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Two Kinds Of Thinking In Iqbal's Philosophy

Iqbal had a great admiration for rational thinking. His *Lectures* are an excellent example of rational and logical thinking. On the analytical side his thinking makes sabre-like thrusts on the doctrine or the position he wants to demolish. On the synthetic side he builds up arguments like a piece of architecture in which columns, arches and portals are aesthetically related. Apart from logic, one notices the aesthetic quality of his writing. He writes beautifully although the thoughts he wants to convey are sometimes difficult. Aesthetics is one quality which is very seldom noticed and appreciated by Iqbal's critics. I wish one could compose a treatise on Iqbal's Aesthetics—in which architectonic elements coalesce and make a beautiful structure. Very little has been written about Iqbal's structure. When I say structure, I mean a blend of thinking and feeling and the language which clothes it. The language by itself provides a clue to structure. This structure which it unfolds is the essence of Iqbal's philosophy. The essence has a cadence which awakens consciousness, and stirs the unconscious, the archetypal structure of Iqbal's poetry and philosophy.

On the feeling side the archetypal structure is a blend of fear, love and knowledge. The question arises, how does thought come into it? The two kinds of thought penetrate to give a wholeness to Iqbal's philosophy.

M.Schuon has maintained that each Semitic religion has a dominant motif. The dominant motif in Judaism is fear. The dominant motif in Christianity is Love. The dominant motif in Islam is knowledge. This does not mean that all these motifs are

not present in each of these religions. One motif is dominant. The other two have secondary importance.

Iqbal's main concern in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is the adaptation of knowledge to Islam. According to Iqbal, there are three main sources of knowledge :

1. History
2. Nature and
3. Self.

When Iqbal talks about History, he does not mean stories of exploit of kings and conquerors and feelings and thoughts of saints, poets and thinkers, but his main pre-occupation is the historical process.

When he talks about Nature, he not only discusses sense-perception which provides us with the raw material of scientific knowledge, but also Nature as a living force.

The third source of knowledge is the human personality. Iqbal thinks that in Muslim history only the sufis studied the human personality in its depth.

The emphasis on the value of the human personality gave us a great positive attitude. This is a life-affirming and life-giving philosophy. Indeed it gives supreme value to "man" who according to Foucault, "is an invention of the 19th century". Man, according to Iqbal, can elevate his ego to an extent that God Himself can ask man about the nature and direction of his Destiny. He goes so far as to address man as "the seed, the field, the harvest". Man is the root, the soil and the fruit. But he himself is the user—the one who benefits from the fruit.

In many poems he tried to obviate the sense of devaluation among the colonised people. It is true that the awareness of the people had been mangled and severely damaged by the colonisers. Iqbal tried to heal the wounds of the Muslims who had not only lost a kingdom but were also groping for an awareness of

self-identity. What havoc this sense of self-devaluation induced by the colonial rule can play has been portrayed by Frantz Fanon in his *Wretched of the Earth* in a masterly fashion! But colonisation had inflicted wounds on the soul of the Muslims. The first balm applied to those wounds was to kindle memories of their own history, their own tradition, their own culture. Iqbal thus gave a spiritual "space" to the Indian Muslims, and gave them boundaries, a home which, by definition, is a place where one can day-dream, have a reverie. Thus he gave them space—which they could cultivate, cherish and fertilize—in which they could live and breathe. Of course he gave them not only the idea of space but also provided them with an image of that space.

His glorification of Muslim history led to the realization that Induction as a method of scientific investigation was first propagated by Muslims. In fact Renaissance was the result of Muslim conception of Induction. The glorification was meant to awaken Muslims to an awareness of the present realities and to adapt themselves to the new developments in Science and Technology. In this process of adaptation Iqbal quite often resorts to apologetics in his monumental work, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. glorification of the Ego through a glorification of the past has its dangers. In a considerable portion of our past we encounter a very strong streak of patriarchal and too masculine a trend of thinking in which passion for mastery and conquest is evident. But the opposite of this trend is also found in the liberal and humanistic philosophy of sufis, saints and poets. If one strengthens the ego on the first pattern, the ego can easily develop an inflated image of godlikeness. It can drive us to conquer, manipulate, subdue and oppress others.

Desacralization implies a total denuding of the nature of Beauty. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon his soul) has said: "The whole world is a mosque." In his lecture on "the Meaning of Prayer" Iqbal thinks that when a scientist observes nature he is praying. That is, he has an attitude of reverence towards nature.

How far is it true of all scientists or all science we do not know ?

Again in *Payam-i-Mashriq* he says :—

ہائے علم تا افتد بدامت  
یقین کم کن گرفتار شکمے باش  
عمل خواہی یقین را پختہ ترکن  
یکے جوئے و ، یکے بین و یکے باش

Here to know is not to pray. There in order to know one must involve oneself in doubt and decrease the intensity of faith. Iqbal admired the development of modern science, but could not swallow the Cartesian method of doubt. He, therefore, denounces *Khirad* or thought, quite often.

In his poetry one encounters quite often a serious devaluation of thought—that it can reach nowhere. Similar denunciations are found among other sufis—for instance, Maulana Thanvi, in his *Basair-ud-Dawair*, thinks that all thinking is circular—it begins where it ends and again reaches the same end and so the vicious circle goes on.

But at other times one notices in Iqbal the vital importance of thought and thinking. For example, in *Secrets of the Self*, he relates a story about Sheikh Ali Hajveri and the young man from Merv :

I will tell a story of his perfection and enclose a whole rose-bed in a single bud.

A young man, cypress tall  
Came from the town of Merv to Lahore.  
He went to see the venerable saint,  
That the sun might dispel his darkness.  
I am hemmed in he said, by foes ;  
I am as a glass in the midst of stones.  
Do thou teach me, O sire of heavenly rank,  
How to lead my life amongst enemies !

The wise Director, in whose nature  
Love had allied beauty with majesty,  
Answered : Thou art unread in life's lore.  
Careless of its end and its beginning.  
Be without fear of others !  
Thou art a sleeping force ; awake !  
When the stone thought itself to be glass,  
It became glass and got into the way of breaking,  
If the traveller thinks weak,  
He delivers his soul unto the brigand.  
How long wilt thou regard thyself as water and clay?  
Create from the clay a flaming Sinai !  
Why be angry with mighty men ?  
Why complain of enemies ?  
I will declare the truth : thine enemy is thy friend :  
His existence crowns thee with glory  
Whosoever knows the states of the Self  
Considers a powerful enemy to be a blessing from God.  
To the seed of Man the enemy is as a rain-cloud.  
He awakens its potentialities.  
If thy spirit be strong, the stones in thy way are as water :  
What recks the torrent of the ups and downs of the road ?  
The sword of resolution is whetted by the stones is the way  
And put to proof by travelling stage after stage.  
What is the use of eating and sleeping like a beast ?  
What is the use of being, unless thou have strength in **thyself** ?  
When thou mak'st thyself strong with Self,  
Thou wilt destroy thy world at the pleasure.  
If thou wouldst pass away, become free of Self:  
If thou wouldst live, become full of Self !  
Who is death ? To become oblivious to Self,  
Why imagine that it is the parting of soul and body ?  
Abide in Self, like Joseph !  
Advance from captivity to empire !  
Think of Self and be a man of action

Be a man of God, bear mysteries within !

The story emphasises two important points about human motivation :

Number one is the point that thinking determines the nature and conduct of your personality. He says : If you think, that you are weak, you will become weak, if you think that you are strong and powerful you will be strong and powerful. If you seriously ascribe any moral quality to your ego, and think about it persistently you are bound to develop that quality. He maintains a similar position in his other poems such as *Pas Chi Bayad Kard* in which he ascribes the spiritual and material degeneration of the people of the East to their confused and timid thinking.

The second important point is that it is thinking which determines the nature of your emotions. 'As you think so will you feel' and not the converse that 'as you feel so shall you think.'

Thinking involves concepts. Without conceptual thinking, science, philosophy, in fact, no academic discipline, except perhaps the Fine Arts, is possible. All sufis denounce thinking in concepts when it is a question of being close to God. In fact they think that concepts are a veil which conceals the Absolute from us. you dissolve the concepts into experience, you cannot reach the station of closeness to God.

When thoughts are expressed in images, poetic images, mythological images. then one experiences the thoughts of the heart. It is the heart which is *Qalb* and which can exercise "*himma*", and become capable of perceiving spiritual realities.

It seems to me that Iqbal attaches considerable value to thinking but he cannot outgrow the Bergsonian ternary of Instinct, Intellect and Intuition. The second category—the Intellect—has to be realized fully before you reach the station of Intuition, or Love. Intellect thus becomes the means to the stage of Intuition or Love. This is not the position of sufis. They think that you develop



love by constant invocation of the Supreme Name, and reciting litanies and chanting hymns and prayers. Intellect does not seem to relish prayers, and stronger the ego, the greater is the resistance to prayer.

### Iqbal And Sufism

While reading Iqbal one gets the general impression that his attitude towards sufism was ambivalent. At one time he seems to condemn Sufism and the sufi institutions, but at other times he seems to be a devotee of sufism regarding it as the sole way out of that desperate spiritual state which Rene Guenon called "Dispersion into multiplicity." We have to find out exactly what he consistently condemns and what he admires or attaches value to in the sufi doctrines.

It might be a healthier approach to the problem if I start with a consideration of *Qalb* or heart. According to the Chishti Saint, Hazrat Nizamud Din Auliya, heart is the abode of Allah. The point of beginning with this concept is that heart or love plays a central role in Iqbal's philosophy. Secnodly, in modern times heart has become the organ which is most in danger. Harvey's heart has an inherent dichotomy—right and left, and in modern times this cleavage has caused an alarming increase in the diseases of the heart. Heart has become the killer, a palpitator, a robber of health and poise, a disturber of sleep and a organ which mysteriously fails. It is not this heart that Iqbal and sufism regard as the abode of Allah.

One function of *Qalb* or heart is that it is capable of perceiving the inner being of Reality. It does so by developing 'Himma', courage to break the conventional patterns of perception. 'Himma' develops when one dares to imagine. The highest stage of imagination is what Ibn-i-Arabi calls creative imagination. There is a valid distinction between true and false imagination. Day-dreams, reveries, idle fantasies etc. are all instances of false imagination. True imagination is an instrument of perception, with which you perceive innermost being of Reality.

In *Javid Nama*, Iqbal tries to answer two questions :—What is Being ? and what is good ? Are you alive, or dead, or dying ? For an answer to this question one must seek three witnesses :

The first witness is Consciousness of self, to see oneself by one's own light, the second witness is other people's consciousness by whose light you see yourself. This others or others is vague. But it appears that Iqbal meant by other, one's spiritual mentors, not the people around you. Third witness is the consciousness of the Essence of God seeing oneself by the light of this Essence. If you do not shake and tremble and collapse in front of this light, you will reach eternity and self-sustenance. This is the abode of yourself. This is real life. Life means seeing the Essence unveiled: *Momin*, the man of God, is not satisfied with attributes. For Mustafa insisted on Sight. Sight however means a longing for a witness who may testify thyself.

After giving the description of the development of spirituality, he writes a few verses which seem to contradict this description. He says : Thou seest the Lord through self and self through Him. Neither more nor less thou seest of God than that. Again in *Payam-i-Mashriq* he says :

“If you seek God, you will see nothing but yourself,  
If you seek yourself, you will find nothing but Him.”

The contradiction is that in first stage of development, one sees oneself by one's own light. The point is that one cannot see oneself except by the light of God. This is also the sufi position. It is only through *Mujahada* that one can see God by looking into oneself ; it is through introversion that Reality is revealed to you. We may take a term from Silberer and call it intro-determination. Introversion can be natural state, but into-determination implies that one is determined to look within, to confront the witnesses, the barrenness and the desert. This desert can only be converted into a perfumed garden if our efforts develop a response from '*Barakah*', the divine grace.



What does Iqbal mean when he says that the first stage is when one sees one's self by one's own light. Surely he is talking about ego. Iqbal never makes a distinction between the ego and the self. The ego has its own light of sorts but it is different from the divine light. Very few people see the divine light without first receiving an injury to the ego. After the "I" is wounded they start looking for the spirit generally under the guidance of master or mentor—there is also a mystic saying "one who is not injured, does not know what it is to be healed." The fall of man contains the provision of his redemption. Iqbal himself has his Master, Maulana Rumi, but he is a turbulent seeker, he makes nimble transitions from one Master to the other.

It has become fashionable especially in the Third World to label all spirituality as an escape. And Iqbal sometimes supports this view. It is very seldom specified as to escape from what to what. It is generally said it is an escape from reality; which reality? Surely they mean escape from external reality—socio-economic, political conditions etc. But we seldom realize that a total preoccupation with socio-economic reality might be an escape from the reality within, which preoccupation might result in an escape from all intrinsic values,—Justice, Truth, Beauty and Love. Which escape is more rewarding? It is a difficult question.

Surely, there is nothing intrinsically wrong in escape. You sense the presence of a dangerous animal in the jungle, it would be wise to flee and take to one's heels.

Almost the first sentence in the prayer when we start praying is that we seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan. Marco Pallas writing in his fascinating book *Peaks and Lamas* states that he once asked the most venerable Lama in one of the monasteries in Tibet: What is the essence of Buddhism? the Lama gave a laconic reply "Refuge". B.F. Skinner in a thought-provoking essay called "Flight from laboratory", contends that brilliant people succumb to the blandishments of popular acclaim when they

desert laboratories and start doing social service and social welfare work. He criticises Albert Schweitzer that he involved himself with social reform and wasted his talents, which if they were expressed in a laboratory, might have produced something which is beneficial to the entire humanity. But Skinner forgets that just as there are some people who flee from laboratories, there are others who flee into laboratories. They are so frightened of having contact with real people that they seek refuge in the closed walls of a laboratory. Sometimes, thinking may be an escape from feeling.

Thought is one of the points on which Iqbal always dwells with eloquence but with a considerable degree of ambivalence. Quite early in his lecture on "Knowledge and Religious Experience" he maintains that in its deeper movement unfolding thought is capable of reaching an immanent infinite in whose self unfolding movements the various finite concepts are merely moments." Later, he elevates the capacity for thinking to a still higher level. He says :

"Its movement becomes possible only because of the implicit presence in its finite individuality of the infinite which keeps alive within it the flame of inspiration and sustains it in its endless pursuit. It is a mistake to regard it as inconclusive for it too, in its own way, is a greeting of the finite with the infinite."

Iqbal speaks about the unity of human consciousness. By unity, I think, he means the inter-relatedness of mental events. My toothache is related to my frustration and anxiety ; that is, both belong to the same organic whole. My toothache cannot in the same way be related to another person's anxiety, although his anxiety may be about my toothache. Iqbal says :

"Devotional sufism alone tried to understand the meaning of the unity of human experience which the Quran declares to be one of the three sources of knowledge.

"In the higher sufism of Islam unitive experience is not the finite ego effacing its own identity by some sort of absorption

into the infinite ego,' it is rather the infinite passing into the loving embrace of finite, as Rumi says :

علم حق در علم صوفی گم شود  
 این سخن کے باور مردم شود

“Divine knowledge is lost in the knowledge of the saint. How is it possible for people to believe in such a thing.”

What is the difference between the finite being absorbed in the Infinite, and the Infinite flowing into the finite or the Infinite embracing the finite. How does the latter unity differ from the unity attained in the former case? Is it a difference between “Consciousness” and “Ecstasy”. Is it that in the former case, the general attitude of the person concerned is that of lassitude and passive fatalism and in the latter case it is dynamism, vigilance and initiative? Iqbal demands of sufism, a revolutionary outlook, which actively fights the evils of the world, takes up arms in defence of the oppressed and wipes out the sense of self-devaluation from their souls. Self-respect and self-regard are intrinsic values for him, and he does not like to see a human being bow before anyone but God. It is this picture of combativeness against oppression of keeping how to become aware of his dignity, which distinguishes Iqbal from other sufi thinkers.

Iqbal endorses Rumi when he says :

مصلحت در دینِ عیسوی غار و کوه  
 مصلحت در دینِ ما جنگ و شکوه

The significant word is *maslahat*, that is, a strategy, and not the essence. The strategy in Islam is war and glory. The strategy in Christianity is caves and mountains.

Strategies differ in two religions, but not their essence. The essence is the same—both are manifestations of the Divine, revelations of the Divine fountain-head.

The interesting point is that sometimes Iqbal also glorifies the cave and the mountain. In a lovely poem he has a verse which says :

If the Independent Beauty (God) likes to reveal itself in deserts,  
which is better, city or a desert ?

The words which invite us to think are the greeting of the finite with the infinite. Is it a one-sided greeting and/or is it mutual ? Does the finite only greet or does the infinite respond ? But since infinite is potentially present in the finite thought, it becomes a greeting of the infinite with the finite, greeting of the potential with the actual.

One wonders here that Iqbal who consistently devalues thinking comparing it with Intuition or Love in his poetry, what kind of thought is he talking about. Is he talking about the thought of the heart, when thought is not the Harvey's heart which in the words of James Hillman is a killer. Or is it the *Qalb*, the heart which is the abode of God ? When *Qalb* is moved by the '*Himma*', it expresses itself in thought which perceive the imaginal and not the imaginary. It is the creative act of the *Qalb* or thought. It is certainly not the discursive thinking, or ratiocination of the mind, and it certainly does not express itself in concepts. It expresses itself in images which may later be embodied in concepts for purposes of logical statements.

Even in his poetry Iqbal assigns considerable value to thinking. He regards thinking as an agent of internal change, as a transformer of personality—almost like stoics and in our own time like Albert Ellis.

Throughout his poetry, however, he eulogises "Love", Love as "the great healer of all ailments". His eloquence is unsurpassed when he contemplates his "heart".

"O My heart, O my hearts, my ocean, my ship, my harbour.  
Did you drop on my dust like dew, Did you reveal yourself like a

blossom on my clay ?” Love, when it fills a heart must lead to “the sacrifice of the superior function”. Without this sacrifice nothing is achieved. I will cite here Iqbal’s understanding of some of Rumi’s verses :

“The sufi’s book is not composed of ink and letters ; it is not but a heart white as snow.”

The scholar’s, possession is pen-marks. What is the sufi’s, possession—footmarks ?

The sufi stalks the game like a hunter, he sees the musk-deer’s track and follows the footprints.

For some while the track of the deer is the proper clue for him, but afterwards it is the musk gland that is his guide.

To get to the stage guided by the musk gland is better than a hundred stages of following the track and roaming about.

Iqbal explains the verses in his own way :

“The scientific observer of Nature is a kind of mystic seeker in the act of prayer. Although at present he follows only the footprints of the musk-deer—his thirst for knowledge is eventually sure to lead him to footprints of the deer.”

According to Jung, there are four functions which regulate man’s behaviour—thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition. In struggle of existence, we have adapted to one function only and ignored the other functions. The function which dominates our adaptation is called the superior function. According to Jung if we do not sacrifice the superior function we cannot achieve the wholeness or individuation.

The inability to sacrifice one’s superior function has been very well described by Attar in *Mantiquat-Tair* :

“The nightingale cannot leave for the quest of *Seemurgh*, because it is attached to the rose too much. The duck cannot leave

water, because it is addicted to water. The hawk cannot leave its prey.

These are examples of not being able to sacrifice the superior function. The concept of *Tark-i-Sabab* found in Iqbal emphasises the same aspect. But somehow Iqbal did not formulate clearly the concept of sacrifice of superior function for spiritual growth.

There is a sufi saying :

گر راه بر تست عادت خویش  
مردود و مناقی نہ درویش

The explanation of Rumi's verses does not seem to be in consonance with the general trend of Rumi's thought, or for that matter, sufi thought. A scholar follows the footmarks by his thinking. According to Rumi, one who follows the footmarks, does so endlessly and wanders about. The transition is from the observation of the footmarks to the perception of the musk-deer's track. This change of perceptual mode is what we can call "sacrifice of the superior function." The scholars' approach is based upon the superiority of the thinking function. Rumi contends that the superior function has to be sacrificed so that other functions, which are consciously regarded as "inferior", are also awakened to enrich the life of the spirit; without this sacrifice, nothing can be achieved. It is this emphasis on sacrifice which is present as conversion of feeling into their opposites.

There is another ambivalence which projects itself into Iqbal's thought. Talking about Sheikh Ahmad of Sirhind, he quotes a passage from him which delineates stations of the *Qalb* (The Heart). After mentioning the first station, he goes on to say : "Beyond this there are other stations known as *Ruh*, *Sirr-i-Khafi* and *Sir-t-Ikhfa*; each of these stations, which together constitute what is technically called *Alam-i-Amr*, has its own characteristic states and experiences. After having passed through these stations, the seeker of truth gradually receives the illumination of "Divine Names" and "Divine Attributes", and finally the illuminations of the Divine essence.



Iqbal quotes this passage with approval but he castigates modern psychology for not having touched even the outer fringes of the subject. He looks to psychology for developing a new technique better suited to the temper of our times. It appears that Iqbal wants a psychological apologetic to be developed for religion. The concepts used by Sheikh Ahmad are archaic from his point of view. He demands that someone like Nietzsche should emerge—though he was a failure.

The antique of this passage shows Iqbal's contempt for tradition, and traditional nomenclature. He does not say even once that modern psychology, since it is not supported by a metaphysics, is concerned largely with trivialities or authoritarian techniques of controlling other human beings. No amount of apologetics will help, and the language used by Sheikh Ahmad is the language of the soul, suited to spiritual aspirations. True, when he says "Medieval mysticism has done greater havoc in the Muslim East than anywhere else" far from preparing the Muslims for participation in the march of history, it has taught him a false renunciation, and made him perfectly contented with his ignorance and spiritual thralldom.

This is a strong denunciation of mysticism. But it is not the mystic who obstructed the march of history but colonialism which infused a sense of self-devaluation among the people. Sufis are, perhaps, the only people who refuse to copy the modern West. Hence they give the appearance of a smug quietude, which now and then erupts into states of ecstasy. For Iqbal, Nationalism is a menace, but sufis are the only people who openly proclaim ideal of Universal Love—irrespective of cast, creed or nation. Iqbal himself was eloquent about the contrast between the wordly life and the spiritual life.

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**Spiritual Life And Stress**

Let me begin my talk on spiritual life by explaining the concept of "stress". Stress is a metaphor. It is taken from metallurgical science. Every threat, challenge, dilemma places one under stress ; it causes airplane crashes, suicides, murders. Coping with, and managing, stress in the modern world is a technique (as we lit candles before statues or we use charms in front of tombs of saints). The popular meaning of stress is a force, pressure or strong influence acting upon a physical object or person. This meaning is current from 18th century. But people living in an age of science can experience stress, as perhaps only a primitive people can experience the sun as a divinity.

Our age is the age of stress. This age is at times described as the iron age, the steam age, the electrical age and, after Hiroshima, the atomic age. It might perhaps just as adequately be described as the age of stress and strain.

We are constantly surrounded by a multitude of mechanical forces, by gigantic engines capable of destruction and ruin but restricted and controlled by engineers into useful and productive channels. We walk our tunneled streets and side in man-made courses. We live in columns, beams and girders, side on trusses and arches, sleep on planes, trains and ships. Thus our contact with nature is remote, but with metals it is intimate. We do not feel in our veins the sweet sounds of birds, of running streams, wafts of fresh air.

Stress has another aspect. Without undergoing stress we cannot shape the mis-shapen, we cannot convert the prosaic into

poetic, we cannot assemble bricks and stones, build them into houses. Stress can be creative.

When the birds in *Mantiq-ut-Tair* set out to see the *Simurgh*, they have to experience a great deal of stress ; it is then that they find the King of Birds and thus find themselves. In finding oneself one has to exert, experience an enormous amount of stress and suffering. It is the suffering of loneliness, of separation from the beloved, sometimes the distance from the *Murshid*. Experiencing and accepting the stress leads one to self-encounter.

Hopkins' poetry and his poetics echo two teams : stress and instress. Hopkins asks us to consider the way we place the stresses on words and syllables. He understood that correct accent to stress is vital for the music and meaning of a poem. Stress is making a thing more, or making it markedly what it already is ; it is the bringing out of its nature. Hopkins makes a simple point. We must receive stress.

Being receptive is an active and reverential mode of awareness, not the least passive. Hopkins says that he did not see the field, but that he attended to it as a distinct place with a unique identity. To see the identity or self of the field he held as if his eyes were still growing with a companion. His eye and the ear are for the most part shut and instress cannot come. J. Miller describes the awareness as a freshness and virginity of the mind with a lack of preoccupation with past or future.

Instress is nowhere specifically defined ; but the two terms, instress and inscape, are used together for the first time in some early notes on Parmenides, Hopkins says:

“Perhaps...it means that all things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it...His feeling for instress, for the flush and foredrawn, and for inscape is most striking, and from this one can understand Plato's reverence for him as the great father of Realism.”

Hopkin's interpretations of Parmenides are tinged with Christian predilection; and here "instress" seems to imply a supernatural force which binds in, bounds, the finite One. It is in effect, for Hopkins, the hand of God upon His creation—the vividness and completeness of the Divine concept, in which nothing, ultimately, is 'extended' or 'unforedrawn'. Hence about six years later the rudely arched timber-frames of a barn at Roehampton could prompt him to write :

"I thought how sadly beauty of inscape was unknown and buried away from simple people and yet how near at hand it was if they had eyes to see it and it could be called out everywhere again."

The perception of inscape is marked simultaneously, as a rule, by a flow of instress, as though the individual beholder becomes mystically one with the Whole. The word instress is used in a bewildering variety of contexts, but its combined epistemological and mystical value is brought out in the following :

"I saw the inscape...freshly, as if my eye were still growing, though with a companion the eye and the ear are for the most part shut and instress cannot come."

As in mysticism, solitude and concentration are preliminary to the act of 'illumination', the inflow of supersensuous 'knowledge'. The word instress is also used later in a frankly theological sense to describe an access of Divine grace—"instressing the affective will."

In Hopkin's Journal we see how a deliberate act of contemplation seems to produce a purely subjective revelation :

"But such a lovely damasking in the sky today I never felt before. The blue was charged with simple instress."

There is a true and a false "instress of nature" for, as he says elsewhere, "When you look hard at a thing it seems to look hard at you"; yet only by constantly refreshing the mind by looking

hard and long in this way can you "remember or believe how deep the inscape in things is."

What is perhaps his most brilliant prose celebrates the self and its wonders : "That taste of myself, of I and me above and in all things, which is more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum..." Other selves were mysterious. As a shy man, he found it easier to reach natural "inscapes" than to know other selves. He had not Newman's psychological finesse ; wrote no psychic portraits matching by their sharpness and delicacy his notations of ash-tress. The men in his poems are seen as from a distance—sympathetically but generically.

Making the eye grow longer brings up another element and that is the spiritual element. It is here that "spirit" enters in order to unfold the self—Spirit is the life and light of the self.

A spiritual man does not only believe in God, Allah, but he is near and close to Allah. In fact, sometimes he is intimate with God.

Near, close and intimate are aspects of spiritual space, and not of physical space. Similarly concepts far, distant and remote are aspects of the spirit. Ainul Quzat in his brilliant analysis of space and time has pointed out the special qualities of spiritual space as it reveals itself in the Holy Quran. Similarly time, when we talk about today, future and past, and now—this is spiritual time.

In spiritual life you are close to God.

Similarly, you are intimate with Allah when you pray, when you have a dialogue with God, when you are intimate with God.

Another mode of prayer is meditation. Prayer is subjective, while meditation is objective. You meditate when Intelligence gets absorbed in the objective Absolute. (There is a space of Orison in which no evil can enter.)

The personal character of non-canonical prayer does not imply that it is free from rules, for human souls—as the Psalms admirably

show—are always alike in their miseries and joys, and therefore in their duties towards God ; it is not enough for a man to formulate his petition; he must express also his gratitude, resignation, regret, resolution and praise.

In his petition man is concerned to look for some favour, provided it be of a nature agreeable to God, and so to the universal Norm; thankfulness is the consciousness that every favour of destiny is a grace which might not have been given ; and if it be true that man has always something to ask, it is just as true, to say the least, that he has always grounds for gratitude ; without this no prayer is possible.

Most men are supposed to be normal. They are normal if we equate the normal with the average. Spinoza's god-intoxicated man is normal, the man who breathes in the last chapter of the Ethics, on Human Freedom. It is in this chapter that Spinoza says that all noble things are as difficult as they are rare. Normal man is the noble man, who is also rare. He is not easy to find. He is elusive and demands a serious chasing after.

Average man is the unhappy man who lives the life of absurdity without knowing it. He has no definite goals, no well-defined purposes, and runs after many different purposes, however conflicting their interests. He is caught in the bondages of family, of society. He tries to flee them but cannot. There is no moment in his life which he can call "the now," "the present." The present is harrowed by the past and is haunted by the future.

Rich and poor are all bound by bonds of slavery. The average man is the slave of money, of other people's opinions, orders and thoughts. He has no thought of his own. He is the slave of other people's irony, where he cannot judge his own action to be right or wrong. He has no conscience of his own. His conscience is dormant, unappeased, The voice of conscience is low but it is a voice which must be heard. His liberties are limited ; when he flies a kite he thinks that he has acquired liberty.



There are variations to which the average man drifts. But we are not basically interested in the average man and his states of decadence.

Essentially, the average man is the type that has no ideal other than that of pleasure in the more or less sordid sense of the word; this concupiscent man who not knowing how to master himself has to be mastered by others, so that his great virtue will be submission and fidelity.

Heart is the abode of Allah. But whoever forgets the heart and the abode of Allah generally moves with the coarse desires of a human being. If his coarse desires overpower him and demand compulsive obedience, this spirituality suffers, and his bestial nature takes hold of all his faculties, his intelligence, his money, his volition. He has no sense of the sacred, and sacred becomes irrelevant to his thinking, and his feeling. Sense of sacred suffuses a person when he is possessed with the numinous, the indescribable reality which surpasses intellectual distinction. Sense of the sacred involves experience of the archetypes or, what one may call, archetypal experience. People who live on the level of the instinct seldom have the archetypal experience. Instincts always furnish man with the paraphernalia for their emotional life.

Spiritual man is a man with a heart, a heart that imagines and loves. Its imagination is creative in the sense that its images have a reality of their own. They move according to their own dynamic. It is these images which relate him with angels and bring him with direct contact with spiritual beings. If the heart is full of love, no hatred, no malice, no ill will enters it. Heart is complete and full, when it is charged with love, when love becomes its motive force; it is a love which is all-encompassing, it radiates its glow.

Spiritual man lives with the spirit—and “The spirit bloweth where it listeth.” It means that no form can preclude the spirit from growing in whichever direction it grows. Spirit is non-formal and it is shapeless. It expresses itself in styles, in a general bearing

towards things and events. Concepts do not interfere with the growth of the spirit. When the Japanese who generally live in wooden houses allow one pond of fish to grow behind their houses, and their houses merge into nature surreptitiously and quietly where no artifice is involved, no tricks, no craftsmanship to heal the separation between the house and nature, the Japanese regard it as the work of the spirit. The Japanese regard their houses as works of Art. Artistically, they have their tea-ceremonies—all sitting on the floor, no chairs, no tables.

Spiritual life involves intimacy with Allah, an intimacy in which you address your soliloquies, undertones of speech, and gesture, and your silences of solitude. In intimacy you can also have dialogues with God. In these dialogues you generally pronounce a question and try to hear His answers. Hearing His answers demands an expectant and attentive attitude. Sometimes the answers are all unspoken but intuited. As Sufis claim that when you recite a line of the Quran, Allah responds in one way or another, provided your attitude is reverential and meditative.

Sometimes the dialogue is only a feeling and an ambience of two persons hearing a dialogue. Or there can be a dialogue that Ibn-i-Arabi had with God so beautifully described by Henri Corbin in his book on Ibn-i-Arabi. Such a dialogue, of course, is possible only when a Sufi's creative imagination is at work.

Still another aspect of this relationship is that Allah sees you and you see Allah: of course we all believe that All sees us but very few realise and feel that Allah sees us. The feeling that Allah sees fills us with fear and awe, reverence and sanctity.

“The Real, Most High”, says: “And He is with you, wheresoever you are.” “Nowhere is there a secret counsel between three persons but He is the fourth of them, nor between five but He is the sixth of them, nor less than that nor more but He is with them wheresoever they are” (58 : 7), “And We are nearer to him than his life-vein” (50 : 16), “And there does not lie concealed,

from your Lord the weight of an atom in earth or in the heaven" (10: 16)". And there are numerous other verses as such in the Quran. All those verses obviously mean that the Real, the High is Himself compresent with even the smallest atom (of the universe). But His compresence is not like that of the bodies with the bodies as it occurs in the world of corporeal things, for Divine Existence is free from corporeality; nor is it like that of the substance with the accidents. The Divine compresence with the whole of the universe is like the compresence of soul with body. The soul is neither within nor is it without the body; the former and the latter are members of different worlds. Soul belongs to one world, and the body to the other. The bodily properties, say, of exit and entrance, conjunction and separation, do not apply to soul, yet there is not a single atom (of the body) with which it may not be present. The compresence 'He, who knows his self, knows his Nourisher' alludes to this mystery. In short, I have interpreted those verses as to have referred to a space, which must be appropriate to His eminence and transcendence. (It is such that) He is with every tiny particle of the Universe and yet is high and above it.

There are a number of Traditions from the Apostle, may peace be on him. On the narration from Anas bin Malik, May God be pleased with him, the Apostle said: "Says God, Most High; 'By My Might, by My Glory, by My Unity, by My creation, by recourse to Me, by My stay at the Throne, and by My Exalted Plane, indeed I am shy of my servants, male and female, who grow old in Islam (unless) I grant them relief from chastisement.'" And says God, Most High; "By My Majesty and by My Exalted Plane (or Space), no one shall have entered Paradise and shall have a dark heart." Thus, the Traditions have frequent usage of the words like 'My Might,' My 'Majesty', and 'My Exalted Plane' (or Space). If all of the Traditions are quoted here, this thesis will become unwieldy. Consequently, it seems enough to quote only one more Tradition. The 'Commander of the Faithful' 'Ali b. Abi Talib, and Thauban, may God be pleased with them, reported the Apostle as saying:

“Moses Said : ‘O, the Nourisher, are Thou near so that I must approach voice ? Art Thou farther away so that I must approach Thee loudly ? Indeed, I sense Thy gentle voice, but do not perceive Thine whereabouts.’ The Lord replied : ‘I am behind you and in front of you, at your right, at your left, and I am companion of My servant, when he remembers Me ; and I am with him when he is in supplication before Me.’ *Tafsir-i-Nasiri* contains a Tradition as reported by Thauban from the narrations of Anas, may God be pleased with them : “Once the Apostle of God passed by a man who was uttering, ‘By Him, who is veiled in six heavens. The Apostle interrupted and said : ‘Wait ; He is above everything, and His Majesty fills all.’ Ibn ‘Abbas narrated : “One who believes that He ascended from the Tomb of Rock at Jerusalem, is in error. His command surrounds all and permeates every part of this earth, No space—neither in heaven, nor in earth, nor in sea, nor in land, nor in air—is vacant of Him. He, the Most High and Manifest, is in every place.” *Tafsir-i-Nasiri* has a narration from Ibn Abbas, “Once the Apostle of God recited : ‘He is the First, and (He is) the Last ; and (He is) the Apparent and (He is) the Hidden’ (57 : 3), and said ; ‘He is the First, for there is nothing before Him ; He is the Last, for there is nothing after Him ; He is the Apparent, for there is nothing, external to Him ; and He is the Hidden, for there is nothing beside Him’.” Moreover it has been reported in the Traditions that ‘God is not merged in, nor is absent from a thing.’ Traditions on this subject clearly demonstrate that God has a distinct Place (Space) of His Own. The Traditions, however further establish that His Space is free from the particularity of dimension. Not a single particle of the world is alienated from the Divine Existence, though He is not in the neighbourhood of, nor is at distance from, any of His creation, and He is not contiguous with them either.

Spiritual life makes direct approaches to nature. It is not the mechanized or industrialised nature, but living nature, which the alchemists regarded as full of powerful individualities. It is nature that can speak to you, be it a vast desert or a dense jungle.

As its awesome beauty stirs the human soul to look for the infinite, all great art is born of its appreciation and contemplation. You do not only look at nature, you look hard, very hard so that you are able to instress the inscape.

It is this nature through which you can perceive God's Beauty. You can greet the nature everytime you look at it and it will respond. Early in the morning when you see the sun, you tend to ask the question : Who am I ? Wherefrom do I come ? The answer will be facilitated by nature through reflection into yourself. As you walk along, it is not that you approach nature. Nature seems to come to you, to approach you to enlarge your heart, and wildness induces some kind of dizziness to your head.

A spiritual man is close to nature. He sees the spirit embodied in natural surroundings. He speaks to nature, in silence and in solitude.

The North American Indian, says Schuon, had no intention of 'fixing' himself on this earth, where things crystallise or petrify in time if they do not evaporate : 'this explains his aversion to houses, especially stone ones, and also the absence of writing which, from his perspective, would 'fix' and "kill" the sacred flow of the spirit. For many of the nomadic tribes, the notion of putting plough or spade to the earth would have been exactly comparable to what desecration of the High Altar is for the Christian. In certin of his rites he humbled himself before the whole of creation, because all visible things were created before him and, being older than he, deserved respect ; but, at the same time, man was pre-eminent because he alone was capable of knowing the 'Great Spirit' (Wakan Tanka, in Sioux terms). As Viceroy he knew and listened to his Master, and as Viceroy he respected and spoke to his province.

## **SINCERITY**

"Sincerity", according to M.Schuon, "is the absence of falsehood in inward and outward behaviour ; to lie is deliberately to

mislead : one can lie to one's neighbour, to oneself and to God." The essential element in this virtue is reference to God. It is important to point out this reference, because in the modern world, sincerity has been made an equivalent to openness or exhibitionism. If a man confesses his weaknesses, and admits his shortcomings—his versions depending upon the nature of his audience he is regarded as sincere. If a man confesses that he is greedy or selfish, he is regarded as sincerely greedy or sincerely selfish. One can admit a fault publicly with a view to wallowing in an ornamental description of the fault. There are generally two motives in this kind of public display. One that he wants to repeat the performance of the misdeed in imagination, thus yielding to a kind of repetition compulsion ; the other is that he takes pride in the fault and wants to attract public attention or admiration to it. A sincere criminal or a sincere cynic can enroll followers and admirers, and if he does, his pride is strengthened and fortified by the approval secured from his hopeless supporters. Quite a few artists and writers of today have written their "confessions" which are pornographic in character. The pornographic element is condoned because it is sincere, although this is the principal attraction of their sordid admissions. A pious man, when he conceals his shortcomings, has so far two reasons : one that he wants to and tries to outgrow them by a constant application of technique of "mindfulness", or *takhliya*. He is not a hypocrite because he does not hide them in order to deceive others. In all humility and steadfastness he strives to eradicate his imperfections. Secondly, he has a genuine fear that a public display of his weaknesses might tempt suggestible minds to follow his example. Inwardly, and with the help of his spiritual mentor he fights against unwholesome tendencies in himself.

As for pride, it is the vilest of the vices. Boethius defined it thus : "All the other vices flee from God and only pride sets itself up against Him," Saint Augustine said : "Other vices attach themselves to evil, that evil may be accomplished : pride alone attaches itself to good, that good may perish." Pride has been denounced



by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and Muslim sufi Saints. In fact in the divine creation it has been regarded as a quality of Iblis :

And when He said to the angels : "Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all save Iblis. He demurred through pride, and so became a disbeliever."

Sincerity is sometimes applied to a half truth. A man in order to rationalise and justify himself may utter a half truth, which is equivalent to a deliberate half lie, which may consist in suppressing some aspects of the truth. A half truth which emanates from half knowledge is excusable provided ignorance can be condoned. The point is that most half truths are spoken from some pernicious intentions. It is the desire to hurt others or to create a scandal which prompts them to mislead others by making a statement which has a semblance of truth but in reality it is far from it.

Islam emphasises the importance of knowledge and categorically regards ignorance as evil. But here knowledge is not literacy. For quite a few illiterates have "knowledge".

For example, Caesar tells us that Driuids held that to commit their sacred doctrines to writing would be to desecrate them. Many other examples could be brought forward to show that the absence of writing like the absence of agriculture, can have a positive cause, and in any case, however accustomed we may be to thinking powers as inseparable from literacy, a moment's reflection is enough to show that there is no basic connection, for linguistic culture is altogether independent of the written alphabet, which covers as a very late appendix to the history of language as a whole.

It was Islam, or the need to record every syllable of the Quran with absolute precision, which imposed literacy on the seventh-century Arabs. But at the same time, the Quranic language became the model, and since it was to be learned by heart and recited as much as possible, the detrimental effect of literacy was

counteracted by the Quranic Arabic upon men's tongues. When literacy was divinely decreed, the primordial character of the spoken word was preserved through emphasis on recitation and memorization.

But the damage is not done by the written word as much as by printed word of the modern machine which has exploded and spread its influence over a huge mass of readers. It has entered the domain of commerce as an instrument of debasing men's cultural appetites through propaganda advertisements, posters etc. The massive production of the printed word has created an enormous number of voracious readers. The most obvious are the newspaper-addicts. The distinction between ignorance and illiteracy is necessary because it is the literate ignorance which has created confusion about the nature of sincerity. With this confusion one can easily talk about a "sincere exhibitionist" or even a "sincere hypocrite."

What the modern literate man really and quite often wants is freedom for dissipation and self-indulgence. He comes to regard any attempt at self-mastery as an abnormality. Sincerity, therefore, is a virtue only of those who seek to transcend themselves. "The wholeman," says M. Schuon, "is one who masters himself, and loves to master himself; the base man is one who does not master himself and shrinks in horror from mastering himself." Transcendence has an objective standard. In fact without an attempt at "Objectivity" there can be no transcendence. One who is caged in the prison of his own desires cannot know transcendence; his objectivity holds him back. One who loves objectivity breaks the walls of this prison and tries to encounter "Objectivity". He alone can be sincere — to quote M. Schuon again : "To be sincere is not to be imperfect before men, but to be virtuous before God, and to enter into the mould of virtues as yet unassimilated, whatever one may think." Sincerity is a process which always moves towards an ideal; to the degree that a man develops his virtues with a view to transcending himself, to that

extent he is sincere. The ideal sincerity is that state where one is able to say and live the following lines from the Holy Quran :

Say He is Allah, the one ;  
Allah, the eternally Resought of all ;  
He begetteth not nor was He begotten.  
and there is none comparable unto Him.

At this station all baseness, all association are transcended. This Surah is called "*Ikhlas*", which can also be translated as sincerity.

A true person is one who strives to introduce proportion and rationally in his feelings and emotions. He expresses what he feels and seldom permits social demands and current fashions to affect his expression of what he feels. He may, however, suppress or withhold his expression where he fears that his expression may hurt some other person's feelings and where he is able to distinguish between genuine feelings and vanity which is a false conception of his ego, or a false self-image. For instance, if he does not like "pop music" or "rock" and feels that these varieties of noise are uncouth and disturbing, he expresses his feelings openly even in the midst of a group of youthful admirers of what is known as modern music. He does not argue with them or reason with them, because he knows that no amount of reasoning or persuasion will help, and in fact it might provoke aggression. A "true" person in this case follows the advice of Abu Said Abil Khair who says :

If you fall into the company of fools, my dear,  
Rid yourself of their claws by hook or by crook,  
Say yes, and "aye" nodding your head,  
Do not debate with them, or else you will be perplexed.

A "false" person is one who has adapted totally to the values of the market. For him, "survival" is the only aim in life. He

survives by paying for it a heavy price, his own feelings. What he regards as his own desires are not really his. His ambitions and ideals are borrowed. He lets himself be dictated by other people's tastes, likes and dislikes. He seeks what the crowd seeks. He is so identified with his "persona" that he is completely alienated from himself.

Sometimes the turbulent desires of an exhibitionist run counter to his or her persona. For instance, there was a case of a disturbed married woman of about 55. She was prompted by her strong sexual appetites to have a clandestine affair with a young, handsome labourer. She wanted to keep that affair a secret from her husband and yet wanted to tell him about it in an indirect manner in order to hurt him—sadism was a very strong element in her personality. Every time she slept with her lover, she would inform her husband by drawing a flower on the margin of the morning newspaper. When asked directly by her husband if she was having an affair with that young man, she would swear by the Holy Book that she was not. Symbolically she was telling the truth, but verbally she was telling a falsehood.

This woman was doubly false. She not only told lies but lived half truths. She not only prided herself on always telling the truth but also prided herself on having had a number of secret affairs.

This is the confusion and perplexity of the modern person. He has obliterated from his awareness the distinction between truth and falsehood.

The same process of decay and degeneration can be observed in relation to the concepts of truth and knowledge. Truth has become the property of some propositions, where Bertrand Russell has defined a proposition as something which is either true or false. The more distant and separated we are from the realism of the sacred and the traditional, the more unbearable and fragile the concepts of knowledge and truth become. A real quandary has been created in the realm of meaning. What is the meaning of

a word? From the commonsense point of view the meaning of a word is a particular object or a class of objects. According to Wittgenstein, a proposition is a picture of some aspect of reality. But later he changed his view. In his *Philosophical Investigations*, he maintained that it is the context of a proposition which determines its meaning: change the context, it will change its meaning. Take it out of a particular context, and place it in another context, and it will have a new meaning.

One need not discuss the various philosophical theories of meaning which have emerged in the modern times. One can only perceive the dispersion of the human personality which has taken place almost systematically. Words like truth and falsehood belonged to a particular word-view which expressed itself in a definite style of life. Truth was rooted in faith, and one could speak of a true person, a genuine person. A true person was not a static being. He developed and ascended various stages of truthfulness recognizing that the truth was infinite. A true person not only spoke the truth; his intentions were also true. He was true both inwardly and outwardly because he tried to live more truly in the eyes of the ABSOLUTE TRUTH. His aim in every movement of the spirit and the body was to get closer to God, the Absolute Truth. This was not only a true speech but a pilgrim's journey towards the Godhead.

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