

WAS IQBAL AN EPISTEMOLOGIST?

Dr. Asif Iqbal Khan

Iqbal does not claim to be an Epistemologist. Whatever re-marks he offers about the origin, structure, methods and validity of knowledge are sketchy. No systematic account of his inquiry into the nature and ground of experience, belief and knowledge can possibly be worked out in the absence of a detailed treatment of the issue in his writings. In spite of that, his philosophical stand point is founded upon certain epistemological assumptions which are significant not only for his metaphysical views but also for his religious thought.

The conventional view of philosophy generally conceives Epistemology and Metaphysics as logically interdependent. An epistemologically presuppositionless metaphysics is, thus, as unattainable as a metaphysically presuppositionless epistemology. With most philosophers, the relative priority assigned to other Metaphysics or Epistemology has largely been a matter of philosophical preference. Epistemology has priority for Descartes, Locke and Kant while Spinoza, Hegel and Whitehead have first attached the metaphysical problems and adopted the view of knowledge consonant with their metaphysics. These differences notwithstanding, all of them have generally dealt, fairly and squarely, with the issue concerning possibility, limits and origin of knowledge, the methodological problem, the problem of the structure of the knowledge-situation and that of truth.

Iqbal's treatment of epistemological problems betrays a clear inclination to fall back upon a Kantian view of knowledge. Kant's was the most notable attempt to reconcile rationalism (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz) and empiricism (Locke, Berkeley, Hume) by assigning to reason and experience their respective roles in the constitution of knowledge. However, his critical epistemology, his transcendental method, his distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal, etc, puts across a well articulated picture of his view of knowledge. But can we say the same about Iqbal's thought?

Iqbal on 'Knowledge'

Iqbal begins in a decidedly Kantian fashion. He says that knowledge is

"sense perception elaborated by understanding"⁷⁸ and that "the character of man's knowledge is conceptual".⁷⁹ These two basic assumptions necessarily involve the contention that human knowledge has two distinct ingredients, viz, (a) the data or the 'given' and (b) thought or understanding, which organises the data into knowledge properly. Iqbal emphasises that this is true of all knowledge, including religious knowledge. In this context, he designated thought both as an organising principle and as a potency. Also, in Kantian style, he classifies thought in its (i) discursive potency, (ii) practical potency and (iii) deeper movement. In the last stage, it is supposed to move beyond its own finitude and is capable of reaching the infinite.⁸⁰

This inflated concept of thought is, thus, identified with life. "It is as much organic as life.... In conscious experience life and thought permeate each other. They form a unity. Thought, therefore, in its true nature, is identical with life. "and", while it appears to break up reality into static fragments, its real function is to synthesize the elements of experience by employing categories suitable to the various values levels which experience presents."⁸¹ Strangely, however, no attempt is made to make it clear how discursive thought transforms itself into a deeper movement and by what route it moves beyond its own finitude. Further, we are not supplied with the precise list of categories suitable for different levels of experience. Nor are we told about the mode of their application to perception, conception and inner-experience respectively.

Clearly, Iqbal refuses to accept either perception or conception as the basis of knowledge. As a result, he, like Kant, tries to utilize the insights of both the empiricists and the rationalists. But, unlike Kant, he does not approach the problem of knowledge systematically. Nor does he rely on the

⁷⁸ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, S.M. Ashraf, Lahore, 1968, p. 12.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7. Iqbal agree with Kant that human reason has its utility in the sphere of the natural world. The agreement, however, goes no further. Iqbal refuses to see thought as the organising principle in moving from the *given* to its 'understanding'. He, on the other hand, takes "thought not as a principle which organises and integrates its material from the outside, but as a potency which is formative of the very being of its material" (*Ibid.* p. 31). Moreover, he refuses to restrict thought to its discursive and practical aspects, as is done by Kant (See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, London, 1963, pp. 65, 90).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

conceptual tools which rationalists have devised. He tries, on the contrary, to manage somehow to come out on the other side of the empiricist-rationalist controversy. He tries, at random, to overcome the classic dualism inherent in both the empiricist and the rationalist traditions. Apparently, such a position is pregnant with numerous contradictions.

Iqbal tends to take percepts and concepts as constituted of the same stuff. While he accepts conceptual character of knowledge he also asserts that "in the domain of knowledge scientific or religious -- complete independence of thought from experience is not possible."⁸² He, in fact, goes still further and tries to bring together perception, thought and intuition and binds them together in an organic relationship. "Psychologically speaking, all states... are organically determined."⁸³ But, then, where is the need to speak so persistently of the different levels of consciousness? Further, psychological considerations cannot be logically relied upon in this regard. Psychological and epistemological treatment of the same cognitive processes of mind are radically different. The supposition that the psychological origin of an item of knowledge prejudice either for or against its cognitive validity involves a type of genetic fallacy which is psychologism at its worst. Iqbal's analysis of the levels of matters, life, mind and consciousness leads him to the view that space and time are relative to various grades of being. He, finally, comes to the conclusion that there are different levels of knowledge yielding experience.

An interesting controversy about percepts and concepts operates in the domain of epistemology. Apparently, percepts can never be deemed as empty; but they are, also, not already knowledge. Knowledge, in the strict sense, requires concepts. Knowledge is reflection of what is immediately apprehended and, therefore, cannot take place in the immediacy of the concrete present. Thus, knowledge by acquaintance may not be knowledge for the simple reason that it does not acquaint us with definitely constituted objects and relations. However, it has its own peculiar role in pointing to an indispensable moment in the cognitive process that leads to conceptual knowledge. In this context the following remark by Iqbal acquires great significance. He says:

"Knowledge must begin with the concrete. It is the intellectual capture of

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

and power over the concrete that makes it possible for the intellect of man to pass beyond the concrete."⁸⁴

Now, the adverbial use of term concrete implies a stress on the 'sensuous', the 'factual' and the 'experiential'. It is commonly applied to a particular object, usually of sense, or to a particular event, or to some characteristic circumstance, inherent in such particular object or event, in opposition to *the abstract*. It is also used for the type of intelligence manifested in dealing with things or particular affairs. Thus, Iqbal's use of *the concrete* virtually means that for every type of knowledge the starting point or the basis is sense experience or perception. In view of this, his introduction of the concept 'intuition' appears to be an extension of the sphere of perception, meant only to emphasise the perceptual basis of all knowledge. Thus, he says: "in the interest of securing a complete vision of Reality, sense-perception must be supplemented by the perception of what the Quran describes as '*Fuad*' or '*Qalb*', i.e. heart."⁸⁵

Obviously, the term intuition, or 'heart' has been used by Iqbal in the more recent sense of 'insight' or inner perception rather than in line with the faculty psychology of the scholastics. He asserts. "We must not regard it as a mysterious special faculty, it is rather a mode of dealing with Reality in which sensation, in the physiological sense of the word, does not play any part. Yet the vista of experience thus opened to us is as real and concrete as any other experience"⁸⁶ Thus understood, however, there is little difference between intuition and religious experience with the attending difficulties of its meaning verification and communication to others.

Taking into account all aspects of Iqbal's philosophy, it can be asserted that he did not mean to exclude sensory experience from any of the 'sources of knowledge'. For him, on the contrary, sense -- perception, intellect and intuition are different levels of the developing power of human insight. In this context, intellect acts as a common instrument of the other two sources of knowledge, which themselves are complementary to each other, are organically related, spring from the same root and are two facts of the same light.⁸⁷ In this perspective, Iqbal's concept of intuition can be interpreted in

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁸⁵ p. 15.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3,15,16.

the following way; it is a way of arriving at knowledge which is based on the senses as far as its origin is concerned. We reach this stage via the intellect, which in turn affects the senses as well. Yet in the act of knowledge it-self, neither the senses (in the physiological sense) nor the intellect (directly) play any part. But, then, other interpretations can also be given of not very clear picture of this issue drawn by Iqbal.

Religious Experience

Iqbal's epistemological assumptions form the background against which he considers the problem of religious experience and in the process further dilates upon his view of knowledge. Though he begins by treating various types/characteristics of religious experience, it becomes apparent at the very outset that his main interest lies in the content, value and meaning of these experience.

A lot can be found in Iqbal's writings where he advocates the possibility of levels of experience other than the normal and essentially different from experience by perception or thought.⁸⁸ He also relates these *potential types* of consciousness to a definite type of temperament and mood. He finds a parallel in the drug-induced states of consciousness or those which result from neurosis and remarks that only a disorganised brain is susceptible to intuition. Moreover, for particular forms of consciousness and experience certain kinds of temperament are necessary. To say that these experiences are abnormal or neurotic does not prove the point that they are worthless⁸⁹ He also considers the ordinary, the mystic and prophetic levels of consciousness and find them to be organically related.

Iqbal distinguished between mystic's and prophet's religious experience on the ground that the latter necessarily leads to social and moral consequences and it is on the basis of the quality and scope of these consequences that we have to make such a distinction. He, however, fails to point out clearly that there are important differences between the neurotic and the religious. The religious man may have fixed and persistent ideas which tend to transform themselves into belief and action, and in this respect he may be akin to the neurotic. But he does not all the time live in his own

⁸⁸ But, how can they differ from normal consciousness since "psychologically speaking, all states whether their contents is religious or non-religious, are organically determined"! (*Ibid.* p. 23).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

fancies and fantasies, away from the facts and realities of the actual life-situation. The belief and action of the neurotic hardly ever fit into the existing spatial-temporal requirements of this matter-of-fact world. On the contrary, the religious man, as he is exemplified for Iqbal in the ideal personality of Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him), never loses contact 'with the objective world and, therefore, his mission for ever remains targeted at re-shaping and re-moulding it in accordance with the new standards furnished to him during religious experience.

One is at a loss to understand how the fact of their being organically determined makes religious consciousness the same as ordinary consciousness. Of course, for particular kinds of experience particular kinds of temperament and mood are necessary. But it is also fact of equal importance that difference of mood and temperament can also lead to a basic difference in the kind of experience we encounter. We cannot on that count, count all organically determined experience the same in all respects. Moreover, a neurotic temperament even when coupled with superior intellect is seldom a sufficient condition for the revelation of religious truth.

By harmonizing sense-perception, intellect and intuition, and on the basis of his peculiar conception of 'thought' Iqbal argues that "the facts of religious experience are facts among other facts"⁹⁰ of experience. He further contends that since all experience is immediate, religious experience is not without a parallel. "It has some sort of resemblance to our normal experience and probably belongs to the same category".⁹¹ The conflict between sensory and religious experience is due not to the fact that one is and the other is not based on concrete experience. Both seek concrete experience as a point of departure. Their conflict is due to the misapprehension that both interpret the same data of experience. Making God the real object of such knowledge, Iqbal says: "As regions of normal experience are subject to interpretation of sense-data of our knowledge of the external world, so the region of mystic experience is subject to interpretation of our knowledge of God."⁹²

So, the main issue involved here is that of verification, that of an agree test to evaluate the claims of the recipient of religious experience. In short, it is the question of the verification of religious statements. The question

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

whether religious experience is meaningful experience and whether it has a cognitive content have become highly important for the contemporary philosophy of religion. The verificationist thesis runs like this: the statements like 'I have had a direct vision of God' is not an 'objective' statement capable of verification in the same way in which empirical statements are. Suppose, someone asserts 'I am a changed man since I had experience of God. Now, compare it with the empirical statement 'I am a changed man since I lost my job'. It is obvious we cannot check the truth or untruth of the former assertion in the same way as we can do about the latter. No matter how much his behaviours subsequent to the alleged religious experience is transmuted, it could not prove or disprove his statement to the strict verificationists.

Alongwith a stress on empiricism, Iqbal appears to concede that religious experience required a kind of 'sixth sense'. Apparently, he was conscious of the inadequacies of the empiricist argument to prove the validity of religious experience. His theory of the unknown levels of consciousness, with the possibility of there being higher consciousness further re-inforces the need for him to go beyond the normal five senses. He has argued that in order to secure a complete vision of Reality, sense-perception must be supplemented by 'the perception of heart'. By this, he seems to imply an intuitive approach. But such a theory of inner intuition or 'insight' in which sensation, in the physiological sense of the word, is not supposed to play any part but is nevertheless based on our normal experience, may not necessarily take it out of purview of positivistic criticism.

An intuitive knowledge which rely on normal experience as its foundation cannot logically own an agreed vocabulary of its own but must depend on metaphors drawn from other senses. There are no terms which exclusively apply to it. The closest we come to normal experience is when we are said to see logical connections in a direct experience. We mark this by employing such phrases as 'a sudden flash of light', 'a direct apprehension of Reality', and so on. Such events are usually described in terms of complete assurance that one's interpretation is correct and a confidence that one will tend to be able to reproduce and recognise the argument of problem in various contexts in the future. Here, the vitally important requirement is that a checking and testing procedure for evaluating the intuitive experience must be devised. For Iqbal, this issue has not merited expatiation.

There is, indeed, much merit in Iqbal's assertion that, unless we allow an agreed set of checking procedures to test the validity of religious experience, it would seem to make no claims beyond the psychological claims about one's colour-sensation, for example.⁹³ It might even lose any claims to an existential import and become a mere mental state. The worth of Iqbal's position lies in the fact that in his own peculiar ideational predicament he was able to recognise the dangers and tried, in his own way, to provide solutions.

While discussing the content of religious experience Iqbal says:the quality of mystic experience is to be directly experienced, it is obvious that it cannot be communicated. Mystic states are more like feeling than thought. The interpretation which the mystic or the Prophet puts on the content of his religious consciousness can be conveyed to others in the form of propositions, but the content itself cannot be so transmitted... the incommunicability of mystic experience is due to the fact that it is essentially a matter of inarticulate feeling, untouched by discursive intellect."⁹⁴ He further says that "religious experience is essentially a state of feeling with its cognitive aspect."⁹⁵ Because of this cognitive element, it lends itself to the *form of idea*. He emphasises that it is in the nature of feeling to seek expression in thought. It would seem that the two-feeling and idea -- are the non-temporal and temporal aspects of the same unit of inner experience. He further links feeling and idea into an organic relationship where *feeling moves towards its object with a sense of direction* -- no feeling is so blind as to have no *idea* of its own *object*. Iqbal concludes his argument by asserting: "It is no mere metaphor to say that idea and word both simultaneously emerge out of the womb of feeling, though logical understanding cannot but take them in a temporal order and create its own difficulty by regarding them as mutually isolated. There is a sense in which the word is also revealed".⁹⁶

Feeling as Vehicle of Knowledge

The terms feeling, object, idea and word are crucial in our present discussion. The main issue involved, then, is how to translate feeling into word-language which can be communicated to others. Normally, it is by an

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27. A purely psychological method cannot explain religious passion as a form of knowledge.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

act of association that we give a name to a feeling. This association constitutes the essence of language and also accounts for the difference between human and animal speech. But what does it actually mean to speak of associating a word with a feeling?

The idea with which feeling is associated has been conceived by Iqbal as something which is directly known. It is a sort of private mental content with which I am immediately acquainted. Communication by means of language take place, when, by employing certain words, I try to bring it about that a mental content like mine gets produced in you. In this way you learn of the contents of my mind, you understand what I am saying. W. James gave this conception of language one of its most general formulations when he said that what a word stands for is a 'specific affection of mind'. There is such a specific affection of the mind associated with every word we use. "We ought to say a feeling of *and* a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but*, quite as readily as we say a feeling of *blue* or a feeling of *cold*".⁹⁷ Very few philosophers however, are attracted to this view when it is stated as a thesis about the meaning of every word. But it has seemed to many, including Iqbal, to be the correct analysis of how some words get their meaning. One sub-class of these words which acquire meaning by being associated with an object of immediate acquaintance is that of the sensation-words such as 'pain' and 'itching'. Concerning these words, it is held, only because I have been immediately acquainted with such objects, or states, or processes, was it possible for me to learn their meaning.

It is said, for example, that it is the act of association which turns of feeling of pain into a linguistic act of calling it 'headache'. But what does it actually mean to speak of associating a sign with a feeling? How is it to be conceived of as being done? Suppose a child is thought of as having invented in this way a word for a type of sensation, for example, headache. But how, it needs to be asked, did the child determine that the word was to be applied to headache and to nothing else -- not to pain in the hand, for example? How

⁹⁷ William James, *The Principles of Psychology (Vol 1)*, Macmillan, London, 1890, pp. 245-246. For P.T. Geach also, explaining the logical concepts (like 'not', 'some', 'or,' 'every', etc.) as being derived from characteristic *feelings* evoked by logical words, is doomed to failure. For him, in ordinary usage of such words, no feeling at all may be present. Further, the absence of such feeling may not deprive these words of meaning (See his *Mental Acts: Their Contents and Their Objects*, London 1957, pp. 22-25).

does he determine the 'range of application' of the word 'headache'? Let us suppose that the child resolves to use the word 'headache' as a name for some object of direct acquaintance, which in this case is the feeling of pain in the head. But then the question arises: How does the child know? I think there is a mistake involved concerning naming. The assumption that the child invents a word by naming his feeling is a result of not seeing how little can be accomplished in this way. Obviously, it cannot work in a case where two different states of feeling are required to be named, particularly when they occur in succession. Moreover, is it possible, in this way, to assign names to the innumerable states of feeling one is capable of experiencing? Such a course of action would be analogous to that of a savage who finds a metal number in the jungle and sticks it on his mud hut. In his community there is no practice of numbering houses and he does not know which number to assign to the hut next to his own. His case is quite dissimilar to the one where a block of 'L.D.A. Flats' has been built, and as a final step, a man goes along nailing the 'flat numbers' in a certain order.

What is the role of the idea in this context? It seems that the classical empiricists, in somewhat different ways, all treat the idea as something which, by being labelled (associated with a word) fixes the meaning of the label. How to use the word correctly is determined once it is made the sign of an idea. In Locke's scheme of things, though the nature of idea is left very unclear its role is made quite clear. It is something with which 'things existing' are to be compared. And it is fundamental to Locke's conception of it that there cannot be different ways of comparing it with things. So that, if two persons associate X with the same idea, assuming that their senses are not deceiving them, they could not disagree about whether X applies to a given object. If they do not agree about the application of X it is not because they compare the idea with the object in different ways. It is because the ideas with which they individually associate X are different.

If it were possible to compare the idea in different ways it could not play the role in communication which both Locke and Iqbal seem to attribute to it. What that possibility would mean is that, though my word produced in you the same idea with which I associate it, you might still not be able to understand me. Your having the idea would bring you no closer to my meaning than the word alone. But as Locke thinks of it, your understanding me consists in you having in your mind the ideas with which I associate my

words. For Locke we all might be speaking a private language in the Wittgensteinian sense. We each give meaning to the words we hear others speak by using those words 'to Label' (to signify) mental entities with which we are directly acquainted. We learn our native language to the extent that we as-sign labels as others do. The fundamental operation, the word-creating move, is the association, the assignment of the label.

Now, Iqbal, while trying to establish an 'organic relation' of feeling and idea, claims that "inarticulate feeling seeks to fulfil its destiny in idea which in its turn, tends to develop out of itself its own visible garment",⁹⁸ i.e., label or name. Moreover, "man is endowed with the faculty of naming things, that is to say, forming concepts of them, and forming concepts of them is capturing them,"⁹⁹ and "that our fellows are known to be real because they respond to our signals and thus constantly supply the necessary supplement to our own fragmentary meanings."¹⁰⁰ It is fairly obvious that though, for Iqbal, idea and feeling create the conditions for a move to understanding the object, it is only by associating a name with the object that the communicative process be-gins. As we have seen above, the case of 'associating' itself is quite hopeless. What is wrong with the present conception is that the situation which is thought of as establishing the meaning of the word is not rich enough. There are not enough elements in it to encompass the whole situation. There is the creator, the object in his mind, and the association of this object with a sign. These elements taken together do not constitute a 'rule of use' for the sign and no further application of the sign is either sanctioned or forbidden. The mistake involved here has been incisively pointed out by Wittgenstein: "We are looking for the use of a sign, but we look for it as though it were an object co-existing with the sign."¹⁰¹

The problem for Iqbal lies in the fact that he is trying to find something objective in feeling (which is by definition 'inarticulate') while the very structure of language is incapable of becoming completely objective. How can Iqbal hope to communicate objectively the content of private feeling in language? The 'rule of use' for the word, of course, is always the same: the word applied to those things which match ('agree with') the object with

⁹⁸ The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, op. cit.p.22.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 13.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p., 19.

¹⁰¹ L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue Book*, Oxford, 1958, p. 5.

which it is associated. What is not noticed is that in order to play this role the object must itself be something which cannot be used (compared with reality) in various way. When this feature of it is explicitly brought to one's attention, one recognises that there could not be such an object, either mental or physical. The illusion resides in the fact that this feature of the object is simply not considered. And so, because the different ways in which the standard can be employed are lost sight of, the language user is thought to have a rule of use when he merely associates the word with the standard. Similarly, without noticing that one is doing so, one treats 'feeling' as a standard whose method of application is fixed. It is just not noticed that, what-ever the object is, anything can be said to be the same as it.

Indeed, object appears to play a crucial role in fixing the meaning of word. But, then, initially, any object would have been labelled differently. And this is relevant to the idea that we learn the meaning of such a word as 'pain' by associating it with a feeling. What we actually do in making the association, on this view, is to 'give' the word meaning. We have learned its meaning if the right association has been made, i.e. if we have associated it with the same thing to which it has been related by others. What is appealing about this view is that it seems to offer an ex-planation of how we know whether to use the word 'pain' or some other word. The explanation is in terms of a comparison we make between what we are presently feeling and (via memory) what we originally associated with the word. The picture is one in which we select a standard which guides us in our future use of the word.

This expresses, in connection with the language of sensation, the view which Locke adopts concerning language generally. Thus, the 'idea' associated with the word 'chair' is a key element in the explanation of how the language user knows whether that is the right word for the subject he is looking at. The procedure parallels the one involving 'pain'. The object of present experience is compared (via memory) with what was previously associated with the word.

In fact, the explanation of 'transmitting' feeling through word by association does not solve the problem, but only pushes it one step further back. In connection with 'pain', the problem is: How does the language user now whether it is this word or some other that applies to what he is feeling? But even if the idea of association were an intelligible one, the association of the word with some previous object does not solve this problem. For the

question which immediately arises is: How does he know how to compare that previous object with what is now experiencing? What lies behind this view is the idea that if two people associate the word 'pain' with the 'same' feeling they will use the word in the same way. The feeling associated with it, 'standard', is thought of as being inserted in the rule: Apply the word 'pain' to whatever is the same (i) as this (ii). But the fact is that both (i) and (ii) can 'follow' this rule and come out with different results. That is why it is not the rule but only an illusion of the rule.

How, then, does he know which word to use? This problem itself arises from a mistaken way of looking at the language of sensation. It appears to be a problem when the linguistic expression of feeling is seen as being fundamentally different from the more primitive ways in which feelings are expressed. A groan is thought of as being forced from us, so to speak, while the use of language seems to require an identification in order that the proper word is selected. Seen in this context, saying e.g. that I am in pain, is the last step in a process, the linguistically important part of which has already taken place. With the identification, which results from matching the present feeling with the standard, the linguistic decision is made. The final stage arrives when we utter the word we have decided to apply in such a situation.

Seen in a different perspective, the problem of identification undergoes an important transformation. In the context of a gradual growth of the language so sensation, e.g., in the case of a growing child, instead of seeing a radical break between language and the expression of feeling, it is possible to see the change as a smooth one. It can be conceived as a gradual process of learning. The child's developing social relations show the emergence of the linguistic expression of feeling as a continuation of the process from the meaningless sound of crying to a distinctly verbal expression of discomfort. The fact is that human beings gradually come to give linguistic expression to their feelings. But the gradual acquisition of linguistic expression does not eliminate the need for the basis on which identification is made. Standard and criteria can be seen as implied in the very expression of feeling.

The problem underlying the whole controversy is that any 'standard' or 'criterion' to be meaningfully applied to a linguistic expression of feeling has to be based on certain objective conditions. Feeling on the other hand cannot be entirely objectified. We normally seem to know states of feeling through introspection and observation of the physical expression of these

states. But states of consciousness and data of introspection have generally been suspected as liable to mislead. Many analytical philosophers, under the influence of Wittgenstein, have maintained that no term can have an intersubjectively shared meaning if it simply functions as a name for object which are necessarily private. Hence, linguistic expression of feeling, in the form of words and as terms in a 'public' language, cannot function in this way.

Serious doubts have also been raised as to the nature of relation of feeling with its 'object'. If one is happy, one is happy over some achievement or some 'conquest'. It is alleged, how-ever, that feeling is only contingently connected with such an object. It is logically possible that the feeling involved typically in 'happiness' would be aroused by drugs or even by thinking. But in that case it would not be happiness. Therefore, happiness cannot be identified with a kind of feeling. In fact, it is often difficult to distinguish one state of feeling from the other, or even from other mental states if one identified them with feelings. Moreover, the relation of feeling to other mental states can also be construed as contingent, including the cognitions which give rise to it and its voluntary and involuntary expressions. It is conceivable that human nature might have been such that the emotion called 'pain' would have been associated with cognitions of objects as 'pleasant' rather than as 'repulsive' and with tendencies to 'like' rather than 'dislike' and avoid.

The above discussion critically implicates Iqbal's idea of knowledge who loads his view of feeling with all kinds of epistemological and ontological overtones. As feeling, to be shared, must have some meaning, so Iqbal declared that feelings, including the mystic variety, have a cognitive element, and "it is ... because of this cognitive element that it lends itself to the form of idea".¹⁰² Moreover, as he believes that feeling without direction is impossible and that direction implies some object, this view falls within the ambit of this brand of criticism.

The Test of Religious Experience

We have already seen the weaknesses involved in the argument purporting to find objective meaning in the linguistic expression of feeling. So, we are forced to fall back upon Iqbal's claim that there are tests available

¹⁰² The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, op, cit. p. 21.

which could reveal the validity of religious experience We are in possession of tests which do not differ from those applicable to other forms of knowledge. These I call the intellectual test and the pragmatic test. By the intellectual test I mean critical interpretation, without any pre-supposition of human experience, generally with a view to discover whether our interpretation leads us ultimately to a reality of the same character as is revealed by religious experience. The pragmatic test judges it by its fruits."¹⁰³

Iqbal claims to have applied the 'intellectual test' in the Second Lecture on "*The Revelation of Religious Experience*"¹⁰⁴ It differs little from the famous coherence theory of truth advocated by Bradley (*The principles of Logic*) and in a modified form by Carnap in *The Logical Syntax of Language*. It broadly says that a proposition is false if inconsistent with some chosen corpus of propositions, true if it can be consistently included in that corpus. Now, the limitations of this theory are obvious to the discerning philosopher. As an instrument to decipher the truth of a statement, its mode of application is largely arbitrary. It is possible that the whole system of propositions hitherto revealed by experience, which constitutes the corpus, may itself be false. Thus mere consistency with the already existing opinions is no warrant for the truth of any new belief. Neither will its inconsistency make it worthless. So, in the case Iqbal, the intellectual test may at best ensure consistency -- it cannot possibly determine the truth and meaning of a proposition.

Accordingly, Iqbal, finally, turns to 'pragmatic test' to judge the truth and validity of religious experience, Pragmatism, generally, is said to operate on two levels (i) in metaphysics, it is taken as a procedure of arguing back from the consequences of something to its causes and motives; (ii) in epistemology, it means that if no practical consequences accrue from an idea, that concept is meaningless. Now, a consequence may be the result of a number of causes. If we take the apparition of a lost friend as the object of my 'parsi-psyche experience' as the paradigm example, the resulting change in my behaviours can at best be only one of the causes of the said transformation. It is, therefore, not possible to determine the genuineness of such an experience through appeal to its consequential utility. In other words, consequences can, at best determine the utility of an experience or of a proposition based on that experience. They cannot warrant its truth and

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-61.

validity.

The type of argument presented by the pragmatists appears to involve what is called the fallacy of affirming the consequent. It may be argued that any evidence from 'Para-psychic experience' used to prove the existence of the apparition will be ambiguous. Since the evidence can always be accounted for on some hypothesis which does not involve the existence of the apparition, we may never be able to decide from that evidence alone whether my friend's apparition exists or not. Such experiences may also be explained along the lines suggested by Freud.

The pragmatist argument can be given the following general formulation for the sake of clarity: We can suppose that 'q' stands for the proposition which expresses the evidence we want to use as the proof for the 'existence' of the apparition. Now, supposing 'p' stands for the proposition that the apparition exists; if 'p' is true, it is possible to show that, by definition, q will be true. But, the problem is this: Since we do not know whether p is true, any argument for its truth -- using q as the evidence -- seems translatable into the classical fallacy of affirming the consequent:

$$p \supset q, q / p$$

All we know to be true is q, and one may very well say that the truth of q remains merely ambiguous evidence for the truth of p as long as we do not show that q entails p. In other words, the truth of p can be inferred from q if and only if it can be shown that $q \supset p$.

However, arguments exemplified in the formulae

$$p \supset q, q / p$$

may be considered reasonable, in at least *some* important circumstances. For example, while affirming the consequent is a formal fallacy in certain systems of deductive logic, in the case of science generally and in everyday life, we are often willing to turn arguments of this sort from fallacies into some sort of acceptable 'proof'. In those cases, therefore, one need not have shown that q entails p, thus making $p \supset q, q / p$ formally acceptable. We frequently accept the argument in two types of situations: (i) when we are not in a position to propose any other interesting antecedents which would entail q; and (ii) when the other possible antecedents are in some reasoned way less likely to be true. Of course, the antecedents of the arguments as a reasoned

proof in either of these cases means acceptance of an inductive argument. But this is hardly unusual in science and philosophy and Iqbal seems right in asserting that test applicable to religious experience need not necessarily differ from those applicable to other forms of knowledge.