

"THE SECRETS OF CREATIVE LOVE: THE WORKS OF MUHAMMAD IQBAL"

Prof. Dr. Annemarie Schimmel

Much has been written about Iqbal in various languages; books that are critical of him, books that call him a reactionary, and others that call him progressive. There are not two scholars or lovers of Iqbal who completely agree about him, because his work has a very strange but important combination of Eastern and Western thought. But I personally think he has described in his own way his own work and his ideals in a sentence that he spoke in 1930 at the All India Muslim League meeting in Ahmadabad. He described himself as a man,

"Who believes that religion is a power of the utmost importance in the life of individuals as well as that of states, and who believes that Islam in itself is destiny and will not suffer a destiny".

Let me just say a few words about Iqbal as a poet and a philosopher so that what I am going to say later falls in place. Born in Sialkot, he was educated in Lahore, and then in Cambridge where he studied law and Hegelian philosophy; then after a short while in Germany, he returned to Lahore and worked there first as a lawyer but mainly as a poet and thinker. He was invited to various great occasions including the Round Table Conferences in London in 1931 and 1932; but in 1930 before that he had pronounced his great wish:

"To see the Punjab, the North-western frontier (which includes, of course, also Kashmir), Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state".

That was the birth of today's Pakistan. He dreamt of a kind of state that should be a bulwark for India against the destructive forces that always came from the North-West thinking of Genghis Khan and Timur and of other so many conquerors. Iqbal knew very well the role of the Punjab and the Northwestern Frontier in the history of India. It was that part that had always been overrun by the conquerors and he wanted to create a state in which these dangers were kept away from mainland India. He was also of the opinion that the Muslims should have a say in the building up of their own educational and legal ideals. This was behind his famous Pakistan speech of 1930.

But Iqbal was much more than a politician. He was a philosopher and he was a poet. His first collection of poetry in Urdu, *Bang-i-Dara* appeared in 1924, one year after his second Persian collection was published, the *Payam-I-Mashriq*. But his first Persian poems, as we shall see, were of a different character. His early Urdu poetry follows classical models. In 1912, however, for the first time, he cried out against fate. After seeing the situation in Europe he found that he had to give some strength

to the Muslims of India and so in his great poem *Shikwa* (Complaint) of 1912, he made the Muslims complain that everything in life is too difficult and that their old civilization has no role to play anymore; that God, indeed, seems to have forgotten them: but in another great poem *Jawab-i-Shikwa* (Answer to the complaint), God teaches them what they have done and what they were supposed to have done. They should, no longer, neglect the duties of their faith, no longer neglect the love of God, and the Prophet (PBUH). This poem was a kind of entrance into his new phase of life.

It is told, and he said it himself, that one night the great Sufi poet Mawlana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi appeared to him in a dream and bade him write a Persian *Mathnavi*, a poem modelled on Rumi's own great book, the *Mathnavi*. Iqbal complied and he wrote in Persian, not in Urdu, and it is this *Asrar-i-Khudi* and its sequel the *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* which made him famous, but which also earned him many attacks from those who thought that he should have rather stayed with the classical tradition of Urdu and Persian poetry, where according to the poets' dreams, the Self dissolves itself like a fragrance of a rose, and not write things in which the weak dewdrop is juxtaposed with the strong diamond: the dewdrop dissipating, disappearing, being eaten by birds, and the diamond always stable, always radiant, whatever its fate may be. It is power that enables everything to survive.

These ideas seemed very alien to many of the Indians who read his books, but they show a new approach to life in Iqbal's work. Formerly, being a Hegelian, a follower of the Cambridge neo-Hegelian, McTaggart, he now turned to the ideals of Bergson and his *elan vital*, his powerful philosophy, and tried to embody that in the tradition of Islam. It was not an easy task for him but he was certainly right in what he was doing.

In 1923, as I mentioned briefly, his great Persian work appeared, *Payam-i-Mashriq*, a book that is dear to us Germans because it was the first and only answer of a Muslim thinker to Goethe's famous collection *Westostlicher Divan* which, in turn, was the first German response to Muslim and particularly Persian poetry. Then follows another Persian group of poems, the *Zabur-i-Ajam* (Persian Psalms) and in 1932, a poem which to this day is for me Iqbal's most important work, the *Javidnama*, a story of man's travelling through the spheres under the guidance of Mawlana Rumi. He comes from the earth and finally reaches eternal beatitude after having communed with the inhabitants of the Seven Spheres about politics, poetry, mysticism, religion, and so on and so forth. It is a book which contains an almost inexhaustible wealth of ideas and when I translated it into German (and also into Turkish), I thought and I must say, I still think, it is a book which everyone should read, perhaps with a commentary.

Then follow Urdu collections, *Bal-i-Jibril* (Gabriel's Wing) and a very critical political collection called *Zarb-i-Kalim* (The Stroke of Moses) in which he voices his criticism of the Western world and its imitators in the East. And finally, in 1938, after

his death, on 21st April, his posthumous poems were collected and published under the title *Armaghan-i-Hijaz* (Gift of the Hijaz) thus showing that his heart was longing to go to the Hijaz to visit the sacred places of Islam and especially the *Rawdat* of the Prophet (PBUH).

Iqbal's poetry began as a continuation of the tradition of Persian and Urdu poetry but all of a sudden at the time when he wrote the *Asrar-i-Khudi* in 1915, he discovered the Arabic anti-classical tradition and shocked his contemporaries with his criticism of Hafiz and of Plato. He warned his compatriots not to graze any longer in the beautiful gardens of Iran, but rather return to the sands of Arabia, and to drink the wholesome water of *Zamzam* instead of imbibing intoxicating Persian wine which might be useless to enable them to face the difficulties of life. You can well imagine how a culture that was used to this kind of poetry — singing of roses, nightingales and wine, was shocked at hearing these new messages, but Iqbal reminded his readers that the deer once it leaves the *Haram* of Makkah becomes a prey of the hunters; likewise, Muslims who forget the centre of their religion can easily be caught by the Europeans and can fall prey to them.

His interest in the 'Arab' aspect of Islam, something that is rarely mentioned in the books about him permeates his whole life, and, I think it is not an accident that at the very end of his life he returned to this point. His last letter, written six weeks before his death in 1938, closes with a line of the great Persian poet Khaqani who died in 1199AD which says, "Do not put the mark of Greek philosophy on the crupper of the steed of religion which is of Arab origin." Religion was for him something born in Arabia and just as the Muslims of old and the Sufis worked against application of too many Greek ideas on the interpretation of Islam, thus Iqbal has as his last word the warning not to become too much enthralled by Greek thought and not to interpret the Qur'anic message in the terminology of Greek philosophy. That is certainly an important message and it shows you how his main ideas remained the same throughout his whole life. It is natural that a man like Iqbal should find the centre of his faith and of his whole life in the Qur'an. In the *Javidnama* (the great vision of his journey through the spheres), he has a whole chapter about the *Alam Al-Qur'an* in which he shows or tries to show that the Qur'an if it is indeed God's eternal word must be eternal like God; it must be as manifold as God is; in every moment it will give one new wisdom. He himself followed the classical Sufi maxim that unless the Qur'an is revealed to you personally, just as it was revealed to the Prophet(PBUH), then neither the commentaries of Razi or the *Kashshaf* of Zamakhshari are of any use for you. As early as 1917 he had written in an article,

"The Qur'an is brimful with joy of life and light and there is no place in it for pessimistic mystics, for something gloomy and dark," — a sentence which certainly is highly interesting in the light of his later philosophy. This joy of life, this complete enthusiasm about the words of the Qur'an as they have been revealed to the Prophet (PBUH) is typical of his work.

And that brings us quite naturally to the role of the Prophet (PBUH) of Islam in his work. Iqbal was deeply in love with the Prophet (PBUH). To be sure, he has not written classical *na'at* poetry and yet in one of his later works we find a poem that is inspired by the great *Burda* of Al-Busiri, because when he was ailing he was reminded, again in a dream, by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the reformer of Islam, to turn to the Prophet (PBUH) and ask him for help, just as Busiri in the 13th century was miraculously cured and then wrote his great *Burda* in praise of the Prophet (PBUH).

But there is more to it for Iqbal. The Prophet (PBUH) is the most important manifestation of the spirit of Islam. In the *Javidnama*, you find the very daring sentence, "You can deny God but you cannot deny the Prophet." The Prophet (PBUH) is the one who brought Islam to the fore and who interpreted what he had received in his revelations. He was, as Iqbal repeats time and again the ideal person, not the *Al-Insan Al-kamil* of Sufism, but his quality is that of *Abduhu* as he is called in the Qur'an (God's servant) [e.g. *Sura* 17.1; *Sura* 53.10], who is according to Iqbal, as he was to the classical Sufis, the ideal personality. It is this love of the Prophet (PBUH) which permeates his whole work, and it is much more important to see this than many other aspects of his work. Of course, Iqbal has used in his interpretation of the Qur'an the figures of the previous prophets and he has praised Abraham, the one who is the first true monotheist, because he believed that the survival of the Muslim nations really lies in the ethical monotheism which is represented by Abraham. But even dearer to him was Moses, the '*Kalim Allah*', and it is not astonishing that he called his last great poetical work in Urdu, *Darb-i-Kalim* (The Stroke of Moses). Because just as Moses cleft the mountains asunder to bring water out of the rock and just as he cleft the Red Sea so that his people could pass, similarly our poet wanted to show that with a hard stroke one can certainly save the believers or at least come closer to the salvation of the Muslims of our days.

Moses, who had *Al-Yad Al-Bayda* (The White Hand), is for him the model of the miracle-working prophet. And both of them— Abraham and Moses — appear, as is correct, as forerunners of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH). Jesus, however, does not play any important role in Iqbal's work. He was certainly an admirer of him as we can see from his *Javidnama*. But Christianity was too much connected in the minds of the Indian Muslims of the 19th and 20th centuries with colonialism and with imperialism. Therefore, the role of Jesus in the works, not only of Iqbal, but also of other thinkers and poets of that period is not as great as it is in classical Persian poetry. The figure of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), however, is central to his whole thought. Already, in 1912, he writes in the *Answer to the Complaint*:

"Light the word so long in darkness with Muhammad's (PBUH) radiant name."

But perhaps the most beautiful description of the role of the Prophet is found in his second Persian *Mathnawi*, the *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* (Mysteries of Selflessness) which is his most political and at the same time most Qur'an-oriented work, where he

says, "Love of the Prophet runs like blood through the veins of the community". And, another verse, which I always found particularly beautiful, is when he compares the *Ummah*, the community of the Muslims, to a rose with a hundred petals, a true centifolia with one fragrance, and this fragrance is the spirit of the Prophet (PBUH). I have rarely found any more beautiful description of the role of the Prophet (PBUH) than this simple line.

And even more, Iqbal felt that he was very closely related in spirit to the Prophet (PBUH). It is his conviction that the Prophet (PBUH), who is the true manifestation of 'Abduhu' (God's servant) who is free and at the same time bound to God, is the ideal of humanity, and when you look at Iqbal's poetical language, you will find that in two very conspicuous places he alludes to the role of the Prophet (PBUH). One is rather easy to understand, the other one is a little bit more difficult to detect but even more important.

The title of his first Urdu collection *Bang-i-Dara* means 'the sound of the caravan bell'. The poet found himself in the role of the little bell that is bound to the feet of the camel of the Prophet (PBUH) in order to show by its sound the way back to the centre, to Makkah. This is an image that can be easily understood by everyone. The second one occurs in the *Javidnama*. Rumi is asked by some of the spirits in the spheres about his fellow traveller, i.e. Iqbal: "What is his name?" And he answers, "His name is *Zindarud*". Now, *Zindarud* means 'living stream' and that would be a beautiful poetical name in any case. However, go back to Goethe, Iqbal's great master, and you will find in Goethe's early works the description of Muhammad (PBUH) as a stream, a mighty river. In the poem *Mahomets Gesang*, this image is elaborated: just as the stream begins from a small fountain and then becomes larger and larger and finally ends up in the all-embracing ocean. Thus, the Prophet can also be seen as beginning from a small source and then widening to embrace by his message more and more people and countries, urging them to leave their home to God.

Iqbal had translated this poem in a very free version in his *Payam-i-Mashriq* as he had found it extremely expressive. What neither Goethe nor Iqbal could know is that exactly this image had been used already in the 10th century by the Shi'a theologian Kulayni in order to describe the Prophet (PBUH), not a prophet of course, but someone who follows closely his steps. And I think when we keep that in mind we understand much more of his ideas.

One of his last poems expresses his wish to go to the *Rawdat* in Madinah where the Prophet (PBUH) is buried. He never performed the *Hajj*, nor did he perform the visit to the tomb of Prophet (PBUH), Madinah, but in one of his last lines he writes,

"Old as I am I'd still go to Madinah
To sing my song there full of love,
Just like a bird who in the desert night

Spreads out his wings when thinking of his nest."

That was his central thought. However, there is also something else in his love of the Prophet (PBUH). In the fifth chapter of his famous, 'Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam', he begins with a tale from an Indian Sufi of the mid-16th century. This sentence runs,

"Muhammad (PBUH) of Arabia went to the highest Heaven and returned. I swear by God, if I had reached this place, I would have never returned".

And then he continues that this is the attitude of a great Sufi. The Sufi wants to remain in the eternal happiness of being close to God, and not to return to the world, while the prophet comes back in order to preach what he has experienced in the immediate neighbourhood of God, and to teach mankind what God has inspired him with. Now this is, of course, a very interesting application of a category in the history of religion, which distinguishes between the mystical, and the prophetic approach to religion, and Iqbal was most certainly a great representative of the so-called 'prophetic' approach to religion. He was someone who wanted to preach what he had felt and experienced.

In the history of Islam, you can see this model very clearly in the life of the Prophet (PBUH). I do not know if Iqbal thought of it, but it is certainly a fact that after his experiences in the cave of *Hira* where the Prophet (PBUH) had the first revelation he went out to preach what he had learned, and in a second case, after acting only in Makkah, he left his home town in order to go into the world and create a state — a basis for the political life of the community. This alternation of what Iqbal calls *Jilwah* (manifestation) and *Khalwa* (being with God in seclusion) is also visible in other aspects of his thought, namely in his great emphasis on the two aspects of life. Everyone knows that life can exist only in polarities, the heartbeat, the breathing, everything is certainly bound to be twofold; as Goethe says,

*"In breathing there are two kinds of blessings,
Once you take in the breath and then you take it out again."*

You inhale and you exhale, and the same is true for the systole and diastole. Nothing can live without this twofold activity. That can also be applied to God in his manifestations.

I remember when I was a professor at Ankara, I tried to teach my Muslim students that our German philosopher Rudolf Otto had described God in categories of the *mysterium tremendum* (the tremendous, frightening mystery) and the *mysterium fascinans* (the fascinating mystery). One of my students got up and said, "But we, Muslims, have known that for the last 1000 years. We speak of God's *Jalal* (Majesty) and his *Jamal* (Beauty): these are the two aspects under which He has revealed Himself." That is an idea which Iqbal also takes up although we have to say that in his concept of the Divine, the *Jalal-side* appears to be somewhat stronger than the *Jamal-side*.

But how does he see this God whom he describes like that? God is for him the greatest Ego. His philosophy of *Khudi*, of Egohood, is something that has been criticized by many Western scholars, and also by Eastern scholars because the word *Khudi* in Persian usually means 'egotism', 'selfishness' and so on and so forth. However, if you go back to the 13th century, and you read Mawlana Rumi, you will find that in his prose work *Fihri ma Fihri* he uses *Khudi* exactly in the sense that Iqbal uses it, namely, 'the innermost being'. It is the essence par excellence. And thus, for Iqbal, everything in the world consists of smaller and greater egos, of *Khudis* in various forms, God being the greatest all-embracing Ego. One cannot describe Him. We all know that it is impossible to reach the *deus absconditus*, the hidden God who is never to be reached by intellect, or by love or by any possibility, but we can at least approach Him when He reveals himself in His word. What we know, says Iqbal in his lectures, is that God has described Himself as an individual, as an Ego, by calling Himself in the Qur'an by the name of Allah. This shows that he is something or someone who is personal, to whom I can turn. We are reminded of modern European Protestant theologian, Paul Tillich, who said, "The divine has to be given as a thou, because there is no possibility for me to come into a living encounter with an indescribable and faraway neutral being." God is the Greatest Ego in which everything is contained, and after all, as the Qur'an says, he invites man to call upon him, '*ud uni astajib lakum*', ("And your Lord says: Call on Me; I will answer your [prayer]"), Sura 40.60). That is for Iqbal the proof of God's great egohood, and what he says about Him in his poetry is mainly one aspect that he calls *Kibriya* (Divine Grandeur) — an expression which he has taken doubtlessly from the poetry of Rumi in which God is often circumscribed with the form, *Kibriya* (Divine Grandeur). Most of you will know the beautiful *Hadith-i-Qudsi* which runs *Al-Kibriya rida'i* (Grandeur is my Cloak), that means, it is one aspect which we can hope to touch at least a little bit.

Religion for Iqbal has to be wedded to power. Power is dangerous and satanic when it is separate from religion, but the two have to work together to build up a better new world. For Iqbal, God is the one who is *Al-Hayy Al-Qayyum* and he loves the Qur'anic saying, "*Kull yawmin huwa fi shan*". He interprets this Qur'anic verse in a philosophical way in his lectures when he says, "The not-yet of God means unfailing realization of the infinite creative possibilities of His being which retains Its wholeness throughout the entire process." That means God creates constantly, He works constantly, but He never changes in His innermost being.

It is also important to see Iqbal's interpretation of the words of the *Shahadah*. The interplay of the *La* and *Illa*, which has been interpreted very often by the medieval mystics, seems to be extremely important for him. Because without a *La*, without negation, there cannot be an affirmation. From the *La* you go to the *Ba-La*, to the higher. Again, the play between *La* and the *Illa* forms an important aspect of his poetry and his philosophy, and here we come to an interesting interpretation of life by Iqbal.

Many people have claimed that he was strongly under the influence of Nietzsche, the German philosopher. Iqbal has placed him in the *Javidnama* in a place beyond the spheres. He shows that Nietzsche remained in the *La*, in the negation, by denying God and failed to reach the affirmation. Had he gone one step further towards the *Illa* (except Allah), then he would have found the real religious attitude. He would have found the God who, he thought, 'had died'.

Here, we come to Iqbal's interpretation of the human being. Nietzsche was supposed to be responsible for Iqbal's ideal of man as a great fighter, as a kind of Superman. Similar concepts were very common in European philosophy at the beginning of 20th century. However, Iqbal's *Mard-i-Mu'min* that is *Al-Insan Al-Mu'min* has nothing in common with Nietzsche's *Superman* because Nietzsche's *Superman* appears only 'after God has died'. This idea was, of course, inconceivable for a pious thinker like Iqbal. Nor has Iqbal's ideal man anything of the *Insan Al-kamil* as he was developed in the Sufi philosophy. Rather, Iqbal's ideal believer is the one who is a co-worker with God and thus completes many unfinished things in this world, on this earth, and perfects what remained unfinished.

One of the most famous poems in the *Payam-i-Mashriq* is a discussion between God and man. Man proudly addresses God:

"You made the night and I the lamp.
You made the clay and I the cup.
You made the deserts, forests, mountains high,
I, flowerbeds and orchards and the park.
It is I who grinds the mirror out of stone.
It is I who makes from poison, antidote."

You could say that this is a very high ambition for man and perhaps, even a dangerous one, and many critics especially in the West have accused Iqbal of portraying a very self-conscious human being who has no respect for God. This, I beg to differ, is not true. I would say that the *Mard-i-Mu'min*, the *Al-Insan Al-Mu'min* is the one who, in himself, has realized the paradox of freedom and *servantship*, and thus he is the ideal person as manifested first by the Prophet (PBUH), namely as 'Abduhu', (God's servant), which means *servantship* in freedom. That is how Iqbal, according to my understanding, defines the role of man.

Something that is absolutely important and which belongs to our theme of creative love is that this man is nothing of a static being. There is a constant growth. For Iqbal the whole universe is growing in every minute, in every second. Even the smallest ego wants to show itself, wants to assume a higher place, and this rising gamut of egohood goes through everything created.

In this rising gamut of egohood, in this manifestation of the best qualities of man one finds one important aspect: the struggle against *Iblis*, against Satan. It may sound strange that Iqbal has given such a prominent role to the satanic powers. We

may be shocked when we read his descriptions of *Iblis*. However, Iqbal's Satan shows in himself trends from various literary and religious traditions. On the one hand, he is the haughty being who said, "*Ana khayr* (I am better than Adam)" and was then cursed. On the other hand, he has much of Goethe's Mephistopheles who is sent by God to man in order to test him and thus to help with his growth. This is the favourite aspect of Satan in Iqbal's work. He has described his activities in a great five-part poem in the *Payam-i-Mashriq* called *Taskhir-i-Fitrat* (The Overcoming of Nature). Here, he describes how Adam was cast out of paradise and then spent his life in struggling with the powers of evil, and it was only through this struggle that he assumed a real human personality. This fight against heavy odds, the fight against the satanic powers — that is what man is called to. So, Satan in one of Iqbal's poems can proudly say, "*It's I who gives colours to life.*"

The most impressive description of this satanic aspect is found at the end of the *Falak Al-Mushtari*, (the Sphere of Jupiter), in the *Javidnama*. There, Satan appears as a very sad old man just as Nietzsche had described him, and he complains of man. Why? Because man is much too stupid to understand his temptations and it is no fun for an old devil to fight with such a silly creature! What Satan wants and what he prays to God for is, "Please give me a mature human being, one who fights with me and who overcomes me at the end." Then — and this is Iqbal's ingenious solution — *Iblis*, overcome by the perfect believer, will finally perform the *Sijdah*, the prostration, which he refused at the beginning of time.

It is very touching to read this complaint of poor *Iblis* who feels so bored with us human beings. But Iqbal knew, of course, that the '*Iblis* of fire', the one who once did not perform the prostration before Adam, is comparatively interesting and even useful for the development of human beings. However, there are other *Iblises*, made of clay, the human devils, who are much worse than the real devil. With the expression, '*Iblis* of clay', he takes up an expression which was used as early as in the 11th century by the great Ismaili philosopher Nasir-i Khusraw to whom Iqbal owes a lot of inspiration. It is this kind of devil who appears more and more in his later work, and one of his most tragic poems deals with the discussion of Satan with his political disciples, a poem in which many of the developments we have witnessed during the last decades are foreseen with a visionary power.

And yet, I would say that the role of *Iblis* as the one who brings man to higher stages of life is extremely important because, as I said, there is always the wish to reach higher spheres and the development of the Self is strengthened by the fight with forces of evil. The more we fight, the higher we can reach. It is this aspect which is most important in Iqbal's work and here again he takes up classical ideas, "In great action alone the Self of man becomes united with God without losing its own identity". This sentence has to be kept in mind because it is not a fading-away of the mystic in God but the development of the Self which comes closer and closer to God. So united with God and without losing its own identity, it transcends the limits of time and space. "Action is the highest form of contemplation." Thus, he says in the

lectures, after describing the importance of prayer and communal prayer in most beautiful words. But in the previous sentence, I would ask you to look at the word 'time'. The Self, in a great struggle, transcends time and space and Iqbal's concept of time is of great importance for our understanding of all his thoughts. He has seen time on a twofold level — *Afaqi* and *Anfusi*, the one that is connected with the outward world, and the other one which we carry ourselves in our hearts. In the *Javidnama*, he makes the old Iranian deity of time, *Zurvan*, appear who teaches man that it is important to tear the *Zunnar* (The Infidel's Girdle) of Time. Because once time comes into existence, once it is here and we see it second after second, year after year, then it looks like a long, long belt as, according to the tradition, the infidels would wear. The true faithful believer is the one who tears this *Zunnar*, this girdle, this belt and for a single moment finds himself in the 'Time of God' which is without a beginning and without an end. And then one can say with the Prophet (PBUH), "*Li ma'a Allah waqt* (I have a time with God)." It is the great experience of love that we go through when we grasp infinity in a single moment.

Iqbal knows that our life develops not just by accident. "It is our actions and especially our thoughts and our dreams which colour our development." It is our unconscious ideas which slowly come into consciousness and form and shape our lives. Again, this is an idea which has been expressed by Goethe in very beautiful words. "It is the man who dreams up something, who will finally be able to realize it or at least to come close to his goals." For Iqbal, this is also true for our attitude to God and to life and most importantly to death.

As early as 1910 in his *Stray Reflections*, a little notebook, he had noted down: "Personal immortality is not a state, it is a process." And he goes even further: he believes it is there for everyone, rather it is something that is given only to the strong— only the person who has overcome the shock of corporeal death can develop in the end, further and further in the divine presence. However, death and eternity have to be seen from a completely different angle. Death is man's experience of what he has done in life and, thus, for Iqbal, Hell is nothing but the complaint and the suffering of the human Ego which has failed to fulfil its ambitions and has not realized its goals. "Heaven", however, he says, "is the joy of triumph over the forces of disintegration. Heaven is growing without diminishing, and he even coins the lovely sentence, "Heaven is no holiday."

We still have to develop ourselves in eternity, because if eternity means eternal life then movement must be continued through eternity. Interestingly, and I was always fascinated by this coincidence, almost verbatim the same ideas are found in a book that was written in Sweden at the same time as Iqbal was writing his lectures by the Swedish Lutheran bishop, Tor Andrae, who was a great Islamicist and who has in his book, *Die letzten Dinge*, developed the idea that death is not the end of our life but is just a beginning of a new stage. That is something, which you also find in classical Sufism, "When the journey to God is finished the journey in God begins"

But, of course, such an interpretation of Hell and Paradise was considered dangerous by many of the old-fashioned believers.

Yet, I personally think it is something that is extremely important in our appreciation of Iqbal's work, and here the creative love comes in. What is this love? Love is in Iqbal's work that which Bergson, the philosopher, whom he appreciated very much, calls the 'elan vital': it is the power that creates values, and is never satisfied with what it has created. It is a power that changes every moment what is in man. It is the symbol for the experience of intuition "in which the mystic grasps reality in its wholeness in a single indiscernible moment." Love is this experience, which the believer many gain in the middle or at the end of his road. Love is the desire to assimilate, to absorb. "It is", he writes, "the highest form of the creation of values and ideals and the endeavour to realize them." So when we speak about the rising gamut of egohood or whatever word we want to use, this is impossible to achieve without creative love. Everything we do, every moment has to be done with this *elan vital* in the Bergsonian sense.

On the other hand, I may just add here, the philosophy or theosophy of Ibn Al-Arabi was very alien to him. He praised Ibn al-Arabi in his dissertation of 1908. However, in the long run he found him tinged by neo-platonic ideas, too much theosophical, and not vital enough. But Rumi appears time and again as his great master who teaches him not only the secrets of the Self, but also the secrets of love. "Love is to live with fire under one's feet", and it is this power that moves people into true religion. In a very daring verse at the end of his life Iqbal says that, "The burning and unrest of one real Allahu Akbar does not fit into the five ritual prayers", that is, it transcends even the prescribed religious forms because it is so powerful that it is much stronger and much more impressive than anything else. When you read such a line, you understand why Iqbal, who himself was deeply interested in Islamic law and who has tried to interpret Islam from the most different, modern viewpoints, was very much against *Mullaism* and *Pirism*. He thought that *Pirism*, the role of the *Pirs*, the most influential leaders of Sufi brotherhoods in the modern Islamic world, was very dangerous because it was against true love and true life. The fact that the mystical leader completely ruled over the minds of his often illiterate followers would, of course, be not very helpful in introducing new ideas such as Iqbal wanted.

And *Mullaism*, the role of the *mullas*, the interpreters of the law, who created layer over layer of interpretations, of plethora of commentaries and so on and so forth to the books of law and to the Qur'an, seemed to him equally dangerous because the *mullas* did not understand anything of the burning power of love. And he has a wonderful comparison of the *mulla* who looks like *Qarun*. (*Qarun*, as you know, was buried alive under the weight of his wealth.) For Iqbal, the *mulla* is, a *Qarun* of Arabic dictionaries out of which he tries to find the meaning of the Qur'an and the Hadith and is thus bound to remain in the dust, not to glow in the fire of love.

Iqbal knows that this burning love is something that shows itself in human prayer, but prayer is not done for the sake of the individual. The individual may pray as much as he wants but he should not complain when God does not grant his wish. The most important is that in prayer, in contact with the divine, with the living God, man should change himself. Prayer is useful when God gives man the possibility of becoming his co-worker and of accepting the Divine Will as his own will, and only then he, too, will be able by his prayers to change the world. I think that is another aspect of Iqbal's thought which is worthy of our investigation.

It is natural that this love, *Ishq*, as Iqbal calls it, is contrasted very frequently with *Ilm*, with scholarship and science and also with *Aql*, with intellect. He uses *Ilm* mostly in the English sense of 'science', as natural science. *Ishq* is synthesis. *Ilm* is analysis. Both of them have to work together. In a great Persian poem in the *Payam-i Mashriq*, Iqbal shows that without love, without this synthetic approach, *Ilm*, science, is something satanic. But if both of them co-operate they can create paradise on earth. It is one of the finest expressions of his belief in synthetic thinking instead of a dry analytical approach. In his poetry he has compared the man who relies only on science to a bookworm who lives in the beautiful pages of philosophers like Al-Farabi and Al-Razi but never knows anything of real life. He is contrasted with the moth, the butterfly who casts itself into the flames in order to experience one moment of ecstasy. *Ishq* for Iqbal is comparable to the Prophet, Mustafa (PBUH), while *Aql*, the dry intellect, is Abu Lahb. In a poem in which he brings together Goethe and his own Eastern guide, Mawlana Rumi, he quotes a line by Rumi to which both agree; 'Cunning intellect is from Satan, but love, *Ishq*, is from Adam.'

Perhaps even more beautiful and more understandable, at least for a Muslim audience, is his verse that, "Science is the son of the Book, but love the Mother of the Book". It means love is what is behind everything, behind every revelation. Intellect, he says, is the open question, love, the hidden answer. He never tired of describing this love in the most beautiful and sometimes also very exotic images. I think the secret of this daring love is very well expressed in a verse from his later period, when he says,

*"Love leaps into Nimrod's fire without hesitation,
Intellect is still busy with looking from the roof."*

Intellect ponders and does not dare to annihilate itself in the flames of love, but love is careless because it knows that the real way is to burn oneself in the flames of God. In another verse, in which he uses an image very dear to classical Persian poetry, that of the great conqueror king, Mahmud of Ghazna, who conquered the idol-temple of *Somnat* in India, he says,

*"The whole world bows in adoration to love.
Love is the Mahmud that conquers the Somnat of intellect."*

Intellect is something like a temple which has to be conquered by the all-embracing love. We find very similar ideas in Mawlana Rumi's work, but they are put here in a more modern context, and therefore are more relevant to all of us. He knows also, and that is important to keep in mind, that love should never be fulfilled. When Paul Tillich, whom I have already quoted once, the German theologian of our time, says, "Fulfilled love is at the same time extreme happiness and the end of happiness, because only through separation can one become active," Iqbal also says,

*"The reed started to sing when it was cut off from the reed-bed.
Without separation there cannot be activity, and fertility,"*

Thus, we find in Iqbal's work one of the most important aspects, what he calls in Persian, *Kushish-i-Natamam* (Never Finished Striving). Here, again, he is close to Goethe, and the poetry which he writes, for instance, about his meeting with the virgins of paradise or with anything else is always permeated by this constant burning of unfulfilled love. Only, while still waiting to reach the goal can a human being become active and create values. The stronger his longing is, the stronger and the greater are the values he may be able to create.

It is this *Kushish-i-Natamam*, this longing, this constant search for more and more closeness, for approximation to the highest values that colours Iqbal's thought. He has expressed his ideas not only in the philosophical prose of his six lectures which were given in 1928, but even more in his poetry. Many people, especially Western critics, have found contradiction in Iqbal's philosophical prose. That is possible. Perhaps, for some people it was too strange to understand how he welded together European philosophy and classical Islamic thought. Yet, I personally think that one always has to read together his poems, be they in Urdu or in Persian, and his philosophical writings. Only, then, can we understand the breadth and the width of his greatness.

Strangely enough, he, himself, has claimed that he wrote poetry only for practical purposes. Poetry, as he saw it, was an art which is only valuable when it makes people creative. "The highest art is that which awakens our dormant will force and nerves us to face the trials of life manly." That is his idea, and for this reason did he, as I mentioned in the beginning, criticize the most beautiful poetry by Hafiz. His own poetry, was written as he claims for practical purposes, because the people in the Sub-Continent were not used to reading philosophical statements or listening to many long sermons, but they wanted poetry. They could be approached by poetry and Iqbal's poetry, as everyone who has read him, will agree is extremely impressive, has a very strong rhythm and could be memorized immediately. Thus, his ideas became more and more known.

He has transformed in his poetry many of the old symbols, without discarding them, because after all people were used to listening to bulbuls, to nightingales and looking at roses. These traditional symbols have been changed in their meaning and have also been partly replaced by others. His bird of love, his soul-bird is not so

much the complaining nightingale, rather it is the falcon, the powerful bird who carries away its prey and who carries away man's heart. For the falcon there is no end to searching, he is not soft and weak, but every moment there are new horizons before him, horizons that stretch from stars to sun and moon and beyond all the spheres into eternity. Many Pakistanis of our day have painted the falcon in front of the blue sky and have written the lines on their paintings, "Before you there are still many new horizons." If the falcon is his 'soul bird', so to speak, as it was incidentally also in Rumi's poetry, then his beloved flower is the *Lalah*, the tulip. One of his first collections of Persian poetry in the *Message of the East* is called the *Tulip of Sinai*, because the tulip resembles a flame reminding us of the 'flame of God' Moses saw in the burning bush. In spring, the whole desert, all the hillsides are covered with the small red tulips which remind the poet of the manifestation of God's *Kibriya*, of God's grandeur in the world. He often compares the faithful believer to a tulip which is lonely and which opens its bloom with all its will-power to shine in the darkness. He even says that on his tomb will grow tulips to show that a burning heart has been buried here.

The same way of speaking of classical symbols is also used in his transformation of figures. Just to give you one example: the martyr mystic Al-Hallaj who was killed in Baghdad in 922A.D. and who is notorious in Islamic history for his words, "*Ana al-Haqq* (I am the creative truth)", appears in the *Javidnama* as the great master of creative love. It is he who tells Iqbal in the *Sphere of Jupiter* that he is a sort of forerunner to him, because it is he who wanted to bring resurrection to a mentally and spiritually dead people, and Iqbal wants to do the same through his verse. Hallaj becomes the prototype of his own attempt to bring spiritual resurrection to people who seemed to him spiritually dead. I think, this, too, shows the depths of his feeling for the past and for the future likewise.

It is interesting to see that a German philosopher Rudolf Pannwitz, who came from the school of Nietzsche, developed a great liking for Iqbal. We, often, discussed him in previous years, before his death, and in one of his books he has written a chapter with a title, '*Das Zeitgedicht*'. The word can be translated only with great difficulty. It is a poem that really means something that is more than a poem; it is a spiritual political message and as Pannwitz writes, "The *Zeitgedicht* discharges in the hearts of the contemporaries a productive process which is stronger than any present time and is able to tear out the future from the womb of the present." I think that is exactly what applies to Iqbal's poetry because he was a poet who wanted to create new values and to show his people a new way. It is this kind of poetry of which he himself says in the *Javidnama*,

*"If the aim of poetry is to create and to shape true men,
Then poetry is the heir to prophecy."*

That is a daring word and he says it in the context of his own role in the world. Iqbal was certainly one of those poets whose poetry was an heir to prophecy.

Hermann Hesse, our great German writer, wrote a wonderful introduction to my German translation of the *Javidnama* in which he says of Iqbal, among other things, that, "He dreams of a human race that is united in the name of Allah and His service." I think that is an excellent description of our great poet-philosopher. Iqbal himself said in his lectures, "The world-life intuitively sees its own needs and at critical moments defines its own direction; that is what in the language of religion we call prophetic revelation." Of course, he does not mean that anyone after Muhammad (PBUH) is a prophet because for him the abolition of Prophethood is the birth of inductive intellect. But he knows that there are powers in the world, in the world-spirit, if we may say, that know what the world needs. Perhaps taking his inspiration from this sentence in the lectures, perhaps also from a different viewpoint, Bishop Kenneth Cragg has said about Iqbal that he is, "the spokesman of something deep within the contemporary soul. The age, then, must have felt its need of him." If this is true, then we can certainly say that for Iqbal it is valid what he says about the ideal poet, namely that, "the poet is the heart in the breast of the nation." A poet who teaches us this mystery, the secret of creative love, can certainly be called a heart in the breast not only of his own nation, but of all nations.

Let me close with his hymn to creative love as he has written it in his great Urdu poem, the *Masjid-i-Qurtuba* (The Mosque of Cordoba), which he wrote when he was in Spain, and which is one of his most famous poems. Here, he sees in the mosque of Cordoba the great power of creative love which has formed the civilization of Muslim Spain and of Islam in general. He says,

*"Love is Gabriel's heart. Love is Muhammad's strong breath.
Love is the envoy of God. Love is the clear word of God.
Even the clay figures, see, touched by love's ecstasy, glow.
Love that is Makkah's jurist. Love the commander of hosts.
Love is the son of the road, thousands of places are his.
Love is the plectrum that plays tunes on the taut strings of life
Love is life's radiant light. Love is the fire of life."*

