CONTOURS OF AMBIVALENCE: IQBAL AND IBN ARABI: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

(Part-iii)

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(Continued from the October 1993 issue)

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The author has tried to elucidate, through analyzing the material available about the various phases of Iqbal's life and thought, the question of shifting positions of Iqbal vis-a-vis Ibn 'Arabi. Till 1910, Iqbal appears as a great admirer of Ibn 'Arabi. After the publication of Asrar-i-Khudi a shift in his position is discerned whereby he emerged as a critic of several ideas which were regarded to be of Akbariam origin. A list of twenty important objections raised by Iqbal was given in the previous parts which were then analyzed and compared with the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi as reflected in his original works, especially, al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah. The findings of the author indicate that in most of the cases, the ideas and statements criticized could not be traced back to Ibn 'Arabi himself whose intellectual position appears quite different from the received body of thought and praxis which was, infact, the target of Iqbal's criticism. Part three continues the analysis of the remaining two objections which pertain to the questions of the deterimental effects of the Persian poets and the concept of fana (annihilition). This concludes the second phase of Iqbal's relationship with Ibn 'Arabi's ideas. Rest of the article would deal with Iqbal's attitude towards Ibn 'Arabi in the last and final phase of his life which spans from 1920 to 1938.

Objection No. 3 & IC

The question of the Persian poets and their detrimental influence on the masses is a complex and detailed problem. A few general observations would

only be possible within the confines of this article. First of all e have to consider that the process of decadence, to which they are seen as the chief contributors, had equally overwhelmed the non-Persian peoples who could not have, possibly, received the negative influence of the "pantheistic" ideas borne by the wings of their poetry. Therefore we can surmise that the Muslim community was, as a whole, subject to more universal and profound causes of decline and decadence in which the Persian mystic poets had no special contribution.

Moreover, this matter of an exceedingly complex nature may not he treated in a hasty and summary fashion as Iqbal seemed to have done, perhaps, in the fury of the raging debate. That he had second thoughts about it is testified by his recantation of his verses about Hafiz[170]; this is an action which cannot be attributed to an attitude of capitulation on his part in the face of a growing and menacing opposition. Iqbal being a man of principles, it seems hardly possible that he decided to expunge the verses on account of the objections raised against these verses. It is more likely that it had to do with his later deliberations on the problem.[171]

We had occasion to touch upon the primary concern which lqbal hall for the decadent state of the Muslim Ummah, causes of its decline and their possible remedies.[172] A careful analysis of his prose and poetical works reveals that it is, inf.-let, the permanent leitmotif which appears not only in all of his' poetical works but also in his philosophical prose works and, like an invisible thread, binds them together in a unified whole and provides them a common direction of thought, a sense of purpose, aims and objectives,' motivation and underpinning.

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[170] See his letter to Aslam Jirajpuri, May, 1919, Iqbal Namah, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 52. Also see Vol. II pp. 53-55. Also see Hashmi, Tasanif op. cit., p. 77.

[171] "but the sharp reactions of many admirers of classical Persian poetry to his verdict later made him delete the most critical verses from the Secrets of the self.." This is how prof. Anameri Schimmel views the problem and her views reflect an opinion that is commonly held by many Iqbal scholars. See A. Schimmel, "Iqbal's Persian Poetry" in Persian Literature, Bibliotheca Persica, Albany, 1988, p. 423. Also see the first part of our article that appeared in Iqbal Review, April and October 1993.

[172] See part one of the article, op. cit.

His background and the situation in which he was born were entirely different from that of Rumi and Hafiz and this partly explains the difference of emphasis these poets respectively put on various elements in their poetical works. Apart from quite general and ever-needed reminders against the recurrent human tendencies of gaflah[173] (heedlessness towards the essential, spiritual vocation of human beings) Hafiz had no immediate or urgent need for that kind of a message or worldly dynamism that Iqbal required to 'jolt out' his audience from its indolent state of torpour and spiritual apathy Hafiz had a different task to accomplish and he did it in such a remarkable manner that ever since his poetic excellence has never surely been surpassed if seldom equaled, by any of the Persian poets. If there had been such a nee. in the epoch in which Hafiz lived and sang his lyrics he could have used his medium of expression and his skill to convey the new ideas, more suitable to his age, as Iqbal successfully did by taking over the images, the idiom and diction of the Persian poetic tradition, of Hafiz and others, and made use of it for a different and, in a sense, more immediate purpose by filling inherited forms and images with a new spirit through a shift of-emphasis.

Emphasis on the practical consequences and concern for the redress is as much a result of his particular bent of mind as it is an outcome of his mileau which was different from that of 'Hafiz. The times in which Hafiz lived were of great political and social upheavals[174] but the fabric of his society was still intact and the disturbed conditions of his age were still an internal' matter of the Muslim Ummah. They were yet free from being subjugated and enslaved by an alien civilization whose tenets and world view were completely contrasted with their own. To bring out the singinficance of this difference we quote from a contemporary historian.

> "Up to Harun's tine, and that of his sons, the story of the caliphate was at least to some extent the story of Islam and had its influence upon the shaping of the religion. The point

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[173] Gaflah is the Qur'anic term indicating the centrifugal tendencies that draw people away, from God towards an excessive concern with the affairs of the here-below as against the here-after.

[174] All standard works on Islamic history record details of his times in a similar manner.

had now come when the divorce between dynastic and political history on the one hand and the life of the Ummah on the other was made absolute. Sunni Islam had crystallized in a definitive pattern, and the legal and social framework within which the community lived, generation after generation, changed very little in the next thousand years. The full implications of the Qur'an and of the Hadith had been worked out by men who laboured quietly, indifferent to what happend at Court. The Ummah had taken on a life of its own and had become spiritually and socially self-sustaining.[175] If the entire structure of government and administration were to disappear overnight in any occidental country, chaos whould ensue; if this were to happen—even today—in any reasonably typical Muslim country, we might find that it made very little difference to the life of the people, and in earlier times the only contact most citizens are likely to have had with government was in the person of the local tax-collector. They went one way, their 'rulers' another."[176]

The objections that we listed in the first part of our study[177] are, in one way or the other, related to this primary concern. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that Iqbal is not concerned, at least directly, with a philosophical critique of these issues. His attention is focused on the practical consequences and inherent dangers of these tendencies. Readers familiar with Iqbal's rather pragmatic approach in such matters would see that he has analyzed this issue, like many others, from a concrete, practical point of view;

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[175] 'For a long time, in fact since the nineth century, mainly despotic rulers were obeyed but kept at a safe distance, partly because Muslims had developed a comfortable social order based on an intricate network of personal and group loyalties and obligations.' The rulers may have been usurpers: ' what counted, however, is that the social order was legitimate because it was governed by the law of God.' P.J. Vatikiotis in Arab and Regional Politics in the Middle East (Croom Helm. 1948).

[176] Hasan 'Abd al-Hakim (Gai Eaton) Islam and the Destiny of Man, Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, p. 159.

[177] See part one, op. cit., p. 32.

instead of using the theoretical criterion of correct and incorrect or less correct, he looked at the issues at stake from the angle of their being usefull and harmful, or conducive or detrimental to the overall well being of the Muslim Ummah. In rejecting or accepting an idea or a trend he would give precedence to the prevalent and more pervasive aspect of it rather than its original meaning and intent or its exact position with regard to its metaphysical, philosophical or religious content.[178]

One is reminded here of his similar criticism of the great teacher of morals, Shaykh Sa' di of Shiraz. Sa' di had advised:[179]

زمانہ با تو نہ سازد تو با زمانہ بساز

Iqbal rejected his advice in an apparently disparaging tone.[180]

حدیث بے خبرا نست ' با زمانہ بساز'

زمانہ با تو نسازد تو زمانہ ستمسز

From the times of Sa' di to Iqbal there is a historic span of several centuries which casts its shadow on the meaning and connotations of the phrase 'times' used commonly by both Iqbal and Sa' di but with divergent or rather cross intentions and purposes. 'Times' held out a different shade of meaning for Iqbal from that it conveyed in Sa' di. If the one advocated a change and adaptation in the readers to become 'in tune' with the time, the other invited and incited them for a struggle against time which was 'out of joint'

Secondly, the matter takes on a perplexing, rather ironic, turn when we consider the events occuring in the contemporary world as well as few of those which happened in the recent past.

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[178] We are indebted to Mr. Ahmad Javid for inviting our attention to this point of considerable importance.

[179] Sa'di Shirazi, Kulliyat.

[180] Iqbal, Kulliyat (Persian) Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1989.

Amir 'Abd al-Qadir al Jaza'iri (1222/1807-1300-1883) was, to borrow the expression of J.W. Morris, "in many ways a sort of Ibn 'Arabi reborn".[181] Apart from being a freedom fighter, an' activist' in the current meaning of the term, and the leader of the Algerian resistence movement between 1832-1947 he was also an extraordinary sufi writer and teacher who could be regarded responsible for reviving the teachings of al-Shaykh al-Akbar. He was the one who financed the first publication (in Cairo) of the complete al-Futuhat al-Makkiyyah. His lifelong adherence to sufism, more particularly to the 'school' of Ibn 'Arabi, and his teaching and spiritual activity revolving around the 'central transforming insight into the transcendent Unity of Being (Wahdat al-Wujud)[182] could not turn him into a 'passive' entity!

Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani (714/1314---786/1385) a Kubrawi sufi[183] who played an important role in the establishment of Islam in general, and sufism in particular, in Kashmir, 'spiritedly supported'[184] Wahdat al Wujud,translated and commented on Fusus al-Hikam, in Persian[185] and wrote many treatises

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[181] See, J. W. Morris, "Ibn 'Arabi and his Interpreters,....", part II, Journal of the American Oriental Society, 107-10 (1987) p. 115, n. 112.
For biographical details and accounts of his life by French contemporaries, see Gmtave Dugat (tr.), Le Livre d' Abdul Kader, Editions Boustamia, Tunis, n.d. and Reve R. Khawani, Lettere aux Fransais:… Paris: Phebus, 1977 both being the translations of ' Abd al-Qadir's letter written to Societe asiatique in 1855. The mystical and spiritual side of his personality is carefully explained in Michel chodkiewicz's remarkable introduction to his selection of shorter chapters ' from Kitab al-Mawaqif (the treatise on spiritual halts), Paris, Editions du seuil, 1982, cf.. Morris, op. cit.

[182] Morris, "Ibn ' Arabi and his Interpreters ...", op. cit. p. 117.

[183] See S.M. Stern, article "'Ali Hamadani" in EI2, I, p. 392; H. Corbin. History of Muslim Philosophy, K. Paul, 1993; S.H. Nasr (ed.) "Central Asian School" in Islamic Spirituality —, Manifestations, Vol. II, Crossroad, N.Y, 1991, pp. 102, 208, 246-8, 257; Pervaiz Azka'i, "Mir 'Ali Hamadani", Farhang Iran Zanim, Tehran; Muhammad Riaz, Ahwal-o-Athar wa Ash'ar-i-Mir Sayyid 'Ali-yi Hamadani, Isld., 1985. S. 'Ali Hamadani appears in Iqbal's Javid Namah as well. See note 153.

[184] See S.A.A. Rizvi, A History of Sufism in India, Delhi, 1986 (rpt.) p. 293.

[185] See Osman Yahya, Histoire et classification de I' oeuvre d' Ibn Arabi, I, p. 252; Mss. in Sir Salar Jang Museum, Hyderabad, Tasawwuf, p. 780, Risalah Wujudiyyah, Raza library,

on Ibn ' Arabi's teachings. In 'avid Namah Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani appears as a paragon of mystical insights as well as a guide and mentor in the affairs of this world; a saintly figure belonging to the folk of Allah who bequeathed both dhikr and fikr (remembrance of God and contemplation) to Ghazali when he turned to the Path and a man who could untie a hundred knots in a single ' look'" and for whom Iqbal was advised by his companion and guide Rumi "let your heart open to his arrow".[186] Here, as in the case of Amir 'Abd al-Qadir, we observe a perfect compatability between a faithful adherence to the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi or even to wahdat al-wujud, a teaching usually ascribed to him[187], and a dynanism, appreciated by Iqbal and, infact, required to fulfill the duties of our human vocation.

To take into consideration an example of a different order we draw the attention of our readers to a significant set of circumstances that deserve our attention since they have a direct bearing on the question we are discussing at present. The imperial patronage of the Ottoman Turks was accorded to the shaykh al-Akbar and his school early in history. It appeared with Sultan Salim the First and continued till the end of the dynasty.

The popular and prevalent sufi order among the Turks and the Turkish races had been, and still to a large extent, is the Naqshbandiyah order.[188] Upto the time of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, the Mujaddid (d 1034/1624) the

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Rampur, India, cf. Rizvi, op.cit.; Najib Mayil Hiravi, "chahar Nazar ...." Danish, Islamabad, no. 11, 1987, pp. 90-116, For details of his mss. see W.C. Chittick, "Notes on Ibn 'Arabi's Influence in the Subcontinent", Muslim World,, Vol LXXXII, No. 3-4, July-October 1992, pp. 218-241. Dr. Chittick has also expressed his views about S. 'Ali Hamadani's indebtness to the school of Ibn 'Arabi. "Among his rasa'il is the Arabic Asrar al-Nuqtah which shows his mastery of the technical terminology of Qunawi and his followers. Bruce Lawrence remarks that Hamadani like Sayyid Ashraf (sic. Jahangir Simnani) taught the principle of Wahdat al-Wujud with contagious zeal." (p.224).

[186] M. Iqbal, Kulliyat (Persian) op. cit., p. 63-40

[187] Concerning the problems that arise by as ascribing this doctrine to Ibn 'Arabi without qualification, see W.C. Chittick. "Rumi and Wahdat al-Wujud", The Heritage of Rumi. Ed. Banani and Sabagh, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 70-111. We have previously touched upon this point briefly in the earlier part of our study.

[188] Iqbal's views about the Naqshbandiyah order are well known.

Naqshhandiyah order, like other turuq, was devoted to the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi and his school.[189] Being a "crystatallization of the particular traditions of Khurasanian Sufism"[190]; Khurasan and Transoxiana being penetrated by the works and teachings[191] of Ibn 'Arabi by the 8th /14th century, the period that coincides with the genesis of the Naqshbandiyah order in that area. What is of particular interest here is that not only its early figures like Khwaja Muhammad Parsa were among the enthusiastic and celebrated devotees of Ibn 'Arabi but along with a long list of Naqshbandi saints, Mullah 'Abdullah Ilahi (d.896/1496), the first major propagator of the Naqshbandiyah order, was qreatly influenced by Ibn 'Arabi. Activities of Mullah Ilahi did not only surface in the spread of the Naqshbandiyah order among the Turks. This trilingual author and poet were also responsible for the cultivation of wajudi poetry.

This brings us to the next point that we intend to mention regarding the use and influence of poetry that winged the ideas of wahdat al-wujud. Hafiz and Bedil are the most popular poets among the Afghan Mujahidin who recite their verses, in their trenches and battle spots. Armed resistence to the hegemony of a super power go hand in hand with the influence of a poetry which could have turned them into a "passive collectivity"! It may also he remembered that the dominant sufi order among the Afghans is still the Naqshbandiyah.

Apart from this reference to the interaction of these teachings with two of the 'martial' races of the Muslim lands let us also consider the evidence afforded by the school of Deoband which, according to its own official statement, is "an heir to the legacy of Ibn 'Arabi and Hallaj" but which, neverthless, has not been prevented by this intellectual commitment to provide the best and largest group of 'activists' in every walk of life.

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[189] See Hamid Algar, "Reflections of Ibn 'Arabi in Early Naqshbandi Tradition", Journal of the Mnhyi al-Din Ibn 'Arabi Society.

[190] Ibid., p. 46.

[191] Jandi and Farghani both came from these areas.

From the Malay archipeligo, Shaykh Yusuf of Macassar (d.1699) provides yet another striking example of the same phenomenon. A prolific writer[192] and a commentator on Ibn 'Arabi's teachings, he waged a life long struggle against the Dutch colonial power, until his exile, while at the same time propagating the ideas of the Shaykh al-Akbar. Even during his days of exile in the Cape of Good Hope he introduced, like Mir 'Ali Hamadani, the local populace to Islam.

Ibn 'Arabi's own life also provides an excellent example of social and religious responsibility --- an exact opposite to the apathy and antinomianism to which Iqbal objected------- wedded to the most sublime and sophisticated metaphysical teachings, We cannot enter here into the details of his life which include an enormous and almost super human literary output along with extensive travels, teachings and training of disciples, spiritual practices and. interaction with political and religious authorities.[193] However, we would like to conclude our remarks on the question of 'inactivity' and wahdat al-wujud by drawing the attention of our readers to a few pertinent points regarding the issue.

The Indian distinction between wahdat al-wujud and- wahdat al-shuhud was taken up by several orientalists, including Massignon, Anawati and Gardet who were responsible for not only reading this distinction back into Islamic history but attributing certain elements to Ibn 'Arabi which could have hardly been assigned to his age and milieu except on very questionable grounds. Massignon had a well known personal preference for Hallaj (love-mysticism) and a deep aversion to Ibn 'Arabi's approach. He and those who followed him presented the popular image of Wahdat al-Wujud as "static existential monism" as contrasted to Whadat al-Shuhud which was in a sense "patronized" since it not only, supposedly, accorded more with "orthodoxy" but also because it represented "dynamic testimonial monism". Criticizing

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[192] See Achmat Davids, The Mosques of Bu-Kaap, Anthlore, Capetown, 1980, p. 37-41; K.M. Jeffreys, "The Karamat at Zandvlei, Fanre", Pt, and 2, Cape Naturalist, June, 193$ July 1938.

[193] For details see the excellent study of claude Addas, Search for the Red Sulphur, Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, England, 1993.

Massignon on this point, Dr. William Chittick made some very perceptive remarks. He says:

> Massignon's attribution of a "static" mysticism to those who supported wahdat al-wujud illustrates the typical sort of over simplification indulged in by those who place labels on Ibn aid Arabi, thus mutilating a highhy complex doctrinal thesis
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> No. one paints a more dynamic picture of creation and the human relationship to God than Ibn al-'Arabi. For example, when he explains the similarity demanded by God's sel disclosure (tajalli), Ibn al- Arabi constantly quotes the axiom, "Self- disclosure never repeats itself" (la takrar fi l-tajalli), which is the principle behind his well-known doctrine of the "renewal of creation at each instant" (tajdid al-khalq ma'a l-anat). One of the names that Ibn al-'Arabi gives to the highest stage of spiritual realization, where the human receptacle becomes the full manifestation of the all-comprehensive divine name Allah, is "bewilderment" (hayra),since within this station the perfect human being constantly witnesses (shuhud) the infinite expanse of the divine wujud through never-repeating and ever-changing revelations of light and awareness. Thus, he writes in the Fusus, 'Guidance is to be led to bewilderment. Then you will know that the whole affair is bewilderment, that bewilderment is agitation and movement, and that movement is life. There is no rest, no death, only existence -- nothing of nonexistence".[194]

Moreover, the ideas of inactivity and action should also be defined with more precision. Merely an absence of outward action (physical, poilitical, social etc.) capable of producing immediate, palpable and tangible results, is no proof of the non-existence of an inward activity which is often more important and, in most of the cases, precedes and determines outward action. This is all too obvious but it is often lost sight of in similar discussions in Iqbal studies, identifying all action with the most outward, feverish agitation.

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[194] See Chittick, "Rumi and Wahdat al-Wujud" op. cit.

The presumption that underlies these discussions must also be analyzed. According to its logic, Islam is an exception to the universal process of decline and its rules governing the unfolding of history. It is not because Islam is the youngest of the world religions and can consider itself from its vantage point of a comparatively young religion. It is regarded to be immune to the universal causes. Had it not been for various extraneous influences working on it ____ and there is hardly any agreement on their true nature ____ Islam would have completely escaped the inevitable process of decline. Rest of the job is quite easy. You name the causes and hang those responsible for it!

Attributing the rise and fall of the Ummah to an influence of "pantheism" of a supposedly Akbarian origin would mean that we glide silently over the more profound and pervasive elements of this universal process of decline to, which human collectivities are subject and from which Islam is not exempted, albeit in the sense of being the youngest and least affected of religions.

Dr Schimmel has pointed out a very pertinent reason for this incomprehension or, to be more precise, an ill-comprehension evident in both the Eastern and Western interpretations of Hafiz. We may conclude this discussion with her explanation.

> "Hafiz is not a romantic poet; rather, it is the clear-cut, polished quality of his verse that is so fascinating, and at the same time so difficult to assess for a Western reader who is used, at least from the eighteenth century, to Erlebnis-lyrik that is, the poetry that translates a real experience of the writer into verse --- and who no longer understands the "learned", and intellectual character of most of Persian poetry in which many sentiments are filtered, as it were, through the mind until one perfect line contains their quintessence."[195]

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[195] A. Schimmel, "The Genius of Shiraz..." in Persian Literature Ed. Ehsan Yarshater, State University of N.Y. Press, Albany, 1988, p. 224.

As far as the personal piety and moral uprightness of Hafiz is concerned even Iqbal himself acknowledged it in one of his letters.[196] Mention was also made of a Persian work written by a contemporary of Hafiz which provided first hand account of the life and spiritual station of Hafiz.[197] Later Iqbal scholarship has time and again relied on this important piece of evidence to argue in favour of Hafiz. But this is beside the point. Given that, on the basis of whatever little evidence we cam unearth about Hafiz's life and works (apart from the Diwan), he could be absolved of the charges of antinomianism or anacreontism, the question of his literary influence and subsequent interpretation remains to be analyzed as this is, precisely, the main issue that Iqbal has taken up with Hafiz.

The question of Iqbal's sources that he used for interpreting and understanding Hafiz hardly arises as long as we take for granted the direct exposure to the works of Hafiz which Iqbal's literary background and his training with Mawlvi Mir Hasan presuppose. The reason that we now try to discusss this point is provided by an interesting piece of information that has lately come to our notice. Prof. Annemarie Schimmel, in her illuminating article "The Genius of Shiraz: Sadi and Hafiz"[198], briefly elucidated the background of Hafiz's reception in German literature in the following words:

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[196] Letter to Akbar, Iqbal Namah op. cit., vol. I, p. 54.

[197] See his letter to Siraj al-Din Pal, Iqbal Namah op. cit. vol. I, p. 43. Though Iqbal has not given the title of the work but it can be identified easily as Lata'if-i-Ashrafi, Nusrat al-Matabi', Delhi. 1880, since the other extant work of Ashraf Jahangir Simnani i.e. Maktubat-i-Ashrafi is still in manuscript form (Dept, of History, Ali Garh Muslim University). See Dr. Nazir Ahmad, "Hafiz Shirazi' Ke do Qadim Tarin Ma'khadh", Fikr-o-Nazar, Ali Garh, January, 1960, Also see Yusuf Hussain Khan, Hafiz our Iqbal, Delhi, 1976, p. 63, 64, 115, 116, where he mentions Hafiz's piety, his interest in Quran Studies and Arabic language Hafiz wrote glosses on the famous Tafsir al-Kbashshaf -- and his spiritual station by quoting Simnani and other contemporary sources. Simnani says. "I stayed with him is Shiraz for a long time. Though I had seen a lot of those who were attracted by God (Majdhuban) and those who were loved by God, I found him (Hafiz) to be of a very high spiritual station". Other commentators also mention of his Quran lessons, fatawa etc. Ashraf Ali Thamwi, whom Iqbal regarded in very high esteem quotes an anecdote in one of his sermons which testifies,to the religious standing of Hafiz.

[198] See note 162.

"Likewise, the real meaning of Hafez's verse has been a matter of dispute. Some commentators have understood him to be a perfect Anacreontic, praising wine and love without inhibition, and cursing the narrow-minded ascetics and theologians. The Turkish commentator Sudi belongs to this group, which strongly influenced the early European critics, especially those who became acquainted with Hafez through the Turkish tradition. Here, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall is the leading figure; he translated the entire divan of Hafez, which appeared in two volumes in 1812-13 and inspired Goethe to compose his West-ostlicher Divan of 1819. Following Hammer-Purgstall's rather mundane interpretation of Hafez, a considerable number of mediocre German poets of the nineteenth century adopted his name as a trade-mark for their drinking poems and love songs, and especially for their attacks against the clergy.[199] "

Here is a representative sample of Sudi's commentary on Hafiz taken from the very first ghazal of his diwan which many, if not all the readers know quite well. In his usual manner, after giving the linguistic break-up and an analysis of the grammatical structure of each of the verses, he provides the quintessence of its meaning under the suggestive sub-heading mahsul-i-Bayat.

> The hopeless lover who cannot endure the turning away of the beloved from him sometimes indulges in wine-drinking and at other occasions in opium and qahwah in order to find solace for his inward torments so that his maddening heart may find a little peace in it.[200] "

Readers acquainted with Islamic religious and mystical poetry can immediately discern the motif of plaints about the temporary "absences" or "abandonment" (fatrah) of the Beloved in the overall frame work of the divine presence. It is one of the major themes of Sufi poetry and one can go on quoting, almost endlessly, examples of sorrow at interruptions of the state

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[199] Schimmel "The Genius ..." op. cit. p. 221-2.

[200] See 'Ismat Sattarzadah, (tr.) Sharh Sudi bar Hafiz, Intisharat-i-Zarrin, Tehran, 1366 p. 4-5. For the original Turkish commentary see Muhammad Afendi Sudi Bosnawi, Sharh Sudi, Bullaq, 1250 h.

of union or an absence of divine graces. Hafiz has employed this age old expression in the verse that we have quoted. Moreover, this is how Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi, one of the most outstanding religious scholars of Iqbal's times, interpreted this verse.[201] Sudi's interpretation, as the readers might have observed, goes completely wide the mark and relegates the symbolic poetry of Hafiz to such a mundane level that it does not remain something worth paying attention to.

Iqbal mentioned Sudi in one of his letters[202] which dates back to the days of controversial debates on Asrar-i-Khudi After referring to Clarke's[203] translation, Browne's History and Encyclopaedia of Islam, he wrote, "Sudi had also been translated into German. If I could find a copy here, I would help you to read it".[204]

In view of the foregoing facts, are we justified to feel ourselves inclined to find here traces of an unconcious influence of J.Von Hammer_Purgstall[205] at work, carried over from his stay in Germany? It is hard to believe but there remains the possibility of these background influences that might have surfaced during his quest for identifying the causes of our decline in a concrete manner.

While on the point concerning the interpretation of Hafiz's verse, we would like to quote from Prof. Schimmel another illuminating comment made by her in her remarks on Goethe.

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[201] Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi, 'Irfan-i-Hafiz, Karachi, 1972, pp. 10-11.

[202] To Siraj al-Din Pal, Iqbal Namah, op. cit. vol, I, p. 42.

[203] It is interesting to note that Clarke's translation was again based en the German edition, much later than Purgastall, of Hemann Brockhaus (3 vols., Leipzig, 1854-56), cf. Persian Literature, op. cit. p. 501. Clarke, obviously knowing little Persian, had produced an idiosyncratic English version in literal and markedly artificial prose.- Iqbal has referred to it repeatedly in his letters. See Iqbal Namah, Vol. I, p. 39,41.

[204] Ibid. p. 42.

[205] Joseph von Hammer- Purgastal, Der Diwan von Mohammed Schemseddin Hafiz, 2 VOIs., Stultgart and Tubingen (Colta) 1812-13.

"Goethe understood Hafez perfectly well. A great poet and thinker himself, he knew that the word qua word has a mystical quality and that a verse can convey something far beyond its external meaning, can point to a transcendental truth without being in need of an allegorical interpretation that puts, as it were, heavy chains of metaphysics around the wings of a butterfly. The true poetical word reveals and hides at the same time; it enables the reader to sense things that transcend the simple statements found in a verse. That holds true for most poetic masterpieces."[206]

The real meanings of Hafiz's verse have endlessly been debated not only in Persian but other Islamic languages and, lately, among the Western scholarship as well. We cannot even give a sampling of this vast literature here. What, nevertheless, transpires from this debate is that readers in different climes and different intellectual and social milieus can interpret Hafiz according to their own levels of knowledge, or of wisdom. An overall decline and, especially, an impoverished academic background coupled with a perverted taste for this worldly and the mundane resulted in the prevelant views about Hafiz. Moreover, poetry by definition and by its place in the Islamic civilization has always been something of an elitist nature, addressed to, and presuming, a cultural sophistication and refinement of learning. When it filters down to the masses it, inevitably, takes on a simplified and often misleading character. But this is not the fate of poetry alone. Religion and human thought generally share this destiny. As things move away from their origin, process of decadence sets in.

This leads us to say, with a certain embarrassment indeed, that it is difficult to agree with Iqbal on this point. We do not deny that the phenomenon of decline or passivity towards the demands of the Creator manifested in the Ummah; in fact we would come to it again shortly when we discuss, in the context of Iqbal's objections, the tendencies and misunderst-andings that gave rise to this phenomenon. The point of disagreement lies in that whether Persian poetry, and the teachings of wahdat al-wujud which it vehicled, could be singled out as the cheif culprit. In our view, causes of decline are numerous and they mostly lie in different directions.

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[206] Schimmel, op. cit., p. 222.

To conclude our remarks about the question of Iqbal's criticism of Hafiz and the Persian poets in general, we may add that Iqbal scholars, in the half century or more -that has passed since Iqbal made his initial comments, have not taken his statements at their face value. One observes that the majority of Iqbal scholars dealing with these topics are inclined towards seeing an element of opportune ness at work in these comments. The real brunt of Iqbal's criticism, in their view, falls on the interpretation which a decadent readership imposes on these symbols and the meaning it reads into an otherwise quite different and independent frame of reference. To illustrate our point we quote three outstanding Iqbal scholars from three different parts of the world. First, the doyenne in this field, in the West, Prof. Annemarie Schimmmel.[207]

Mystical poetry, on the other hand, has tried to sing in many words the ineffable mystery of Union, and there exist mystical poems of unsurpassable beauty in all Islamic languages. However even in this field the formal element wins whereas genuine religiosity fades away, and there remains nothing but a spiritual play, "das Geistreiche" as Goethe has put it. The blending of mystical and profane meaning, the willfully used anbiguity of symbols, the stress on the pessimistic aspects of life which was in vogue in classical Persian and Urdu literature, the endless expression of the languish, the hopeless sighs, of the frustrated lover all these were features of
poetry (and in a wider meaning also of music) which appeared to a prophetically minded spirit like Iqbal extremely dangerous. He wanted literature to be optimistic (M II 56, 1918). This is also the reason for his criticism of Hafiz whose poetical art—if taken only as art— he highly admired but who did not sharpen the sword of the Self (ZK 127.)

The same struggle which he launched against the favorite poet of Persian-speaking peoples in the first period of his work, he continued later on against what he regarded as denervating power of European lifeless civilization and education (ZK 155 and others)…….

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[207] Schimmel, Gabreil's Wing, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore, 1989, p. 63-4.

It is interesting to note that Iqbal, as long as he talks about poets and poetry, acts like a prophet pouring his wrath over the useless devastators of individuals and peoples whereas, when preaching his religious ideals, he uses the classical literary forms, and expresses his thoughts in most sublime poetry, using the traditional symbols of his predecessors whom he otherwise so strongly attacked."

(To be continued)