

GULSHAN-I-RAZ AND GULSHA N-I-RAZ-I- JADID

The Nature and Role of Reason

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It is said that Philosophy is the art of asking deliberative and significant questions⁵. Significance is sometimes equated with meaningfulness which no doubt it is, but if by meaning-fulness we understand the verifiability or un-verifiability of a proposition in the light of facts, we restrict thereby the range and scope of significant propositions and confine them to scientifically testable statements. In philosophy the term significance is to be used or should properly be used for all such questions or problems which touch the ultimate bottom of human life and raise issues which go deeper than the one raised by physicochemical sciences.

Questions can be raised at two levels-the physical and the metaphysical, to use Aristotelean phraseology. At the physical level, the questions are concerned with the phenomenal and mundane reality and can be very deep, as requiring a research by a host of competent scientists or a research extending over centuries of observation and experimentation. But, despite the tremendous importance that scientific research has, and the long laborious work and study that the scientists have to undertake the question that sciences raise, do not touch the ultimate bottom of life. They concern the physical aspect of life-very vital and very significant no doubt, but by no means does it comprehend the entire gamut of human existence. For the materialistically oriented world of today, science is everything and scientism the best type of philosophy. By scientism is understood a creed which firmly believes in the cogency, validity and relevants of science implying thereby

⁵ Ethics for Policy Decision Wayne A, R. Leys Bunting Hall, 1961.

that only science can provide genuine knowledge about every thing including of course man and society. Scientism, however, is a denial of all that is noble and sublime in life and also that which is amenable not through scientific techniques but through intuition.

At the second level, namely the metaphysical, such questions are asked as are not mundane or phenomenal in nature but are noumenal and of ultimate significance. When, for instance Omar Khayyam, in his Quatrains, asks, “who the potter and who the pot” or questions death, by saying, “Surely not in vain, my sub-stance from the common earth was taken, that he who subtly wrought me into shape should stamp me back to common earth again”, or when he demands explanation of the discrimination on the earth, by making an ungainly vessel say, “they sneer at me for leaning all awry. Did the hand of the potter shake?” or when he doubts the existence of hell by saying “they talk of some strict testing-pish, he is a good fellow, and it will all be well”, Omar Khayyam is trying to know how ultimately every thing is going to turn out or what in short is the nature of metaphysical reality. To distinguish the nature of scientific enquiry from the quest of a metaphysician it is sometimes said that while a scientist raises questions, a metaphysician is concerned with riddles. Life and death are great mysteries for human being and when an effort is made by a metaphysician at the metaphysical level to offer an explanation of them in human language, it is mystery from whose face he is trying to lift veil. It is for this reason that procedures and techniques of physical science fail when dealing with supersensible reality. No amount of scientific observation and experimentation can ever resolve the mystery of life and death or that of hell and heaven. But because of their inaccessibility to the methodology of strict sciences, it cannot be held that the issues raised by Metaphysics are of no account or that they are no questions but moods and fancies of human beings in their hours of distress and helplessness.

To clarify further the type of questions that philosophy raises in contradistinction to the questions generally raised by the illiterate and the

untutored, it can be said that philosophical questions are deliberative, meaning thereby that they are the product of deep thinking and can be resolved through deliberation or deep thinking alone: For instance, the first question of Omar Khayyam, who the potter and who the pot, is a question about the creator of the universe and the nature of the creation. It is also a question about the relation which the creator has with its creation and of the distinction between the two, if any. Omar Khayyam, thus raises the question of the unity of Being as contrasted with that of the Duality of Being. The problem whether ultimately everything is one and the same or that there are differences is the age-old question of one and many. It is a deliberative question. It is the result of thinking and requires deliberation for its solution.

In *Gulshan-i-Raz*, Mahmud Shabistari, a poet, mystic and thinker of the thirteenth century raised metaphysical questions on the asking of a certain student and tried to solve them in the light of knowledge available at that time and also in keeping with the high traditions of Islamic mysticism. Generally speaking the Islamic mystics, that is to say, sufis believed that God alone is reality and therefore it is God alone that exists. In his *Lectures*, Allama Muhammad Iqbal records the talk of two sufis, one of whom says that there was a time when nothing existed save God and the other replying that the same is the case even now. Since the only reality is God and all else a manifestation or an emanation, the apparent distinctions between the primal Source and the world is illusory. God is everything and everything is God. This belief goes by the name of Pantheism, according to which the ultimate reality being one, all else is but a mode, an appearance or a projection. The doctrine of Pantheism, in its extreme form, is not held generally by sufis, for not all of them were astute and consistent thinkers. Among the Western thinkers Spinoza was a pantheist and among the Muslim thinkers Ibn-i-Arabi was a thorough-going pantheist. The Medieval mysticism of which Mahmud Shabistari is a product, is surcharged with pantheistic ideas and practices. In the Medieval Islam, it was Mad-Arabi whose thoughts were accepted and

incorporated in the general body of literature particularly poetry and metaphysics.

According to Edward G. Brown,⁶ in the *Gulshan-i-Raz*, Shabistari asks fifteen questions. It may be mentioned, however, in passing that when these questions are elaborated many other questions crop up so that in reality the *Gulshan-i-Raz* is a. discussions of all those issues that a student or a follower of sufism feels or countenances in his pursuit of gnostic knowledge. The questions are:-

1. What is the nature of Reason?
2. Why is reasoning sometimes a duty, sometimes a sin and when is reasoning incumbent upon a mystic?
3. What am 'I'? What is meant by travelling into one's self?
4. What is meant by the Pilgrim and the Perfect Man?
5. Who is gnostic and who attains to the secret of unity?
6. Is the Knower and the Known one in essence? If so, can the knower have a sense of responsibility?
7. What does one mean when he says "I am the 'Truth'?"
8. When a creature is called "united", then what does "travelling" and journey" mean?
9. What is that Sea whose shore is speech and what pearls can be found in its bottom.
10. How can the 'Necessary' and the "Contingent" go together? What is Quantity and Space?
11. Which part is greater than the whole? How can such a part be found?
12. How are Eternal and Temporal separate? Can we call the one as God and the other as the world?
13. How can the symbolical and the allegorical language be interpreted? What does it really mean when the "eye", "curls", "down" and "mole" of God are mentioned? What do "stations" and "states" mean when they are said to occur in the "journey" undertaken by a mystic towards the

⁶ Literary History of Persia, Vol III Cambridge 1956, pp. 147.48.

ultimate source of every thing?

14. What do “Beauty”, “Wine” and “torch, really mean?
15. Is the talk about Idols, Girdles and Christianity tantamount to talking about infidelity? If not, how should it be taken?

If one were to put all these questions in philosophical language, one would say that they are questions either concerning Epistemology or Ontology. There are some questions about the nature, the possibilities and the limitations of human knowledge including reason and some about the ultimate nature of reality. When, for example, Shabistari discusses the nature of the reasoning process and the role of discursive reasoning in the realm of subjective and objective reality or when he is dealing with the problem of reaching the ultimate truth, he is concerned with epistemological problems. When on the other hand, he is dealing with the problem of One and Many, Transcendentalism or Immanentism, the nature of the three-dimensional world, human destiny, life after death, creation, and pantheism, he is raising ontological questions. There are many other problems that he raises incidentally. He asks about the nature of the supra-spatial and supra-temporal reality, the distinction between the Observer and the Observed, whether numbers are absolute or relative, the difference between prophetic and mystic consciousness and the meaning of ‘far’ and ‘near’, ‘great’ and ‘less’, and ‘part’ and ‘whole’.

It can be easily seen that the questions posed by Shabistari are the ever-recurring questions of Philosophy. Right from the beginning, the questions of human destiny, creation of the world and the nature of the universe have occupied the attention of the philosophers of every age and of every country. Among the Greeks a person who knew who created the world, what its attributes are and what relation it bears to what it created, and also knew whether the story of a human being ends with his/her physical death and whether the world is basically and essentially spiritual or material was regarded a ‘wise’, a sage or a philosopher. Shabistari raises precisely these questions and many other besides showing thereby his allegiance to the ‘past’

and also to the “present” in which he lived. The ‘present’ for Shabistari is the ‘past’ for Allama Muhammad Iqbal and the ‘future’ for the Greeks. The ‘present’ they say, is a razor edge dividing the past from the future. What is ‘present’ now, becomes instantaneously past. Hence the present is over determined, not by the time-span it occupies, for the time-span is incredibly small but by the will of the people. The important point to remember is the relative and contingent nature of the ‘present’. The ‘present’ dies every moment and comes into being every moment.

The ‘present’ of every age is constituted by the aims and ideals as well as the hopes and disappointments of the people of that age. In some cases there is a leading idea which epitomizes the psyche of an age and so guides and inspires it. It may be said that the leading idea of Shabistari’s age is the metaphysical one, as inherited from Plotinus through Ibn-i-Arabi with modification introduced by the Islamic way of thinking. The idea of Wandat-ul-Wujud seems to be the dominant idea and it is in reference to this idea that all else is explained. Ibn-i-Arabi is a staunch supporter of this idea and also of the theory of emanations, a necessary corollary of this creed. In explaining the nature of the ultimate source and the emanation of the world, Ibn-i-Arabi takes recourse to Muslim terminology and thought and so presents a picture of the metaphysical reality in a way which does not sound bizzare to the Muslim ear, but a closer look can detect departure in it from the strict orthodox point of view. Hence in the history of Muslim thought, one finds many thinkers taking up cudgels with Ibn-i-Arabi and holding the doctrine of Wandat-ul-Wujud as a heresy. But it can be said that inspire of what the opponents say, the doctrine of Wandat-ul-Wujud has remained the corner stone of all types of sufistic thought. Persian as well as Urdu poetry is surcharged with the idea of unity of being and the concepts related to it.

It is however important to note that every thinker including Shabistari had his own “present’ and he accordingly refused to acknowledge any other “present, no matter how powerful and meaningful it once was. Nor did Allama Muhammad Iqbal, for he wrote *Gulshan-i-Raz-i-Jadid*, that is to say,

a new “Garden of Mystery’. Allama Muhammad Iqbal has used the word “jadid’, which not only means new and fresh, but also modern. Hence Allama Muhammad Iqbal attempts in Gulshan-i-Raz-i-Jadid an interpretation of the mysteries of theosophic thought in the light of modern knowledge as available to him. Allama Muhammad Iqbal could not accept the “present” of Shabistari as his “present”. What was “modern’ for Shabistari was not “modern’ for him, for there was a distance of seven centuries between them. Knowledge ever advances though the speed of its advancement was never so great as it is now. It is said that the quantity of knowledge doubled in the fifteenth century but after the invention of the press, the revival of Learning as well as the development of the rapid, easy and quick means of communication and transport, the speed of the development of knowledge increased tremendously, so that now knowledge doubles every five years. Allama Muhammad Iqbal in writing Gulshan-i-Raz-i-Jadid, acknowledged the advancement of knowledge during his time and the need of writing afresh whenever a significant change takes place in the body of knowledge. Allama Muhammad Iqbal not only wrote a new Gulshan-i-Raz but also wrote a Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. ‘inspite of the fact that there had been Reconstructions of Religious thought in the past. Every philosopher of Islam attempted a reconstruction in the light of knowledge of his own time. Mutazilites, Asharites, the great Moghal king Akbar, Shah Wali Ullah, Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, and a host of others who initiated new movements of religious thought in Islam reinterpreted Islamic thought in the light of scientific and philosophic thought of their time, and the requirements of their own age.

Unfortunately for static, unprogressive and unthinking people, the “present’ of the ‘past’ remains the ‘present’ for them. For them the ‘present’ of the bygone times perpetuates itself and covers the ‘presents’ of the future. This however is a grievous mistake. The ‘present’, as observed already, is a razor edge having no dimension of its own, except the one given by people and so constituting what is called the “spacious present”. Allama Muhammad

Iqbal never thought the 'present' could be perpetuated, and that is why he held that with the advancement of know-ledge a fresh and a better reconstruction of religious thought in Islam could be offered. The same he would say about his rendering of Gulshan-i-Raz in modern diction of his time. Between the Gulshan-i-Raz and Gulshan-i-Raz-i-Jadid there is a distance of seven centuries and between Allama Muhammad Iqbal and us there is a distance of seventy years, but from the point of view of knowledge, the distance between us and Allama Muhammad Iqbal is the same as it was between him and Shabistari. Hence both his Reconstruction and Gulshan-i-Raz-i-Jadid need fresh thinking.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal admits that though the questions in their philosophic aspect are the same yet their understanding and their solution would be different. Iqbal Says:

بطرز دیگر از
مقصود گفتم
جواب نامئه
محمود گفتم⁷

Shabistari wrote, as a result of the invasion of Tatars and the havoc it wrought in the intellectual, social and spiritual life of the people, But after him for centuries no one was born to cognize and to understand the new challenges that arose now and then. It was Allama Muhammad Iqbal who realized the meaning, the significance and the extent of the revolutions which came about in his own time due to the colonisations of Asia by the Western powers Since the revolution of his time was different from that of Shabistari, a new challenge had arisen, necessitating rethinking and reconstruction. Allama Muhammad Iqbal has accordingly offered an explanation of the

⁷ Gulshan-i-Rat-i-Jadid p. 145/537

problems raised by Shabistari in the light of the revolution that had come about in Muslim thinking due to the secularization of knowledge and the acquaintance with new instruments and techniques for identifying, sifting and evaluating data. Iqbal Says:

نگاہم انقلابیے
دیگرے دید
طلوع آفتابیے
دیگرے دید
کشودم از رخ
معنی نقالیے
بدست ذره دادم
افتابیے⁸

Iqbal insists that his rethinking should not be regarded as simply a new poetical rendering of Shabistari's 'Gulshan-i-Raz'. His rethinking is an exploration in the realm of Khudi, it is in fact an "inner fire", an exhibition of the "pangs of the heart". He supposes that if Gabriel were to read what he has written, he would cry.

تجلی را چنان
عریاں نخواہم

⁸ Gulshan-i-Raz-i-Jadid, p. 146/538

نخواہم جز غم
پنہاں نخواہم
گزشتہم از وصال
جاودانے
کہ بینم لذت آہ و
فغانے
مرا ناز و نیاز
آدمے دہ!
مرا ناز و نیاز
آدمے دہ!
بجاں من گداز
آدمے دہ⁹

In Gulshan-i-Raz-i-Jadid, Allama Muhammad Iqbal has employed the terminology of Shabistari but has given it a new meaning. Allama Muhammad Iqbal has not discussed all the questions of Shabistari but has chosen a few and showed how his interpretation differs and why it differs. It will be seen that Allama Iqbal's interpretation registers a real advance in knowledge.

In this article it is not possible to compare and contrast Iqbal and Shabistari on all points raised and discussed by them. That would be too lengthy and would require a separate book. I am limiting myself to one

⁹ Ibid p. 147/539.

question, namely, the first one, which concerns the nature, the limits and the source of human know-ledge. It will be evident that this is a question of epistemology and lies at the bottom of all metaphysical knowledge. In the philosophy of the Anglo-American world, it is epistemology that is reigning supreme, while ontology has been thrown into the background.

The first question as stated is:

نخست از فکر
خویشم در تحیر
چه چیز است
آنکه گویندش
تفکر
کدامین فکر مارا
شرط راه راست
چراگه طاعت و
گاہے
گنداوست¹⁰

The term used by Shabistari is ‘fkr’ which has several meanings like deliberation, thinking, reasoning, rationality etc. It would be deer that in the sense of deliberation, ‘fkr’ becomes an instrument through which thought process can be carried on to its logical end. With Aristotle and his followers, Logic was an organon, an instrument which could aid thought and lead it to its right path. When Bacon replaced deductive method of enquiry by the

¹⁰ Gulshan-i-Raz-i-ladid, p. 148/540.

inductive one, he called it Mourn Organon, meaning thereby, a new instrument. Hence it was never the intention of the logicians, barring a few one, that Logic gave any information about any thing. It was regarded as purely formal, dealing with the “shape” of arguments, not with the matter of arguments or the content of knowledge. There were some logicians who thought that the laws of Logic were the laws of reality, that the laws of Identity, non-contradiction and excluded middle were true of thought as well as of reality. But this point of view was severely criticised by mathematical logicians who took logic on the analogy of mathematics and held that both logic and mathematics had their stand on certain definitions which do not necessarily reflect the nature and complexion of physical reality as it is. When Euclid defined a point as something, having neither depth, nor length, nor width, he was not giving the definition in reference to any physical reality, for there can be no point, if it is actually drawn on a piece of paper, which had neither depth, nor length, nor breadth. In Radd-ul-Mantiqeen, Imam Ibn Taimiyyah, has precisely taken this position. He is of opinion I that logic is empty of content and can yield no knowledge of external or internal reality. In logic, Ibn Iaimiyyah is a nominalist which, by the way is the standpoint of Russell and of many other mathematical logicians.

In Radd-ul-Mantiqeen Imam Ibn Taimiyyah, is concerned with the refutation of Aristotelian Logic as Imam Ghazali of Aristotelian Philosophy. Though the primary aim of both these thinkers was to clear the way for the justification of religious beliefs and dogmas, indirectly and negatively, by demolishing what the philosophers and logicians had claimed to be true, they nevertheless succeeded in making any points which are cogent even today. But their aim was not to demolish philosophy or logic as such. Logic is an instrument of enquiry and no enquiry whatever its motive, can proceed, an such without following the laws of right thinking. When therefore Shabistari or Allama Muhammad Iqbal denounce reason, it cannot be reasoned as an instrument of enquiry, for otherwise their own “denunciation” would stand condemned, as being without logic, that is to say, without sense and meaning.

Deductive logic as an instrument of research and enquiry, is primarily, though not exclusively, used in mathematical sciences and inductive Logic, for the same purpose, again primarily, though not exclusively in empirical sciences. As research proceeds these 'two methods cooperate and jointly lead the enquiry to its successful end. Thus if enquiry is to be carried on in any domain of thought, religious or non-religious, it is absolutely essential that laws of logic be followed directly or indirectly.

As there is a widespread misconception regarding the role and function of reason in human thought, I want to pursue the matter a little further. The first question is, as Shabistari himself has pointed out, what the nature of Tafakkur or reason is. In answer it can be said:

1. Reason is creative. This point has been very well brought out by Plato when he says, "For generation of the Universe was a mixed result of the combination of Necessity and Reason. Reason overruled Necessity by persuading her to guide the greatest part of the things that become towards what is best; in that way and on that principle this Universe was fashioned in the beginning by the victory of reasonable persuasion over Necessity (Plato 1957; 48 A Cormford, tr). In this contrast which Plato suggests between reason the guiding and controlling activity, and necessity the blind, compulsive force, the creative role of reason becomes obvious. It is through persuasion, that is, through working with natural forces and not by opposing or negating them that reason creates. It encourages some forces, redirects others, it combines and balances some, changes others. Thus it brings order out of chaos. The forces of necessity pushing about aimlessly and at random are organized into enduring structures. These structures are always breaking down, so the task of reason is never finished; there is always repair work, correction, adjustment left to do.

2. Reason is the discovery and the application of rules to cases. Man is distinguished from the animals by this rationality and this consists in the ability to apprehend general principles and freely act on them. Animals, in

contrast, perceive only particulars and have therefore no free-will. The general principles, man apprehends, are part of the nature of things, they are eternal and universal. Kant says, “Everything in nature works according to laws. Rational beings alone have the faculty of acting according to the conception of laws, that is according to principles the deduction of actions from principles requires reason”.¹¹

3. Reason is calculation-adding and subtracting. Hobbes says, “When a man reasons he does nothing else but conceives a sum-total, from addition of parcels; or conceives a reminder from subtraction of one sum from another... reason in this sense is nothing but reckoning, that is adding and subtracting.”¹² This conception of reason is basic to the theory underlying the construction of decision-making machines, since these machines operate by addition, subtraction and simple comparison.

It may be held that rationality or reason works differently in different spheres. It is creative in social and political matters, it is the application of law to cases in legal and moral reasoning and it is calculation in technical and economic spheres. Thus the three conceptions of rationality work differently in different departments of human knowledge, but basically they are not incompatible. The difference is primarily in emphasis. Each approach must eventually include the other within itself in some fashion. We can look at reason from a different angle and say that it has three functions;

(1) It can generate purely non-empirical or a priori ideas. When Euclid said that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, he was intuiting an idea for which there was no empirical ground. The earth being spherical and not flat, it was not possible to draw a line which could be called straight in the light of what Euclid had said. Any line drawn on the surface of the earth must have curves, because of the spherical nature of the earth and so could not be the shortest distance between two points. In the same way

¹¹ Paul Diesing in *Reason in Society*, Illinois, 1962, p 245.

¹² *Leviathan*, 1939, p 143.

when Euclid said about point that it had neither length, nor breadth, nor depth, he was defining point without reference to empirical reality, for in the real world there could be no point without length, breadth and depth.

(2) Among the priori ideas reason establishes necessary and universal relationship. For instance, it is reason which tells us that all equilateral triangles are equiangular, that is to say, that it is on the strength of reason that it can be said that all triangles whose sides are equal have also their angles equal. In sciences nearly all concepts are non-empirical and the relation established between them is the work of reason.

(3) It is reason which enables a person to draw inferences. Since the nature of intellectual disciplines is not one and the same, reason works, as shown above, in different manners in each one of them. In some it works deductively, in some inductively, in some it creates, while in others it calculates or works through application of laws to specific cases.¹³

From the nature of reason as creative, calculating or implementing laws, or from the function of reason as intuiting a priori concepts or establishing necessary relations between such concepts or in enabling human beings to infer there is nothing that can be singled out for ridicule, criticism or denunciation. Reason is needed to denounce reason and therefore reason cannot be denounced in the last analysis, for how can reason be denounced through reason?

When Shabistari denounces logic or reason it can not be reasoned as defined and described above but it is, as he says, as employed in the domain of religion, to prove and to seek God. Shabistari says:

پر آنکس را که
ایزد راه نمود

¹³ See Broad C.D., *Five Types of Ethical Theory*.

ز استعمال
منطق ہیچ
نگشود 14

It means that Logic cannot open the door to God. To know and to understand God, there are doors other than the one of Logic. Again he says:

خرد را نیست
تاب نور آن
روی
برو از بہراو
چشمی دگر
جوی¹⁵

This couplet supports the above idea that reason is incapable of reaching God. In order to reach God, some other method has to be devised.

Shabistari's denunciation of reason can be understood in the light of the objective he has fixed for reason. He thinks that the primary, if not the sole function of reason is, to lead a person from untruth to truth or to enable him to perceive the whole in the part. This definition of reason is not in accord with the one usually found in books of logic or philosophy. Shabistari is conscious of it, but he says that all other definitions of reason as found in books and accepted by all and sundry are conventional and customary but that his definition, is original, in the sense that it is a product of his own research and thinking.

¹⁴ Gulshan-i-Raz, Mahmud Shabistari.

¹⁵ Ibid.

When Shabistari accepts a definition of reason which suits his way of thinking, he stands philosophically on sure grounds, for all definitions are man-made and accepted, because together with other definitions of a certain type, they have the capacity to generate new idea or schemes of ideas. Euclid, for instance, laid the foundation of geometry on the basis that a straight line could be drawn on the surface of the earth. Those who differed from him and thought that this could not be done as the earth was not flat but spherical laid the foundation of non-Euclidean geometries. What is different in both these systems is the initial assumptions, together with their definitions. That both these systems have their own valid system of deductions does not invalidate the claim that both are man-made and that both stand on certain assumptions and definitions about which there is nothing sacrosanct. If therefore Shabistari has adopted a certain definition of reason together with its objectives, there is no harm provided it generates a system of ideas and assists in the flow of ideas. It is undoubtedly true that religiously considered the object of knowledge should be the realization of God, but to say that the object of reason is to attain God looks odd, as reason is simply an instrument of knowledge and as such it has no objective save to assist thought in its journey from untruth to truth. In Muslim thinking much confusion has arisen because of the fact that reason and knowledge have not been properly differentiated and consequently what is true of one has been attributed to the other.

Shabistari thinks that reason is faulty since no philosophical argument for the existence of God has ever turned out to be valid. He is of the opinion that the effort to reach God through the manifestations of God is misleading, since whatever receives light from God, who is the Source of all existents and therefore the existents can throw no light on the primal source. The argument as stated is spacious, but there is no denying the fact that no argument for the supersensible reality can be built on the basis of what is true of the sensible world. The sensible and the supersensible worlds differ fundamentally and essentially; hence nothing that is true of one can form a

basis for drawing inference about the other. So far Shabistari is right, but he is not right when he says that all the “signs’ or the manifestations of God can prove is that the world is not absurd, that is to say, without reason or logic. Existentialist philosophers of today would take exception to this statement. Both Albert Camus and J.P. Sartre together with other existentialist thinkers hold that no reason can be found why what happens should happen. There is facility but no necessity.

Shabistari is also right in holding that knowledge gained through the channels of sense-organs and reason is utterly in-adequate or should we say, utterly irrelevant to the knowledge of God. Indeed the much maligned logical positivists said nothing but what Shabistari has said. Only logical positivists put the matter in modern terminology and maintained that no proposition could be true as had no empirical verification. Since empirical verification is possible in the case of sense of knowledge, the data received from sense-organs can never be appropriate for reaching God –a supersensible reality and so incapable by definition of empirical verification. Those people who condemn reason should consider:

1. If reason has ever claimed that it is the organ of God’s knowledge,
2. If reason has ever held that its findings are final.
3. If reason has ever maintained that the data on which proofs for the existence of God rest, can not be improved, or that new disciplines cannot arise throwing fresh light on the problem. Indeed Para-Psychology and Occultism have supplied fresh data to philosophers and religionists to think and to draw inferences.

To these considerations, there is only one answer and that is in the negative. No philosopher has ever held that reason is final or that it is the gateway to God-knowledge. All philosophers worth the name, have recognized the limitations of reason and have used it where its competence is acknowledged.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal agrees with Mahmud Shabistari in thinking that the source of true thought in man is his “Qalb’-usually translated as heart, and thought is the Light which is present in the heart. It is through that light that the absent is converted into the Present. Our bodily existence is bound up with time and space, but the light is supra-temporal and supra-spatial. The assumption behind this idea is that though the light resides in the body which is material and so subject to the laws of Time and Space, yet the light which illumines the hearts of men and turn them towards the Almighty is above time and space. The entire world is a manifestation of this light.

About the characterization of Qalb, Shabistari and Iqbal differ substantially while Shabistari supposes that Qalb is meant to reveal the world within, Iqbal thinks that it reveals not only the inner reality but also the outer reality. The extension in the application of Qalb in Iqbal comes about as a result of a large number of physical, biological, psychological and social sciences that had come into existence during Iqbal’s time but were not present in Shabistari’s time. These sciences are the product of observation and experimentation with the help of sophisticated instruments and techniques, not available before the nineteenth century. These sciences together with the technology they had given birth to had caused an intellectual revolution in European countries and had enabled the Europeans to control the forces of Nature. Iqbal was conscious of the fact that in the twentieth century it was as essential to subjugate the forces of nature, which constitute the world without as it was to conquer the forces within which Constituted the world within. Hence to confine Qalb to the inner world only and to exclude from it the objective world was suicidal. The shift from the subjective to the objective and the extension in the meaning of Qalb so that it covers both subjective and objective, marks the triumph of a spiritual cum material point of view. Iqbal accordingly says:-

به چشم خلوت

خود را به بیند
به چشمے جلوت
خود را به بیند
اگر یک چشم بر بند
گنا ہے است
اگر باہر دو بینہ شرط
را ہے است¹⁶

Iqbal however thinks that in the conquest of the subjective and the objective world, the priority belongs to the subjective world. First the inner world is to be ordered, refined and oriented towards the source and then the task of the subjugation of external forces can be taken in hand, in religion as well as in mysticism, the spirit takes precedence over the nature and therefore it should be attended to before anything else. Iqbal says:

منہ پادر بیابان طلب
سست
تختین گیر آں عالم
کہ در تست
اگر زیری زکود
گیری زبر شو

¹⁶ Gulshan-i-Raz-i-Jadid p. 19/541.

خدا خواهی بخود
نزدیک تر شو
به تسخیر خود
افتادی اگر طاق
ترا آسان شود
تسخیر آفاق¹⁷

For Iqbal both the objective (Alam-i-Afaq) and the subjective (Alam-i-Anfas) are important and should be made to serve the interests of life.

Shabistari is the product of Mideaval philosophy and mysticism, popularly known as Scholasticism and could not go beyond the inner subjective world of reality. But despite his mystic learning's, Shabistari could not ignore the objective world and therefore held that though the application of reason in the domain of religion is a sin, it is not so when used in the field of material reality. Shabistari however believed that it is the spiritual world that really matters and the material world with all its charms and variegated phenomena, is but an illusion. Accordingly he built his argument for the spiritual world on the basis of the illusory character of the phenomenal world. Iqbal's procedure is different. His argument for the spiritual world does not rest on the illusoriness of the phenomenal world. He fully realizes the importance of the sciences and the conquest of nature for the advancement and enhancement of life. For him both the sense knowledge and rational knowledge are true with-in certain limits and have to be sought by all means at our disposal. It is only that in seeking God, a different organ has to be utilized, as sense-knowledge and reason are incompetent. Shabistari taking his stand on Ibn-i-Arabi's philosophy could condemn the external

¹⁷ Ibid p. 150/542.

world as illusory, ephemeral and an obstacle to spiritual advancement, but Allama Muhammad Iqbal' could not do so, for in the period of seven centuries that separated these two thinkers, knowledge had advanced considerably. Hence he was constrained to attach value to objective as well as to subjective knowledge. Gone were the days when a saint, a sadhu, a guru or a sufi was alone looked up in society. Now the scientist, the philosopher and the thinker had as much claim to public esteem as any body else. The experimentally tested knowledge was extolled, in some cases above the subjective data. This was not so in Shabistari's time. That is why Shabistari, holding the aim of knowledge as union with the ultimate source of life, recommended with draw from the world of objective reality. Both Plato and Plotinus recommended such a view of life and Muslim thinkers who followed in the footsteps of these two great thinkers were so much enamoured of the so called world of reality that they held in derision what they called the world of appearance and condemned it as illusory, insubstantial and utterly worthless. Iqbal could not subscribe to this view, and was, as a result, deadly opposed to the classical spirit of Greek thinking and the anti-worldly attitude of the mystics. (For details refer to Allama Muhammad Iqbal The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Lahore, 1965, Chapter V. The Spirit of Islamic Culture).

Despite the fact that Iqbal does not consider reason an instrument to reach God and dislikes the supremacy of reason over intuition or other means of mystic and prophetic knowledge, he does admit openly the value of objective knowledge and regards the conquest of nature, an essential ingredient of the Islamic way of life. That is modern touch in him and is the consequence of the wide-spread influence of experimental sciences.

Since for Shabistari, the inner life alone constituted essence, it was but natural, that he should emphasise self-realization and therefore the individual as against society. In mysticism one can observe the tendency towards self involvement and personal development. A sadhu or a sanyasi would retire to jungles or to any other place away from the noise and din of cities and

villages to engage himself whole heartedly in self elevation. The life of a recluse, a mendicant or a solitary, lonely wayfarer was preferred over the life of social responsibilities. Shabistari recommends individual and personal development and attaches no importance to social living and the duties consequent upon such a living. Iqbal was conscious of the fact that a human being was both an individual and a member of his own community Hence communal living was as much important to him as individual living. Very often it is said that among the Muslims of today what is lacking or at least weak is the social ethics that is to say, the sense of belonging together and a spirit of working in cooperation and in unison with others. This may be due to the fact that for centuries the monastic way of life was much extolled and regarded as the sole gateway to God and to His grace. Iqbal, unlike Shabistari, recognizes that for full development both individual and social aspects of life have to be nurtured. Iqbal may have received inspiration for this as well as for other points in which he differed from Shabistari from Islamic traditions but there is no doubt that his wide acquaintance with Western knowledge and the Western way of life had an impact on him and so provided to him an impetus towards re-evaluation and reassessment of the problems and solutions of Shabistari in *Gulshan-i-Raz*.

In the end it may be said that though in certain respects there is similarity in the thinking of Iqbal and Shabistari on the nature and role of reason in human life, yet there is also a significant difference in their understanding, due to the advancement of knowledge in the seven centuries that separated these two thinkers, Iqbal's version is nearer to times but not the nearest as he is separated from us by a period of seventy years which from the point of view of knowledge and its advancement is as great as the period of seven hundred years that separated Shabistari from Allama Muhammad Iqbal.