaching nature. Iqbal established a profound dialogue with the German poet and philosopher, the "gifted enthusiast" of the East, as described by Edward Said many years later.⁽³⁾ In *Stray Reflections* we find this acknowledgement by Iqbal:

"Our soul discovers itself when we come into contact with a great mind. It is not until I had realized the infinitude of Goethe's imagination that I discovered the narrow breadth of my own."⁽⁴⁾

(1) Iqbal, Muhammad, *Jawid Nama*, translated from the Persian by Arthur J. Arberry, lines 2703–12, 2747. Online:

<http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/javidnama/translation/index.htm>
Accessed 5/1/2010. Henceforth, *Jawid Nama*

(2) Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Antichrist* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2007), p. 160

(3) Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 51. Henceforth, Said.

(4) Iqbal, Muhammad, *Stray Reflection: Allama Iqbal's Note-Book* (Lahore: Ghulam Ali & Sons, 1961), p. 2.

universally accepted spiritual values of equality and brotherhood of man.⁽¹⁾

It is ironic that his stay and study in the West dramatically contributed to endow him with the strongest sense of belonging. In his book *Glory of Iqbal*, the well-known scholar Abu al-Hasan Ali al-Nadwi points out the impact of Europe on the young Muslim students' minds:

"Through Western philosophy and literature Muslims got acquainted with the mysteries of the Occident. They learnt to understand its intrinsically materialistic disposition and the arrogant nationalism underlying its collective consciousness."⁽²⁾

If Nietzsche's influence on Sartre, Camus and later on Jacques Derrida was that of estrangement and loss of centre, and on Hitler an extreme form of nationalism, his impact on the mind of the young Indian student of philosophy journeying in Germany was the opposite. Muhammad Iqbal found his true path after wading through the murky sea of Western philosophy and contrasting it with the religion of Islam; that philosophy made him realize the value of what he already had, of what the Muslim East treasured for him. Iqbal's attitude towards Nietzsche was a mixture of admiration and sadness over wasted genius as we see in the section entitled "The Place of Nietzsche" in his *Jawid Nama* (translated into English as *Pilgrimage of Eternity*):

"I said to Rumi, 'Who is this madman?'
He answered: 'This is the German genius
Whose place is between these two worlds;
His reed-pipe contains an ancient melody.
This Hallaj without gallows and rope
Has spoken anew those ancient words;
His words are fearless, his thoughts sublime,
The Westerners are struck asunder by the sword of his speech.
His colleagues have not comprehended his ecstasy

(1) Iqbal, Javid, "Religious Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal." Online: <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr02/01-RELIGIOUS%20PHILOSOPHY%20OF%20MUHAMMAD%20IQBAL.htm>. Accessed 5/1/2011.

(2) Nadvi, Syed Abul Hasan Ali, *Glory of Iqbal*, translated from Urdu by Muhammad Asif Kidwai (Lahore: Progressive Books, 1977) p. 45. Henceforth, Nadvi.

religious, cultural, or linguistic values.⁽¹⁾ Nowadays Europe is replacing its narrow early–twentieth–century nationalism with a very broad form of unity: a ‘European Union’ is born. The type of nationalism that was the cause of so many wars in the past century is being driven to the background and new unifying concepts are fore grounded. It is not a simple economic entity, a "common market", any more. But, is the logos ‘European’ really free from the contamination of territorialism and race? Nevertheless, it is an indicative of how Europe, having discovered the faulty nature of the nation–state, has abandoned its earlier and narrower sense of nationalism, realizing that other levels of loyalties are possible; other more important and more human than the ties of mere blood or earth, albeit still secular and materialistic.

– Iqbal and the West

Glancing back at the journey he travelled, Iqbal acknowledges that he owes a great deal to some Western thinkers, especially Goethe.⁽²⁾ In the opinion of the German writer Herman Hesse, Iqbal’s thought belongs to three realms of the spirit: the world of India, the world of Islam, and that of occidental thought; though ultimately, as Hesse reasserts, Iqbal’s dream is a humanity united in the name and service of Allah.⁽³⁾

Actually it was during his stay in Europe that Iqbal passed through an intellectual as well as emotional revolution and became disgusted with pantheism, secular nationalism as well as territorial patriotism. He had seen the forges of secular nationalism and territorial patriotism active in Europe and arrived at the conclusion that the construction of human groups on the foundations of race, language, colour and territory or fighting as well as dying for it was not only inhuman and barbaric but contrary to the

(1) Malik, Rizwan, "Allamah Muhammad Iqbal’s Concept of Muslim Nationalism in India," IIAS Newsletter, no. 10. Online: <http://www.iias.nl/iiasn/10/Regional/10CBCA01.html> Accessed 16/12/2010.

(2) Bhatti, p. 3.

(3) Extracts from Hermann Hesse’s Geleitwort to Anne Marie Schimmel’s translation of *Javid Nama*, published in 1957, quoted in: Schimmel, Annemarie "Germany and Iqbal", in: *Muhammad Iqbal und die drei Reiche des Geistes* edited by Wolfgang Köhler (Hamburg: Dt.–Pakistan Forum, 1977), p. 60.

‘Arrogant nationalism’, on the other hand, is the second general feature of Europe during that period. It is the principle on which the states in Europe were founded: a flag and some geographical space devoid of the lofty moral and spiritual values; a secular structure in the Machiavellian sense. In fact Iqbal accredits the narrow secular concept of European nationalism to Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527). In his infamous work *The Prince*, Machiavelli advises the contemporary ruler of Florence to unify Italy at any price, with emphasis on the separation between politics and morality, which leads to the employment of unethical, immoral and irreligious means. His motto is the now-hackneyed cliché "the end justifies the means." Iqbal severely attacks Machiavelli in his verse,

"That Floraentine, the worshipper of untruth
He wrote a book for the rulers,
And sowed the seeds of discord in our fields.
His ‘religion’ turned state into god."⁽¹⁾

Iqbal believes Machiavelli is responsible for the introduction of this ungodly philosophy and flagrant corruption of human nature; he blinded the eyes of people and wrote a new code of (mis)guidance for rulers, thereby sowing the seeds of war and conflict:

"His mind fashioned new patterns (of principle)!
His religion made the state into a deity.
And presented what was evil as good!
He kissed the feet of this deity.
And tested truth on the criterion of profit!"⁽²⁾

Iqbal is clear in his mind that territorial nationalism is one thing and cultural nationalism another. The former, originally a Western concept, demands affiliation to a territory without having anything to do with the cultural values of the people concerned; in contrast, cultural nationalism defines people as a nation on the basis of their inwardly felt sharing of

(1) Quoted in Vahid, Syed Abdul, *Iqbal: His Art and Thought*, London: John Murray, 1959, p. 175. Henceforth, Vahid.

(2) Ibid.

In his poetry, he delineates the implications of this belonging:

"To live in company is real life.
Love does not acquire insight without company,
And without company, it does not become self-conscious.
In our assembly, there are divine manifestations, behold!"⁽¹⁾

Actually, Iqbal dedicates the whole of his *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* to his conception of the organic nature of the individual/community confluence. In his preface to his translation of Iqbal's long poem, Arthur J. Arberry expounds this conception:

"It is obvious that the Iqbalian conception of selfhood, if developed in isolation from society, ends in unmitigated egoism and anarchy. But he was not interested merely in the individual and his self-realization; he was equally concerned with the evolution of an ideal society, or community as he preferred to call it. It is only as a member of this community that the individual, by the twin principles of conflict and concord, is able to express himself fully and ideally; it is only as an association of self-affirming individuals that the community can come into being and perfect itself."⁽²⁾

A human being according to him needs to belong, for one's full humanity cannot be realized in isolation:

"When in the Congregation he is lost
'Tis like a drop which, seeking to expand,
Becomes an ocean.....
The individual a Mirror holds
To the Community, and they to him;
He is jewel threaded on their cord."⁽³⁾

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- (1) Iqbal, Muhammad, *Persian Psalms*, translated by Arthur J. Arberry and Bashir Ahmad Dar. Online: <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/persianpsalms/translation/index.htm> Accessed 5/12/2010. Henceforth, *Persian Psalms*.
- (2) Iqbal, Muhammad, *The Mysteries of the Selflessness: A Philosophical Poem*, translated, with introduction and notes by Arthur J. Arberry. Online: <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/ramuz/translation/index.htm> Accessed 5/12/2010
- (3) Ibid.

– Europe's nation and alienation

If we are to make generalizations about the human condition in twentieth-century Europe, they will have to be nation and alienation; the latter stands for the absence of any sense of belonging as an existential and philosophical crisis. It started in the West and from there spread eastward; a contagious phenomenon. People especially Muslims with grave national issues such as the loss of freedom and independence, and the spread of material and scientific backwardness displayed the symptoms of that condition, which unfortunately drove them away from looking seriously into their immediate problems and prevented many intellectuals from facing those problems and solving them.

Modern Western thought is saturated with this theme of alienation and estrangement. Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* (1956)⁽¹⁾ summarizes its different manifestations in the thought and literature of such prominent figures as Friedrich Nietzsche, Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, T. S. Eliot, Herman Hesse, Ernest Hemingway and T. E. Lawrence. In his attempt to explore the mentality of the 'outsiders', Wilson exposes their experience of dislocation and their sense of being at variance with society. Dostoevsky's "insect-man", Nietzsche's "ant-man", Eliot's "hollow men", Hesse's "steppe's wolf-man" and Camu's "stranger" are all manifestations of what Wilson describes as a needless pessimistic fallacy.

Muhammad Iqbal was the witness who saw it all. Though he was writing in a colonial context and with what some describe as "his sense of having inherited a history of loss",⁽²⁾ he visualized himself as a man with an unwavering sense of belonging to a body of people with an ancient culture, like a wave in a mighty river:

"A wave is a wave only inside the river,
Outside of it, it is nothing."⁽³⁾

(1) Wilson, Colin. *The Outsider*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1956.

(2) Bhatti, Anil, "Iqbal and Goethe: A Note," Goethezeit Portal, 2005. Online <http://ourbeacon.com/wp-content/uploads/admin2/2007/08/iqbal-and-goethe-by-abhatti.pdf> Accessed 16/12/2010. Henceforth Bhatti.

(3) Quoted in Maitre, Luce-Claude, *Introduction to the Thought of Iqbal*, translated by Mulla Abdul Majeed Dar, ([Karachi], n.d.), p. 19. Henceforth, Maitre.

He reexamines terms such as geographical space, nationhood, faith and nationalism, and relocates them within an Islamic frame. Arabic, Qur'anic terms become the subject of interrogation and debate; such as *qawm* and *ummah*, the first he recognizes as nationalist, the second as signifier of the Muslim community. Iqbal had the double vantage point of Western philosophy and Eastern intellectual and metaphysical traditions, something that qualifies him to play a role model for Muslims of today who are torn, individuals and nations, between allegiance to Islam on one hand and many other factors that destructively intervene and confuse this allegiance on the other.

The issue imposed itself upon the historical context in which Muhammad Iqbal found himself. As a philosopher coming to maturity in the first decades of the twentieth century and witnessing disastrous upheavals in the world; also as an Indian Muslim experiencing the trauma of British colonialism and the fear of Hindu hegemony, he conferred paramount importance not just upon the definition of one's identity and sense of belonging, but also upon the discovery of the ways to defend and protect them. For us, a century later, the world is still prone to similar catastrophes, man-made or man-incurred, including the recent type of 'cultural imperialism'. A new kind of hegemony is threatening the Muslim world, – that of globalization at the expense of national cultures. Anxieties keep repeating themselves and the search for answers continues.

This paper is mainly a literary investigation of the nature and development of Iqbal's conception of 'belongingness', highlighting his comprehensive formula of how allegiance to Islam never contradicts other natural senses of belonging; conversely, it enhances those loyalties and directs them into constructive channels, and puts them in the right perspective. The relevance of his thought is as crucial today as it has ever been.

Introduction

To choose to discuss the topic of faith and nationhood in the thought of Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) at a conference on the jurisprudence of the sense of belonging is to present him as a prototype of the contemporary Muslim scholar, who has searched for, and succeeded in, finding the Islamic answer to such a problematic question. The confusion in the minds of contemporary Muslims everywhere when it comes to understanding this concept is still lurking there and causing conflict on many levels, individual, communal and national. Iqbal centered most of his writings and activities on this particular theme of faith and nationhood, the two poles of his dialectic. To disentangle this complex issue he needed to master Western philosophy, where the modern sense of nationalism was born; he studied law and the Islamic sciences to set his terms of reference right, and acquired five languages in order to access such an enormous amount of necessary knowledge. He truly poses as a "gateway to world culture".⁽¹⁾

The result of this gigantic effort is decisive: Iqbal discovers that allegiance to Islam transcends all other allegiances and loyalties, whether to the tribe or to the country, and transforms them into healthy ones. Within Islam, to love one's tribe, country, homeland, or ethnic group can be an act of faith, provided it does not breach Islamic law, nor turns into some blind herd instinct: to follow one's group, right or wrong. Having achieved this, Iqbal dedicated the last thirty years of his life (after his return from Europe in 1908) to propagate and work for this simple yet huge idea.

This paper is an analytical reading of the sense of belonging in the thought of Muhammad Iqbal, the founder of the state of Pakistan and the prominent Islamic scholar, poet and philosopher. Iqbal strenuously exerted himself trying to realize his dream-like project: not only of establishing an independent and viable homeland for his people, the Muslims of India, but also setting the ideological and jurisprudential grounds on which individuals like him can belong to this homeland.

(1) Shahid, Mohammad Haneef, ed., *Tributes to Iqbal*, Lahore: Sangemeel Publications, 1977, p. 83. Henceforth, Shahid.

Chapter 1

Faith and Nationhood in the Thought of Muhammad Iqbal

Samira al-Khawaldeh⁽¹⁾

ملخص ورقة: الدين والقومية في فكر محمد إقبال

تتناول الورقة مفهوم الانتماء بوصفه محورياً أساسياً في أدب العلامة محمد إقبال وفكره، وإشكالية التوفيق بين الدين والقومية التي ظهرت مبكراً في كتاباته. وتبين الورقة كيف تطوّر هذا المفهوم من الانتماء إلى القومية بالمفهوم الغربي المبني على وحدة الدم والعرق، إلى الانتماء إلى الإسلام على أساس من حرية الإنسان في الاختيار؛ إذ لا يد للمرء في اختيار عرقه. وتتناول بالتحليل العوامل المختلفة التي أثرت في فكره - شرقية وغربية، فكرية وسياسية- وبالذات اهتمامه ببيتشه وجوته. وتلقي الضوء على العلاقة في فكر إقبال بين الانتماء إلى الإسلام والولاءات الفطرية الأخرى، التي لم يجد بينها تناقضاً، بل رأى أنّ الإسلام يرفدها ويضعها في الإطار الصحيح، بحيث لا تؤذي بأصحابها إلى الحروب المدمرة مثلما حدث في أوروبا.

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى تقديم محمد إقبال أنموذجاً للفكر المتقدم الذي نهل من ثقافة الشرق والغرب وخلص إلى الإيمان بالوحدة الإنسانية، وأن الحضارات يستمد بعضها من بعض، وأن الانتماء الحقيقي هو للمبادئ التي تنفع البشرية جمعاء ولا تدعو إلى الصراع كما عبر عن ذلك في شعره.

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