

Iqbal's View of Omniscience and Human Freedom

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Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) was an eminent Muslim poet-philosopher of the Subcontinent. He wrote his philosophical poetry in both Urdu and Persian. After getting his master's degree in philosophy from Government College Lahore in 1899, he proceeded to Cambridge for further education (in law) and then obtained his Ph.D. from Munich University, Germany in 1907. The title of his dissertation was "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia." Iqbal's range of interests includes religion, philosophy, science, art, politics, economics, nationalism, the revival of Muslim life, and universal brotherhood of man. His main philosophical contribution is his famous *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. This is a collection of seven lectures he delivered between 1929 to 1932, and published in complete form in 1932, only six years before he passed away.¹ *Reconstruction* can rightly be regarded as containing his most mature thought. Its importance also lies in another fact: had Iqbal produced only philosophical poetry, it would have been very difficult to accurately synthesize his thought into a coherent philosophy. In *Reconstruction*, Iqbal undertakes this task himself. As is evident from the very title of this work, Iqbal undertakes a philosophical discussion of some of the basic ideas of Islam in order to attempt a reconstruction of Islamic religious thought in terms of modern science and philosophy, considering them a standard of rationality. Iqbal considers that the essence of religion is faith, that faith is based on religious experience (revelation) or intuition, and that science is a systematization of sense experience and philosophy an intellectual view of reality.² Developing an extended concept of *thought*, Iqbal persistently advocates his conviction that senses, reason and intuition are not independent sources of knowledge but only aspects of *thought*. They seek visions of the same reality which must be absolutely reconcilable. Intuition,

however higher a form of thought, is more basic than intellect and sense experience and is not devoid of cognitive element. In the first lecture of *Reconstruction*, Iqbal considers the genuineness of intuition as a source of knowledge, and taking the Qur'ān as the embodiment of religious experience, gives an account of reality revealed in it. In order to prove his contentions, he critically interprets and examines the accounts of reality discernible from scientists and philosophers with a view toward discovering whether they ultimately lead us to the same character of reality as is revealed by religious experience. Through philosophical discussions of levels of human experience and the meaning of creation, the primacy of life and thought, the teleological character of reality and the meaning of teleology with reference to God by the end of second lecture, he is able to reach the idea of God (or Ultimate Reality). He reaches this idea by identifying *Time* with God, and the spatial aspects of reality with His manifestation in serial *time*. Conceding the limitations of the intellectual view of life, Iqbal asserts that it cannot take us beyond a pantheistic view of life whereas intuition of one's own self reveals that the ultimate nature of reality is spiritual (i.e., a self) and must be conceived as an Ego. Further, the Qur'ān emphasizes the individuality of the Ultimate Ego and gives Him the proper name of Allah.³

Having reached and having identified the Ultimate Ego with the Qur'ānic God citing *Surat al-Ikhlās*, which declares the incomparable uniqueness of God as individual, in the third lecture of *Reconstruction*, Iqbal embarks upon drawing out either the characteristics of the Absolute Ego and reinterpreting the attributes of the Qur'ānic God to reconcile them or the other way around. In this perspective, Iqbal also attempts to reconstruct the attribute of Omniscience. I have attempted to examine Iqbal's reconstruction of this concept in this article, and highlight its implications for human freedom.

Divine Omniscience and human freedom are two of the basic postulates of the Islamic faith. Islam sets forth in the Qur'ān a certain concept of God and His attributes derivable from His Good-Names (*al-Asmā' ul Husnā*). Omniscience is one of the Divine attributes recognized by

Islam. Similarly, belief in requital, which necessarily implies free will for man, is presupposed in all teachings and injunctions of Islamic faith. Philosophers and theologians from both Muslim and Judeo-Christian traditions have remarked that the doctrine of the Omniscience of God does not seem to be coherent with the doctrine of man's free will. So far as Muslim tradition is concerned, according to my understanding, this problem arises only because Muslims are in a bid to rationally reconstruct their religious concepts of Omniscience and human free will and have tried to reconcile them with a philosophic understanding of these concepts. The Qur'ān is the standard of truth.⁴ What the *Truth* certifies is truth. If anything is contrary to what is taught in the Qur'ān, it is untruth and cannot help but produce confusion and incoherence with other concepts.

Iqbal has taken account of many subtle problems of Muslim theology, philosophy and culture. He has critically viewed the classical formulations of Divine Knowledge in the third chapter of his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. He discusses the problem and nature of the freedom of the human ego in chapter four, but does not discuss the problem of God's knowledge with reference to its compatibility with human freedom. Iqbal's discussion of Divine Knowledge refers to securing God's own freedom. A formulation of Divine Omniscience that does not warrant freedom for God would not by implication warrant any freedom of creative action to man. And a concept of Divine Knowledge that warrants free creative action to God, may allow freedom of creative action to man. Therefore, to expect anything from Iqbal like what we can see from Muslim theologians of early centuries (i.e., the *Mu'tazilites* and *Ash'arites*) or Western theologians such as St. Augustine (354-430), Boethius (c.480-524), or St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274) would be disappointing. In what follows, we shall elaborate Iqbal's formulation of Divine Knowledge, draw its implications for freedom of choice for man, and critically examine the presumptions found in Iqbal's thought.

Iqbal identifies three theses concerning Divine Knowledge. He rejects theses that conceive of Divine Knowledge as discursive or passive Omniscience, as they do not warrant

freedom for God.⁵ Iqbal conceives God's knowledge as living creative activity, the proper concept of Divine Knowledge. When we apply the word "knowledge" to finite egos, it always means discursive knowledge. It means knowledge of something that already exists independent of the knowing ego. It is bound to be temporal as well as relative to the object known. Even if such knowledge extends to include everything, since it presupposes the independent existence of the object known prior to its knowledge, it is not worthy of God, whom Iqbal conceives of as all-inclusive.⁶

Examining an alternative concept of Divine Knowledge as "omniscience in the sense of a single indivisible act of perception which [would] make God immediately aware of the entire sweep of history regarded as an order of specific events in an eternal now," Iqbal agrees that there is an element of truth in this concept but goes on to say "it suggests a closed universe, a fixed futurity, a predetermined unalterable order of specific events which, like a superior Fate, has once for all determined the directions of God's creative activity." Iqbal calls it a kind of "passive omniscience." He compares it to a "sort of mirror passively reflecting the details of an already finished structure of things which the finite consciousness reflects in fragments only."⁷ This view regards history as a movie gradually revealing a predetermined order of events. Such a concept would make the objects of Divine Knowledge equally eternal with God. Iqbal does not accept this view either. He observes that if we conceive of God's knowledge as a kind of reflecting mirror, we no doubt keep intact His foreknowledge of future events, but we do so at the expense of His freedom. He further observes that with this view it is not possible to prove God as Creator; no meaning can be attached to the word "creation" if "creation" means capacity for original action.⁸ Spontaneity, novelty, and initiation lose their meanings if Divine Knowledge is considered to be passive omniscience.⁹ Iqbal thinks that the above views presuppose a false concept of creation. To him, the act of creation is not a specific event in the life history of God that has occurred once for all and now there is a question of knowing it. This perspective denotes

a finally finished structure to the universe, an independent 'other' in no need of its Creator, which to Iqbal, is a false concept of creation. The right perspective is to see creation as one continuous creative act. Denying the above interpretations, Iqbal develops his own view by identifying God's act of knowing with the act of creating.¹⁰ This means he sees the act of knowing in God as one continuous act. He thinks "Divine Knowledge must be conceived as a living creative activity to which the objects that appear to exist in their own right are organically related.... The future pre-exists in this organic wholeness of God's creative life but as an open possibility, not as a fixed order of events with definite outlines."¹¹ This view implies: (i) an open universe, and (ii) it saves God's freedom at the expense of His foreknowledge of future free events. The problem for Iqbal is not to establish the compatibility of Divine Omniscience with human freedom, however, the implication is that he finds it necessary to deny God's foreknowledge of free actions to uphold God's freedom as well as the freedom of man.

Iqbal argues that God has given this freedom by His own choice. But how is freedom of the human ego intelligible in the face of the system of efficient causality? Iqbal thinks that the view of ego-activity taken by the physical sciences - that it is a succession of thoughts and ideas that are ultimately reducible to units of sensations - is not correct. He argues that a system of cause and effect is not a final expression of reality,¹² but an artificial construction of the ego for maintaining its life in a complex environment, and there is an element of guidance and directive control in the ego's activity that clearly shows that the ego is free personal creativity. Iqbal observes that the human ego is capable of private initiative on its own. In order to theologially substantiate his view of ego as free personal causality, he refers to the Qur'ān: "*And say: The truth is from your Lord: Let him, then, who will, believe: and let him who will, be an unbeliever.*" (18:29) "*If ye do well to your own behoof will ye do well: and if you do evil against yourselves will ye do it.*" (17:7)¹³

With these preliminary remarks, let us examine the basic propositions of Iqbal's thesis of Divine Knowledge as living creative activity: (1) in the Ultimate Ego, "thought and deed, the act

of knowing and the act of creating are identical”¹⁴; (2) “Divine Knowledge must be conceived as a living creative activity to which the objects that appear to exist *per se* are *organically related* to Omniscience”¹⁵; (3) “The future pre-exists in organic wholeness of God’s creative life but as an open possibility, not as a fixed order of events with definite outlines.”¹⁶

Criticism: If the act of knowing and the act of creating in God are identical (cf. proposition 1 above—which thesis cannot be supported by the Qur’ān) and knowledge of God includes the infinite possibilities of His “all-inclusive being”¹⁷ (cf. proposition 3 above), then the act of knowing must be eternal and with it the act of creating must also be eternal; moreover, there will be no place for Divine will and command in such act of creation. Although Iqbal does not conceive of creation as a specific event in the “life history of God” but as a living creative activity, (i.e., as a continuous process) even then there is no doubt that he would conceive of this “living creative activity” without specific beginning. This view resembles, in certain respects, both the Doctrine of Emanation of al-Farabi (870-950) and Ibn Sina (980-1037),¹⁸ and the Doctrine of the Continuity of Effects propounded by Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328).¹⁹ The former conceives of *thought* as an essential attribute of God rather than *Will* (for they consider *Will* to imply imperfection in God). In the emanationistic cosmology, God is only logically prior to the world; temporally, they are co-eternal. Muslim philosophers present this view by asserting that knowledge of God is identical with His Self-Knowledge, and Self-Knowledge of God is identical with creation (in the sense of emanation). The Doctrine of the Continuity of Effects states that it is logically impossible for the Divine attributes to be inactive at any time, drawing the conclusion that Divine attributes including His attribute of creation have been acting from eternity and creating objects from ever. The objects are the effects of the attribute of creation. Any particular object has a beginning but the activity of creation and for that matter the coming into being of its effects are beyond beginning. This view, too, conceives of creation as eternally continuous activity. If *Will* is also a Divine attribute, where does its activity stand? ‘Will’ means will either to

create or not to create the world. Does the Doctrine of the Eternity of the World, the Eternity of the Act of Creation, or the Doctrine of the Continuity of Effects not deny consigning any role to the will of God concerning the beginning of the universe? If creative activity were eternal, then there would be no beginning to the process of creation. Hence, the process of creation would be co-eternal with God. The co-eternals are parallel to one other. The parallels have no power over each other. God has no power over His creative activity. Creation in the sense of continuous creative activity without specific beginning would amount to a necessary activity. The Muslim philosophers were true to their doctrine when they asserted that even God couldn't change the course of the world.²⁰ Muslim philosophers conceived of God as *pure actuality*. They further conceived that everything flows from the self-knowledge of God with logical necessity. In their system of Emanation, even God was not free. In order to avoid this conclusion and secure Divine Freedom, Iqbal conceives of God not as *pure actuality* but as Absolute Ego with *infinite possibilities* of self-revelation. But how could freedom be secured for God if future lies in Him as an open possibility when Absolute Ego has no power over His self-revelation? (Cf. proposition 1 above.) As far as the attribute of creation is concerned, freedom of God demands volition and then power to issue command. If thought and deed, and the acts of knowing and creating in God are identical and omniscience as living creative activity is eternal, where is there a place for volition and command? Such a view is also contrary to the teachings of the Qur'ān: "*Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth, Able to create the like of them? Aye, that He is! For He is the All-Wise Creator. But His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says unto it: Be! And it is.*" (Qur'ān 36:81-82)

The expression "self-revelation" is also objectionable. "Self-revelation" is not creation in the real sense of the word. It can only figuratively be used for creation. It is evident from the fact that Iqbal, quite true to his thesis, uses the epithet "all-inclusive" for God. If creation in God means Self-revelation and God is "all-inclusive," then the objects are only relatively real; they just

appear to exist *per se*, when actually they don't. Everything is included in God when Iqbal asserts, "Reality lives in its own appearances."²¹ Since Iqbal is trying to rationally reconstruct a religious concept (i.e., the Qur'ānic concept of God) it is better to call this position, *hama ander oowast* (All is in Him.) So far as the relation of God and His manifestation are concerned, Iqbal's view seems to be *Tanzih-m'at-Tasbbih* (Transcendence with Similarity/Immanence).²²

If God has infinite possibilities of self-revelation, the self-revelation of God is an eternal process,²³ and God is rationally directed life (ibid., p. 62), then whatever comes into being *in* God will be in accordance with the laws of reason, and necessary and predetermined. This position is ultimately identical with the position of Muslim philosophers al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. Iqbal himself is conscious of these implications when he says that Absolute Ego Himself out of His creative freedom made the finite egos share in His Life, Power and Freedom.²⁴ In this way, Iqbal tries to prove freedom for man but it is impossible to overcome the basic incoherence of his thought. If even God is not free, how can man be free?; and if thought in God is identical with deed, how could He Will freedom to man; and if there is no place for Will in the creative activity of God, which is a necessary postulate of freedom of an Ego, how can He bestow 'will' to the finite ego? The concept of the finite ego as a real agent in the fold of an all-inclusive Absolute Ego is incoherent. It shows that whether Divine Knowledge in Iqbal's metaphysical system leaves any scope for freedom of God or not, it definitely leaves no scope for freedom of man.

Without volition and command, the concept of God as *Self (Dhat)* is inconceivable. In a way, Iqbal denies creation *ex-nihilo* (i.e., not out of something already existing, on a pattern not eternally existing in God's Knowledge as possible existents or whatever.) This view is not reconcilable with the Qur'ānic concept of God. Creation is real only if it is essentially *ex-nihilo*. God, in his essence is beyond determinations. A prior phase of privation of all determinations is a must for creation. "Thought of the Ultimate Ego" can only be identical with "the Deed of the Ultimate Ego" in an emanationistic cosmology and pantheistic ontology but not in theistic

ontology and cosmology. The concept of “organic relationship” in the context of ontology is misleading.²⁵ It would further make the objects of God’s knowledge to appear as members of an organism. If the objects of Divine Knowledge were organically related to Divine Knowledge, then Divine Knowledge would be organically related to Divine Essence. If the objects that appear to exist *per se* were organically related to Omniscience (as a living creative activity), they would not retain their uniqueness as egos. How could egos that being organically related to the all-inclusive Ego as members retain their uniqueness, freedom, and impenetrability? A pantheistic ontology and emanationistic cosmology do not allow an open universe or future free actions of human beings nor of God. The concept of creation necessarily demands a prior phase of absolute indetermination. It demands the Will of God and then issuance of command to create the world.²⁶ It also demands creation *ex-nihilo*, otherwise it is only a manifestation, self-revelation or self-disclosure. It demands that the Creator be supremely transcendent or incomparably unique of creation. It also demands that the Creator must sustain reality and run it freely with His Knowledge and Wisdom. But the governance of reality and sustaining it demands that He must encompass creation in His Knowledge as well as Power. One may observe that transcendence is not a unilateral relationship. Iqbal apprehends that such a view makes reality confront and limit God (Iqbal’s Ultimate Reality). But this apprehension is based on a misconception. It arises only when one conceives a difference of degree and not of kind between reality and the Creator of reality. But the Creator of reality, unlike a human creator, is singular, unique, alone and transcendent of all determinations (*Ahad*). No such concept as “to confront Him” validly applies to Him. Reality in its essence is not self-subsistent; it needs its Creator to sustain it. To sustain reality, the Creator must be omnipresent. To be omnipresent means to encompass reality in knowledge and power. Iqbal misconceives this concept too. He seems to think that omnipresence would easily lend itself to pantheistic interpretation, and suggests that the Creator be conceived as immanent in reality.²⁷ Iqbal conceives the immanence of God in nature on the analogy of spirit

[i.e., Iqbal uses the word “soul”] in the body.²⁸ Spirit is immanent in body. Body belongs to the category of creation of God and spirit (*Ruh*) belongs to the category of Command of Allah,²⁹ and both belong to the order of originated beings.³⁰ It is Allah’s Command (*Amr*) which makes what is to be created active in a well-defined course of action and subservient in its area of operation. “...*And the Sun and the Moon and the Stars are made subservient by His Command (Amr). Surely His is the Creation (Khalq) and the Command (Amr)...*” (7:54)³¹ Iqbal conceives the Creator on the analogy of created beings. In order to get support for his thesis, Iqbal refers to the following verse: “*He is the First and the Last, the Visible and the Invisible [Bātin], and He is the Knower of all things,*” (Qur’ān, 57:03) and interprets it to draw the immanentism of God. To conceive of the Divine attribute of being invisible [*Bātin*] in the sense of immanence on the analogy of spirit in the body is to violate the Qur’ānic principle of Absolute Transcendence and Incomparable Uniqueness of God.

Iqbal’s criticism of the views of Divine Knowledge (i.e., Discursive Knowledge and Passive Omniscience), which he rejects, as well as the concept of Omniscience as Living Creative Activity (which he formulates) is based, in the final analysis, on his concept of God as Absolute Ego. Let us first elaborate and then critically examine this concept to finally appreciate Iqbal’s Doctrine of Omniscience.

Iqbal conceives the Absolute Ego as “*the whole of Reality.*”³² He also conceives of God “as essentially *spiritual* - spiritual in the sense of being an individual and an ego.”³³ He is an ego because He responds to our reflection and prayer. God is an ego, because, *like the human self*, He is “an organising principle of unity, a synthetic activity that holds together and focalises the dispensing dispositions of *His living organism* for a constructive purpose.”³⁴ He is living. He lives in pure duration.³⁵ This is what Iqbal calls the appreciative aspect of Absolute Ego. The creative activity or spatio-temporal world is self-revelation of the Absolute Ego in its efficient aspect.³⁶ God or what Iqbal calls Absolute Ego is *all-inclusive* and universe is not an ‘other’ existing *per se* and confronting Him.³⁷ Since there is nothing beside Him to put a limit to Him, He is an

absolutely free creative spirit.³⁸ Absolute Ego is absolutely perfect. The perfection of the Creative Self consists in an infinite scope of His creative activity and vision. It consists of the unfailing realization of the infinite creative possibilities of His being. God's life is self-revelation and not the pursuit of an ideal. Absolute Ego is also *infinite* but He is not infinite in the spatial sense, His being a free living spirit with infinite creative possibilities means that He is Omnipotent."³⁹ Change as a movement from one imperfect state to a relatively more perfect state, or vice versa, is inapplicable to Him. He is *continuous creation*,⁴⁰ and therefore changes only in the sense in which a continuous creation can be said to change. But change as continuous creation does not imply imperfection.⁴¹ There is no reproduction in Him.⁴² "From the unity of the all-inclusive Ego who creates and sustains all egos follows the essential unity of all mankind."⁴³ Iqbal quotes from the Qur'ān to reconcile his philosophical concept of the Absolute Ego with the Qur'ānic concept of God.

When we critically examine Iqbal's concept of Absolute Ego we see that he conceives of God as "*the whole of Reality*." The word 'Reality/reality' is applicable only to the world, the universe, and the created order. God is the Creator of Reality/reality. The epithet "*the whole of Reality*" cannot be applied to God without effacing this difference and including creation in the Creator.

Actually, Iqbal creates difficulty for himself by wrongly conceiving of God on the analogy of man.⁴⁴ Iqbal conceives of human self as ego. Human being as ego is finite. He identifies appreciative and efficient aspects of human ego. Now Iqbal conceives of God as Ego. In comparison to man, who is finite, God is infinite; man is relative, God is Absolute. The life of the finite ego consists in its coming from appreciative to efficiency. God as appreciative Self lives in pure duration. On the analogy of the life of the finite ego, Iqbal conceives of world as creative activity of the Absolute Ego (in its coming from appreciation to efficiency) by way of Self-revelation.⁴⁵ He conceives of nature as character to the Divine Self.⁴⁶ Nature at any instant is only

a fleeting moment in the life of God, however, it is a living, ever-growing organism. (This is why Iqbal emphasizes the all-inclusiveness of the Absolute Ego.) All these things arise as implications of his viewing God on the analogy of man, which is anthropomorphism.⁴⁷ To avoid this, Iqbal also tries to see things other way round, i.e., theomorphically when he states that from the Absolute Ego only egos “proceed.”⁴⁸

As compared to nature, which is only transitory and ephemeral, the “I-amness” of God is independent, elemental and absolute.⁴⁹ Iqbal sees the metaphor of *Light* in the Light Verse of the Qur’ān as a metaphor “to suggest the absoluteness of God and not His Omnipresence, which easily lends itself to a pantheistic interpretation.”⁵⁰ But according to my understanding, the metaphor of light in this verse does not refer to God or to the Absoluteness of God as individual. This interpretation suits Iqbal because he sees God as all-inclusive and immanent. Otherwise this interpretation is not coherent with the Imperative Verses of the Qur’ān. The reality of light is guidance. The light of heavens & earth, as referred to in this verse, is the light of the guidance (*Nur e Hidayat*) of Allah. The heavens and the earth are lighted with it. ‘*Al-Nur (The Light)* is the Good-Name of Allah and Allah has placed the light of guidance in the heavens and the earth.⁵¹ The Qur’ān says that the heavens and the earth and whatever is therein are the signs of Allah for those who ponder it. (3:116; 3:190; 10:6) It is in this sense that Allah is the Light (*Nur*) of heavens and of the earth. Allah is the Creator, and the heavens and the earth and whatever therein (i.e., including all the forms of physical light) are His creation. (25:59; 30:8; 32:4; 15:85; 46:3) It is necessary to observe this distinction in interpreting this verse at all times, but Iqbal has overlooked this.

The Qur’ān divides the whole originated order of being into two ontological categories: *Khalq* (Creation) and *Amr* (Command). It is Allah to whom the creation (*Khalq*) of every thing belongs, and it is He, according to whose command (*Amr*), everything is active in its sphere. (Qur’ān,07:54) It is this *Amr* within a thing that guides it upon its destiny (Qur’ān,20:50). Soul

(*Rub*) belongs to the category of Allah's command (Qur'an,17:85). This is the Principle of Guidance from Allah within man.⁵²

The Qur'an consists of two kinds of verses: the imperative (*Mubkamat*) and the allegorical (*Mutashabihat*). The imperatives (*Mubkamat*) are those verses that are directly in the form of commandments. The allegorical (*Mutashabihat*) are the verses that, on reading or listening, render an obligation on the reader or the listener according to that statement. Only the imperatival verses (*Mubkamat*) of the Qur'an are called the "Mother of the Book" (*Umm ul Kitab*). Some verses can clearly be categorized as imperatival and some others as allegorical, while the remaining others can be categorized on the base of already established set of imperatival verses. The imperatival verses are the standard in any decision. These are the foundation of the Book. Whatever is to be inferred from the allegorical verses is necessarily to be verified by and be coherent with the imperatival verses. If otherwise, the interpretation is false.⁵³

The verse in question clearly belongs to the set of allegorical verses. Keeping this fact in mind, let us develop the parable. The heart of man is like a niche in which is placed the lamp. The lamp is encased in a glassy globe. The globe is so clean that it glitters like a star. Imagine how much illumination the globe can add to the light of the lamp when it is lighted, and how beautifully will it distribute this light! The lamp in the heart of man is filled with blessed oil, the *Reason*. Heart is the seat of Reason.⁵⁴ This blessed oil is pure like the oil extracted from the fruit of an olive tree which is neither in the east nor in the west but in the center of the garden where the sun shines over it from morning until it sets. The oil of such a tree is so pure that it is just to be lighted up as soon as a spark approaches it. Now imagine when this lamp is lighted, how luminous would it be! Light upon light! The role of Reason is to free man from contradictions. Reason, when pure, has the greatest capacity to catch light from the Light of Guidance of Allah by which the heavens and the earth are lighted and luminous. But when man follows his desires, reason loses its purity.⁵⁵ The heavens and the earth are filled with the light of Allah's guidance. If

there is a heart whose oil has not lost its purity and whose globe has not lost its shine, Allah guides him to the way of His Light, to the way of His gnosis. This is the heart of the believer. When it is lighted by gnosis (*Nur e M'arefat*), it becomes light upon light. Allah is the knower of everything, He knows with absolute knowledge whom to bless with this favor. Allah sets parables for the guidance of mankind.

The word "Self" (*Dhat*) is more proper and nearer to the Qur'anic insight to be used for God than "ego." "Ego" emphasizes His "I-ness" more than anything else; "Self" (*Dhat*) denotes the whole person of the Divine with emphasis on His will and power. (Qur'an, 17:1; 67:1) He is individual but alone, singular and unique (*Al-Ahad*). Of course, He is not a principle, but transcends all conceptions of spirit, soul, and matter. Whatever He has originated is either creation or command. Creation definitely bears the signs of the person of its creator but is never like the creator, or the command in any sense identical to the command-giver. Naught is like Him.⁵⁶ The principle of the incomparable uniqueness of the Creator leaves no scope for conceiving God as Absolute Ego on the analogy of one's experience of one's own ego. Iqbal, throughout in his *Reconstruction*, in almost all the terms, metaphors and analogies he uses, violates this principle. A created being cannot by any stretch of the imagination, psychological analysis or intellectual abstraction ever imagine, conceive of or encompass the Being of its Creator. One may experience one's presence (*Hazoori*) before the Omnipresent but can never experience His Being.

Of course, God is a self; unity in the comprehensive, perfect and unique sense is His characteristic. But He is not like an organism in any respect. No analogy can hold between God (who is unique) and creator, and an organism that is His creation. The concept of "organism" in the context of ontology, as said earlier, is a false concept. Organisms reproduce them, whereas Iqbal himself admits that reproduction is contrary to the Absolute Ego. Organisms are born, and they die. Then what is the sense in saying that Absolute Ego is "living organism" but doesn't reproduce etc? Why not assert His incomparable uniqueness and transcendence?

Iqbal conceives of God as *continuous creation*. This may imply pantheism and identifying God with nature but not God of the Qur’ān Who is Creator at Will & Command. Essentially, He is Creator *ex-nihilo*—*both of forms as well as matter*, but He is also Creator out of things already created by Him. To conceive of nature as the character of God is also misleading. It would be conceiving of God on the analogy of man and would imply the eternity of nature.

According to M. M. Sharif, “A perfect individuality means to Iqbal, as to Bergson, an organic whole of which no detached part can live separately.” The Ultimate Ego is perfect in this sense but not only in this sense. His perfection also implies “the infinite scope of His creative vision.”⁵⁷ Terms and concepts used or coined for God should be such that nothing should harm the incomparable uniqueness of God. To call God infinite as compared to man is to fail to observe the above principle. God is neither finite nor infinite; He is beyond determinations (*Al-Abad*).⁵⁸

Iqbal conceives of *time* as an essential element in Reality (i.e., God)⁵⁹ on the analogy of the human ego. All such concepts based on analogy of human self are misleading. The tradition that identifies *time* with God referred to by Iqbal is stated thusly: *la tasubbu al-dabra fa inn- Allah huma’l-dabru*, and means “Do not vilify Time for Allah is Time.”⁶⁰ This tradition is narrated by Ahmad Hanbal in his *Musnad*, V, 299 and 311.⁶¹ To further corroborate his identification of *time* with God, Iqbal refers to the eminent Sufi Muhyuddin Ibn al-‘Arabī, who asserts that *Dabr* is one of the beautiful names of God.⁶² Both these views are incorrect. Neither the alleged tradition can be a saying of the Prophet nor *al-Dabr* is the Good Name of Allah. The Qur’ān does not endorse any of the views. In verse 45:24, the Qur’ān says: “*And they say: There is naught but [only] our life of the world; we die and we live, and naught destroyeth us save time [al-Dabr]; when they have no knowledge whatsoever of (all) that; they do but guess.*” Thus, it is the disbelievers who deny afterlife and requital and attribute what happens to them to *al-Dabr* as if *al-Dabr (time)* was but over and above everything like a superior fate. The believers believe in afterlife and requital and attribute all consequences to the Will of Allah. At verse 76:1, the Qur’ān says: “*Hath there come upon man (ever) any period of time [al-*

Dabr] in which he was a thing unremembered?’ There is no sense in drawing the identification of *al-Dabr* with Allah or taking it as the Good-Name of Allah on the basis of these verses. It can be said on the authority of the Qur’ān that the Prophet could never have identified *al-Dabr* with God.

Criticism of M. S. Raschid’s Views

In the introduction to his book *Iqbal’s Concept of God*, M. S. Raschid observes: 1) that Iqbal’s concept of God is a finite (panentheistic) one; 2) that Iqbal’s finite deity cannot be reconciled with the supremely transcendent but also immanent God of the Qur’ān.⁶³ Raschid further notes that not only has Iqbal developed a finite conception of deity but he has also argued for the inclusion of the created order (nature) within the being of the creator (God). He makes us conceptualize this process of inclusion by taking nature as an organic part of “the ultimate self.” It is obvious that according to Iqbal, God and the world forms a unity and this united whole is divine.⁶⁴ Raschid rightly terms such a position as panentheism.⁶⁵ But he points to incoherence in Iqbal’s thought. He says that Iqbal also argues that nature is “a rationally directed creative life” as an ego. Raschid observes that it sounds more like straightforward pantheism. These are two incoherent positions that are found in Iqbal. But Iqbal further complicates the problem by equating and identifying his concept of ‘Absolute Ego’ with the Qur’ānic concept of God.⁶⁶

Raschid is right to declare Iqbal’s concept of God as finite (panentheistic). But his own view that the Qur’ānic concept of God is the concept of a supremely transcendent but also immanent God and that Iqbal’s concept of a finite deity cannot be reconciled with it⁶⁷ is also partially incorrect. Of course Iqbal’s concept of God cannot be reconciled with the Qur’ānic concept of God, but Raschid is not right to call the Qur’ānic God “immanent.” Immanence implies identity like immanence of the soul in the body or of fire in the red-hot iron. “Immanence” also means “similarity.”⁶⁸ “*Naught is as His likeness*” means none of the creations is similar to Allah, the

Creator. The Qur'ānic concept of God definitely is the concept of a “supremely transcendent” God, but it is not in any sense the concept of an “immanent” God. The Qur'ānic concept is the concept of a ‘Creator God’ who is also “Omnipresent & Sustainer.”⁶⁹

The Qur'ānic God is supremely transcendent but not immanent. He is transcendent because He transcends all determinations. He transcends form, matter, and energy. He transcends beginning, end, want and need, He transcends imperfection but also transcends human conceptions of perfection. He transcends change but He also transcends to be analogical to a process or activity.⁷⁰ He has *Will* as ability to bring about or not to bring about determinations. He is a Self but He is an incomparably unique Self that transcends what He has created whether man, angel or any other sort of spirit, law, fate, process or organism. He is Creator of everything, its form, matter and existence but “*naught is like Him.*” Everything comes to be because Allah creates it. Everything exists because Allah sustains it. Nothing can be created or sustained without knowledge and power. Allah encompasses everything in His knowledge and in His power. To encompass everything in knowledge and power proves that He is present everywhere. The concept of a ‘confronting-other’ does not arise in the above said perspective. Nothing limits Him nor confronts Him as ‘other’; these are but human misconceptions. He is self-conscious, willing, knowing, commanding, creating and responding. The attribution or denial of attribution of descriptive phrases like “organizing principle of Unity” or “Pure Duration” does not befit Him. He is the person without any similarity to any person. It is wrong to apply words like “Reality,” “Absolute Reality” or “Ultimate Reality” to God. These at the very outset presuppose a pantheistic ontological set up. Whereas the right thing is that what Allah has created is “reality.” Everything, whether changing, ephemeral and transitory, is real because the creation of Allah is no illusion.⁷¹ Allah has stated the change in time as real. Space, time and universe are reality. Allah has specifically stated that the creation of heavens, and the earth and what is between them is reality and that the order of reality will last even after the Day of Judgment, though in a reshaped

form.⁷² They are not interpretations put by finite egos on experience. The objective aspect of time is not unreal; man is accountable for his deeds performed in this succession. ‘Reality’/reality refers to determinations; Allah is Creator of reality and transcends determinations. M. M. Sharif, an eminent Pakistani philosopher,⁷³ encompassing Iqbal’s poetry and philosophical works, delineates the development of Iqbal’s concept of God into three stages. As far as Iqbal’s views about God in their final form are concerned, he observes that Iqbal’s thought took its final shape under the influence of the philosophies of Rumi, McTaggart, James Ward, Bergson and Nietzsche. Whatever the influence of other philosophers in other directions, with regard to the concept of God—Iqbal’s thought was molded chiefly by Ward.⁷⁴ Sharif, in an attempt to examine different Western and Eastern philosophers’ influence, finally observes that Ward’s influence on Iqbal is greater than anyone else’s.⁷⁵ To measure this influence he has given a list of common elements and their respective views on the concept of God, which are as follows:

[i] Both of them, after the manner of Kant, reject the three notorious arguments for the existence of God, [ii] discard Platonism, Pantheism, and Absolutism, and [iii](a) object to omniscience as foreknowledge of a preordained reality and, (b) to applying the idea of serial time both to God and to the finite self—and all this for exactly the same reasons. [iv] Both are Pluralists, Theists, and Spiritual Monists. [v] Both hold Panpsychism against Berkeley’s occasionalism, and [vi] windowed monadism against Leibnitz’s windowless monadism. [v] Both believe in the creative freedom and immortality of the individual. [vi] For both, the sensuous world is due to interaction between egos, [vii] the body is created by the mind to serve its own purposes, and [viii] serial time is only an act of the mind. [ix] Both hold on exactly the same grounds and in exactly the same sense that God is an infinite, conscious, omnipotent and omniscient spirit, which is immanent in the finite egos and yet transcends these parts. [x] For both He is a perfectly free creative spirit that limits its own freedom by creating free finite egos, and [xi] for both this internal limitation is not inconsistent with His own perfect freedom. [xii] According to both, God is perfect throughout His creative progress, for this progress is progress *in* perfection, not *towards* perfection. [xiii] Both hold that God’s Will functions through the will of the finite egos. [xiv] Both believe with Wundt that reason can prove the necessity of faith, but cannot turn faith into knowledge. [xv] Both agree that belief in God is ultimately a matter of faith, though of a rational faith, that conviction or complete certitude about Him comes not from reason but from living, that direct communion with Him is gained only through *rapport* or love, and that it is only love for Him that immortality is achieved by the finite self.⁷⁶

This does not mean that Iqbal owes everything to Ward and does not go beyond Ward’s

conception of God. He certainly does and in a very important respect. Sharif notes the following points of difference between them:

- [i] Ward regards God as eternal, but fails to explain eternity, chiefly because he has no idea of time as non-serial. Iqbal taking his clue from a saying of the Prophet of Islam in which time is identified with God—accepts Bergson’s theory of pure duration with some modifications, and thereby succeeds not only in explaining Divine eternity but also in laying greater emphasis on the dynamic aspect of reality.
- [ii] Again, the idea of perfection is not the same as Ward’s. It is partly Bergsonian and partly his own.⁷⁷

Sharif observes that Ward, Bergson and Iqbal follow similar procedures when they start from the individual experience and that there seems to be nothing wrong with this. Since we are certain before all other things of our own experience, Sharif sees it as the best way to proceed. However, he agrees with Iqbal that it is not the only right procedure. Sharif points out a great danger in this allegedly best method of study, and that is the pitfall of viewing everything anthropomorphically.⁷⁸ He thinks that “what reality is as a whole must forever remain hidden from the finite self, for how can the part with all its limitations comprehend the whole, which essentially goes far beyond its compass?”⁷⁹

Sharif is right in his conclusion that to conceive of God on the analogy of man is not the right approach but he is wrong in his observation at two points: he seems to use the phrase “reality as a whole” for God; he calls man “the part” of this whole. God is the Creator of reality and man is creature. The right thing would be to say, “How could the creature with all its limitations comprehend the Creator, which essentially and absolutely transcends its compass?” On the basis of my own analysis, I find myself in agreement with Raschid in his contention that “Basically Iqbal’s procedure involves two moves. First, he draws some quite unreasonably extravagant, and indeed, in very important respects, illegitimate metaphysical conclusions from his philosophical inquiry into modern science and philosophy...The second move,” as he rightly observes, is “Iqbal’s repeated and persistent attempt to read the results of his inquiry into the Qur’ān.”⁸⁰

Philosophers coin, stipulate or use certain terms to express their thoughts. These terms express their concepts relating to their subject matter. Terms are constructed into propositions. In order to rightly understand a philosopher and evaluate and appreciate his position, it is necessary to determine the meaning of these terms. In this article, I have examined propositions expressing Iqbal's view of Omniscience and have analyzed the basic terms and concepts he used. I have come to the conclusion that Iqbal finds foreknowledge of God to be incompatible with freedom of God as well freedom of man and, therefore, does not attribute Omniscience in the sense of foreknowledge of free events to God. However, I have found that Iqbal does not succeed in proving freedom for God because of his panentheistic concept of God. Allah is *Al-Ahad* (Supremely Singular, Unique, and Alone). *Abdiyāt* transcends all determinations. The spatio-temporal, numerical and logical concepts of infinity are but originated out of Him, they do not apply to Him. Nothing could ever encompass His Being. He is *Al-Samad*; He transcends need, want, compulsion or imperfection. He created the universe absolutely out of His free will without any longing, yearning or aspiration in the sense of inner compulsion.⁸¹ He is the Absolute Originator (*Al-Badi'*) of everything. Allah is the Beginner of His creation (*Al-Mubdi'*). He is prior to any origination and beginning, He is *Al-Awwal* (the First). Every beginning has with it its termination. Allah is there after the termination of anything, He is *Al-Ākhir* (the Last). Allah is the Restorer of His creation (*Al-Mu'īd*) after its termination. He is the External; the Manifest (*Al-Zahir*), none is more manifest than Allah is by his portents. He is the Internal, the Hidden (*Al-Bātin*); none is more hidden than Allah is as the Determiner of the purpose of created beings.⁸² Allah is *Al-Wāhid*, i.e., the Alone, the Unique. No one is to be worshiped except He alone. Iqbal's concept of Absolute Ego is not reconcilable with the Qur'anic concept of God and neither is his philosophical concept of Omniscience.

Proponents of Iqbal's thought, in order to save him from such criticism, try to show that Iqbal's *Reconstruction* does not have any permanent value, universal appeal or central place in

Iqbal's thought as compared to his poetry. They assert that in these lectures Iqbal addresses a specific audience. The addressees of these lectures were those Muslims of India who, being highly impressed by contemporary Western philosophical and scientific thought, became skeptical about the truth of religion. These scholars assert that the purpose of these lectures was to bring out reconciliation between Islamic religious thought and modern knowledge (science and philosophy) by reinterpreting dogmas of the Islamic faith using contemporary philosophical terminology and critically reinterpreting the discoveries of modern philosophy and science to prove that they are not contradictory. In order to bring these Indian Muslims out of their skepticism, Iqbal prefers to accept the basic postulates of contemporary philosophical thought (i.e., the British Empiricism and Utilitarianism that were taught in India in those days) to reinterpret them to ultimately show that the findings of these disciplines were not contrary to the doctrines of religious thought, but rather supported them. So if one finds Iqbal's reconstruction of religious dogmas inconsistent with Qur'ānic teachings, he should be considered helpless because of the above limitations. Such scholars also say that in order to rightly appreciate the worth of Iqbal's thought as expressed in the *Reconstruction* and to reach and understand its real meaning, it is necessary to study the whole corpus of Iqbal's writings in Urdu, Persian and English, i.e., poetry, articles, letters and whatever, many of which were written before as well as after the writing of these lectures.⁸³ But this is not the end of it. These scholars also suggest that one should try to determine the time of writing of a poetic verse or piece, and then try to read it from the perspective of the international as well as contemporary political situation in India. Only then will one be able to rightly appreciate Iqbal's thought and succeed in resolving its contradictions - an unending and fruitless task. The readers can best appreciate the value of such a lame defense. To me, it is a straightforward admission of the failure of Iqbal's alleged attempt at the reconstruction of Islamic religious thought.

¹ The Institute of Islamic Culture in Lahore, Pakistan has published an annotated and properly edited version of *Reconstruction* in 1986. All references to *Reconstruction* in this article are to this version.

² Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religions in Islam*, ed. & ann, M. Saeed Sheikh (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, reprint 1986), 1,49.

³ cf., *ibid*, 48-50.

⁴ The Qurʾān is the Truth (*al-Haqq*) from your Lord. Al-Qurʾān: 2:147; 3:60; 18:29; etc., His Word is the Truth. (*Qawlu huḥ Haq*); 6:73 What Allah descends unto His Messenger is the Truth. 5:83,84; 11:120; 13:01,19; 21:55; etc.

⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas also rejects Discursive Knowledge as being worthy of God. See *Great Books of the Western World*, vols. 55, (*Summa Theologia*, by Aquinas, First Part, Q. 14, Art. 7), ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1952), 19 : 82.

⁶ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 62,75.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁸ The definition is incomplete. ‘Creation’ must mean capacity for original action but at ‘Will’ and ‘Command.’

⁹ Iqbal attributes this view to Dawwānī, (Jalaluddin Mohammad b. Asʿad, Mullā, 830-908/1427-1502-3, *Risālat al-Zawāʾi*, Cairo, 1326/1908), Iraqi and Royce (Josiah Royce 1855-1916). *Ibid.* 60, 62. Professor M. Saeed Sheikh ed. & ann., however, tells us that the Sufi poet named here as well as in Lectures V and VII as Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Irāqī is really ‘Ain al-Qudāt al-Hamadānī, 492-525/1098-1131, whose tract on space and time: *Ghāyat al-Imkān fī Dirāyat al-Makān*, 54, has been edited by Rahīm Farmanish, Tehran, 1338 S/1959; (Iqbal, *Ibid*, Notes & References, 169, and Index, 234.) Dr. M. Maruf, however, observes that Iqbal’s objection is based on a confusion between foreknowledge and predestination. He distinguishes predestination and foreknowledge observing that it [i.e., foreknowledge] is always based on the knowledge of prevalent conditions, and in no way determines future events. He further observes that “Iqbal denies foreknowledge to God in the zest for preserving freedom and originality in creation. He, however, forgets that God’s knowledge does not divest future of its originality any more than the forecast of a meteorologist robs future weather changes of their originality.” Dr. M. Maruf, “Iqbal’s View of Divine Knowledge,” Appendix to *Iqbal’s Philosophy of Religion: A Study in the Cognitive Value of Religious Experience* (Lahore: Islamic Book Service, 1977), 224-25.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹² *Ibid.*, 86.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 86-7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁸ H.A. Wolfson, “Avicenna, Al-Ghazali and Averros on Divine Attributes” in *Homenaje a Milta Vallierosa* Vol. II, 1956, 545-46; and Michael E. Marmura, “Some Aspects of Avicenna’s Theory of God’s Knowledge of Particulars” *Journal of American Oriental Society*, 83.3(1962), 304.

¹⁹ Mohammad Hanif Nadvi, “Ibn Taimiyyah Ka Tasawwar e Sifat” (Urdu) in *The Pakistan Philosophical Journal*, Lahore vol. V (January 1962), 41-49.

²⁰ The Muslim philosophers al-Farabi and Ibn Sina argued that Divine Knowledge is essentially and primarily self-knowledge. Creation proceeds as a consequence of divine self-knowledge. Marmura, *ibid.*, 302.

²¹ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 12.

²² Both these terms occur as interpretations of وحدت الوجود (wahdat-ul-wujud), or the Doctrine of the Unity of all Being.

²³ Iqbal uses the word “act” or “activity.” An eternal, continuous act must be synonymous with an eternal ‘process.’ Iqbal seems to conceive creation as the process of self-revelation in God.

²⁴ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 64.

²⁵ cf. Assumption 3 above.

²⁶ ...He is the All-Wise Creator. But His Command when He intends a thing is only that He saith unto it: Be! and it is. (Al-Qurʾān, 36:81-2)

²⁷ Iqbal, *Ibid.*, 85.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 108, Iqbal also approves Iraqi’s (i.e., ‘Ain al-Qudāt al-Hamadānī’s, ref. footnote no.6 above) similar view, 110.

²⁹ Qurʾān, 17:85.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, ... Surely His is the Creation (Khalq) and the Command (Amr)... (07:54).

³¹ Hazrat Fazal Shah & Mohammad Ashraf Fāzli, *Tafsir e Fāzli*, (Urdu) 7 vols., (Lahore: Fāzli Foundation, 1982-98), 2 (reprint ed. 1996): 224. Translation into English is mine. Marmaduke Pickthall translates this verse in following words: *Lo! your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then mounted He the Throne. He coverth the night with the day, which is in haste to follow it, and has made the sun and the moon and the stars subservient by His Command. His verily is all creation and commandment. ...* (7:54) Hazrat Fazal Shah (d.1978 in Lahore, Pakistan) initiator of Fāzli Qādrī branch in

already existing Qādrī order in Muslim Mysticism. Mohammad Ashraf Fāzli at present is his successor. The most prominent feature of this commentary is that it draws forth the practical application of each and every verse of the Qurān for a believer. It asserts the absolute primacy and sufficiency of the Qurān. It shows that the Qurān is authoritative; it is perspicuous and internally self-consistent.

³² Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Ibid.*, 47.

³³ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁵ Cf *ibid.*, 44, 45, 61.

³⁶ Cf *ibid.*, 61.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

³⁸ Iqbal also tries to conceive of 'will' for God when he says 'rationally directed Divine will is good' (*Ibid.*, 64) but he only conceives of it in the sense that Divine Omnipotence is intimately related to Divine wisdom and is not arbitrary and capricious. Iqbal does not prove 'Will' for God in the context of creation at Will and Command. *Ibid.*, 64.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 50-51.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 61. Iqbal writes: "If then we accept the guidance of our conscious experience, and conceive the life of the all-inclusive Ego on the analogy of the finite ego, ..."

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁷ Professor M.M. Sharif also supports this observation. M. M. Sharif, "Iqbal's Conception of God" in *About Iqbal and His Thought: Collected Papers—1* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1964), 20.

⁴⁸ Iqbal, *ibid.*, 82. To assert that 'God created Adam upon His Own Form' is theomorphism. Among modern Muslim thinkers, Syed Hossein Nasr holds this view. Syed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966), 18. *Theomorphism* is as un-Qurānic as the *Anthropomorphism* because they demolish the absolute transcendence of the Creator from the created. Usually both views go together. If "There is something God-like in man..." (Nasr, *Ibid.*) then God is somewhat man-like. This is why they anthropomorphically interpreting the verse 15:29 of the Qurān, try to support an alleged tradition from which they have drawn theomorphism.

⁴⁹ Iqbal, *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵¹ Light (*Nur*) is an attribute of Allah as there are other attributes, but it is not some kind of substance which comprises the essence or being of Allah. Physical light, in all its forms, is a kind of energy and inter-convertible into matter. No doubt speed of physical light has been found to be the last limit of speed in nature but even then it is not infinite nor any absoluteness be attributed to it. Then in what sense can it be a symbol for absolute. But let us first define the term 'absolute'. Absolute means what is not relative, what is ultimate. Ultimate Reality is absolute for it is not relative to anything. What is absolute or the ultimate can never be measured. Physical light is a form of energy; sound, electricity, magnetic force, heat being other forms. Energy and matter are inter-convertible and the relationship of both is measurable through the famous equation of Eienstein i.e., $E=MC^2$. Qurān says: Allah has created the heavens and the earth and whatever therein is in six days. Light, as a physical phenomenon belongs to these things. Then how can it be a symbol for the absolute?

⁵² For details see: Abdul Hafeez, "Free Will and Predestinarian Verses in the Qura'n" in *Hamdard Islamicus*, Vol. XXII, No. 4 (October-December, 1999) (Bait al-Hikma at Madinat al-Hikma, Karachi, Pakistan), 97-105.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Have they not travelled in the land, and have they hearts wherewith to feel [to reason—ya'qiloon] and ears wherewith to hear? For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind.* Al-Qurān, 22:46.

⁵⁵ Those who follow their desires go astray. (Al-Qurān: 18:28; 25:43; 45:23; ...) Their reason (*'aql*) go blind. (Al-Qurān, 22:46)

⁵⁶ al-Qurān, 42:11.

⁵⁷ M. M. Sharif, "Iqbal's Conception of God," 20.

⁵⁸ Al-Qurān, 112:1.

⁵⁹ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 46.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 8. Iqbal also refers to the same tradition in poetry in section captioned *Al-Waqtu Saif-un (Time is a Sword)* of his *Asrār-i Khudī (Secrets of the Self)* as thus: Life is Time and Time is Life; 'Do not abuse Time!' was the command of the Prophet. (trans. Nicholson). *Ibid.*, (Lecture I, Notes & References no. 24), 160.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 160. Professor M. Saeed Sheikh who has annotated this book also quotes following other references: Cf.

Bukhari, *Tafsir*, 45; *Tawhid*: 35; *Ādāb*:101; and Muslim, *Al-Jāz*2-4.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 58.

⁶³ M.S.Raschid, *Iqbal's Concept of God* (London: Kegan Paul, 1981), xiii-xiv.

⁶⁴ Through out *The Reconstruction*, Iqbal uses the word 'Reality' with uppercase first letters both for God and the world. For example, comparing 'thought' and 'intuition,' Iqbal writes, "The one grasps Reality piecemeal, the other grasps it in its wholeness. The one fixes its gaze on the eternal, the other on the temporal aspect of Reality." Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 2. "The one noteworthy feature of the Qurān is the emphasis that it lays on this observable aspect of Reality." *Ibid.*, 11. "Reality lives in its own appearances." *Ibid.*,12. etc.

⁶⁵ Dr. M. Maruf in Iqbal's Philosophy of Religion also states Iqbal's position as pantheistic. He rightly conceives that Iqbal denies Divine Foreknowledge to secure human freedom. But Dr. Maruf himself takes the traditional libertarian position that Divine foreknowledge is non-causative. This approach is not correct to the present writer. Dr. M. Maruf, "Iqbal's View of Divine Knowledge," Appendix to *Iqbal's Philosophy of Knowledge*, Ph.D dissertation submitted to Punjab University in 1968, 314.

⁶⁶ M.S. Raschid, *Ibid.*, 59.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, xiii, 95.

⁶⁸ The school of Ibn Arabi commonly expresses its most fundamental view of *wujud* in terms of the theological concepts of *tanzih & tashbih*. The first is often translated as 'transcendence,' the second as 'immanence' or 'anthropomorphism.' Chittick prefers translating these in more literal sense, as 'incomparability' and 'similarity.' This school declares that God in Himself is incomparable with every created thing. In other words, *wujud* in totality is beyond the reach of everything in the cosmos; It is absolutely Nonmanifest (*al-batin*). But the Qurān teaches us that, He is also Manifest (*al-Zahir*). As such, He is similar to all things, since He bestows His own attributes on creation. As the One Being, He is absolutely incomparable, so no created thing can share in His Being, but as the Creative Principle, He is similar to all things, since He bestows His own attributes on creation. *Wujud* is One in Itself at the level of Its nonmanifestation or Incomparability, and many through Its manifestation or similarity; God is One in His Essence (*dhāt*), and many through His Names. He sometimes refers to God as the 'One/Many (*al-wahid al-kathir*)'. Cf. William C. Chittick, "Wahdat Al-Wujud In Islamic Thought", in *The Bulletin*, Jan.-Mar. 1999, 11. It is un-Qurānic to say that 'Allah bestows His own attributes on creation'. Divine Attributes are un-created and unique, human attributes are originated. They are either creation or command of God.

⁶⁹ M.S.Raschid is right to observe "that Iqbal's pantheistic notion of God is very close to pantheistic Sufi concept of God" (M.S. Raschid, *Ibid.*, xiii-xiv) but his observation is right only concerning Sufis belonging to pantheistic tradition. Pantheistic tradition in *Tasawuf* is not the only approach in Muslim mysticism; there is a parallel tradition that believes in supremely Transcendent and Omnipresent God.

⁷⁰ Process or activity is never a willing & self-conscious agent which have names like Allah has. Process or activity does not govern itself but is governed. Allah is the Creator, initiator and controller of all processes. *Allah is He Who created seven heavens and of the earth the like thereof. The Command (Amr) descends among, that you may know that Allah is Possessor of Power over all things, and that Allah encompasses all things in (His) Knowledge.* 65:12.

⁷¹ ...Allah created not the heavens and the earth and that which is in between them save with the truth... (al-Qurān, 30:08)

⁷² Al-Qurān, 6:73, 10:5, 14:19, 15: 85, 16:3, 29:44, 30:8, 39:5, 45:22, 46:3, 64:3.

⁷³ M.M. Sharif (late) was the editor of *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 2 vol. published by Pakistan Philosophical Congress and first printed in Germany by Allgäuer Heimatverlag GmbH, Kempten, Germany in 1963. M.M. Sharif was also the founder president of Pakistan Philosophical Congress.

⁷⁴ M. M. Sharif, "Iqbal's Conception of God," 9-30.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 27.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

⁷⁸ To, M. M. Sharif, both Ward and Iqbal have fallen into this pitfall. *Ibid.*, 29-30.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁰ M. S. Raschid has demonstrated this in the first part of his work.

⁸¹ Al-Qurān, ...Lo! Allah is Independent of all creatures. 3:97; And Moses said: Though ye and all who are in the earth prove thankless, lo! Allah verily is Absolute Owner of Praise. 14:8; And whosoever striveth, striveth only for himself, for lo! Allah is altogether Independent of (His) creatures. 29:6.

⁸² *Al-Mubdi'* and *Al-Mu'id* do not occur in the Qurān but the idea frequently, e.g., *See they not how Allah produced creation, then reproduced it? Lo! for Allah that is easy. Say (O Muhammad): Travel in the land and see how He originated creation... 29:19-20; He began the creation of man from clay. 32:07; The Day when We shall roll up the heavens as a recorder rolleth up a written scroll. As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it...(21:104) Lo! He it is Who produceth, then reproduceth.* (85:13)

⁸³ Cf. Mohammad Suhail Umer, *Khutbat-e-Iqbal Niay Tanazir Mein* (Urdu) [*Iqbal's Lectures in New Perspective*] (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1996), preface 7-19. Mr. Umer says that he has grown out of this position and now he believes that there is no essential contradiction between Iqbal's works, whether poetry or the *Reconstruction*.