

IQBAL AND THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN RELIGION

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It is usually asserted that to think is to philosophise, and knowledge is the awareness of internal sensation interpreted to unfold reality. To me this statement seems incorrect, as merely to think is not to philosophise. Everyone has the faculty of thought, but everyone is not a philosopher! Thinking is a necessary process in life to arrive at conclusions, but philosophy involves itself in strange dialectics and makes the problems more complicated without defining its terms of reference. It is a strange paradox that none of the problems discussed so far by philosophy have ever been defined in clear terms. While discussing the proofs of the existence of God, Iqbal, in the second chapter of his renowned Lectures, says: "But regarded as logical proofs, I am afraid, they are open to serious criticism and further betray a rather superficial interpretation of experience."⁶⁹ And the Muslim philosophers particularly, while converting foreign terminology to their own language, have found equivalents to make confusion more confounded. They too have not cared to look into the meanings of these terms either as used in the Holy Qur'ān or in Arabic dictionaries. While superimposing this terminology, Muslim philosophers transferred the total meanings which the Greeks or the Vedantists had given to them, and helped to carry the controversy into the further centuries without solving the problems whose answers were readily available in the Holy Qur'ān. Around these problems a strange logical network has been woven which has completely hidden the real issues. To mention a few examples, the problems of Soul and Spirit, Good and Evil, Free Will and Determination and Existentialism may be cited. Each problem has been left unsolved and more confusion has been created, showing man the ways of escape from the real truth. No one ever tried to explain what the Soul was or what the Spirit is. They even left terms undefined. Nor have they passed verdict as to what is Good and what is Evil, and how they come about. Similar is the case with Determinism and Free Will. They have adopted an attitude of escapism to take away all the

⁶⁹. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 27.

responsibility which man was to shoulder. They have tried to pass on the baby and make man run away from reality. They have always blamed the Superior Power whom they never tried to understand.

“Is it then possible to apply the purely rational method of philosophy to religion?” asks Iqbal, and to this he replies thus: “The spirit of philosophy is one of full inquiry. It suspects all authority.”⁷⁰

As a Muslim, I feel that all this is superfluous and is merely en-tangling man in unnecessary controversies and wasting his valuable time. Ever since man started to philosophise, hundreds of thousands of pages have been written on these problems without arriving at any conclusion. We have thus been wasting our time over imaginary problems. The Qur’ān is a self-contained book and answers all these questions clearly, and all that is required of man to lead an honest and peaceful life. Not only this, the Qur’ān discourages dabbling in problems which the mind of man is incapable of grasping Says the Qur’ān: “Why then do you dispute about that of which you have no knowledge?”⁷¹ This is in right earnest to save man from wasting his time. After all the Creator knows what the capabilities of man are. In so far as knowledge is concerned, the Qur’ān contains right guidance for its pursuit, and prevents man from pursuing shadows which are of no value to him. Knowledge was essential for man for understanding the purpose of His creation, and has been well defined in the Qur’ān; at the same time, man has been discouraged from dabbling in problems which have no utility in this life and do not help him to attain the purpose for which he was created.

The Soul Take for instance the problems of the Soul or the Spirit. Man from the earliest days of his intellectual awakening created this problem for himself, and attributed to it all supernatural qualities. It will be seen that it is man himself who has created these unwanted mysteries. This problem has, one after the other, troubled the Baby Ionians, the Greeks and the Iranians, not to mention the Vedantists! And no one has ever been able to solve this mystery. This philosophy is contained in the pre-Islamic Hebrew words, *Ruach* and the Ne fash (Ar.=*Rūḥ* and *Nafs*). These words were prevalent at the advent of Islam, and the Jews questioned the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) as to the nature of Soul. Back came the reply: “Tell them it is My

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 1.

⁷¹ iii. 65.

business, and you have been given meager knowledge of it.”⁷² And yet, in spite of this shut-up reply, man chose to run after it, knowing very well that he had been discouraged to pursue this matter. Man is obstinate enough to think that he can find out something even of what he has been given meagre knowledge. With a Muslim the question is different. He takes the Qur’ān as the revealed word of God, every word of which is correct, or is proving its correctness after gradual research. But the strangest thing is that even Muslim thinkers were so intensely influenced by Greek and other thought that they succumbed to this external influence. Perhaps there was no escape for them as the trend of superior civilisations was tantalising. Islamic thought was just emerging. Perhaps, it was the fashion of the day, as it has always been. They amalgamated their own thinking with it, believing that they will help to make it up-to-date; little realising that they were really drifting away from the true teachings of the Qur’ān Iqbal says:” while Greek philosophy very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers, it, on the whole, obscured their vision of the Qur’ān.”⁷³ A whole lot of spiritual philosophy and supernaturalism developed out of this chase, but without result. After giving up this chase and not being satisfied with their result they started to run after Ne fash or Nafs. This too they deemed to be something akin to the Soul, forgetting that the Qur’ān uses this word for the Conscious Self, and the mere word Self means nothing in the light of the Qur’ān This word is used al-most two hundred times in its different forms in the Qur’ān, and in each place it means Consciousness or the Conscious Self, and only in five places does it denote the Heart-the physiological and anatomical heart. They mistook *Nafs* for the *Rūh* (Soul) and wasted further time in resolving its mysteries of which, really speaking, there were none! To quote a few examples: (i) “Every soul (Nafs) will taste of death”⁷⁴; (2) “And in yourself do you not see”⁷⁵; (3) “Allah takes away consciousness (*Nafs*) from the bodies at death, and temporarily when you are asleep.”⁷⁶ These three examples are sufficient to illustrate our point of view. *Nafs*, therefore, is the Conscious Self and not the Spirit as is usually presumed, or a substitute for the Soul. However, in one place in the Qur’ān the word *Nafesh* is used in the form of

⁷² xvii. 85.

⁷³ Reconstruction, p. 3.

⁷⁴ iii. 184.

⁷⁵ Li. 20.

⁷⁶ xxxix. 42.

Nafashat (xxi. 78), where it intends to convey the sense of dispersal. It has, however, the same root as the Hebrew word *Nafesh*, as already referred to above. *Nafs* is, therefore, the Conscious Self or Consciousness, but not the Soul into which a man cannot peep. It is the conscious material self into which one is required to peep, and see how man has evolved from a tiny speck of sperm which is visible only with the aid of a microscope. The excellence of creation is discernible only by dissecting the human body and not by a philosophical discussion! One has to perceive what organs and what fluids have been created out of this single cell (*nafsin wahaidah*) of a sperm, and how the various functions of organs are maintained. Certainly by pondering only one can see the Greatness of God, and not by looking into one's spirit which one can not see or perceive. It, therefore, boils down to this: man has been wasting his time in idle pursuits while the Qur'an keeps on telling him to mind his own business and not meddle with affairs about which he has been given meagre knowledge.

Qur'anic Theory of Knowledge. And in so far as knowledge is concerned, the Holy Qur'an repeatedly tells man to ponder over the works of Nature and see how the whole universe is operating. And also to keep away from such problems of which he cannot find solutions. Says the Holy Qur'an:

(1) "And amongst men is he who disputes about Allah, without knowledge, and follows every rebellious devil."⁷⁷

(2) "And among men is he who disputes about Allah without knowledge and without guidance and without an illuminating Book,"⁷⁸

And of real knowledge the Qur'an tells man to ponder externally:

"Seest thou not that Allah sends down water from the clouds, then We bring forth therewith fruits of various hues? And in the mountains are streaks, white and red and of various hues, and

⁷⁷ xxii, 3.

⁷⁸ xxii.,8

(others) is tensely black....Those of His servants only who are possessed of such knowledge fear Allah.”⁷⁹

It would now have become clear that knowledge or scholarship is not philosophy which preaches to you to look inwardly at something sub lime but to ponder externally and internally over the physical body where you can see everything of the creation with your own eyes, and not merely imagine things of which you have no sight or insight! AP knowledge, according to the Qur’ān, becomes concrete science which un-folds to him the real purpose of creation. In view of this the Holy Qur’ān discusses at some length the various types of knowledge, such as Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Cosmogony, Psychology, Mathematics, Geology, Medicine and even Embryology! But nowhere do we find even an inkling of Philosophy. Philosophy, therefore, is not knowledge. It is a mere human device to mince matters and take man away from real thought. Of course, the Qur’ān does not discuss details of these branches of knowledge It only introduces you to foundational, knowledge and asks you to ponder and investigate. We have to work out the details ourselves and establish the truth of Divine Revelation. In no place has the Qur’ān devoted any time to philosophy. Whenever an occasion arises it asks you to believe in the Unseen and discourages you from discussing such problems, knowing fully well that you will waste your time and will not arrive at any conclusion. As far as the existence of God is concerned, it clearly says: People unnecessarily argue about the existence of God and follow the misguided philosophers (see above). Yet man has entered into superfluous discussions of Pantheism and Panentheism to make confusion worse confounded! When teleological and ontological proofs are available, where lies the need of philosophical juggling? This universe could not have come about on its own. in this universe nothing comes about on its own. Even the machinery, the furniture, the houses have been built by man. Does man think that he and the vegetation around him have come into the world on their own? Yet man persists obstinately to argue that this universe is not the creation of God. How foolish of him to call himself knowledgeable?

Nature of the Human Soul. As I have said above, philosophy has never tried to define its terms, but has proceeded to argue about them

⁷⁹ xxxv. 27-28.

unnecessarily. Had it taken the trouble to define its terms, it would, have saved us a great deal of intellectual confusion. Take for instance the very term Soul which is sprung from the Hebrew word *Ruach* the equivalent of which in Arabic is *Rūḥ*. The meaning of *Rūḥ*, according to the Arabic dictionary, is movement, etc. It is a common expression to say in Arabic: *Rūḥ min hind* [Go away from here]; or, *Ila anta rūḥ* [Where are you going?]. It would have now become clear that the Arabic word means movement or energy. Everything moves by virtue of the inherent potential energy. *Rūḥ* or Soul is, therefore, nothing else but energy; for it makes the things move! And movement is life. By this energy everything grows and develops and evolves. It is the primordial and the vital impetus, the *elan vital* of all life. And man I know very little about it, except that it exists. It is perpetually flowing. According to the latest scientific investigations and researches, matter and energy are interconvertible. Each one is being transformed into the other. It was energy which took the form of smoke or clouds and became a glowing mass which later cooled and contracted and its pieces broke off to float in space to organise themselves into the Cosmos. It was this energy which later flowed from the sky in the form of water from which sprang the first germs of life, which later took different shapes to give life different forms, and finally became man. The controversy between matter and spirit is thus resolved. All these stages which I have mentioned above, of condensation and conversion of energy and matter, are described in the Qur'ān. Man must ponder and think and rationalise before he can understand. It must be remembered, realised and understood that there is nothing super-natural about religion or creation. All is natural phenomena and we must look into each entity with the eye of a scientist and not that of a philosopher, if we wish to understand.

Harmony and Balance in Universe. Similar are the problems of Good and Evil. Free Will and Determinism. It must be realised that if we mould our thought according to the Qur'ān, we will find that there is total harmony and balance in the universe. All disharmony and imbalance are the creation of man. All pollution and indiscipline are also his creation. There is nothing but goodness in Nature, Evil only exists in the creative imagination of man, because it is of his own creation. The Qur'ān prescribes the limits of behaviour, The moment you exceed or trespass these limits, you are held responsible for the disharmony and misery that spring therefrom. It is we who are polluting the air, it is we who are polluting the seas, and it is we who

are polluting the minds of men by obscene literature. How dare do we then blame the Almighty and escape the responsibility we shouldered at the time of our inauguration as the vicegerents of God on this earth? Does man think that he is not responsible for his actions? And is he determined? Surely man does not have an overall control But the little control which the Almighty has reserved for Himself is for the right guidance of man and for his benefit. God is all goodness, and is guiding man at every step. It is we who are negligent and irresponsible. Man is responsible for the chaos we see in the world today. Nations are racing for supremacy, and by the force of strength and not reason they want to usurp every thing for themselves and leave nothing for the comfort of weaker nations Political and diplomatic strategies coupled with industrial exploitation are the tactics which are destroying peace and tranquility in the human race. If people of all races were to truly follow their own religion in its true spirit, there would be peace all over. No religion permits discord. Every religion promotes harmony. It is the philosophy of life which percolates into human desire, thus upsetting the tranquility and harmony in nature and in the society of man. It is making confusion worse confounded. Everyone tries to philosophise but does not stare at reality in its face. Man runs away from truth. And the moment man runs away from truth, he has fallen asleep. "We are all asleep. We shall awake when we are dead!" (Prophet Muhammad).

This is the trend of modern deterministic existentialists! And this is mostly atheistic! I am aware of the fact that there are theistic non-deterministic existentialists too, but their number is insignificant. They are ineffective and no one pays any attention to their teachings. Had man considered himself responsible for his actions, he would have behaved more sensibly and wisely, because he would have been conscious of the fact that he was answerable for his acts. Unfortunately, philosophy has always had a soft corner for creating such problems to confront man. It has always overlooked the fact of complete balance and order in the universe. If we study the Qur'ān carefully, or for the matter of that, any scripture, we will find that man is held responsible for all his ills and all good is from God. These are simple facts of life which everyone can experience, no matter to what religion he belongs. But philosophy has its own religion and tries to upset solid facts with obscure thought. God Almighty is bounteous and generous; we are disobedient and dissident.

All great religions are Divine religions. Prophets of God have appeared

since the creation of man for his guidance; for man was hasty, forgetful and thankless. In every religion it has been the priests and the philosophers who have been responsible for the adulteration of true teachings. The main feature of every revelation was to bring man to the true teaching of the worship of One God and make him bow down to HIM. All religions were unitarian to start with. The worship of two, three, four and multiple gods started much later. This diversification was the result of philosophy, which could only make things vague, and escape from the exact true reality. Even to this day we find Unitarians in all advanced religions and amongst all thinkers. The need for Prophets (guides) was always felt to bring man to the true worship of One God. As man became civilised and settled down he started to meddle in philosophy and paid less attention to the nature around him, and sometimes when he did he drew attention to the stars and planets above and likened them to Gods with different attributes. Man could not understand the natural phenomena. He labelled everything as supernatural. He was overawed with the natural elements, and became superstitious, thus losing his hold over reality. Initially, people led a religious life. There was no philosophy. But the moment philosophy entered religion it put over religion covering of theosophy and mysticism, and tried to justify its existence. Mysticism played an equal havoc with religion and destroyed its very spirit. Monasticism and esotericism further paralysed the belief of man. The entire shape of religion was transformed into supernatural beliefs, which was against the natural religion of man. This has happened with Islam. Unfortunately. Very few Muslims realise that the form of religion which they possess today is anything but what the Qur'ān teaches and what the Prophet of Islam left for them. The Islamic society today, in spite of its profession, is totally un-Qur'ānic. Islam has assumed a ritual shape for which there is no place in the Qur'ān. The Muslims today, instead of paying attention to the Qur'ān, are absorbed in things other than those laid down in the Qur'ān. The Muslim philosophers were tremendously influenced by the Greek and Vedantic thought. The pure *Tawhīd* was adulterated with Pantheism and Panentheism (*wahdat: 'at al-wujūd* and *wahadat al-shubūd*) for which belief there is no justification in the Qur'ān. This has happened in all religions where the highest form of worship still exists as the worship of One True God, the Creator of all. The Advaita philosophy in Hinduism and Unitarianism in Christianity are still cherished as the highest forms of worship. It will thus have become clear how philosophers in every religion have polluted the true

form of belief. What we see of Islam today is not the Islam of the Qur'ān. It is a ritualistic, sufistic and traditional Islam. If it was not so, the Holy Prophet would not complain on the Day of Judgment thus: "And the messenger will say: O my Lord, my people had taken this Qur'ān as a forsaken thing!"⁸⁰ Some people will not relish my quoting this verse, for they are averse to all that I have said! But this is a fact, which has unfortunately to be admitted. Even the highest authority on the Qur'ān cannot deny this verse of the Holy Qur'ān: and if he cannot, how come this about? The Muslim society, which we see today, is not a Qur'ānic society. Weigh your actions against the dictates of the Qur'ān, and you will find out the truth of what I have said. Says Iqbal again:

"This is what the earlier Muslim students of the Qur'ān completely missed under the spell of classical speculation. They read the Quran in the light of Greek thought."⁸¹

One result of such philosophical thinking is that the propounders of this new thought have always been the founders of new religious movements. This has upset the purity of Divine Revelations. It also happened partially because these philosophers and Sufis translated foreign thought without understanding their language which resulted in the accumulation of a hopeless mass of absurdities in our own religion. This became a "heap of obstructing nonsense" and took Muslims away from the true teachings of the Qur'ān. Iqbal is very adamant about this attitude of Muslim thinkers and unfolds the loopholes in their thought in the opening chapter of his *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. If the Muslims had understood the problems of Matter, Spirit and Space, Time and Movement, from the Qur'ān, instead of taking inspiration from Neoplatonic and Vedantic thoughts, they would have much more easily understood the cosmology and cosmogony of the universe, and not made the whole affair so complicated and complex as to drive everything away from the mind of man.

The main effect of the Greek thought was to create confusion between the concept of Matter and Spirit from where all the problems arose. Had they understood that there was no difference between the two and they were only two different forms of one and the same thing, this confusion would not

⁸⁰ xxv. 30.

⁸¹ *Reconstruction*, p. 4.

have arisen. On the other hand, the philosophers of history have tried to solve the problems, whereas the philosophers of religion have minced matters.

There is a Vital Principle in creation, the *elan vital* of Bergson or the Vital Impetus, which runs through everything. This running force is the *Ruach* or the *Ruh* (Soul) which is being transformed into matter and evolving into different forms of being. This is happening through a process of congenial condensation. This energy or soul is vibrating and flowing through space from eternity in different wave-lengths and is infused into everything living. Mountains, vegetation, living beings and minerals are all different forms of energy taking shape by condensation. They are all vibrating, radiating, migrating and re-assembling. Had this concept been understood, the controversy would have melted away. Unfortunately, the problem has never been tackled in the way described above. It is purely for this reason that the Soul has always been taken as something sublime and supernatural.

I have no intention of describing the history of philosophical thought in religion, but am merely trying to show how important problems of religion have been tackled and interpreted by the complicated philosophical thought. All that was so simple and easy to understand, had we correctly understood the scriptures. Unfortunately, even the scriptures were not spared and their contents were tampered with to suit the new philosophy of man. Philosophy is a vague subject which has so far never arrived at any conclusions regarding any problem. It tries to put forward a multiplicity of views, but never brings out any result. To think is not forbidden to man. On the other hand, it is encouraged. But a man must think to bring out results and arrive at a definite answer, and be clear about the problem. This is the property of human thought. Even a dog thinks before it sips a hot cup of milk. It arrives at a conclusion that if it does not let it cool, it will burn its tongue.

According to the Qur'an, there are only three ways of arriving at a certainty regarding any problem. Philosophy has drifted away from these methods and has evolved its own peculiar logic. These methods are: (1) Inference (*'Ilm al-Yaqin*), (2) Observation (*'Ain al-Yaqin*) and (3) Realisation or Experience (*Haqq al-Yaqin*). Experience is the final stage of certainty. It is physical experience and not spiritual or supernatural experience which only exists in the mind of philosophers or Sufis who, in order to imitate the

Prophets, take upon themselves the onerous function of Prophets sent by God or who are deputed to guide mankind. These methods of certainty are so simple that any man can utilise them to arrive at results, and convince himself. But to drive man into the so-called spiritual field is to make the whole thing volatile. The cold charm of philosophy, by its very touch, makes the whole atmosphere supernatural! And this is beyond the grasp of man. Physical experience is an experience which every one of us is experiencing. But the spiritual experience is only a fairy tale which no one has ever experienced. How can it be made the final test of certainty? When the spirit or soul is actually energy, all spiritual experiences turn into physical experiences!

Iqbal says in his *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*: “There is no historical evidence to show that the Prophet of Arabia actually communicated certain esoteric doctrines to ‘Alī or Abū Bakr.”⁸² I would go a step further and say that the Holy Prophet did not communicate or demonstrate any spiritual experience to any of his Companions! All spiritual experience assigned to saints and holy men is a fiction. All psychic phenomenon is actually psychophysical function of the brain. When the localisation of functions of the remaining part of the brain is completed all these mysteries and mystical phenomena will disappear. Even to this day we witness pious people relating stories of premonition taking them to be spiritual experiences, little realising that these are common experiences with the people, no matter to what religion they belong. This is a physical phenomenon. And then these so-called spiritual experiences are taken to be the result of contemplation. But in the opinion of Iqbal again: “Such methods of contemplation are quite un-Islāmic in character, and the higher Sufis do not attach any importance to them”⁸³ Even the so-called highest spiritual experience of al-Ḥallāj (*An al Ḥāqq*) has been borrowed from the Vedantists who cried out: “I am God” = *Aham Brahma Asmi!* These are tales of imitation practised to excellent prophetic expressions and experiences. There is no truth in them. They are merely philosophical utterances, which have reappeared in the garb of spiritual sciences.

Time and Motion. Movement itself is nothing. You see movement in the moving object. The whole universe is moving. The time is flowing, but you

⁸² *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. 84.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

do not see it. This movement is the result of physical phenomenon. It has no spiritual background as is usually presumed. It is energy floating all around which is giving shape to various phenomena, as has been amply described above. Thus has con-fusion been created in the problem of Time and Motion. They both are eternal, and the common thing in them both is the flow. They are both the creation of the Almighty. Everything besides the Almighty is created. Therefore to say Time is God is also incorrect. Time came into existence with the liberation of energy. This may be assumed to be what we call Eternal Time, what the Qur'ān calls *Dabr. Waqt* or physical time came into existence with the creation of the sun. And *'Aṣr* in the Qur'ānic terminology signifies periods of physical time in the history of creation. *'Aṣr* again is a part of the physical time. The extent of these periods vary. However, time and motion are simultaneous creations. With the release of energy the space started to vibrate with motion, and it was this vibration of energy which congenially concentrated centrally to take the shape of mist or clouds (*Dukhān* — Qur'ān). It was these clouds upon which the vibrations were repeatedly impinging that they became aglow and formed the glowing mass which later cooled, solidified, and contracted to break off into pieces which floated in the space to form the galaxies, the solar systems and the universe Therefore the controversy regarding time and motion is also time-consuming and does not lead to any definite conclusion. Suffice it to say that it is energy which flows or moves and leaves a trace of time behind it. God Almighty repeatedly says in the Qur'ān and asks men to Reflect, Ponder, Think, See and Understand creation outside and inside himself. Whatever is hidden or unseen, He simply asks him to believe and not to argue (see above). When this is the attitude of the Almighty Creator, what business have we to poke our nose into things unseen and unexperienced by our senses? To create problems is a very easy thing. To solve them is very difficult!

Says Iqbal again: "Philosophy proper comprises the knowledge of the beginning of things, the end of things, and the knowledge of the Self."⁸⁴ If this is true, and it does seem true, then all this has been laid bare in the Qur'ān. Where then lies the need for philosophy? Does it not unfold that it is trying to create confusion in the Divine Revelations? The Qur'ān describes the complete cosmogony and cosmology of the universe and describes the end of the world in clear terms. It even describes life in the Hereafter. But

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 137.

just because Revelation has not dawned upon mystics and philosophers, they have been trying to mislead man. The interpretations of the philosophers and the Sufis is, therefore, superfluous and unnecessary. If we were to ponder over creation on lines suggested by the Qur'ān, we could take aid from the investigation of the scientists and confirm what the Qur'ān is saying and resolve all mystery which is of our own making. But whatever the philosophers have said will ever remain vague and unconfirmed.

Similar are the problems of illumination, Cosmic Consciousness and Death. I consider them stages in the development of man. By a gradual process of experience and acquisition of knowledge man rises in the level of his being. Says the Holy Qur'ān: "That you shall certainly ascend to one stage from another."⁸⁵ Thus man confirms the various aspects of creation himself. He does not require to speculate.

All Revealed Religion is Natural Religion. It is philosophy again which has turned it into a supernatural religion. Nature was created in sympathy, synchronisation and in accordance with the temperament of man. Hence all its laws and limitations are according to the needs of man and fulfil his requirements. Anything supernatural is unnatural for the temperament of man. I am indeed surprised that in this modern and advanced scientific age such philosophical thought is allowed to flourish.

Like other nations, Muslims too have produced great philosophers. But, what have they done? Were they not aware of the fact that the Qur'ān was a self-contained book? By transferring foreign thought and Islamising foreign terminology they have created a great confusion and taken the Muslims away from the true teachings of the Qur'ān? They have so much adulterated the religion of God that we run after their philosophies and neglect the Qur'ān! After all what is their contribution in the understanding of the Qur'ān? Sufistic literature is replete with supernatural and spiritual thought. The Qur'ān is clear and definite on every matter, while they are vague and confused. And what is the Muslim studying today? History, *Kalam*, *Fiqh*, *Taşawwuf*, Philosophy, Poetry and Sorcery! Where does the Qur'ān come in? Will the Prophet not be right in his complaint to the Almighty that his people had completely overlooked the Qur'ān? (See above.) It is time the Muslims stopped a while to take stock of their pursuits and reverted to the Qur'ān which is a Book of Guidance for everyone and for all times to come. To end

⁸⁵ ixxxiv. 19.

this brief article, philosophy is a reaction against science to create confusion. When priests and poets could not learn science, they undertook to patronise philosophy which was easier to learn and take man away from the search for God.

THE SUPERMAN*

The conception of the 'Superman' in Nietzsche is purely materialistic. This conception may be new in European literature. It is, however, the same as the idea of the Overman in Emerson. It is probable that Nietzsche borrowed it from the literature of Islam or of the East and degraded it by his materialism. In the literature of Islamic mysticism the expression used for the higher man is *Insān-i Kāmil*. I wrote on this subject about thirty-six years ago immediately after leaving the College. My dissertation was published in *The Indian Antiquary* of Bombay and now forms part of my *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. Being a thoroughgoing materialist, Nietzsche cannot use the term spirit except in the sense of life in its metaphysical manifestations. The first metamorphosis of life according to him is camel, which from his point of view is a symbol of load-bearing strength. The second is lion, that is to say the strength to kill without pity, for pity is a vice and not virtue with Nietzsche. The third metamorphosis is child, that is to say the Superman passing beyond good and evil like the child and becoming a law unto himself. This is materialism turning the human ego into a monster, which, according to Nietzsche's idea of immortality, has repeated itself and will repeat itself infinite number of times. Nietzsche fell into this error of the world repeating itself on account of his fatal error, namely, that clock time is the real time. On this point again *Asrār-i Khudī* is opposed to Nietzsche's teaching. He never grappled with the problem of time and accepted without criticism the old Hindu and Greek idea of time. The time movement to him is circular. In the *Asrār-i Khudī* it is regarded as a straight line. Life, therefore, to Nietzsche

* From a Note dictated by Iqbal to Sayyid Nazir Niyazi in the summer of 1937. The Note is now the proud possession of the Iqbal Academy. Complete text of the Note appears in S.A. Vahid, Ed., *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal* (Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1964), pp. 238-44.

is repetition, to *Asrār-i Khudī* creation. The perfection of the perfect man according to Islam consists in realizing this aspect of time which can be described only as the eternal now. To Nietzsche there is no such thing as the eternal now. Further, Nietzsche's Superman is a biological product. The Islamic perfect man is the product of moral and spiritual forces.