

REVIEW

Studies in Iqbal by Syed Abdul Wahid, xxi+364, published by Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Kashmiri Bazar, Lahore, 1967

price 20.00

After *Iqbal: his art and thought*, this is the second book by Mr. Wahid on Iqbal dealing with his poetry and thought. The book is divided into nine chapters (1-304) and the last fifty pages are devoted to Bibliography on Iqbal.

A book on Iqbal by a person like S. A. Wahid is indeed a boon to all lovers of Iqbal. He has dealt with almost all the aspects of Iqbal's art and thought in a way which is peculiarly his own. It is indeed a contribution of a high merit to Iqbal studies.

The second chapter entitled "Main Trends of His Thought" (pp. 32-50) deals with Iqbal's philosophy. On p. 38 he says:

"The two principles of classical physics which led to Determinism were:

- (1) It was believed that matter and energy were two different entities. The Theory of Relativity and the Quantum Theory have established that matter and energy are two different aspects of the same entity. Matter and energy are mutually convertible according to a formula known as Einstein's mass-energy relation.
- (2) Newton's Laws of Mechanics laid down that if the state of a dynamical system is known at the present moment,

it can be calculated for any instant either in the past or in the future. But Heisenberg's discovery in 1927 of Principle of Indeterminacy in Quantum Mechanics demolished completely Newton's mechanical determinism.

Iqbal had no knowledge of these discoveries of modern Physics. . . ."

I think, this is contrary to facts. It seems that Mr. Vahid has relied upon the statement of others instead of going through Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought* himself. A perusal of lectures 2 and 3 would be sufficient to refute this statement. You will find reference to Eddington's book *Space, Time and Gravitation* (pp. 62-63)¹⁵² and quotations from him in other places while references to Einstein are too many to be quoted. Iqbal's article "Self in the Light of Relativity" tells its own tale. The private library of Iqbal, at present in the Islamia College, Lahore, contains, besides others, books of Eddington and Einstein. The books of Eddington and Whitehead, to which Iqbal refers time and again in his lectures, deal with the new theories of modern physics which knocked the bottom out of classical physics and therefore nineteenth century materialism based on it and opened the way for a new system of philosophical thought.

I was a student of philosophy in Government College, Lahore, during 1932-33 and Eddington's book *Nature of Physical Reality* was included in our course. This book deals with the philosophical implications of these very new theories of Physics

¹⁵² References are to the Oxford edition of *Reconstruction*

of which Mr. Vahid says, Iqbal was unaware. This book was published several years earlier and could not have escaped Iqbal. Anyhow, convincing proof is a perusal of Iqbal's lectures 2 and 3.

2. On p. 43, Mr. Vahid states: "The universe itself is a Self or an Ego." There is a confusion here between 'universe' and 'Reality'. This confusion will be clear from the following quotations from Iqbal's lecture 2. He says, "On the analogy of our conscious experience universe is a free creative movement" (p.48).

"A critical interpretation of the sequence of time as revealed in ourselves has led us to a notion of the ultimate Reality as pure duration in which thought, life, and purpose interpret to form an organic unity. We cannot conceive this unity except as the unity of a self. . . ." (p. 53).

"Thus the facts of experience justify the inference that the ultimate nature of Reality is spiritual, and must be conceived as an ego" (p.58).

It is not the universe but Reality that is to be conceived as self or ego. This confusion runs, of course, throughout the second chapter of Mr. Vahid's book.

On p. 47, Mr. Vahid introduces a term "Elan vital Impetus" which he translates into English as "the will to live." The word 'elan,' means, according to the Oxford Dictionary, an impetuous rush, ardour, dash. It means that the word "Impetus" in the phrase used by Mr. Vahid is redundant.

3. The second chapter "Iqbal and Goethe" (pp. 51-83) is one of the most important chapters and deals exhaustively with the subject. But I would like to make certain comparisons, which, as the saying goes, are odious but in the interest of truth and clarification it cannot be helped. The comparison is between certain passages of Mr. Vahid's book and those of my book *Iqbal and Post-Kantian Voluntarism* which was published by the Bazm-i Iqbal, Lahore, in 1956 (1st ed.).

Mr. Vahid's book (p. 56)

As is well known the eighteenth century in Europe was characterised by rationalism in philosophy. This was mainly a reaction to religious bigotry, and the result of this reaction was that religious dogmas began to be questioned, and reason became the sole standard of judgement. But it was left to Kant and Rousseau to bring down the whole edifice of rationalism, although Kant's position in this revolt was only preparatory. His *Critique of Pure Reason* clearly demonstrated the limitations under which the human intellect worked, and beyond which it was incapable of going. But it was

My book (pp. 114-5)

The eighteenth century in Europe was characterised by rationalism in philosophy. Reason became the sole standard of judgment and religious dogmas therefore began to be questioned this intellectualism was negative in its effects. It started only as a reaction against the religious exclusiveness and theological bigotry of the Church. . . . In the last decade of the century, Kant (1724-1804) and Rousseau (1712-78) succeeded in bringing down the whole edifice of rationalism. . . . Kant's position in this revolt against intellectualism was only preparatory His *Critique of Pure*

left to Rous- seau to give some positive content to this revolt. Rousseau pleaded strongly that emotions, passions, instincts and intuitions should be given a due place along with reason in man's life

Reason clearly demonstrated the limitations under which human intellect worked and beyond which it was incapable of going. . . . But it was left to Rousseau to give some positive content to this revolt. . . . He pleaded strongly that emotions, passions, instincts and intuitions should be given a due place along with *reason*.

I leave the conclusion to the judgement of the readers. The similarity of the sentences and their sequence is too mainfest to need any comment from me.

I would quote only one more instance:

Mr. Vahid's book (p. 65)

In another place Iqbal says:

پرسیدم از ب لند نگاہے حیات چیست؟
گفتا مئے کہ تلخ تر او نکو تر است
گفتم کہ شیر بفطرت خامش نہادہ اند
گفتا کہ خیر او نشناسی ہمں شر است

I asked a sage : "What is life ?"
He replied : "Wine whose bitterest is the best."
said : "They have put evil in its raw nature."

He answered : "Its good is in this

My book (pp. 137-138)

پرسیدم از ب لند نگاہے حیات چیست؟
گفتا مئے کہ تلخ تر او نکو تر است
گفتم کہ شیر بفطرت خامش نہادہ اند
گفتا کہ خیر او نشناسی ہمں شر است
(پیام مشرق، ص ۱۴۵)

I asked from a wise man,
"What is Life?"
He replied. "It is a wine whose bitterest drop is the best."

very evil".

(PM, p. 145)

In the apparent evil lies the secret of all good : no evil, no good. No life is worth living where there is no evil and no struggle against evil.

I said, "Evil lies hidden in its nature."

He replied, "You do not know, its good lies in this evil."

In this apparent evil lies the secret of all good. No evil, no good. No life is worth living where there is no evil and no struggle against evil.

4. The seventh chapter "Iqbal and Browning" (191-224) was published in "Iqbal Review" of April 1965. This fact is not mentioned by Mr. S.A. Vahid anywhere in the book. He was handsomely paid for it and the copyright of the article therefore lies with the Iqbal Academy. He has not the courtesy to mention this fact: perhaps, he thought, it would lower the value of his book.

As regards quotations from certain books, inadequate references has sometimes been given in the footnotes. I would have, for instance, much preferred if detailed information had been given in the footnote (p. 63) about H.H. Joachim's book *A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza*. No reference to the press where this book was published and the year when it was issued, is given while in almost all other cases such references are supplied. Why complete reference is missing in this particular case, Mr. Vahid alone can explain.

In spite of these, the book deserves serious attention from the students of Iqbal. It is from the pen of a person who has devoted the best part of his life to the dissemination of Iqbal's message throughout the world.

B. A. DAR