

CONTOURS OF AMBIVALENCE: IQBAL AND IBN ‘ARABI: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Part I

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In 1933 Iqbal visited Spain. The Faculty of philosophy and letters in Moncloa invited him to deliver a lecture on “The intellectual world of Islam and Spain” under the chairmanship of Mr. Asin Palacios who, I believe, needs no introduction for the present audience^[1] Mr. Palacios, in his introductory speech, pointed out that Iqbal, in some respects, resembled Ibn ‘Arabi.^[1] This compliment came from some body who had spent a life time in the study of Ibn ‘Arabi and his predecessors.^[2] While giving the obvious margin of courtesy and formal speech this statement is still significant since it points towards a profound relationship between Ibn ‘Arabi and Iqbal whose existence is felt by all scholars of Iqbal studies, though not with equal clarity always, but which has seldom been studied in its true perspective.^[3]

Alongwith Rumi Ibn ‘Arabi was the only other mystico-intellectual figure towards which Iqbal was always attracted but to which his responses varied with the passage of time.

Among the Muslim spiritual authorities, few are so famous in the West as Muhyi al Din Muhammad Ibn ‘Ali Ibn al ‘Arabi (A.H.5011-6.38/A.D.1165-1240). Numerous studies and translations of his works have appeared in the Western languages^[4] over the past century for the western academia Ibn ‘Arabi is more or less, a well known figure.^[5] Iqbal’s case however has been different. Though translated,^[6] apart from more than a dozen languages, in English, French and partially in Spanish, he is relatively less known to the western scholars, not to speak of the general readers in the West. Much less known are his responses to Ibn Arabi and his teachings which shifted to varying philosophic positions and expressed themselves in the form of an ambivalent relationship. In what follows, we would make an attempt to study

these shifting responses and to discern the possible influences that Ibn ‘Arabi may have had on Iqbal and his poetic works.

Ibn Arabi defies classification. Even with in the folds of Islamic mysticism or Sufism he stands over and above all the great figures. During, the last seven hundred years no one else has exercised more deeper and more pervasive an influence on the intellectual life of the Islamic community. His immense significance and far reaching influence in Islamic history makes him like a pole star whether one chooses to go towards him or against him. The direction is determined by his towering personality. A comparative study, in the conventional sense would. Therefore, be hardly possible since it requires both the figures to belong to the same domain or to have common denominators providing keys for a veritable comparative study. Such a situation does not exist in the case of Ibn ‘Arabi and Iqbal. Thus we have consciously refrained from the an undertaking.

Iqbal nevertheless, like every other subsequent thinker, had to make his response to the teachings of the Andalusian sage that had dominated over almost every walk of Muslim intellectual life.

His first encounter with the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabi. Though quite indirect, was in the sessions of discussion and study that were held in his father’s house to understand the works of AL Shaikh al-Akhar, the greatest master.

His own description of this first encounter in his childhood and early youth is as follows:

“I have no misgivings about AI-Shaikh al-Akbar Ibn ‘Arabi rather, I cherish a love for him. My father had a profound attachment to Fusus al-Hikam and Al-Futuhat al Makkiyyah. Since the age of four my ears were acquainted with the name and teachings of Ibn ‘Arabi. For years at end both the books mentioned above were studied in our home. I had but little understanding of these doctrines in my childhood days but I, nevertheless, regularly attended these study circles. Later, when I studied Arabic, I tried to read myself. As I grew in experience and knowledge my understanding and interest also increased”^[7]

“We would come back to this point later on.

Records of Iqbal's life are silent as regards his self study of Ibn 'Arabi's works after the period mentioned above nor do we find any evidence that he had the chance to study the works of Ibn 'Arabi under the guidance of an orthodox master or with the help of traditional commentaries which are indispensable for an understanding of such works of gnostic and esoteric natures.^[8]

Ibn 'Arabi surfaces again in Iqbal's writings in 1900 when he published a resum of 'Abd al-Karim Jili's *Al-Insan al-Kamil* under the title "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al Jilani" in *Indian Antiquary Bombay*.^[9] It is an attempt to present the doctrines of Al-Hi in the form of western philosophic positions, perhaps to bring these closer to the modern readers. Ibn 'Arabi is mentioned thrice in the article and it is evident from the context that Iqbal recognized his status as a thinker of the highest calibre.

In his somewhat 'dated' and partially disowned work *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*^[10] he again mentioned Ibn 'Arabi, presenting his teachings as "an all-embracing exposition of the principle of Unit" and as someone "whose profound teaching stands in strange contrast with the dry-as-dust Islam of his countrymen". From the point of view of the present study two observations seem pertinent. Firstly, Iqbal, while in the tracks of historical relationships of his subject, has not taken into consideration an important factor that played a vital role in the spread of metaphysical thought in the Persian speaking world. Ibn 'Arabi's foremost disciple and step son Sadr ud-Din Qunaw was a Persian. It is through him that several important "lines of influences" of Ibn 'Arabi's doctrines in the East can be traced. Himself a master of Sufism and an authority on various religious sciences, especially hadith, Sadr ud-Din not only commented on the works of Al-Shaikh al-Akhar but wrote many of his own.^[11] He was also instrumental in influencing many important figures like Rumi. Qutb ud-Din Shirazi, Tusi, 'Iraqi, down to Nablusi. Kashani. Qaysiri, Afandi, Jili, Jami and Shabistari.^[12] He also played an especially important role by systematizing Ibn 'Arabi's teachings and placing emphasis upon those dimensions of his thought which would easily be reconciled with the philosophic approach,^[13] thus establishing a deep rooted tradition of interpretation of Ibn 'Arabi's doctrines for successive generations. It was the same tradition which proved seminal in the

efforts at synthesis made b) the later sages in Persia to whom Iqbal refers in his work but does not seem to have taken into account to this all important aspect of the intellectual activities of Muslims in the Eastern part of the Islamic world. This fact is not all together unconnected with a complete absence of the works of Ibn 'Arabi and his followers in the bibliography which Iqbal cited in the beginning of his dissertation.^[14] This is the second point that we wish to emphasize. Moreover this fact leads us towards a plausible explanation of the apparent hostility and the ambivalent attitude which Iqbal maintained in respect of Ibn Arabi and his doctrines in the subsequent years. We would presently consider it in the following part of our study.

Around 1910-11 Iqbal had started composing his first Persian mathnawi, namely *Asrar-i-Khudi*.^[15] Apart from immediate circumstances^[16] that inspired its writing there were more profound reasons which lead him to express his views on the decadent state of the Muslim Ummah and to analyze the causes of its state of decline.^[17] It was precisely in the identification of these causes where Iqbal's differences with the teachings of supposedly Akbarian origin surfaced for the first time. Central to his intellectual concerns, in this period was the problem of the decline of Muslims and the waning of their worldly glory: its historical causes and their possible remedies. This is indeed the main theme of his mathnawi around which he built his Itinerary edifice.^[18]

Iqbal wrote a preamble to the mathnawi for its first edition^[19] which was intended to clarify certain notions that underpinned the work and that might have been difficult for his readers to grasp fully or else which needed an introduction for the uninitiated audience. The readers would observe that, in the preamble as well as in the mathnawi the self or ego is defined in shifting terms. At places he defines its ontological status and tries to 'situate' the soul and its modalities in the hierarchy of states of existence. From an other angle it is defined as a moral agent or a regulating force for human actions and behaviour.^[20] Some statements are suggestive of a character for the self which comes 'cry near to the definition of senses communis i.e. the central inward faculty that unifies the data received by the external sense faculties. It is defined as the principle of Individuation as well. It may be reminded that these were Iqbal's early years and he had not reached the maturity of thought

and clarity of vision that characterized his later thinking. A resume of the preamble is given, in translation, in the following paragraphs.

“This unity, found intuitively, or the radiant center of consciousness which illuminates all human ideas, emotions and desires; this mysterious entity which unifies the dispersed and unlimited modalities of human nature; this ego (ana) or self (khudi) or I-am-ness (mayn) which manifests itself through its action but remains hidden as regards its reality; which creates all experience but which transcends observation; what is it.’ Is it an eternal reality or else life has manifested itself temporarily, in order to accomplish its immediate practical objectives, in the form of this illusion of imagination? Individuals as well as collectivities have to answer this all important question in order to determine the course of their ethical behaviour. Sages and learned men of every nation have taken positions on these issues. Eastern people have largely ascribed to the view that human ego (individuality) is an illusion created by imagination, where as the practical bent of the western peoples has lead them to results that were in accordance with their nature.

Hindu thought regards the state and circumstances of human ego as a result of its previous actions which operate as a Karmic Law. It has also accepted all its philosophic corollaries i.e. since the ego is determined by action. The only way to escape its consequence is to renounce all action. This was very deleterious from the point of view of individual and collective life. Shiri Krishana criticized the prevalent meaning of renunciation and introduced his people to the fact that renunciation cannot be absolute and the only meaningful interpretation of this notion is that one should not be inwardly attached to action and its results. The charismatic logic of Shankara again eclipsed the interpretation that Shiri Krishana and Rama Nuja tried to advocate.

Islam was a movement emphasizing action. This movement regarded the (human) self as a created entity that may attain eternity through action. Hindus and Muslims have a strange similarity in their intellectual history. The point of view which Shankara adopted in his interpretation of Gita was the same which Ibn ‘Arabi used in his exegesis of the Quran and which had a profound influence on the Muslim mind. The depth and breadth of Knowledge of Al-Shaikh-i-Akhar and his towering personality made pantheism (wahdat al-wujud), which he championed so vigorously, an

inseparable part of the Islamic imagination. By the 14th century all the Persian poets came under a complete sway of Ibn 'Arabi.

Hindu sages addressed the mind in their expositions on Oneness of Being. Iranian poets selected a more dangerous course of action in their interpretation. They appealed to the 'heart' with the result that the idea reached the masses and nearly all the Islamic peoples became victims of inactivity and passivity.

Among the peoples of the world. Western peoples are characterized by the tendency towards (outward) action and. for this reason. Their ideas and literatures are the best guide for the Easterners to fathom the mysteries of life.

The (external) sense faculties are meant for receiving data from the material world. but there is an other faculty in the human beings which may be termed as faculty of 'events'. Life depends on observation of events unfolding around us and acting in accordance with their correct purport. This is something which is not usually done. English philosophy is especially rich in this regard and the East may review its own philosophic traditions in its light.

This is a brief outline of the history of the problem which forms the subject of this poem. I have tried to present it by giving it a color of imagination and liberating it from the complications of philosophic reasoning. The preamble is not meant as an exegesis of the mathnawi. It is rather a guideline for those who are not aware of the difficulties of this hard-to-understand reality.

The word self (khudi) is not used in its prevalent meaning 'pride'. It only denotes consciousness of the soul or determination of the self".^[21]

This was the starting point of a controversial debate that reverberated for many years and in various circles.^[22] Many critiques, both sympathetic and disparaging, were written that tried to defend the conventional position. Iqbal issued many rejoinders^[23] and clarified his position. His letters, that he wrote in the same period i.e. 15-18, often alluded to the debate.^[24] We shall presently consider the points of difference raised in all these writings. Before

that. a word about the justification of this apparent digression. from our theme. Ibn 'Arabi and Iqbal. may not come amiss.

As could be surmised from a preliminary reading of the material mentioned above, almost every point raised by Iqbal directly or indirectly relates to Ibn 'Arabi's doctrines or the influence they had on the intellectual tendencies of the subsequent generations of Muslims. So an analysis of the criticism made by Iqbal brings us directly to heart of the problem.

As mentioned earlier. Iqbal had a profound concern for the Muslim Ummah and its state of decline haunted him throughout his life. This theme is present as a constant back drop in all his prose and poetic 'works. So is the case of the period that we are considering at present. The causes that Iqbal identified in the mathnawi, its preamble and the debate literature for the decline of the Islamic community and the objections to the ideas of Ibn 'Arabi' could be summarized as follows: we have left out those points which do not have a direct bearing on our theme.

1) The doctrine of pantheism (Wahdat al-Wujud) teaches that human individuality is an illusion. Belief in the illusive nature of human self leads to passivity and collective inertia.^[25]

2) Ibn 'Arabi's, interpretation of the Quran is similar to Shankara's interpretation of the Gita.^[26]

3) Pantheism influenced the Persian poets and through the medium of their literature it reached the masses turning them into a passive collectivity.^[27] Hafiz is the foremost example of this kind of poetry.

4) Poets influenced by the doctrines of Ibn 'Arabi have installed the state of intoxication (Sukr) as their literary ideal. They try to induce in themselves as well as in others this state where as the ideal state of the muslim is the wakefulness of the heart.^[28]

5) The doctrine of Five Divine Presences is un-Islamic.^[29]

6) God is not immanent/dwelling (saryan) in the world. He is the creator and the universe is sustained by his Lordship. His being does not have a substantial continuity with the world.^[30]

7) Philosophizing of the Sufis; thereby bringing into the fold of Sufism issues that are not mystical but philosophical.^[31]

8) Ibn 'Arabi believes that the spirits of the perfect men (Saints and prophets) are eternal (Qadim).^[32]

9) Ibn Taimiyyah, Ibn Jawzi, Zamakhshari, Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi. Sultan Aurangzeb, Shah Wali Ullah and Shah Isma'il have opposed pantheism and its exponents. I follow in their footsteps.^[33]

10)) "Persian Sufis (followers of Ibn 'Arabi) ignore the Islamic Law."^[34]

11) "Knower and Known are one": "Outward Knowledge and inward knowledge diverge". These doctrines had very harmful practical consequences for Islamic sciences, literature and culture. It is the basis of all monasticism (Ralthaniyah).^[35]

12) Gnosis or inward Knowledge is something that was transmitted secretly to some companions by the Prophet. This is a false belief since it undermines the Prophetic message.^[36]

13) Followers of pantheism (Waltdat al-Wujud) are spiritually affiliated with the hatini sect.^[37]

14. Ouranic Hermemutics of Ibn 'Arabi, to my mind, is largely incorrect, though it may be found acceptable by standards of logic and transmitted knowledge (manqul)^[38]

15) Sufis have been mistaken in identifying Unity (Tawhid) with pantheism (Wahdat al-Wujud). The former is a religious term and the latter pertains to philosophy. The term opposite to Tawhid is Shirk and not multiplicity (Kathrah) as imagined by the Sufis. Multiplicity is the opposite of Waluhat. Those who proved the doctrine of Wahdat al-Wujud or pantheism^[39] (so it is termed in contemporary Western philosophy) were regarded upholders of Unity (Tawhid) whereas the issue they proved had nothing to do with religion. It was a view about the reality of the Universe. Islamic teachings are clear: there is only one entity that is worthy of worship. The mutiplicity that we observe in the world all belongs to the created order though in reality and in essence it may be one, from the philosophic or theological point of view.

Since the Sufis equated these two issues. they worked out for an other way to prove the unity (of God): a way that would have nothing to do with the laws of reason and perception. The state of intoxication came to their help here. I don't deny the existence of such a state. I merely object that it does not-serve the purpose for which it is induced.

If multiplicity has an objective reality, this pantheistic state which enwraps its subject. is only an illusion and has no significance from a religious or philosophic point of view. On the other hand. if this state of pantheism is merely a station of the soul and it does not correspond to an objective reality. rational proofs advanced in its defense, as done by Ibn 'Arabi and others are of no consequence.

According to the Qur'anic teachings the entified existence/being (al-wujud al-Khariji) does not have the relation of identification with the Divinity; their relationship is of the creator and the creation. From the point of view of collective and individual human life the in-rush of such states is harmful".^[40]

16) "As far as I know, Fusus contains nothing but heresy (Ilhad) and deviation (Zandaqah)".^[41]

17) "No doubt, the very phenomenon of Sufism is a foreign thing implanted on the body of Islam and nurtured by the Persians".^[42]

18) There is a selflessness which comes about by the extinction of the human self in the Divine Self. This extinction is in the Divine Self and not in the divine commands.^[43]

19) "Pharorah was not damned; he was a pious man".^[44]

20) "Saints are higher in rank than the prophets".^[45]

Before taking into consideration the variety of objections mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs we would like to make a few observations.^[46]

The point that should always be remembered in the context of Iqbal and Sufism a context which primarily concerns as here is that Iqbal's criticism of Sufism, and of Ibn 'Arabi as well, remains with in the bossom of Sufism of which he himself was a great champion. Ample evidence can be adduced

from his poetry and prose writings. For the period that we are analyzing at present, it is enough to note that, even during the days of the heated debater of Asrar-i-Khudi, he paid glowing tributes to Sufism and even to Ibn ‘Arabi.^[47] He could also assert. “I claim that the philosophy of the Asrar is a direct development out of the experience and speculation of old Muslim Sufis and thinkers”.^[48] Thus one would search in vain to find a general condemnation of Sufism in the works of Iqbal. This is a point which is generally accepted by the majority of the learned among the Iqbal scholars.^[49]

In these objections there is hardly any direct philosophic critique of Ibn ‘Arabi’s doctrine. The real brunt of Iqbal’s criticism is against the practical repercussions that, supposedly, were a result of Ibn ‘Arabi’s influence. The case of two exceptions that we have mentioned at Nos.16 and 17 would be explained shortly.^[50]

The criticism made by Iqbal and much more of it has been successfully defended by the Sufis themselves. We can not, obviously, go into the details of this body of literature in the length of this paper. We would only attempt to examine the position of Ibn ‘Arabi vis-a-vis this criticism and try to discern if it effects him in any respect. To determine the final position of Ibn ‘Arabi on various issues, we would refer back to his magnum opus, al-Futuh al-Makkiyah since it provides us with his final and detailed views.^[51] Moreover, we have its authentic text as well. We would, nevertheless, refer to other works also that are relevant to our discussion.

Next point that we intend to consider is of special importance since it takes us to the core of the problem. Iqbal has identified Wandat al-Wujud (Transcendent Oneness of Being) with pantheism throughout these writings as we have shown earlier^[52] and his objections are directed, perhaps rightly, against this philosophic system. Writing to a friend in 1925, he commented on his own mental make up. This comment provides us a clue to understand as to why did he identify Wandat al-Wujud, which is a metaphysical doctrine, to pantheism which is a philosophic system arising in the West in post renaissance period.

His statement runs as follows:

“I have spent most of my life in the study of western philosophy and this thinking style (i.e. of the western philosophy) has become a second nature to me. Consiously or unconsciously I study the realities of Islam from this very point of view. I have often experienced that, during conversation, I cannot express myself successfully in Urdu”.^[53]

First generation orientalist and, in fast decreasing numbers, some of the later scholars confused pantheism with Wandat al-Wujud. “They mistake metaphysical doctrines of Ibn ‘Arabi for philosophy and do not take into consideration the fact that the way of gnosis is not separate from grace and sanctity”.^[54] The pantheistic accusations against the Sufis and especially against Ibn ‘Arabi are doubly false. Firstly, as we have said earlier, because,

“pantheism is a philosophic system and that even of a recent origin, whereas Ibn ‘Arabi and others like him never claimed to follow or create any system whatsoever; and, secondly, because pantheism implies a substantial continuity between God and the Universe,^[55] whereas the Shaikh would be the first to claim God’s absolute transcendance over every category, including that of substance”.^[56]

There is a basic difference between the essential identification of the manifested order with its ontological Principle and their substantial identity and continuity. This is overlooked by their critics. The latter concept is metaphysically absurd and contradicts everything that Ibn ‘Arabi has said regarding the Divine Essence.

The terms “pantheism”^[57] and “existential monism”, though somewhat less distasteful, are still very inappropriate as a description of the doctrine of Wandat al-Wujud.^[58]

Iqbal was using these works almost exclusively during all these years and the confusion seems to have crept in through these works.^[59] His training in the western modes of thinking, pointed out by himself, may also have contributed to it.

There was an other factor that made it difficult for any body in a similar situation to form an exact idea of Ibn ‘Arabi’s doctrines. The original works as well as the traditional commentaries were very hard to come by. Pir Mehr

‘Ali Shah, the foremost exponent of Ibn ‘Arabi’s doctrines around the turn of the century, has been reported to have found, after great difficulty, a copy of Futuhat with a leather merchant of Lahore, the only one that was available in Lahore.^[60] There is no evidence that Iqbal had the chance to study the original works of Ibn ‘Arabi, in all these years.

As. could be surmised from the foregoing facts, given the circumstances of Iqbal’s milieu, it is quite understandable as to why did Iqbal criticize Ibn ‘Arabi in a certain phase of his life? He sincerely believed these ideas, as he understood them, to be harmful for his community. It is a different matter that these doctrines did not represent the true positions of Ibn ‘Arabi.

To be Continued

^[4] Paper presented at IQBAL CONFERENCE, Cordoba, Spain, November, 1991.

^[1] “Sir Muhammad Iqbal succeeded, like Ibn ‘Arabi, in emptying into the tormented moulds of his poesy and rhyme, his philosophic doctrines under the suggestive title of Asrar-i-Khudi, a pretty poem.” “Life in Madrid”, B.A. Dar, Letters and Writings of Iqbal, I.A.P., KHI, 1969, p.79. See also S.A. Vahid, Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal, Ashraf, LHR, 1964, p.350; A. Chughtai, Iqbal Ki Suhbat Main, LHR.,977, pp.282-289; . B.D. Metcalf, “Reflections on Iqbals Mosque”, Iqbal Centenary Papers, Vol-II, University of the Punjab, 1977, Dr. Mahmud-ur-Rehman, “Allama Iqbal Masjid-i-Qurtuba Main” (Urdu), in Fikr-o-Nazar, Vol.28-29, Nos. 4,1-2, 1991, p.501; Dr. M. Riaz, “Andalus and Allama Iqbal” (Urdu) in Fikr-o-Nazar, op.cit., p.459.

^[2] A selective list of his works in given in the following lines. This does not include his important translations of some of the basic texts of the Shadhaliyyah order which has inherited the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabi more than any other Sufi brotherhood, though with some modifications in the later year.

Asin Palacios, M., El Islam Cristianizado, Madrid, 1931; Vidas de Santones Andaluces, Madrid, 1933; Islam and the Divine Comedy, London, 1961; “El

mistico murciano Abenarabi”, Boletin de Ca Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid), I, 87:96-173 (1925); 11, 87:512-611; 111,87:582-637(1926) IV,, 92:654-751(1928); “La Psicologia Segun Mohidin Abenarabi”, Actes du XIV Congress Inter. des Orient. Alger, 1905, Vol 111, Paris, 1907; “Mohidin” in Homenage a Menendez Y Pelayo, Madrid, 1899, 11, 217-256; “La Psicologia, del extasis en dos grandes misticos musulmanes: Algazel Y Mohidin Abenarabi”, in Cultura Espanola, Madrid, 1906, pp. 209-235; La Espiiritualidad de Algazel y see Sentido cristiano, (Madrid.Granada, 1934-194 I); Abenmassura y see eswela, (Madrid, 1914) which reveals the basic cosmological ideas of Ibn Masarraah that might have influenced some of the formulations of Ibn ‘Arabi. Also translated into English Leiden: Brill, 1978; Vidasde Santones Andaluces, Madrid, 1933; Mahasin al-Majalis, edited and translated into French, Paris, 1933; ‘Islam Christianise, Cf. James Morris “Ibn al-’Arabi and his Interpreters” Journal of the American Oriental Society, 106 (1986) and 107 (1987).

^[3] There are some exceptions to it. e.g. Maykash Akbar Abadi, Naqd-i-Iqbal, Delhi, 1982; S.H.M. Anwar, “Shaikh-i-Akbar aur Iqbal” in Ali Garh Magazine, 1959, p.146: IH. Siddiqi, “Fikr-i-Iqbal par Ibn ‘Arabi Kay Asarat Ka Jaiza’ in Tehqiqat-i-Islami, Vol.6 No.3, 1987, p.58, Dr S. Abdullah, Shaikh-i-Akbar aur Iqbal, Lahore, 1979, M. I. Bhatti, “The Nature of Iqbal’s Criticism of Ibn ‘Arabi in Journal of Research (Humanities) University of the Punjab, LHR. January and July, 1977, pp. 117-127. Also in Dr. Rafi’ud-Din Hashmi (ed.) Iqbal Shanasi our Journal of Research, (Urdu), Bazm-i-Iqbal, LHR, 1989, pp 261. AI-i-Ahmed Surur (ed.) Iqbal aur Tasawwuf, Iqbal Institute, Siri Nagar, 1980 (This collection of papers contains some fine studies on the subject); see also Yusuf H. Khan, Iqbal aur Hafiz, Delhi, 1976, which clarifies a very important aspect of Ibn ‘Arabi’s influence on Persian poetry and Iqbal’s criticism of Hafiz.

^[4] For details of Ibn ‘Arabi’s works and their translations in various languages see bibliography.

^[5] This revival of interest in Ibn ‘Arabi’s teachings in the recent years is not without significance. To quote a renowned scholar of Islamic Studies, “In fact it is not a Fakhr ud-Din Razi that overwhelms a modern Westerner, but a Muhiuddin Ibn ‘Arabi”. Cf. Muhammad Hamidullah, Muhammad Rasulullah, Karachi, 1979, pp.170. On an other and more subtle level Ibn

‘Arabi gains importance for the West as his teachings indicate the way out of the blind alley of Western philosophic thinking towards the forgotten realms of mundus imaginalis and other modes of thinking. For details see William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, State University of New York Press, 1989.

^[6] For a detailed record of works on Iqbal’s life and thought as well as his translations into various eastern and western languages see Rafi’ud- Din Hashmi, *Kitabiat-i-Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, 1977. A revised and updated edition is forthcoming from the Iqbal Academy. A select bibliography is given at the end of this article as well. In the Spanish speaking world only a translation of *The Reconstruction* exists uptill now. See, *La Reconstruction del Pensamiento Religioso en el Islam*, tran. Jose Esteban Calderon, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, LHR., R., 1989.

^[7] See his letter to Shah Suleman Phulwarwi, dated 24th February 1916, in B.A. Dar, *Anwar-e-Iqbal* (Urdu), Iqbal Academy, 1977, p. 177.

^[8] This was the reason, perhaps, that in 1916, during the debate on *Asrar-i-Khudi*, when he tried to prepare ‘a work on sufism and used *Kitab-al-Tawwasin*, he could not decipher the text in Arabic and had to rely on its Persian translation. See Sabir Kalurwi, *Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf*, Lahore, 1985, p. 72.

^[9] For the complete text of his article see Latif Ahmad Sherwani, *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, Lahore, 3rd. ed., 1977, p.69. The same text has been reproduced, with some errors, in other collections; see S.A. Vahid, *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, Lahore, 1964. p. 3.

^[10] See M. Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, dissertation, first presented to the Cambridge University, in March 1907 for his B.A. Degree and later on, with some modifications and additions, submitted for his Ph.D. to the University of Munich. He was awarded a degree on it on 4th Nov. 1907. The dissertation was first published by Luzac & Co, London, in 1908. No subsequent edition appeared during Iqbal’s life time as . he had lost all interest in it by 1917. See, Muhyidin Qadri Zoor, *Shad Iqbal*, Hyder Abad, India, 1942, p.45; *Makatib Iqbal banam Khan Niaz-ud-Din*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1986, p.50; B.A. Dar, *Anwar i Iqbal*, I.A.P.. Lahore, 1977,

p.201 where he discouraged a would be translator of the aforementioned work by indicating the obsolescent nature of the work. In retrospect, the work seems to echo the ideas of the early orientalists and limited in many respects. However, Iqbal, in the early years of this century, was unique in that he introduced some of the Persian sages to the English readers for the first time and, contrary to the opinions of many orientalists, tried to discover the Islamic roots of Sufism, a task. that was to be accomplished by latter scholars with success. The reference is made here to the edition of *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, published by Bazm-e-Iqbal, in 1954, reprinted, 1964, pp.X,116,132.

^[11] See al-Fukuk on the margin of Kashani's *Manazil al-Sa'irin* (Tehran 1315/1897-8); Miftah al-Ghayb on the margin of al-Fanari's *Misbah al-Ins* (Tehran 1323/1905); al-Nafahat al-ilahiyyah (Tehran, 1316/1898-9); al Nusus, on Kashani op. cit.; Ijaz al-bayan fi tafsir umm al-Qu'ran (Hyder Abad - Deccan, 1368/1949) also published as *al-Tafsir al-Sufi li-l-Quran* ed. by A.A. 'Ata' (Cairo, 1389/1969). Corbin and Nasr have also discussed Qunawi and his influence; see Corbin. *Creative Imagination in the Sufism*. of Ibn Arabi, Princeton University Press, 1977, Notes and Appendices; Nasr, *Se As!*, introduction; see also W.C. Chittick, "The Chapter Headings of *Fusus*". *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*. 2(1984): 41-94; "The Five Divine Presences: From al Qunawi to Qaysari". *The Muslim World* 72 (1982): 107-128; "Ibn ul 'Arabi and his School" *Islamic Spirituality; Manifestations*. Ed. S.H. Nasr (vol.20) New York; Cross Road, pp.55; "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn 'Arabi's Foremost Disciple and Some Notes on its Author". *Sophia Perennis* 4/1(1978):43-58; "Mysticism vs. Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History" *Religious Studies* 17(1981):87-104; "Sadr al-Din Qunawi on the Oneness of Being". *International Philosophical Quarterly* 21(1981): 171-184. A complete bibliography is attached to Chittick's *Faith and Practice of Islam*, Albany, 1992. A preliminary survey of the list of Qunawi's works is given in "The last will" op. cit., p. 47; see also A. Schimmels *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, 1975, p. 264; "Ibn 'Arabi", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, (new ed.) Vol.111, p. 710: S. Ruspuli, *La Clef du monde supra sensible*, Cf. Chittick, op. cit., p.55; H.Z. Ulken, *La Pensee de l'Islam*, Istanbul, 1953, p. 264; N. Neklik, *Sadreddin Konevi nin felsefesinde Allah-Kainat ve Insan*, (Turkish) Istanbul, 1967.

^[12] See S.H. Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, Suhail Academy, Lahore, 1988, pp.118-120 where Ibn ‘Arabi’s influence on successive generations, through Qunawi, is discussed. For a detailed study of Qunawi and his works see Chittick, *op. cit.*

^[13] See W.C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, State University of New York Press, 1989, pp.xvi-xviii where this question is discussed with great insight. Also see “Ibn ‘Arabi and his school” in *Islamic Spirituality*, *op.cit.pp.55.*

^[14] Iqbal, M. *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, *op. cit.* p. xii.

^[15] In a letter dated 7th July 1911 he wrote to ‘Atiya Begum, “Father has asked me to write a Masnawi, (sic-mathnawi) in Persian after Bu ‘Ali Qalandar’s and in spite of the difficulty of the task, I have undertaken to do so.” see *Letters to ‘Atiya p.73*; B.A. Dar, *Letters of Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1978, p.36.

^[16] By immediate circumstances we, mean the desire of his father mentioned in the previous note. For a print history of the work see Rafi’ud-Din Hashmi. *Tasaiuf-i-Iqbal Ka Tahqiqi aur Tawdihi Mutali’ah*, I.A.P., Lahore, 1982, p.77

^[17] His ideas transpire from his correspondence which he maintained during these years. See B.A. Dar, *Anwar-i-Iqbal*, *op.cit.* p.176; Letters addressed to Akbar Ilah Abadi in Sh. ‘Ata Ullah, ed. *Iqbal Namah*, vol.11, Ashraf, Lahore, 1981, pp.34-77; *Sahifa*, special issue on Iqbal, Lahore 1973, p.168. In his own words, “‘Religion without power is merely a philosophy’. This is an extremely pertinent observation and in fact, this was the very cause which made me write the mathnawi (i.e. *Asrar-i-Khudi*). I have spent ten years of my life to come to grips with this problem.” Letter to Akbar Ilahabadi dated 18th Oct. 1915, *Iqbal Namah*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p.45. Among the primary concerns which involved Iqbal during this period the following could be pinpointed: his stay in Europe and the comparative study of the two cultures, fall of the Caliphate, overall decadence of the Islamic civilization and the mental agony which ensued from his reflection on the existing predicament of the Muslims at that time.

[18] See M. Iqbal, *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal Persian*, (collected Persian works published in a critical edition by Iqbal Academy Pakistan) Lahore, 1990, p.23. From the point of view of our present study those parts are of special importance that deal either with a description of the ontological status of the self Khudi or those which enumerate the causes that strengthen it or render it powerless; Cf. pp. 32-51.

[19] This preamble was expunged from all the subsequent editions along with some verses that had proved controversial. For details see Hashmi, op.cit: p.81-95. For the text of the deleted preamble see S.A. Vahid Mu'ini, *Maqalat-i-Iqbal*, Ashraf, Lahore, 1963, p.153; T.H. Taj., *Madamin-i-Iqbal*, Hyder Abad, Deccan, 1985, p.48.

[20] Iqbal has himself acknowledged it in his letters; See 'Ataullah Iqbal Namah, op. cit., Vol. II p. 235; Sahifa, No. 65, 1973, p. 173. Also see Schimmel; "Reading Mawllana's Fihi ma Fi Again" in *Essays on Science*, ed. Hakim Saeed, Karachi.; *Gabriel's Wing*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan,

[21] See note 19. This preamble was also translated into Russian by Nattal I. Prigarina. See "Muhammad Iqbal; The prosaic foreward to *The Secrets of the Self*, Literary Indii, 1988. Also See, Prigarina, "Iqbal Articles", translation from Urdu into Russian with introduction, in M. Stepanyanz, ed. *Filosofskie ci.spech,v Sufuzma,m*,1989.

[22] For details of this debate see Haq Nawaz, *Iqbal aur Lazzat-i-Paykar*, I.A.P., 1984, where all the relevant documents of the debate are collected in chronological order. See also, Hashmi, op.cit, p.84 and M.A. Qureshi, "Ma'raka-i-Asrar-i-Khudi", in *Iqbal*, Oct., 1953-April 1954

[23] See Mu'ini, op.cit. pp.153, 160, 171, 172; Dar, op.cit. p. 268. See also his unfinished document on Sufism (announced many times in his letters) published posthumously by Sabir Kalurvi. (ed.) *Tarikh-i-Tasawuaf*, Lahore, 1985. The work contains many errors but, nevertheless, it provides useful insights into Iqbal's mind. Moreover it brings to light the fact that original sources of Sufism, especially of Ibn 'Arabi and his school were very hard to come by in Iqbal's days and he had to rely on secondary, often misleading, sources or the works of the first-generation orientalis. This was the prime reason for which he abandoned his project and didn't return to it again. It

was not peculiar to the works of Ibn ‘Arabi alone. The works of Ibn Taymiyyah as well as the works on Hadith literature were also not easily available. Iqbal complained of this difficulty in his letters also (cf. To Aslam Jiraj puri, May 1919, in ‘Ataullah, Iqbal Namah Vol. 1, Ashraf, Lahore, 1946 p. 54; Makatib-i-Iqbal banam Niaz ud-Din Khan, I.A.P. LHR, 1986, p. 22).

^[24] See Sabir Kalurvi, *Isharia-i-Makatib i Iqbal*, I.A.P. Lahore, 1984 where many indexes are provided to trace out relevant references in various collections of Iqbal’s letters. A select bibliography of letters related to the subject of our study would be presented in the bibliography.

^[25] See Mu’ini, *Maqalat-i-Iqbal*, Lahore, 1963, p. 154.

^[26] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

^[27] *Ibid.*, p. 156.

^[28] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

^[29] *Ibid.*, p.162: Also Kalurvi, S. (ed.) *Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf*, op. cit., p. 57.

^[30] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

^[31] *Ibid.*, p, 164.

^[32] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

^[33] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

^[34] See Sherwani, *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, I.A.P. Lahore, 1977, p. 122.

^[35] See Dar. *Anwar-i-Iqbal*, I.A.P. Lahore, 197 p. 269.

^[36] *Ibid.*, p. p. 272.

^[37] *Ibid.*, p. 276

^[38] See Hashmi, *Khutut-i-Iqbal*, Lahore, 1976, p. 117.

^[39] This is no arbitrary choice of word on our part since Iqbal has used it himself to describe Ibn ‘Arabi’s doctrine. (and of ‘Iraqi as well.) See, Dar, Letters of Iqbal, I.A.P. Lahore, 1978, p. 146 See also Hashmi, Khutut-i-Iqbal, op. cit., p 144, 118; ‘Ataullah, Iqbal Namah, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 47.

^[40] Hashmi, Khutut-i-Iqbal, op. cit., p. 118-119.

^[41] ‘Ataullah, S. Iqbal Namah, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 44.

^[42] Ibid., Vol. I. p. 78.

^[43] Ibid., Vol II. p. 60.

^[44] See Kalurvi, Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf, op. cit. p.

^[45] Ibid.,p. 94

^[46] See note 22.

^[47] See B.A. Dar, Letters of Iqbal, op. cit., p. 146-7, (Ibn ‘Arabi and Sufism); Mu’ini, op. cit., p. 155 (Ibn ‘Arabi), p 161 (Sufism), p. 164 (Sufism); B.A. Dar, Anwar-i-Iqbal op. cit., p. 268 (Sufism); Hashmi, Khutut-i-Iqbal, op. cit., p. 117 (Ibn ‘Arabi); Sadir Kalurvi, Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf, op. cit., p. 31 (Sufism); ‘Ataullah, Iqbal Namah, op. cit., p. 53-54 (Sufism); Niazi, Maktubat-i-Iqbal, I.A.P. Karachi, 1957, p. 10 (Sufism); Sahifa, op. cit., p. 165 (Sufism) p. 182 (Sufism). The list could be expanded considerably. Adding references from his poetic works would prove our point and furnish further evidence. This is being left out at the moment.

^[48] B.A. Dar, Letters of Iqbal, op. cit., p: 147.

^[49] See Bibliography.

^[50] For the real words of his statement see ‘Ataullah, Iqbal Namah op. cit., Vol 1, pp. 44, 78.

^[51] AI-Futuhah al-Makkiyyah The Meccan Openings” Cairo, 1911. repr. Beirut: Dar Sadir, n.d.; Ed. O. Yahya, Cairo: Al Hay’at al-Misriyyat al-’Ammah li’I kitab, 1972.

Completed towards the end of his life, this work is a vast encyclopedia of the Islamic Sciences, within the context of tawhid, consisting of 560 chapters. References are made to both the Bulaq and O.Yahya's critical editions by distinguishing the latter with a 'Y', before the reference. See also Nasr, op. cit., p. 98; Al-Sha'rani, Kitabal-Yawaqit, Cairo, 1305; chap. 308 of Futuhat itself and Chittick, opt cit. which is perhaps the first work in English based on a direct translation from Futuhat. We are greatly indebted to this remarkable work of scholarship for our present study. The translations that appear in the article are also mostly taken from Chittick.

In western languages, only a partial translation by M. Valsan exists in French. More recently, studies and translations made by M. Chodkiewicz are a valuable addition to the existing corpus of Akbarian studies, see bibliography. In Urdu a partial and faulty translation was done lately.

^[52] See note 39.

^[53] See 'Ataullah, Iqbal Namah, op. cit., p.47

^[54] See Nasr, S.H. Three Muslim Sages, op. cit. p.105.

^[55] Which would only mean that the sum total of all existent things in the universe is God.

^[56] "The medieval philosophers were unanimous in placing God, or Pure Being, above substance. How, then, could the Sufis, who consider the Divine Essence (dhat) to transcend even Being, believe in God having a substance which he shares with the Universe?" Cf. Nasr, Three, Muslim Sages, op.cit. p. 164. See also Burckhardt, An Introduction to the Sufi Doctrine, chap.3; A.K.

Coomaraswamy," pantheism, Indian and Neo-platonic." Journal of Indian History, (6:249-252, 1937). The arguments of the author apply to Sufism as well.

^[57] This is how Nicholson and several other scholars term *wandat al-wujud*.

^[58] For details see Nasr, op.cit p.105-107.

^[59] See Kalurvi, *Taiikh-i-Tasawwuf*, op. cit., pp. 92, 93.

^[60] See Faiz Ahmed, Mehr-i-Munir, Lahore, (1376 H.) p.105 and 130. See also note 23. Pir Mehr 'Ali Shah is the same personality to whom Iqbal addressed his queries about Ibn 'Arabi in 1933. See 'Ataullah, op.cit. Vol.1., p.443. A few centuries earlier, situation was no better for Ibn Taimiyyah who, due to a lack of authentic reports and reliable texts, coupled with his brilliant but somewhat fanatical mind, in all sincerity denounced Ibn 'Arabi on various points. As could be seen from a comparison of Ibn Taimiyyah's attacks with Futuhat, Ibn Taimiyyah was not well informed about the works and doctrines of Ibn 'Arabi. For example compare Ibn 'Arabi's position on questions of Ittihad and Hulul with the ideas attributed to him by Ibn Taimiyyah in his Fatawa, al-Riyad, 1382 h. See also M. M. al-Ghurab, al-Radd 'ala Ibn Taimiyyah, Damascus 1981, p.10.7.