

REASON AND FAITH IN THE NATURAL THEOLOGY OF IQBAL

Part I

Azizan Baharuddin

Born in Sialkot in Punjab, Muhammad Iqbal (1878-1938) is widely known as a famous poet-philosopher of the East. Much has been written about his poetry and the so-called influence of the western philosophy on his thinking. However there is sufficient evidence that his overarching concern was in fact the relation of his traditional beliefs with the predominant materialistic thinking in his day. He wanted to prove to himself the universal claims of his faith. However, more than that, he also wanted to create a new synthesis between a very important aspect of modern secular culture, which is science, with the most important aspect of his traditional culture, which is Islam. This synthesis can be seen in his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* which was first published in 1930 in Lahore. Other treatises covering the same theme were to follow but Iqbal died before he could put his thoughts on paper.

Iqbal's efforts could under no condition be called a form of religious apology. At the basis of his thinking lies a problem which is common and prevalent even today and which I observe other modern religious - philosophical scholars have also perceived to be the root of the many crises of the present world - the conflict between reason and faith.¹¹

The so-called rationality of science and philosophy has given man a tremendous amount of knowledge about the physical universe and enabled him to create sophisticated technology for the comforts of his life. Despite this, however, modern man also knows that material progress alone is not enough; moral and spiritual values are also needed. Unfortunately many find that when they turn to traditional modes of thought for help, they find that there is often an insurmountable gap between the temporal and the spiritual. In other words either traditional thought e.g. Religion is found irrelevant or that it seems to oppose materialism, if not in toto, in principle. However

¹¹ See for example Don Cupitt, *The Sea of Faith*, London 1934 and F. Capra, *The Turning Point - Society and the rising culture*, London 1983.

some have persevered, and the results of such analysis between the two (science and philosophy on the one hand, and religion on the other) have taught them that what is actually required is a 'new language' to explain the truths of these traditional ideas. In other words, such men believe that the truth is one and science -- philosophy and religion are merely two aspects of this truth

What was of even more immediate value was the utility of his synthesis for the formation of a practicable *weltanschauung* for a society which was not only in a state of transition but also in disorder and in need of fresh orientations. If a closer look is cast on this synthesis and on others like it, vital lessons could be drawn for the needs of -present man. In this paper I propose, therefore, to draw attention to, amongst others, the following questions and issues:-

- (1) How was Iqbal able to create the synthesis between traditionalism and modernism? The evidence suggests that sufistic elements played a decisive role in the development of his thinking and these sufistic elements seem closely related to H. Bergson's concepts of 'higher religion' and C. Hartshorne's process theological ideas about.¹²
- (2) What were the main contents of this synthesis?
- (3) What are the lessons that can be drawn from the synthesis?

The natural theology of Muhammad Iqbal has been rather neglected. It is arguable that, in contrast to the usual opinion that he was primarily a poet-philosopher, Iqbal was also equally a theologian and that he formulated a very important kind of natural theology. I would like to suggest that his supervening concern was in fact the relation of Islam and modernity, of religion and science. He wanted to prove the universal claim of religion. In other words, he was in search of a universal synthesis, and he saw this in the scientific-rationalistic exposition of his religion, i.e. in a natural theology.

Natural theology is knowledge of God acquired and demonstrated by the use of reason.¹³ Revealed theology on the other hand is the body of

¹² L. Kolakowsky, *Bergson*, Oxford, 1985; C. Hartshorne, *A natural theology for our time*, La Salle, Illinois, 1979.

¹³ J.H. Brooke, *Natural Theology in Britain from Boyle to Paley*, Milton Keynes, 1979, p. 8-9.

doctrines, and their interpretation which could be deduced from God's revelation to man. There is another type of theology the theology of nature which is a set of beliefs about God's relationship the natural world and it is usually based on both; a revealed and a natural theology. As we shall see, Iqbal was primarily immersed in a natural theology and a theology of nature. In the rest of the paper, however the finer distinctions will be waived and for convenience I shall only refer to his theological thought as his natural theology.

The natural theology of Iqbal not only provides useful insight into Muslims' discourse on the relations between science and religion, but that, it also bears comparison to the best that western natural theology has produced ever since. Contrary to some opinions it should be stressed that the thoughts of Iqbal are too rich to ignore.

For Iqbal the question of the status of the scriptures never arose. Rather, the new science and its ensuing philosophy of science or *weltanschauung* led him to believe that religious experience is objective or, that a rational account could be given of religious experience. In the preface of his *Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts in Islam* he wrote:

"religion today requires a method physiologically less violent and more suited to a coherent type of mind. In the absence of such a method the demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge is only natural."¹⁴

Two major contributory factors to the development of his thought seem to be the political apathy of his people and the Muslims in general, in conjunction with the so-called overt materialism or 'soullessness' of the post industrial western man; and secondly the developments in physics with its attending relativistic view of nature in which, he found 'sanctification' from his Sufi mentors. A Sofistic outlook is implicit in his overall thinking.

Iqbal was not directly involved with science *per se*. However this need not detract from the substance of his natural theological efforts. Taking his cue from notable thinkers, philosophers and scientists as diverse as William James, Bergson, Whitehead, Nietzsche, Spengler, McTaggart, Einstein, Eddington, Haldane amongst others, he embarked on a reinterpretation of

¹⁴ M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore 1968, p.v. The book was first published in 1930.

Sufism and Islamic religious thought in the light of modern science and modern knowledge in general.

In his theology he employed two main scientific concepts, the meanings of which were both undergoing revolutionary change - as is evident from the writings of scientists, philosophers and theologians at the turn of the century. These were the concepts of evolution and 'space-time' which were fast developing into the ideas of emergent evolution and relativistic space-time respectively. It is not surprising that these two concepts caught so much of Iqbal's attention, because, as he was trying to show, they were the key concepts in Sufism as well.

Only the new physics could have enabled the mystical theology of Iqbal to come into full bloom. Whereas Sufism was only the spirit which enabled others to be open to the west, for Iqbal Sufism was itself the subject of integration with science.

On the whole, one can see Iqbal's intention to fulfill two objectives via his natural theology: -

(1) To provide a new theology for the increasingly westernized and science oriented Muslims of the early twentieth century and the later; the distinctive theological character of this part of his thought is quite easily discernible.

(2) To naturalize what had hitherto been considered supernatural by arguing that Sufism or Islamic mysticism should be understood in terms of religious psychology accessible to all. Because of what H. Bergson¹⁵ and F. Capra¹⁶ would call the limitation of our ordinary language, this part of his thought sometimes had to be expressed by Iqbal more metaphysically or poetically.

Through these endeavors, Iqbal hoped, not merely to coax his people and the Muslims in general out of their inactivity and torpor but also to enlarge their mental horizon. Iqbal had imbibed too much of the spirit of the west, and the record of his life activities and experiences shows, that he could not help but transcend the attitude usually attached to the 'East versus West'

¹⁵ See Kolakowsky, Bergson, Oxford, 1985

¹⁶ See F. Capra, The Tao of Physics - an exploration of the parallels between modern physics and Eastern mysticism, London 1987, p. 41.

cliche. As such he also saw in his ideas, a working hypothesis of a unified understanding of the meaning of the Reality - the two main components of which he understood to be man and God or the 'ego' and the 'Super Ego'.

Before we go any further, let us look more closely at Sufism and the nature of the Sufi mentality. The element of Sufism is stressed because when talking about Islam, Muslims and Westerners alike often have the impression of a certain rigidity of thought that the followers of Islam must presumably have. In other words only the 'law' is important in Islam, that Muslims regard God as nothing else but a wholly transcendent Being. Who despite His Divine Mercy is alien to the idea of Love. The attitude seems to be, that God is indescribable not because He cannot rationally be so described but because one should not even 'think' of such a proposition to begin with.

I would like to emphasize however, that the image of Islam that emerges from Iqbal's reconstruction is quite a different one and that one of his achievements was to bring out what he saw as the universal appeal of his faith and religion.

The subject of Sufism is relevant for several reasons: -

(i) The Sufi mentality seems to be the basic ingredient of open-mindedness and the courage of the Muslims to dare venture out and seek what could be described as the 'living proof of faith',

(ii) It is arguable that Iqbal was attempting to show that Sufism could be the 'link' between science and religion. In this context Sufism can be taken to mean (a) mysticism guided by revelation and (b) the understanding of God and Divine revelation via intuitive experience that can either be explained scientifically or have parallels in science. In other words, Iqbal wanted to "scientific" or "empiricism" Sufism. Science to him, is the first step while Sufism the second, in our understanding of Reality.

(iii) By drawing upon the 'mystical' views of William James, Bergson, Whitehead and others in the West, who talk about the 'mystical' experience as being a valid form of human experience and showing how similar it is to Sufism in Islam, Iqbal tried to show that religion at its purest or in its essence is really only a special kind of experience describable in psychological terms.

By establishing this he was hoping to defend the very necessity of religion in the life of man. Traditionally there has been a problem with Sufism, its so-called negative 'world-shunning' and 'fact-avoiding' aspects.¹⁷ What Iqbal wanted to do was to revive Sufism with these negative aspects removed, ensuring that Sufism and mysticism would be looked at as experiences quite natural and normal.

In principle, at least, Iqbal can also be considered to be providing a basis for the revival of the Muslim mentality especially in the context of the current Muslim search for identity regarding science and modern knowledge in general.

The 'means' which Iqbal saw, by which to mobilise the thinking of his people, as well as other Muslims towards this end was his concept or idea of the khudi or self. This, as it turned out to be, was inextricably bound up or enmeshed with the whole of his religio-philosophical outlook which was in turn the product of an attempt at reconciling western knowledge (science and philosophy) with Islam (the Shariah) or law and the deeper metaphysical aspects of the religion or Sufism which Iqbal wanted to improve upon. It is in this latter goal that I see in Iqbal the perpetuation of a real effort to construct a natural theology.

I feel that this natural theology bears valuable insight in to the matter for those of us today who believe that the Truth is always one and that the physical and the spiritual are merely two aspects of it. Due to the positivistic view which had dominated science in the past, however, these two aspects seem not to have any continuities with one another. I would like to suggest that Iqbal's natural theology or philosophy actually gives us valuable insight into the nature of the link between these two, realms.

Iqbal's natural theology

There is no doubt that in Iqbal's thinking we can see the realization of the significance of religion for the discoveries of the new science. Many of his critics and commentators have dealt with the purely philosophical significance of his thought, but I would argue that not only the premises of his arguments but also an important portion of what is normally called his philosophy is comprehensible in the context of natural theology.

¹⁷ M. Iqbal, *op. cit.* 1968, p. 182.

As to whether he did indeed have an intention that was natural theological in essence, there can be no doubt, for he explicitly admitted that this was his goal. The title of his main natural theological treatise, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is already an important indication of his contention. As one commentator has said, despite his wide knowledge and involvement with philosophy and metaphysics proper in the early stages of his thought, in the mature period of his thinking he tried to dissociate himself from all philosophy which was not "connected with God."¹⁸

A few words are necessary here concerning his usage of the term 'religion'. First and foremost, religion to Iqbal is synonymous with Sufism or mysticism which stands for a deep knowledge of and a personal contact with (or experience of) God. Although he hated its usual connotations of pantheism and life-denying quality, Iqbal was still very much in the usual tradition of mysticism,¹⁹ the concept of which he strove to empiricise and legitimise in the rational fashion. In this context, it can be argued that Iqbal's ideas also gravitated towards those of William James. (He also mentioned James in his *Reconstruction*) In the latter's *On the Varieties of Religious Experience*. James' article 'A suggestion about Mysticism (1910)²⁰ described in empirico-psychological terms what the mystical experience could be like. I shall be talking more about this later in the section "Is Religion Possible".'

It also ought to be pointed out that even though the *Reconstruction* was the only major work by Iqbal that explicitly expounded his natural theology (despite the fact that he intended to write a number of works that dealt with science and religion),²¹ it does not mean that there is a dearth of material for our understanding of his natural theology. A deeper study of his poetry will show that there is inevitably a close link between the works in prose and those that were in verse. The *Reconstruction* was itself originally a series of lectures delivered at the universities in Hyderabad, Madras and Aligarh as a result of special invitations and were written over a period of three years.

¹⁸ See M Rafiuddin in M.S. Sheikh ed. *Studies in Iqbal's Thought and Art*, Lahore, 1971, p. 75.

¹⁹ This is because, despite his different treatment of them, Iqbal was still dealing with the same sufistic idea.

²⁰ See William James, *Collected Essays and Review*, London, 1920, p, 500-505.

²¹ M. Iqbal in J. Iqbal (ed.), *op. cit.*, 1961, p 49-50.

Iqbal had hoped that it would lay the groundwork for religion and science to "discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies."²²

Some of the problems analysed by Iqbal include the questions of Intuition, Nature and God, Freewill and Determinism, Destiny and the problem of Good and Evil, Evolution and the question of Whether Religion is Possible.

Intuition

Iqbal's philosophy placed a great deal of emphasis on intuition as a source of knowledge. Intuition could be described as a mental state in which a direct revelation is made to the mind comparable to the direct revelation which accompanies the exposure of a physical object to the eye.²³ This type of knowledge "is irresistible and, like bright sunshine, forces itself immediately to be perceived as soon as the mind turns its attention to it, and leaves no room for hesitation, doubt or examination, but the mind is perfectly filled with the clear light of it."²⁴ Thus general meaning of intuition as used by Iqbal knows with absolute certainty.

Is intuitive knowledge possible?

The question of the possibility, indeed the validity of intuitive knowledge was of the utmost importance to Iqbal. Only if intuitive experience was possible could it follow that both metaphysics and religion were possible. In other words, the reality of religion or validity of religious knowledge depends on the "provenness" of intuition and its metaphysical derivatives. In his *Reconstruction* Iqbal stated that Kant had rejected the possibility of metaphysics because it dealt with that which could not be systematised by the categories of space and time.²⁵ Iqbal argued that supposing there was more than one kind of space and time, then it should also be quite possible that there were other levels of human experience; capable of being systematised by these other orders of space and time.²⁶ In these levels of experience, logic and analysis would not play the same role as

²² H. Malik (ed.), op. cit., 1971, p. 28.

²³ R. Hasan, *The Main philosophical Ideas in Iqbal's Writings*. Ph.D. University of Durham, 1968, p. 85.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 56.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ M. Iqbal, op. cit. 1968, p 5-6.

they would do in the case of our normal experience.²⁷ Therefore, Iqbal tried to show the possibility of the existence of other categories of space-time in order to prove the validity of the religion.

In his discussion he utilised concepts from the new relativity physics as well as analogous ideas from Islamic Sufi literature to support his contention. In doing so he also hoped to show that there were parallels between Sufi-mystical concepts and those of modern physics as he understood them. In this respect he wrote:

"In the history of Muslim culture we find that both in the realm of pure intellect and religious psychology, by which term I mean higher Sufism, the ideal revealed is the possession and enjoyment of the Infinite. In a culture with such an attitude the problem of space and time becomes a question of life and death."²⁸

It is not surprising therefore, that Iqbal devoted a considerable portion of his lectures (i.e. the Reconstruction) to discussing the question of the nature of space and time.

Intuition in relation to consciousness and time

In his essay "The Introduction to Metaphysics", Bergson asserted that it is intuition that enables us to reach the reality of a thing. Intuition can give us direct, though not sensual contact with reality; direct, meaning that it dispenses with abstract concepts.²⁹ The intuitive insight which he contrasted with analytical thinking can embrace various phenomena of which mystical union is a privileged instance.³⁰ One can see how Iqbal was inspired by Bergson because in contrast to the mainstream of European philosophy then, he (Bergson) believed that metaphysics is both possible and can be built on the basis of the existing stock of empirical science if only we are able to discard philosophical prejudices.³¹ In the Reconstruction he wrote that

²⁷ Ibid. p. 183

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ H. Bergson, Introduction to Metaphysics, 1903 in L. Kolakowsky, Bergson, Oxford, 1985, p. 28.

³⁰ L. Kolakowsky, Bergson, Oxford, 1985, p. 28.

³¹ Ibid.

among the representatives of modern thought, Bergson was the only thinker who had made "a keen study of the phenomenon of duration of time."³²

The Bergsonian formula was that life is time and time is consciousness or self, of which there are two aspects; i.e. to Bergson each of us is a body among bodies, and our mind, in so far as it is an organ of life and acts according to the body's needs. That in us the self which obeys the laws of matter makes up the 'superficial self' which concerns itself as a part of the spatially homogenous universe.³³ The other aspect of the self is the profound self, "the core of personality. It is not a tool of life, nor an aspect of our practical efforts, whether individual or social "³⁴ As we are normally too absorbed with our everyday survival, we are often not aware of it. Both selves are part of the same consciousness, although the superficial self is the impersonal part of the person.³⁵

Similarly when discussing what consciousness is, Iqbal talked of the two-selves - the 'appreciative' and the 'efficient' the efficient self (Bergson's superficial self) enters into relation with the world of space. But because we are often too absorbed with the external order of things we seldom get a glimpse of the appreciative self, which is the inner centre of experience. We can, however, reach it, says Iqbal, in moments of profound meditation.³⁶

It is also important to note that Iqbal's concept of 'time' is very much like Bergson's. When Bergson said that time is real, he meant that the future does not exist in any sense.³⁷ Unlike the determinists, for whom time is like a machine that unwinds a film reel which has been there all along, with its entire story, bergson asserted that "the life of the universe is a creative process, whereby something new and thus unpredictable appears at every moment."³⁸ Bergson's idea of time is also different from the time of physics which sees time like a type of space breakable into homogeneous segments sitting next to each other in an indefinitely long line.³⁹ This to Bergson is

³² M. Iqbal, op. cit. p.63, emphasis is mine.

³³ L. Kolakowski, op. cit., 1985, p.17.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ M. Iqbal, op. cit. 1968, *ibid*, p. 95-108

³⁷ Bergson in L. Kolakowsky, Bergson Oxford, 1985, p.2.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 2-3..

³⁹ Ibid. p. 3.

'artificial' time; real time, or what he called 'duree' is not divisible, "It is in fact, what we are and what we know intuitively, from direct experience."⁴⁰ As such, real time is only possible through memory or consciousness.

Both Bergson and Iqbal point out the limitation of language in describing the profound self. In his *Creative Evolution* Bergson said:-

"...language cannot grasp it without immobilising its mobility or 'pure duree' (duration)".⁴¹

However both believe that our intelligence can still make an effort to go beyond itself and our language built as it is on spatial relationships, can overcome, to some extent, its limitations and open a path to another understanding of reality, i.e. via poetic and symbolic language. This is in fact what Bergson tried to do.⁴² Iqbal as we already know wrote mostly in verse.

To Iqbal, therefore, intuition which is a glimpse' of the profound self or the window as it were to Reality, is possible, also valid and can be communicated, albeit not as directly but simply as objective knowledge. This can be seen from his description in the *Reconstruction*:

The unity of the appreciative ego is like the unity of the germ in which the experiences of its individual ancestors exist, not as a plurality but as a unity in which every experience permeates the whole....It appears that time for the appreciative self is a single 'now' which the efficient self in its traffic with the world of space pulverises into a series of 'nows' like pearl beads on a thread.⁴³

Iqbal then tried to use this idea to interpret the Quranic verse that speaks of the time duration involved in creation. Creation, if apprehended, intellectually, lasts through thousands of years, yet one divine day, says the Quran, is equal to one thousand years and in the verse 54:50 the whole creation is a single indivisible act "swift as the twinkling of an eye". In other words, the 'time' mentioned in the Quran can be better understood in terms of the single 'now' of the appreciative self as he had explained it.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid. p. 18. Iqbal uses the term 'ego', self, and consciousness simultaneously.

⁴³ M. Iqbal, op. cit. 1930, p. 65.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p.66

"Pure time" as revealed by a deeper analysis of our conscious experience is not a string of separate reversible instants; it is an organic whole in which the past is not left behind, but is moving along with, and operating in the present, "and the future is given to it only in the sense that it is present in its nature as an open possibility."⁴⁵

As has been mentioned, and as will become more obvious. Iqbal's main concern into understand the nature of the 'Ultimate Reality' i.e. to 'know' God better'. We have also mentioned that the keys to that understanding are the concepts of space and time. For the moment we are going to see how he also found similar ideas or precepts about space-time in the writings of the medieval Sufi Iraqi who was also trying to reach a greater understanding of the ultimate nature of Reality. Iraqi's ideas, as explained by Iqbal, are quoted below not for their scientific value but for their relevance to Iqbal's theology. More importantly they help to show how Iqbal put close together knowledge obtained via mystical - experience and science⁴⁶ to achieve a dynamic understanding of Reality

To Iraqi,⁴⁷ the secret of time and space was the greatest secret. To know it is to know the secret of the being and attributes of God. The existence of some kind of space in relation to God is clear from the following verses of the Quran:⁴⁸

"Doth thou not see that God knoweth all that is in the Heavens and all that is in the Earth? Three persons speak not privately together, but He is the fourth; nor five, but He is their sixth.... wherever they be He is with them." [Q 58:8] And again

"Ye shall not be employed in affairs, nor shall ... ye work any work, but we will be witness over you when you are engaged therein; and the weight of an atom on Earth or in Heaven escapeth not thy Lord (Q 10:62). "We created

⁴⁵ Ibid. p.67. Again this is comparable with what Bergson said about his *duree*:- "In the actual *duree* nothing is lost, but nothing is reversible either: each moment carries within it the entire flow of the past and each is new and repeatable. "L. Kolakewsky op. cit., 1985, p.3.

⁴⁶ Philosophy. Science and mysticism.

⁴⁷ See M. Iqbal, "A plea for deeper study of Muslim scientists", *Islamic Culture*, April, 1929, p. 201-29.

⁴⁸ Iraqi.

man; and we know what his soul whispereth to him, and we are closer to him than his jugular vein." [Q 50:15]

We must not forget, however, said Iraqi, which the words proximity, contact and mutual separation, which apply to material bodies, do not apply to God. Divine life is in touch with the whole universe on the analogy of the soul's contact with the body. Iraqi described the soul as being neither proximate to, nor separate from it. Yet its contact with every atom of the body is real, and it is impossible to conceive this contact except by positing some kind of space which befits the subtlety of the soul. Therefore the existence of space in relation to God cannot be denied, yet what this space is, must be explained.⁴⁹

Iraqi delineated three kinds of space - the space of material bodies; the space of immaterial bodies and the space in respect of God. The space of material bodies can be divided into three types:-

i. the space of gross bodies, where movement takes time, bodies occupy places and resist displacement.⁵⁰

ii. The space of subtle bodies is occupied for example by air, and sound. In this space, bodies resist one another, and their movement is measurable in terms of time which however appears to be different from the time of gross bodies.⁵¹

iii. The space of light is different from the spaces previously explained. The light of the sun instantly reaches the farthest limits of the Earth. Thus in the velocity of light, time is reduced almost to zero.

It is clear that the space of light is different to the space of air and sound. The light of a candle spreading in all directions in a room without displacing the air in it, shows that the space of light is more subtle than the space of air, which has no entry into the space of light.⁵² But while the element of distance is not entirely absent, there is no possibility of mutual

⁴⁹ M. Iqbal, op. cit. (note 186), 1929, *ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 207.

resistance in the space of light; e.g. the light of a hundred candles intermingles in the same room without displacement.⁵³

Iraqi stressed that it is not possible to distinguish the various types of spaces except by purely intellectual analysis and spiritual experience.⁵⁴ This remark is significant because, in a way, it characterizes the attitude that Iqbal took; i.e. spiritual experience wherever possible should be coupled with intellectual (scientific) analysis in order to satisfy what Iqbal describes as the modern mind.

Iraqi then described varieties of space operated on by immaterial beings like angels. While their subtlety enables them to pass through a stone wall, they cannot dispense altogether with motion which, according to him, is imperfection in spirituality. The highest scale in spatial freedom is reached by the human soul which, in its essence, is neither at rest nor in motion. Lastly we reach the divine space which is absolutely free from all limitations and constitutes the meeting point of all infinities.⁵⁵

Iraqi then dealt with the subject of time in a similar manner. He considered that there are infinite varieties of time relative to the varying grades of being, intervening between materiality and pure spirituality.⁵⁶

The time of gross bodies which arises, from the revolution of the earth around the sun is divisible into past, present and future; and its nature is such that as long as one day does not pass along, the succeeding day does not come. Even the time of immaterial bodies is serial in character; but if compared to the gross bodies, its passage is much quicker. A whole year in the time of the former, for example, may not be more than a day in the time of immaterial bodies.⁵⁷

Thus, as we rise higher and higher in the scale of immaterial beings we reach the notions of 'Divine Time' which is absolutely free from the quality of passage, and consequently does not admit of divisibility, sequence and change. It is above eternity; it has neither beginning nor end. The 'eye' of

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

God sees all the visibles and his 'ears' hear all the audibles in one indivisible act of perception.⁵⁸

In Iqbal's opinion, because he viewed 'Divine Time' as being utterly devoid of change (a view obviously based on an inadequate analysis of conscious experience) it was not possible for Iraqi to discover the relation between Divine Time and serial time. He was, therefore not able to reach through this discovery, which for Iqbal was the essentially Islamic idea of continuous creation, which means a growing universe. Despite this criticism, however, it is quite obvious that Iqbal was quite impressed by Iraqi's Sufistic-intuitive insight into the nature of space and time-relation to God.

He said:

"From this summary you will see how a cultured Muslim Sufi intellectually interpreted his spiritual experience of time and space in an age which had no idea of the theories and concepts of modern mathematics and physics."⁵⁹

(To he continued)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.