

Towards a Final Combination - Muhammad Iqbal's Philosophy of History

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ABSTRACT

*This paper, using Muhammad Iqbal's works, especially *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, deals with the question of History in his thought. According to Iqbal's interpretation of the Qur'an, History, or in the Qur'anic language "the days of God", was one of the sources of human knowledge, with one of the most essential teachings of the Qur'an being that nations are collectively judged, and suffer for their misdeeds, here and now. A special attention is also paid to his conceptions of Time and historical time, particularly how he actually distinguished "the past" from "the present" and "the future", and how Human Beings acted through Time and, hence, in History, leading us to a Philosophy of History.*

Keywords: *Time; Philosophy of History; Islam; Historical Theology.*

INTRODUCTION

Born in Sialkot, nowadays Pakistan, on the 9th November 1877, in the same year that the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, at Aligarh, was starting to work, Muhammad Iqbal's thought developed in an environment in which a critical tradition to the loyalist policies of the All-India Muslim League was growing, and in a Muslim India which would witness the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire, fragmentation which was seen as an Western threat to Islam.

In the late 19th century, Iqbal studied at the Scottish Mission School (now a days Murray College), where he was influenced by Maulvi Mir Hassan (1844-1929), professor of Persian Literature. Then, to study English Literature, Arabic and Philosophy, he moved to the Government College in Lahore, where he received personal attention from Thomas Arnold (1864-1930), and was influenced by him, an important scholar of Islam at that time and to whom Iqbal would dedicate his Ph.D. thesis. Finishing his studies in 1897, Iqbal obtained a master's degree in Arabic two years later; and, in 1903, he published *'Ilm-ul-iqtisad [The Study of Economics]*, the first book on political economy to be published in 'Urdu. In 1905 he travelled to Europe to continue his studies in London, at Lincoln's Inn, to qualify for the Bar and also enrolled himself at Trinity College (Cambridge), following the counsel of Thomas

Arnold and studying Philosophy under John M.E. McTaggart (1866-1925). At the same time, he submitted his thesis to the University of Munich, where he obtained his Doctorate with *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (IQBAL 1908).

In July 1908 he returned from Europe and became a professor of Philosophy and English Literature at the Government College in Lahore, and also started his career as a lawyer. In 1911, Iqbal gave up his teacher's position to dedicate himself to an independent activity in Law, but still maintaining an interest on Education, associating himself to the Oriental College, the Government College and the Islamia College in Lahore, and also to the Jami'a Millia (National University) in Delhi. He was also interested in the works of the Muslim League. In 1923 he was knighted, and the following year Iqbal became a member of the National Liberal League of Lahore. In 1926 he was elected member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly and, on the 29th December 1930, Iqbal was elected president of the All-India Muslim League, in its 25th session which was held in Allahabad. On this occasion, Iqbal gave a historical speech, where he devised for the first time the creation of a state for the Indian Muslims (IQBAL 1930). Many of the issues raised then were again focused on in the Presidential Address delivered at the annual session of the All-India Muslim Conference at Lahore, on the 21st March 1932 (IQBAL 1932),

and developed further in his most famous book, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Originally published in Lahore, in 1930, as *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, and then revised and added with the lecture "Is Religion Possible?" and an Index, this book was then published under the title *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, in London, in 1934 (IQBAL 1934).

Muhammad Iqbal was a prolific writer, authoring many works covering various fields and genres, including Poetry, Philosophy, and Mysticism, which should be viewed as a unity. His ideas were expressed through many forms and even Anne Marie Schimmel (1922-2003), one of the most important western specialists on Iqbal, acknowledged the difficulty in constructing a system based on Iqbal's work (SCHIMMEL 2003, p. 229).¹

According to Masood A. Raja (RAJA 2008), Iqbal took upon himself the task of deconstructing the benevolent vision of the West, stressing the darkest aspects of European colonialism and brutality, exposed during the First World War. It is this challenge to the West's civilisational and moral superiority that arises in his trustlessness of the West. However, Iqbal's vision on Europe and the West was not binary. For him, the question was not to choose between the East and the West but to find a middle path where Muslims would not have to abandon their Islamic identity to take part of the modern world. Still, his version of an Islamic system was an alternative not only to Muslims but also to the colonial powers, trying to form a civilization where both, East and West, could contribute, since, for Iqbal, unless a civilisation possessed both sets of values, it would not be viable. This philosophical position enabled him to defend a reciprocal sharing between East and West in order to build a better world, creating a space which offered an alternative world-view. Iqbal did not want a Muslim response to the British in a particularist field and so he proposed to articulate both and create the terrain where the importance of Islam and the Umma as a political system would be recognised. For Iqbal, the Muslim future was not only dependent in

gaining western knowledge but also in balancing that knowledge with its own tradition, and his works show this engagement with the West, always mediated through his knowledge of both civilisational systems.

Iqbal's vision of the West was very different from the vision of men like Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898). A product of the colonial system, Iqbal was not only criticising the West from a native perspective but also from within western philosophies. In that critique he exposed the class hierarchies of western liberal democracy and wealth distribution. At the same time, Marxism was also criticised for focusing only in the material world. A modern system should offer the best of all other systems and, for Iqbal, Islam was that true system. So, he was not only fighting against the colonial system but also offering his own political and philosophical system as a solution for the problems of colonial masters. If it is true that Iqbal admired the West's dynamic spirit, the intellectual tradition and technology, he also criticised its excesses: European imperialisms and colonialisms, capitalism's economical exploitation, the atheism of Marxism and the moral bankruptcy of secularism. So, he looked to the Islamic past to rediscover principles and values which could be used to reconstruct an alternative Islamic model for modern Muslim society, resulting in the discovery of Islamic versions of democracy and parliamentary government. Iqbal believed that, through reinterpretation, Islamic "equivalents" of western institutions and concepts could be developed.

Influenced by his Islamic heritage and by western philosophy (Hegel, Fichte, Nietzsche, Bergson), Iqbal developed his own synthesis and interpretation of Time in Islam, in response to the socio-historical conditions and events of his epoch,² something visible throughout his writings. This synthesis of East and West is well demonstrated in his dynamic conception of the Ego. Rejecting Plato's static Universe and some aspects of Sufism that denied the affirmation of the Ego in the world, Iqbal, using the *Qur'an*, developed a dynamic world-view in his theory of selfhood that encompassed all reality: individual Ego, society and God, whose relation

¹For detailed information on Iqbal's life and work see HASSAN 1998; TAILLIEU ET AL. 2000; MIR 2006; and SHAFIQUE 2007. Also useful is the site <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/> established by the Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

²For example, in 1927 Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) had published his *Sein und Zeit [Being and Time]*. For further details on Heidegger's conceptions, and concepts, of Time, please refer to HEIDEGGER 1916; HEIDEGGER 1985; RAFFOUL 2011; and WANG 2002.

with the Islamic society and Muslims' relation with this meant permanence and change. Until the end of his life, Iqbal wrote innumerable articles in newspapers and magazines in 'Urdu and in English, and his last years were characterised by illness, passing away in 1938.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORY IN MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S THOUGHT

The best place to find Iqbal's ideas on History is in his lecture "The Spirit of Muslim Culture", the fifth one in his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (IQBAL 1934, pp. 124-145). For Iqbal, there was a relation between Divine Time and serial time, leading to the essentially Islamic idea of continuous creation which meant a growing universe, a dynamic conception of it, a view further reinforced by the theory of Ibn Maskawaih (932-1030) of life as an evolutionary movement, and the view of history held by Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406). History or, in the language of the *Qur'an*, "the days of God", was, according to Iqbal's interpretation of the *Qur'an*, one of the sources of human knowledge. It was one of the most essential teachings of the *Qur'an* that nations are collectively judged, and suffer for their misdeeds here and now.³ In order to establish this proposition, the *Qur'an* constantly cites historical instances, and urges upon the reader to reflect on the past and present experience of mankind:

Of old did we send Moses with Our signs, and said to him: 'Bring forth thy people from the darkness into the light, and remind them of the days of God.' Verily, in this are signs for every patient, grateful person (14:5);

And among those whom we had created are a people who guide others with truth, and in accordance therewith act justly. But as for those who treat Our signs as lies, We gradually bring them down by means of which they know not; and though I lengthen their days, verily, My stratagem is effectual (7:181-83);

Already, before your time, have precedents been made. Traverse the Earth then, and

³ A reference to the Qur'anic verses: 6:6; 9:39; 11:116; 15:5; 17:16-17; 18:59; 21:11; 22:45; 24:43; 36:31. God's judgment on nations, also called "judgment in history", according to the *Qur'an* is said to be more relentless than God's judgment on individuals.

see what hath been the end of those who falsify the signs of God! (3:137);

If a wound hath befallen you, a wound like it hath already befallen others; We alternate the days of successes and reverses among peoples (3:140);

Every nation hath its fixed period (7:34).

For Iqbal, this last verse was rather an instance of a more specific historical generalization which, in its epigrammatic formulation, suggested the possibility of a scientific treatment of the life of human societies regarded as organisms. It was, therefore, a gross error to think that the *Qur'an* had no germs of a historical doctrine. However, the interest of the *Qur'an* in history, regarded as a source of human knowledge, extended farther than mere indications of historical generalizations. It had given one of the most fundamental principles of historical criticism: since accuracy in recording facts, which constituted the material of history, was an indispensable condition of history as a science, and an accurate knowledge of facts ultimately depended on those who reported them, the very first principle of historical criticism was that the reporter's personal character was an important factor in judging his testimony - "O believers! if any bad man comes to you with a report, clear it up at once" (*Qur'an*, 49:6).

According to Iqbal, it was the application of the principle embodied in this verse to the reporters of the Prophet's traditions out of which were gradually evolved the canons of historical criticism. The Qur'anic appeal to experience, the necessity to ascertain the exact sayings of the Prophet, and the desire to furnish permanent sources of inspiration to posterity - all these forces contributed to produce such men as Ibn Ishaq (d. c. 767),⁴ Tabari (838-923)⁵ and Mas'udi (896-c. 956).⁶ But history, as an art of

⁴ Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad b. Ishaq, considered as the first biographer of the Prophet Muhammad. His work *Kitab Sirat Rasul Allah [The Life of the Apostle of God]* has, however, been lost and is now known only through its recension by Ibn Hisham (d. 833).

⁵ Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarar al-Tabari, author of the monumental history *Kitab Akhbar al-Rusal wa'l-Muluk [Annals of the Apostles and the Kings]*, the first comprehensive work in the Arabic language.

⁶ Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali b. al-Husain b. 'Ala al-Mas'udi inaugurated a new method in the writing of history: instead of grouping events around years (annalistic method) he grouped them around kings, dynasties

firing the reader's imagination, was only a stage in the development of history as a genuine science. The possibility of a scientific treatment of history meant a wider experience, a greater maturity of practical reason, and, finally, a fuller realization of certain basic ideas regarding the nature of life and time, which were in the main two, both forming the foundation of the Qur'anic teaching:

1) The Unity of Human Origin – “And We have created you all from one breath of life” (*Qur'an*, 4:1; 6:98; 7:189; 39:6); and

2) A keen sense of the Reality of Time, and the Concept of Life as a continuous movement in Time, a conception of life and time which was the main point of interest in Ibn Khaldun's view of history.

For Iqbal, given the direction in which the culture of Islam had unfolded itself, only a Muslim could have viewed history as a continuous, collective movement, a real inevitable development in time. The point of interest in this view of history was the way in which Ibn Khaldun conceived the process of change, a conception of infinite importance because of the implication that history, as a continuous movement in time, was a genuinely creative movement and not a movement whose path was already determined. The Qur'anic view of the “alternation of day and night”⁷ as a symbol of the Ultimate Reality which “appears in a fresh glory every moment” (*Qur'an*, 55:29), the tendency in Muslim Metaphysics to regard time as objective, Ibn Maskawaih's view of life as an evolutionary movement, and, lastly, the definite approach to the conception of Nature as a process of becoming of al-Biruni (973-1048) - all this constituted the intellectual inheritance of Ibn Khaldun, whose chief merit lied in his acute perception of, and systematic expression to, the spirit of the cultural movement. Whatever the criterion by which to judge the forward steps of a creative movement, the movement itself, if conceived as cyclic, ceases to be creative. Eternal recurrence is not eternal creation; it is eternal repetition. And it is this assertion which leads us to the second Qur'anic teaching and to the way Iqbal viewed the Reality of Time, and

and topics (topical method), also adopted by Ibn Khaldun.

⁷The phenomenon of the alternation of day and night is spoken of in many verses of the *Qur'an* such as 2:164; 3:190; 10:6; 23:80; 45:5.

the Concept of Life as a Continuous Movement in it.

MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S CONCEPTION OF TIME⁸

In his second lecture “The philosophical test of the revelation of religious experience” (IQBAL 1934, pp. 28-61), and citing Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), Iqbal considered that Nature was not a static fact situated in an a-dynamic void, but a structure of events possessing the character of a continuous creative flow which thought cuts up into isolated immobilities out of whose mutual relations arose the concepts of space and time, allowing us to see how modern science uttered its agreement with the criticism of George Berkeley (1685-1753) which it once regarded as an attack on its very foundation. The scientific view of Nature as pure materiality was associated with the Newtonian view of space as an absolute void in which things were situated. This attitude of science had, no doubt, ensured its speedy progress; but the bifurcation of a total experience into two opposite domains of mind and matter had forced it, in view of its own domestic difficulties, to consider the problems which, in the beginning of its career, it completely ignored. The criticism of the foundations of the mathematical sciences had fully disclosed that the hypothesis of a pure materiality, an enduring stuff situated in an absolute space, was unworkable. Was space an independent void in which things were situated and which would remain intact if all things were withdrawn?

Iqbal, then, cites the example of the ancient Greek philosopher Zeno who approached the problem of space through the question of movement in space. His arguments for the unreality of movement were well known to the students of philosophy, and ever since his days the problem had persisted in the history of thought and received the keenest attention from successive generations of thinkers. Zeno, who took space to be infinitely divisible, argued that movement in space was impossible. Before the moving body could reach the point of its destination it had to pass through half the space intervening between the point of start and the point of destination; and before it could pass through that half it had to travel through the half of the half, and so on to infinity. We could not

⁸For a detailed analysis, please refer to BAUSANI 1954, and MOHAMED 2017.

move from one point of space to another without passing through an infinite number of points in the intervening space. But it was impossible to pass through an infinity of points in a finite time. He further argued that the flying arrow did not move, because at any time during the course of its flight it was at rest in some point of space. Thus Zeno held that movement was only a deceptive appearance and that Reality was one and immutable. The unreality of movement meant the unreality of an independent space.

Muslim thinkers of the school of Abu al-Hassan al-Ash'ari (874-936) did not believe in the infinite divisibility of space and time. For them, space, time, and motion were made up of points and instants which could not be further subdivided. Thus they proved the possibility of movement on the assumption that infinitesimals do exist; for if there was a limit to the divisibility of space and time, movement from one point of space to another point was possible in a finite time. Ibn Hazm (994-1064), however, rejected the Ash'arite notion of infinitesimals, and modern mathematics had confirmed his view. The Ash'arite argument, therefore, could not logically resolve the paradox of Zeno.

Of the modern thinkers, the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and the British mathematician Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) had tried to refute Zeno's arguments from their respective standpoints. To Bergson, movement, as true change, was the fundamental Reality. The paradox of Zeno was due to a wrong apprehension of space and time which were regarded by Bergson only as intellectual views of movement. Zeno's argument was obviously based on the assumption that space and time consist of an infinite number of points and instants. On this assumption it was easy to argue that since between two points the moving body will be out of place, motion is impossible, for there is no place for it to take place. The discovery of Georg Cantor (1845-1918) showed that space and time are continuous. Between any two points in space there are an infinite number of points, and in an infinite series no two points are next to each other. The infinite divisibility of space and time means the compactness of the points in the series; it does not mean that points are mutually isolated in the sense of having a gap between one another.

The reality of movement meant the independent reality of space and the objectivity of Nature. But the identity of continuity and the infinite

divisibility of space was not a solution of the difficulty. Assuming that there was a one-one correspondence between the infinite multiplicity of instants in a finite interval of time and an infinite multiplicity of points in a finite portion of space, the difficulty arising from the divisibility remained the same. The mathematical conception of continuity as infinite series did not apply to movement regarded as an act, but rather to the picture of movement as viewed from the outside. The act of movement, *i.e.*, movement as lived and not as thought, did not admit of any divisibility. The flight of the arrow observed as a passage in space was divisible, but its flight regarded as an act, apart from its realization in space, was one and incapable of partition into a multiplicity. In partition lied its destruction, and personally, Iqbal believed that the ultimate character of Reality was spiritual.

Looking at Einstein's theory of Relativity from the standpoint that he had taken in these lectures, Iqbal considered that it presented one great difficulty, *i.e.*, the unreality of time. A theory which took time to be a kind of fourth dimension of space had to regard the future as something already given, as indubitably fixed as the past. Time as a free creative movement had no meaning for the theory. It did not pass. Events did not happen; we simply meet them. It must not, however, be forgotten that the theory neglected certain characteristics of time as experienced by us; and it was not possible to say that the nature of time was exhausted by the characteristics which the theory did note in the interests of a systematic account of those aspects of Nature which could be mathematically treated. Nor was it possible for us laymen to understand what the real nature of Einstein's time was.

It was obvious for Iqbal that Einstein's time was not Bergson's pure duration. Nor could we regard it as serial time, which was the essence of causality as defined by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). The cause and its effect were mutually so related that the former was chronologically prior to the latter, so that if the former was not, the latter could not be. If mathematical time was serial time, then on the basis of the theory it was possible, by a careful choice of the velocities of the observer and the system in which a given set of events was happening, to make the effect precede its cause.

For Iqbal, time regarded as a fourth dimension of space really ceased to be time, and then he

tried to reach the primacy of life and thought by another route, carrying us a step farther in our examination of experience. The quality of Nature's passage in time was perhaps the most significant aspect of experience which the *Qur'an* especially emphasized and which offered the best clue to the ultimate nature of Reality. Iqbal had already drawn our attention to some of the verses (3:190-91; 2:164; 24:44) bearing on the point, and in view of the great importance of the subject, he added a few more:

Verily, in the alternations of night and of day and in all that God hath created in the Heavens and in the earth are signs to those who fear Him (10:6);

And it is He Who hath ordained the night and the day to succeed one another for those who desire to think on God or desire to be thankful (25:62);

Seest thou not that God causeth the night to come in upon the day, and the day to come in upon the night; and that He hath subjected the sun and the moon to laws by which each speedeth along to an appointed goal? (31:29);

It is of Him that the night returneth on the day, and that the day returneth on the night (39:5);

And of Him is the change of the night and of the day (23:80).

The ontological problem was how to define the ultimate nature of existence. That the universe persists in time is not open to doubt. Yet, since it is external to us, it is possible to be sceptical about its existence. In order to completely grasp the meaning of this persistence in time, Iqbal considered that we must be in a position to study some privileged case of existence which is absolutely unquestionable and gives us the further assurance of a direct vision of duration. The perception of things with which one is confronted is superficial and external; but one's perceptions of his/her own self is internal, intimate, and profound. It follows, therefore, that conscious experience is that privileged case of existence in which we are in absolute contact with Reality, and an analysis of this privileged case is likely to throw a flood of light on the ultimate meaning of existence. What do we find when we fix our gaze on our own conscious experience?

There was nothing static in one's inner life; all was a constant mobility, an unceasing flux of states, a perpetual flow in which there was no halt or resting place. Constant change, however,

was unthinkable without time. On the analogy of our inner experience, then, conscious existence meant life in time. There was no numerical distinctness of states in the totality of the ego, the multiplicity of whose elements was, unlike that of the efficient self, wholly qualitative. There was change and movement, but change and movement were indivisible; their elements interpenetrated and were wholly non-serial in character. It appeared that the time of the appreciative-self was a single "now" which the efficient self, in its traffic with the world of space, pulverized into a series of "nows" like pearl beads in a thread. Here was, then, pure duration unadulterated by space.

The *Qur'an* alluded to the serial and non-serial aspects of duration in the following verses:

And put thou thy trust in Him that liveth and dieth not, and celebrate His praise Who in six days created the Heavens and the earth, and what is between them, then mounted His Throne; the God of mercy (25:58-59);

All things We have created with a fixed destiny: Our command was but one, swift as the twinkling of an eye (54:49-50).

If one looked at the movement embodied in creation from the outside, *i.e.*, if one apprehended it intellectually, it was a process lasting through thousands of years; for one Divine day, in the terminology of the *Qur'an*, as of the Old Testament, was equal to one thousand years. From another point of view, the process of creation, lasting through thousands of years, was a single indivisible act, "swift as the twinkling of an eye". It was, however, impossible to express this inner experience of pure duration in words, for language was shaped on the serial time of our daily efficient self.

Iqbal, then, gives the example from science. According to physical science, the cause of one's sensation of red is the rapidity of wave motion, the frequency of which is four hundred billion per second. If one could observe this tremendous frequency from the outside, and count it at the rate of two thousand per second, which is supposed to be the limit of the perceptibility of light, it would take more than six thousand years to finish the enumeration. Yet in the single momentary mental act of perception a person holds together a frequency of wave motion which is practically incalculable. That is how the mental act transforms succession into duration. The

appreciative self, then, is more or less corrective of the efficient self, inasmuch as it synthesizes all the "heres" and "nows" - the small changes of space and time, indispensable to the efficient self - into the coherent wholeness of personality.

Pure time, then, as revealed by a deeper analysis of our conscious experience, is not a string of separate, reversible instants; it is an organic whole in which the past is not left behind, but is moving along with, and operating in, the present. And the future is given to it not as lying before, yet to be traversed; it is given only in the sense that it is present in its nature as an open possibility. As Iqbal asserts, it is time regarded as an organic whole that the *Qur'an* describes as "Taqqdar" (the destiny), *i.e.*, time regarded as prior to the disclosure of its possibilities, time freed from the net of causal sequence - the diagrammatic character which the logical understanding imposes on it. In one word, it is time as felt and not as thought and calculated. Time regarded as destiny forms the very essence of things. As the *Qur'an* says: "God created all things and assigned to each its destiny." The destiny of a thing then is not an unrelenting fate working from without like a task master; it is the inward reach of a thing, its realizable possibilities which lie within the depths of its nature, and serially actualize themselves without any feeling of external compulsion. Thus the organic wholeness of duration does not mean that full-fledged events are lying, as it were, in the womb of Reality, and drop one by one like the grains of sand from the hour-glass. If time is real, and not a mere repetition of homogeneous moments which make conscious experience a delusion, then every moment in the life of Reality is original, giving birth to what is absolutely novel and unforeseeable: "Everyday doth some new work employ Him", says the *Qur'an*. To exist in real time is not to be bound by the fetters of serial time, but to create it from moment to moment and to be absolutely free and original in creation. In fact, all creative activity is free activity. Creation is opposed to repetition which is a characteristic of mechanical action. That is why it is impossible to explain the creative activity of life in terms of mechanism.

A time-process cannot be conceived as a line already drawn. It is a line in the drawing - an actualization of open possibilities. It is purposive only in this sense that it is selective in character, and brings itself to some sort of a present fulfilment by actively preserving and supplementing the past. To Iqbal's mind nothing

was more alien to the Qur'anic outlook than the idea that the universe was the temporal working out of a preconceived plan. According to the *Qur'an*, the Universe was liable to increase. It is a growing universe and not an already completed product which left the hand of its maker ages ago, and is now lying stretched in space as a dead mass of matter to which time does nothing, and consequently is nothing.

The above discussion took Time as an essential element in the Ultimate Reality, and the next point before Iqbal, therefore, was to consider the argument by John McTaggart relating to the unreality of time. Time, according to him, was unreal because every event is past, present, and future. The death of Queen Anne (1665-1714) is past to us; it was present to her contemporaries and future to William III (1650-1702). Thus the event of Anne's death combines characteristics which are incompatible with each other. It is obvious that the argument proceeds on the assumption that the serial nature of time is final. If we regard past, present, and future as essential to time, then we picture time as a straight line, part of which we have travelled and left behind, and part lying, yet untraveled, before us. This is taking time, not as a living creative moment, but as a static absolute, holding the ordered multiplicity of fully-shaped cosmic events, revealed serially, like the pictures of a film, to the outside observer.

One can indeed say that Queen Anne's death was future to William III, if this event is regarded as already fully shaped, and lying in the future, waiting for its happening. But a future event cannot be characterized as an event. Before the death of Anne the event of her death did not exist at all. During Anne's life the event of her death existed only as an unrealized possibility in the nature of Reality which included it as an event only when, in the course of its becoming, it reached the point of the actual happening of that event. The answer to McTaggart's argument was that the future exists only as an open possibility, and not as a reality. Nor can it be said that an event combines incompatible characteristics when it is described both as past and present. When an event X does happen it enters into an unalterable relation with all the events that have happened before it. These relations are not at all affected by the relations of X with other events which happen after X by the further becoming of Reality. No true or false proposition about these relations will ever become false or true. Hence there is no logical difficulty in regarding an event as both

past and present. However, Iqbal had to confess that the point was not free from difficulty and required much further thinking. It was not easy to solve the mystery of time. Quoting Saint Augustine, "If no one questions me of time, I know it: if I would explain to a questioner I know it not."

Personally, Iqbal was inclined to think that time was an essential element in Reality. But real time was not serial time to which the distinction of past, present, and future was essential; it was pure duration, *i.e.*, change without succession, which McTaggart's argument did not touch. Serial time was pure duration pulverized by thought - a kind of device by which Reality exposes its ceaseless creative activity to quantitative measurement. It is in this sense that the *Qur'an* says: "And of Him is the change of the night and of the day."

And it is this assertion that leads us to the first Qur'anic teaching and to the way Iqbal viewed the Unity of Human Origin, and how Human Beings acted in History.

MUHAMMAD IQBAL ON FREE WILL AND THE PREDESTINATION OF THE HUMAN BEING

To understand the perspective of Muhammad Iqbal regarding the question of Free Will, Predestination and the Human Being, one has to analyse his most important works on the subject, namely *Secrets and Mysteries* (1915-22); *The Message of the East* (1923); *Persian Psalms* (1927); and *Javid Nama* (1932).

Secrets and Mysteries was the first book of Iqbal's poetry, written in Persian in the form of *masnavi*. In the prelude, the poet claims that the spirit of the thirteenth century Sufi poet Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273) asked him in a dream to reveal the secrets that had never been told before. In the first part, "Secrets of the Self" (*Asrar-i-Khudi* in Persian), it is suggested that human beings are driven by ideals. In the second part, "Mysteries of Selflessness", it is shown that groups are formed because they offer the possibility of having much loftier ideals than an individual may discover otherwise. What connects an individual with others is the "self", since a human being, an ideal-based society and God can all be perceived as various types of self. Self is strengthened by love, weakened by asking for favours and diminished by the kind of thinking that does not lead to action.

The Secrets of the Self, published in 1915, was the first philosophical poetry book by Iqbal, a book which deals mainly with the individual, while his second book *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* (*The Secrets of Selflessness*, published in Persian in 1918) discusses the interaction between the individual and society. The first of these books is also concerned with the philosophy of religion. In a letter to the poet Ghulam Qadir Giraami (d.1927), Iqbal wrote that "the ideas behind the verses had never been expressed before either in the East or in the West." Reynold A. Nicholson (1868-1945), who translated the *Asrar* as *The Secrets of the Self*, says it caught the attention of young Indian Muslims as soon as it was printed. The poems emphasise the spirit and self from a religious, spiritual perspective. In *Asrar-e-Khudi*, Iqbal explains his philosophy of "Khudi", or "Self", and his use of the term "Khudi" is synonymous with the word of "Ruh" as mentioned in the *Qur'an*, *i.e.*, that divine spark which is present in every human being and was present in Adam for which God ordered all of the angels to prostrate in front of Adam. But one has to make a great journey of transformation to realize that divine spark which Iqbal calls "Khudi". A similitude of this journey could be understood by the relationship of fragrance and seed. Every seed has the potential for fragrance within it. But to reach its fragrance the seed must go through all the different changes and stages. First breaking out of its shell; then breaking the ground to come into the light developing roots at the same time; then fighting against the elements to develop leaves and flowers; and finally reaching its pinnacle by attaining the fragrance that was hidden within it. To reach one's "khudi" or "ruh" one needs to go through multiple stages which Iqbal himself went through and encouraged others to travel this spiritual path.

Rumuz-e-Bekhudi was the second philosophical poetry book by Iqbal, and a sequel to *The Secrets of the Self*. 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, and Iqbal also recognizes the positive analogous aspects of other religions.

The two collections are often put in the same volume under the title *Asrar-o-Rumuz*. A.J. Arberry's English translation of the *Rumuz* first appeared in 1953. *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* is addressed to the world's Muslims, and Iqbal sees the individual and his community as reflections of

each other. The individual needs to be strengthened before he can be integrated into the community, whose development in turn depends on the preservation of the communal ego. It is through contact with others that an ego learns to accept the limitations of its own freedom and the meaning of love. Muslim communities must ensure order in life and must therefore preserve their communal tradition. It is in this context that Iqbal sees the vital role of women, who as mothers are directly responsible for inculcating values in their children.⁹

Like not all seeds reach the level of fragrance, many die along the way incomplete. In the same way, only few people can climb this mount of spirituality, and most get consumed along the way by materialism. The same concept was used by Farid ud Din Attar (1145-1221) in his *The Conference of the Birds*. He proves by various means that the whole universe obeys the will of the "Self", and Iqbal condemns self-destruction. For him the aim of life is self-realization and self-knowledge. He charts the stages through which the "Self" has to pass before finally arriving at its point of perfection, enabling the knower of the "Self" to become the vicegerent of God.¹⁰

Immediately after the end of World War I, Iqbal started writing the *Payam-i Mashriq* [*The Message of the East*], which is an answer to the *West-östlicher Diwan* (1819) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), and it can be presumed that Iqbal would have thought in this respect to achieve a goal of bringing the East and the West closer to each other. It is evident from some of Iqbal's 'Urdu letters that he first disclosed about his book-in-preparation to Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (1884-1953), a distinguished scholar and his esteemed friend, and because of its pre-publication coverage in the literary journals, the *Payam* gained much popularity and the intellectuals as well as the common readers waited impatiently to see it in printed form. Finally, in May 1923, its first edition came out and was warmly received. The

work was presented to the public with the intention of "warming the cold thoughts and ideas of the West". The work includes a collection of quatrains, followed by a group of poems setting forth Iqbal's philosophy of life in lyrical form and some poetical sketches that picture European poets, philosophers and politicians.¹¹ Goethe was among Iqbal's favourite writers, and *The Message of the East* was written as a response to Goethe's work (BHATTI 2005).

The Message of the East offers an overview of history - past, present and future - from the perspective of Iqbal. It consists of quatrains, short poems, songs, *ghazals* and aphorisms. In the preface we are given two important points to ponder. Firstly, Persian literature had a profound influence on German literature in the late eighteenth century, and Goethe even wrote a "Western Divan" in the manner of Persian poets. The present book is a response to that. Secondly, the civilization of Western colonialism has come to an end with the Great European War (1914-18). A positive spiritual revolution was around the corner, and a new type of human being was in the making, along with a new world for them to live in. However, no world is born in our environment until it has first been conceived in our hearts, which is what the book aims to do.

Published in 1927, *Persian Psalms* includes "The New Garden of Mysteries",¹² and it is the fourth book of Iqbal's poetry. It is written as a *masnavi* in Persian, with explicit reference to *The Garden of Mysteries* by the thirteenth century thinker Sheikh Sa'd ad-Din Mahmud Shabistari (1288-1340). Iqbal says about him in the versified preface, "He witnessed before his eyes calamities resulting from the invasion of Genghis Khan. I saw a revolution of another type, the appearance of a new sun." It may be treated as a summary of Iqbal's system of thought in the form of nine questions and their succinct answers. *Persian Psalms* aims at

⁹The full poem is available in its English translation at <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/Persian/ramuz/translation/index.htm>

¹⁰ The full poem is available in its English translation at <http://www.archive.org/stream/secretsofselfasr001qbauoft#page/n5/mode/2up> and <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/asrar/translation/index.htm>

¹¹ The Introduction and full poem are available in its English translation at http://www.allamaiqbal.com/poet/poetry/persian/poet_intropayam.htm and <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/payam/translation/index.htm>

¹² *Zabur-i-Ajam (Persian Psalms)*, a philosophical poetry book, is available in English at <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/persianpsalms/translation/index.htm>

helping the emerging nations wash out the effects of slavery so that they may become worthy of independence. The help is offered in four parts, all written in Persian: (a) fifty-six short poems demonstrating several stages in the relationship between the individual and God; (b) seventy-five short poems demonstrating the relationship between the individual and society; (c) a *masnavi*, "The New Garden of Mysteries", offering an overview of learning in the form of nine critical questions and short answers; and (d) another *masnavi*, "The Book of Slavery", giving a virtual experience of the difference between the worlds envisioned by slaves and free people in their art forms and religious inspirations. As in other books, Iqbal insists on remembering the past, doing well in the present and preparing for the future. His lesson is that one should be dynamic, full of zest for action and full of love and life.

The *Javid Nama*, the *Book of Eternity* or the *Book of Javid* [Javid was the name of Iqbal's son], is a book of poetry, published in 1932. It was inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and just as Dante's guide was Virgil, Iqbal is guided by Mawlana Rumi. Both visit different spheres in the heavens coming across different people. Iqbal uses the pseudonym Zinda Rud (a stream full of life) for himself in this book. It was translated into English by Arthur J. Arberry; into German as *Dschavidnma: Das Buch der Ewigkeit* by Annemarie Schimmel; and in Italian as *Il poema Celeste* by Alessandro Bausani. Schimmel also prepared a Turkish translation, *Cevidname*, based on her German edition. In *Javid Nama*, Iqbal follows al-Ma'arri (973-1057), Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240), and Dante (1265-1321), guided by Rumi, the master, through various heavens and spheres and has the honour of approaching Divinity and coming in contact with divine illuminations. Several problems of life are discussed and answers are provided to them. It is an exceedingly enlivening study. His hand falls heavily on the traitors to their nation like Mir Jafar from Bengal and Mir Sadiq from the Deccan, who were instrumental in the defeat and death of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula (1733-1757) of Bengal and Tipu Sultan (1750-1799) of Mysore respectively by betraying them for the benefit of the British. Thus, they delivered their country to the shackles of slavery. At the end, by addressing his son Javid, to whom the book is dedicated, he speaks to the young people at

large and provides guidance to the "new generation".¹³

Unlike any other work of Iqbal, this book is a simple narrative: the story of an epic journey in search of immortality. In this journey, the spirit of Rumi takes Iqbal across the spiritual universe. They pass through seven stages – Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and Paradise. Eventually Iqbal gets to meet God and witness the destiny of humankind. Iqbal faints at the vision, but later shares his insight with the younger generation in the form of some practical advice. In the first chapter, their first stop is the Moon, where they come across seven visions. The following passage describes how Iqbal and Rumi arrive on the Moon:

Life means moving on, and therefore I moved on. As I rose above the earth, everything that I had always seen above me was now below. This universe belongs to God, and therefore we should look at it with love and affection. Nothing is alien to the human soul, since the human soul has a divine spark in it. The silent moon was the first stop on our way, as Rumi informed me. Its surface was adorned with many volcanoes but there was neither air nor any sound to be heard. Its clouds never rained and there was no life on the planet. Rumi understood my amazement, and asked me to follow him into a dark cave. Fear struck me dumb as I entered the cave. "Even the sun would need a lamp here!" I thought in my mind, but, nevertheless, I followed my guide into this dark alley. As I moved on, I found myself beginning to doubt everything - maybe that was some strange effect of that mysterious environment. Finally, when I felt that I would perhaps begin to doubt the doubt itself, a new world dawned upon my mind.

As they pass the planet Mars, Rumi mentions that the Martians have discovered an inside-out mode of existence: "While our hearts are captivated and controlled by our bodies, the bodies of the Martians are contained in their hearts."

On Rumi's suggestion, they take a brief tour of a Martian city, Marghdeen, a city which is a magnificent place with tall buildings. Its people are beautiful, selfless and simple; they speak a language that sounds melodious to the ears.

¹³An English translation is available at

<http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/javidnama/translation/index.htm>

They are not after material goods; rather they are the guardians of knowledge and derive wealth from their sound judgment. The sole purpose of knowledge and skill in that world is to help improve life. Currency is unknown, and temperaments are not to be governed by machines that blacken the sky with their smoke. The farmers are hardworking and contented – there are no landlords to plunder their harvest, and the tillers of the land enjoy the entire fruit of their labour. Learning and wisdom do not flourish on deceit, and hence there is neither army nor need for law keepers, since there is no crime in Marghdeen. The marketplace is free from the noisy shouts and heartrending cries of the beggars. “In this world there is no beggar,” said the Martian Astronomer, “Nor anyone is poor; no slave, no master - no ruler and thus none dominated.” However, Muhammad Iqbal says to the Astronomer: “Being born a beggar or a destitute, to be ruled or suppressed, is all by the decree of God. He alone is the architect of destiny. Destiny cannot be improved by reasoning.” “If you are suffering at the hands of destiny,” replied the Martian astronomer with a visible anger,

It is not unfair to ask God for a new one. He has no shortage of destinies for you. Failure to understand the mystical significance of destiny has led the inhabitants of the Earth to lose their identities. Here is a hint to the secret of destiny: change yourself and your destiny will change with you. If you are dust, you shall be scattered by the wind. But if you become solid as a rock, you can break the glass. If you are dewdrop, then you are destined to fall but if you are an ocean, then you will remain. To you, faith means conformity to others while your imagination remains confined because you do not conform to yourself. Shame on the faith that serves like an addiction to opium!

Then he paused, and added, “A gem is a gem as long as you think it is valuable, otherwise it is just a stone. The world will shape itself according to your perception of it. The heavens and the earth too will adjust.”

In *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal considers that the individual, the basic unit of Muslim society, was mandated by the *Qur'an* (2:30) as God's vicegerent with the mission of carrying out God's will on Earth. Muslims shared in this continuous process of creation, bringing order from chaos, in an effort to produce a model-society to be emulated by others: the individual was elevated through the

community and the community was organized by the individual.

In the centre of Iqbal's vision on Islam was the concept of *Tawhid* (Oneness), applied not only to God's own nature but also in its relation with the world. Because God is an only creator, sustainer and judge of the Universe, God's will or law also governs all aspects of its creation and should be realised in all areas of life. For Iqbal, the *Qur'an* taught us that there may be suffering in the world but the universe is growing and the human being can hope for an eventual victory over evil. Wholly overshadowed by the results of his intellectual activity, the modern man had ceased to live soulfully, *i.e.* from within. In the domain of thought he was living in open conflict with himself; and in the domain of economic and political life he was living in open conflict with others, finding himself unable to control his ruthless egoism and his infinite gold-hunger which was gradually killing all higher striving in him.

However, this belief in the possibility of improvement in the behaviour of man and his control over natural forces was neither optimism nor pessimism, but meliorism, *i.e.*, it was the recognition of a growing universe and was animated by the hope of man's eventual victory over evil. And it is with this in mind that we can identify a Philosophy of History in Muhammad Iqbal.

MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

History, according to Iqbal, is divided into two parts, the Ancient and the Modern World, with the Prophet Muhammad bringing Modernity. How one divides History into periods depends on what one wants, and Iqbal wanted Marghdeen. For him, the Ancient World was characterised by six ages: Inquiry (Pre-History); Discovery (Pre-History to c.1800 BC); Transcendence (c.1800 BC to c.1300 BC); Freedom (c.1300 BC to 559 BC); Action (559 BC to 4 BC); and Expansion (4 BC to 570/610 AD). The ancient world used to have prophets, and was characterised by ready-made judgments, a constant expectation of a redeemer¹⁴, and systems of abstract thought:

¹⁴Iqbal attributes to the ancient world, especially the Magian cultures, “a perpetual attitude of expectation, a constant looking forward to the coming of

The plant growing freely in space, the animal developing a new organ to suit a new environment, and a human being receiving light from the inner depths of life, are all cases of inspiration varying in character according to the needs of the recipient, or the needs of the species to which the recipient belongs. Now during the minority of mankind psychic energy develops what I call prophetic consciousness – a mode of economizing individual thought and choice by providing ready-made judgements, choices, and ways of action. (IQBAL 1934, p. 125)

The prophet Muhammad brought an end to that and thus the modern world was born. This period was characterised by the birth of inductive intellect,¹⁵ the abolition of prophethood, priesthood, hereditary kingship,¹⁶ and an invitation to humanity for joining on a common ethical ideal.¹⁷ In other words, humanity received Divine input through prophets in the ancient times and now was the time to give output. Muhammad brought about this transition, and with the advent of Islam came the age of Creation (610 AD to 750 AD) and the goal is the perpetuation of Unity - solidarity, equality and freedom¹⁸ - the spread of inductive reasoning, and a gradual movement towards a spiritual democracy.¹⁹

Taking a more detailed attention to each of the ages, in the Age of Inquiry, symbolised by

Zoroaster's unborn sons, the Messiah, or the Paraclete of the fourth gospel" (IQBAL 1934, pp. 144-145; see also IQBAL 1936).

¹⁵"The birth of Islam, as I hope to be able presently to prove to your satisfaction, is the birth of inductive intellect" (IQBAL 1934, p. 126).

¹⁶"The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Qur'an, and the emphasis that it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality" (IQBAL 1934, pp. 126-127).

¹⁷"Indeed the first practical step that Islam took towards the realization of a final combination of humanity was to call upon peoples possessing practically the same ethical ideal to come forward and combine" (IQBAL 1930).

¹⁸"The essence of *Tawhid*, as a working idea, is equality, solidarity, and freedom" (IQBAL 1934, p. 154).

¹⁹In the last sentence of Lecture VI of the *Reconstruction*, Iqbal mentions a "spiritual democracy" as "the ultimate aim of Islam" (IQBAL 1934, p. 180).

Adam, human beings were preoccupied at first with finding the means of survival, which involved the ability to become acquainted with the inner nature of things and the ability to name things:

When thy Lord said to the Angels, 'Verily I am about to place one in my stead on earth', they said, 'Wilt Thou place there one who will do ill and shed blood, when we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness?' God said, 'Verily I know what ye know not!' And He taught Adam the names of all things, and then set them before the Angels, and said, 'Tell me the names of these if ye are endowed with wisdom'. They said, 'Praise be to Thee! We have no knowledge but what Thou hast given us to know. Thou art the Knowing, the Wise'. He said, 'O Adam, inform them of the names'. And when he had informed them of the names, God said, 'Did I not say to you that I know the hidden things of the Heavens and of the earth, and that I know what ye bring to light and what ye hide?' (*Qur'an*, 2: 30-33).

As Iqbal, asserted, the point of these verses was that man is endowed with the faculty of naming things, that is to say, forming concepts of them, and forming concepts of them is capturing them (IQBAL 1934, p. 13).

Besides naming things, there was Free Choice. For Iqbal, the Qur'anic legend of the Fall had nothing to do with the first appearance of man on this planet. Its purpose was 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. Man's first act of disobedience was also his first act of free choice; and that is why, according to the Qur'anic narration, Adam's first transgression was forgiven. Goodness was not a matter of compulsion; it was the self's free surrender to the moral ideal and arose out of a willing co-operation of free egos (IQBAL 1934, pp. 62-94).

In the second age, that of Discovery, symbolised by Noah, and once survival was ensured, humanity began to appreciate things beyond their utility and to enjoy interacting with them for their own sake, which may have given birth to art and music, and helped aesthetics by triggering the functions related to the right brain, giving place to the age of Transcendence, symbolised by Abraham, who is considered by Jews, Christians and Muslims to be their founder. His legacy includes the Unity of God,

dignity of human being and triumph of reason over superstition. He is remembered as the great patriarch from whom Isaac, Ishmael and their innumerable children were descended. He is also supposed to be the builder of Kaaba, the first sanctuary raised in the name of One God.

With the Age of Moses, ancient rulers derived authority by claiming to be gods or descendants of gods, and subjugated the people in the name of these gods. Such kingdoms and empires could not remain legitimate once the belief in false gods had been questioned - internal freedom means external freedom too, and this ideal could be the one presented by Moses, usually considered to be born sometime around 1375 BC. The story of Moses as recalled later in the *Bible* and in the *Qur'an* offers symbols and motifs that may also be seen in the legend of Buddha: both heroes are brought up in palaces, leave their royal abodes after some mishap, find the light of God on a tree, return to their people with a message of purification and leave their legacy in the form of commandments. Despite some apparent differences, Buddha and Moses may be seen as two sides of a common ideal: peace within and peace without. In China, a similar role was ascribed to Confucius, the sage who set out in search of an ideal ruler.

In the Age of Action, symbolised by Zulqarnayn, civilization tended to move towards unification of humanity. Once it became impossible to create empires in the names of false gods, Zoroastrian visionaries from Iran found ways of building empires by giving religious freedom:

Until, when he reached between two mountains, he found, beneath them, a people who scarcely understood a word. They said: 'O Zulqarnayn! The Gog and Magog do great mischief on earth: shall we then render you tribute in order that you may erect a barrier between us and them?' He said, 'That in which my Lord has established me is better. Assist me therefore with strength. I will erect a strong barrier between you and them. Bring me blocks of iron.' At length, when he had filled up the space between the two steep mountain-sides, he said, 'Blow!' Then, when he had made it as fire, he said, 'Bring me that I may pour over it, molten lead.' Thus were they made powerless to scale it or to dig through it. He said, 'This is a mercy from my Lord: But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will make it into dust; and the promise of my Lord is true.' (*Qur'an*, 18:93-98)

Zulqarnayn, mentioned in the eighteenth chapter of the *Qur'an* as a king whom God granted power over earth, has been identified as Cyrus the Great (c. 600-530 BC) who founded the Persian Empire in 559 BC. A follower of Zarathustra, and perhaps the first great emperor who did not claim to be a god or a descendant of god, his empire was over-run more than two hundred years later by the youthful Greek invader Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), who immediately adopted the ideals and policies of Cyrus, and influenced the Roman conqueror Julius Caesar (100-44BC).

Finally, the last age of the Ancient world was the Age of Jesus, characterised by Expansion. Before the unification dreamed by some visionaries could become a reality, the humanity needed to undergo a phase of wonderment - a stage when it should learn to "give unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar and unto God what belongs to God":

The angels said, 'Mary, God gives you news of a Word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, who will be held in honour in this world and the next, who will be one of those brought near to God. He will speak to people in his infancy and in his adulthood. He will be one of the righteous.' She said, 'My Lord, how can I have a son when no man has touched me?' [The angel] said, 'This is how God creates what He will: when He has ordained something, he only says, 'Be,' and it is. He will teach him the Scripture and wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel, He will send him as a messenger to the Children of Israel: 'I have come to you with a sign from your Lord: I will make the shape of a bird for you out of clay, then breathe into it and, with God's permission, it will become a real bird; I will heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead back to life with God's permission; I will tell you what you may have eaten and what you may have stored up in your houses. There truly is a sign for you in this if you are believers. I have come to confirm the truth of the Torah which preceded me, and to make some things lawful to you which used to be forbidden. I have come to you with a sign from your Lord. Be mindful of God, obey me: God is my Lord and your Lord, so serve Him - that is a straight path' (*Qur'an*, 3: 45-51).²⁰

²⁰ With minor differences, Iqbal divides Ancient History in the same way as classical Christian authors do.

According to Iqbal, with the advent of Islam, came the age of Creation. Muhammad seemed to stand between the ancient and the modern world: the source of his revelation belonged to the ancient world, the spirit of his revelation belonged to the modern world. The birth of Islam was the birth of inductive intellect: prophecy reached its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition; in order to achieve full self-consciousness, humanity must finally be thrown back on its own resources. Two events from the life of the Prophet Muhammad, which have had the greatest impact on shaping Muslim culture and consciousness, were the Ascension to heaven (*miraj*) and Migration to Madinah (*hijrat*). In the words of Iqbal:

A prophet may be defined as a type of mystic consciousness in which 'unitary experience' tends to overflow its boundaries, and seeks opportunities of redirecting or refashioning the forces of collective life. In his personality the finite centre of life sinks into his own infinite depths only to spring up again, with fresh vigour, to destroy the old, and to disclose the new directions of life (IQBAL 1934, p. 125).

CONCLUSION

As Souleymane Bachir Diagne asserts (DIAGNE 2008, pp. 141-143), Iqbal's philosophy is a response to those who consider Islam a fatalistic doctrine of predestination. Fatalism is a kind of self-dispossession resting on a cosmology that envisions a closed universe in which time is fixed and the future predetermined. Quite simply, the future comes stocked and ready to go, a fixed and inevitable order of events that can thus be seen as binding and limiting God's creative activity. "Your ink, that's you", Iqbal writes, in response to the fatalistic metaphor that presents human destiny as prewritten with an ink that is said to have already dried up. Bergson remarks that we always think about time by using spatial metaphors - the river, the geometrical line, and so on. But a great deal is at stake in the "mere" use of such metaphors: our usual conception of time is serial, cinematic rather than dynamic, and our geometrical notion of it tends, as Iqbal says, "to deprive time of its living historical character, and to reduce it to a mere representation of space".

When time is conceived as merely the space separating what is from what will be, we get the picture of "the universe as a collection of finite things, which presents itself as a kind of island situated in a pure vacuity to which time,

regarded as a series of mutually exclusive moments, is nothing and does nothing". For Iqbal, the post-Newtonian scientific conception of *physis* had made it possible to think otherwise, to grasp the cosmos not as a being given in a static view, but as a becoming and a continuously emergent universe. Some true thinking of time as such will be introduced into our world picture. Iqbal offers as a point of departure an interpretative reading of the Qur'anic text. Throughout the *Reconstruction*, he quotes many verses that convey the notion of the continued creation of a world of permanent innovation as opposed to the idea of a finite, achieved act of creation that produced the world *semel factis*, once and for all. For example, to quote other Qur'anic passages: "He [God] adds to His creation what He wills" (*Qur'an*, 35:1), or "Say - go to the earth and see how God hath brought forth all creation: Hereafter will He give it another birth" (29:19). In addition to these citations, he also recalls the prophetic saying: "Do not vilify time, for time is God".

Every Philosophy of History tries to answer the question of where to go, and for Iqbal the destination was a final combination: "O people of the Book! Come let us join together on the 'word' (Unity of God) that is common to us all" (*Qur'an*, 2: 30-33). Writing after the war of 1914-1918, Iqbal reminded his readers that

The wars of Islam and Christianity, and, later, European aggression in its various forms, could not allow the infinite meaning of this verse to work itself out in the world of Islam. Today it is being gradually realized in the countries of Islam in the shape of what is called Muslim Nationalism (IQBAL 1930).

And a few years before the war of 1939-1945, Iqbal wrote

Both nationalism and atheistic socialism, at least in the present state of human adjustments, must draw upon the psychological forces of hate, suspicion, and resentment which tend to impoverish the soul of man and close up his hidden sources of spiritual energy. Neither the technique of medieval mysticism, nor nationalism, nor atheistic socialism can cure the ills of a despairing humanity. Surely the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture. The modern world stands in need of biological renewal. And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the

great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and whither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values (IQBAL 1934, pp. 188-189).

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