IQBAL' S METHOD OF RECONSTRUCTION

Zainal Abidin M. Baqir

It is interesting to note that two contemporary Muslim scholars have given attention to the term "Reconstruction" as used by Allama Iqbal in his Reconstruction,[1] and both express their disagreement about it. Here I am referring to Fazlur Rehman and S.M. Naquib al-Attas.[2] Iqbal himself never elaborated this term expressly. But he used it explicitly in few passages of the Reconstruction, and, as we will show, he seemed to have a clear, particular idea of what he wanted to convey with the term; in other words, he deliberately used the term.

By way of introduction, we may characterize the Reconstruction as Iqbal's response to "the problem of modernity". Historically and intellectually, Iqbal lived in a changing world of Islam. This world was changing due to some internal factors,, but also, not less importantly, to its direct contact -- and clash, at some points -- with the modern civilization, the most significant characteristics of which are science and technology. "The problem of modernity" above refers to the results of this contact. Iqbal was among the first Muslims exposed to the wide-scale "propagation of this new civilization in its imperialistic form. Before investigating the idea later, we may at this stage say that his proposed solution to the problem is by attempting a "reconstruction." As we will show later, that very term indicates

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Knowledge and the Sacred. Albany (N.Y.), State University of New York Press, 1991; The Need for a Sacred Science, Albany (N.Y.), State University of New York Press, 1993; and Religion and the Order of Nature, (New York) and Oxford, University Press, 1995.

[1] All references to Iqbal in this essay, unless otherwise stated, are to The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, edited and annotated by M. Saeed Sheikh, Iqbal Academy Pakistan and Institute of Islamic Culture, 1986. This work would be simply referred to as Reconstruction

[2] Fazlur Rahman, Islam, (second edition), The University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 257; Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, A Commentary on the "Hujjat al-Siddiq" of Nur al-Din al-Raniri, Ministry of Culture, Malaysia, 1986, p.465. Their views regarding this issue will be discussed in the last part of this essay.

the method, while the aim being the solution of what we have vaguely and generally characterized as (the solution of) the problem of modernity. An examination of how Iqbal uses the term "reconstruction" in the work, therefore, would surely be revealing. This would be the first part of this essay. The second part tries to put Iqbal's views in the Reconstruction in historical perspective; we will discuss also few criticisms of the idea of reconstruction in the last part of this essay.

In his Reconstruction Iqbal explicitly mentions his programme of reconstruction several times, in different contexts.[3]

(i) In the preface he states an urgent demand for "a scientific form of religious knowledge" (p. xxi), which he sees as natural in the absence of a method to experience religion as a living, inner experience, on which religious faith ultimately rests. According to him Sufism had done good work in the past in shaping and directing the evolution of religious experience. Yet this method is no longer suitable for modern men, i.e. those who have "developed habits of concrete thought." It is for him, the modern man, in his own peculiar situation, the modern world, that scientific form of religious knowledge is felt as an urgent yet natural demand. To meet this demand, Iqbal promises in his preface, he would try.

> to meet, even though partially, this urgent demand by attempting to reconstruct Muslim religious philosophy -- with due regard to the philosophical tradition of Islam and the more recent developments in the various domains of human knowledge. (p. xxi - xxii).

He then immediately adds that the present moment is quite favourable for reconstruction in view of the latest developments in modern science.

(ii) In another place Iqbal emphasizes the last point: The frontline of scientific theories (as presented mostly by Einstein) has suggested new ways of looking at reality, which are common problems to both religion and philosophy.

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[3] In the quotations below all italics are mine.

> No wonder then that the younger generation of Islam in Asia and Africa demand a fresh orientation of their faith. With the reawakening of Islam, therefore, it is necessary to examine in an independent spirit, what Europe had thought and how far the conclusions reached by her can help us in the revision and, if necessary, reconstruction, of theological thought in Islam. (p. 6)

Next he explains,

> In these lectures I propose to undertake a philosophical discussion of some of the basic ideas of Islam, in the hope that this may, at least, be helpful towards a proper understanding of the meaning of Islam as a message to humanity".(pp. 6-7)

(iii) Speaking about the conception of. God, Iqbal touches on the classical issue in kalam of how God's creative activity proceeds to the work of creation, and tries to evaluate the development of atomism in Islamic theology -- which he calls "the first important indication of an intellectual revolt against the Aristotelian idea of a fixed universe" -- in the light of modern physics. He calls this effort of his as "the work of reconstruction in the light of modern physics." (p 55) What he does here is showing how the Ash \ arite atomism is in full agreement with recent (that is, early 20th century) discoveries in physics, regarding the discontinuity of matter. However, he goes further by pointing out the common defect of both, i.e. the lack of psychological analysis.

The quotations above indicate what Iqbal means by "reconstruction". First, reconstruction of religious thought in Islam means 'formulating" religious knowledge in a "scientific form". Secondly, this kind of effort is felt as an urgent demand for modern man, i.e. those who have developed 1 the habits of concrete thought through their acquaintance with (modern) science. On one hand, "habits of concrete thought" refers to scientific method which emphasizes empiricism. On the other hand, recent scientific findings have suggested new ways of looking at reality, which is a common central concern of both religion and philosophy, and they would be taken into account in the work of reconstruction.

The attempt at relating religion to modern science reminds us of many similar attempts that have been preoccupying Muslim thinkers since the last century. A question may arise at this point: what is the difference of reconstruction with any similar, but clearly apologetic, works such as the one by, for example, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan? Does reconstruction merely mean a presentation of basic ideas of, Islam clothed in modern philosophico-scientific terms? A fuller discussion of this question would be taken up in the last part of this essay; at this point we would only try to make those characteristics of reconstruction stated above clearer.

It seems that Iqbal takes modern science and philosophy much more seriously than only as a means of justifying his ideas. Reflecting on the modern development of science and technology, he even takes it as an indication that the intellect of man seems to have outgrown its own most fundamental categories. Yet of this very important development of human knowledge, Muslims seem to be not aware; the philosophical thinking in Islam has reached its finality, as it were, during the last five hundred years:

> During all the centuries of our intellectual stupor Europe has been seriously thinking on the great problems in which the philosophers and scientists of.Islam were so keenly interested. since the middle ages, when the schools of Muslim theology were completed, infinite advance has taken place in the domain of human thought and experience. The extension of man's power over Nature has given him a new faith and a fresh sense of superiority over the forces that constitute his environment. New points of view have been suggested, old problems have been restated in the light of fresh experience, and new problems have arisen. It seems as if the intellect of man is outgrowing its own most fundamental categories -- time, space, and causality. With the advance of scientific thought even our concept of intelligibility is undergoing a change. (p. 6)

Now, with this great change affecting, especially, modern Muslims, there must be a parallel change in the metaphysics of Islam:"….. the concepts of theological systems, draped in the terminology of a practically dead metaphysics, [cannot] be of any help to those who happen to possess a

different intellectual background. The task before the modern Muslims is, therefore, immense. He has to rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past." (p. 78 - italics mine) Here another point emerges: while modern science and philosophy might be of great help -- not to say indispensable – for Muslims, reconstruction also demands another thing: continuity with tradition.

It is significant to note that in one of his letters, talking about Reconstruction, Iqbal mentions the above two main points of reconstruction, namely, the intellectual tradition of Islam and modern philosophy:

> These lectures are primarily addressed, to these Muslims who are influenced by philosophy and it is their desire that Islamic philosophy should be restated in the terms of modern philosophy, and if there are certain shortcomings in the old concepts, these should be removed. My whole work has largely been constructive. I have, during this work of (re) construction, tried to keep in view the best traditions of Islamic philosophy.[4]

Another important thing to note is Iqbal's remark at the beginning of his first lecture, about the need to give rational foundation to religion. The aim of religion is the transformation and guidance of man's inner and outer life.(p. 1) On its doctrinal side, quoting Whitehead, religion is defined as "a, system of general truths having the transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended." Now man only acts on the basis of principles he firmly believes. As such that system of general truths must not remain unsettled; hence the importance of giving rational foundation to religion. Besides that, discussing the mystic's religious experience, Iqbal points to the fact that, like all feeling, mystic feeling has a cognitive element also, which lends itself to the form of idea. Thus, "while religion starts with

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[4] Sh. Ata Ullah, ed,. Iqbal Namah, vol. I, Shaikh Ashraf, Lahore, n.d. p. 210-211; also see Nazir Ni'azi, ed., Maktubat-i-Iqbal pp.24, 25 42-3, 45-6. This extract is translated from Urdu by Mr. Muhammad Suheyl Umar. This writer is obliged to thank him for his showing and translating this important and relevant extract. Other translations from Urdu works in this essay are also his.

feeling, it has never, in its history, taken itself as a matter of feeling alone and has constantly striven after metaphysics." (p. 17)

In the case of Islam, the search for rational foundations, according to Iqbal, have begun with the Prophet himself, when he prayed, "God! grant me knowledge of the ultimate nature of things!" The works of the falasifa, mutakallimun and sufis that began soon after the demise of the Prophet also moved in this direction. (pp. 2-3) So Iqbal sees the whole philosophical tradition -- in its broadest sense -- in Islam as consisting of a series of attempts at giving rational foundation to Islam. And his reconstruction of religious thought in Islam was a part of it. It had the same aim of giving rational foundations for Islam, yet it differed from them since it happened to occur in a period in which great changes had occurred -- that is to say, in the beginning of the period of direct contact with modern western civilization. As we mentioned in the beginning-of this paper, the distinctive character of this civilization is its science and technology, and this modern science, in terms of both its method and findings, has affected the way modern Muslims look at reality. It is this that must be taken into account in any contemporary attempts at giving rational foundation for Islam; and it is this that differentiates Iqbal's programme of reconstruction from the previous philosophical undertakings in Islam. With this we can now define reconstruction as "an attempt at giving rational foundation to Islam that draws its sources from the intellectual tradition of Islam -- that is, that which is to be reconstructed -- and philosophical considerations suggested by the findings of modern sciences." And this is all done for modern Muslims living in a modern world, which has its particular characteristics.

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Before proceeding further, at this pint we may question the possibility of reconstructions s defined above, since it is problematic: it brings religion - something divine, meant to be universal and everlasting, and more that mere knowledge -- into contact with science and philosophy. For Iqbal, the answer to this question is definitely in the affirmative. The starting point for this is that religion, philosophy and science all try to answer the same problem that is, concerning our understanding of reality. But in face of the apparent image of conflict between religion, on one hand, and. philosophy and science, on the other hand, which is deeply rooted in history, the affirmation begs

explanation. And it seems that this problem of reconciliation between science and religion has become a problem not only in the milliu of western civilization, but also for Islam. This statement can be substantiated by some historical facts of Islamic intellectual developments. For example, the fact that there were apologetic tracts in defense of philosophy and cetrain sciences against fuqaha's and theologians' attack -- such as Ibn Rushd's Kitab Fasl al Maqal, in which he shows that philosophical studies are even obliged by the Shari's demand, or al-Biruni's long introduction to his book on geography (Kitab Tahdid al-Amakin), in which he tries to show that functionally science is needed by Muslims to perform their religious, including societal, obligations -- shows that even in its early period, reconciliation of science and philosophy and religion was a problem in Islam. While for later period, due to some conclusion,reached by modern science and philosophy, this has become more manifest. Moreover, Iqbal's claim is not only that religion may be reconciled with philosophy and science, but that the latter may serve as one of the sources for his reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. Besides, there is also the Kantian challenge that, coming to the matters of religion, man, due to his lack of "proper faculties", should be silent; knowledge about them is impossible, but since we need them, we should simply have faith in them.[5] Here we shall first examine some key-points involved in the definition of reconstruction, i.e. religion, philosophy and science, as Iqbal understands them, and then specify their meeting points.

First, about philosophy. Is the term "philosophy of religion" a contradiction in terms? Or is it meaningless, since 'religion' is much broader a term than 'philosophy'? How can something narrower in scope be a judge of another, broader thing? The answer for this is that Iqbal takes philosophy more as a methodology than a certain specific discipline which has its own subject matter. Doing philosophy does not make one committed to a certain ism .[6] "The spirit of philosophy is one of free inquiry. It suspects all

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[5] This is not exactly Kant's statement. What he denies is the possibility f a metaphysics discussing problems such as God, soul, and freedom. But, as Iqbal rightly says, for that matter his argument "applies with equal force to the realities in which religion is especially interested." (p. 144)

authority. Its function is to trace the uncritical assumptions of human thought to their hiding places, and in this pursuit it may finally end in denial or frank admission of the incapacity of pure reason to reach the Ultimate Reality." (p. 1) It is with the same spirit of philosophy that he is critical to the capability of philosophy itself. Philosophy may deal with religion, but, due to the nature of its object, it cannot give religion an inferior place among its data. (p. 2) It should not subject religion to its own terms by reducing religion to a mere system of logical concepts, and thus conceiving religion merely as a body of doctrines and ignoring it as a vital fact -- such as what the Mu'tazilah have done. (p. 4) Religion is neither mere thought, nor mere feeling, nor mere action; it is an expression of the whole man.(p. 2) Therefore, though it may he object of philosophy, religion will not submit to the jurisdiction of philosophy, except on its own terms. Thus in the process of philosophizing on religion, philosophy, as a method, might be modified to meet the demand of its object, i.e. religion. This is what Iqbal tried to do in his Reconstruction.

To do so, undoubtedly, the first question that should be dealt with is that of epistemology. Here Iqbal uses an uncommon term (and not always consistent in using it) for the faculty on which philosophy relies: thought; while that of religion is intuition. Now, for him, there is no reason to suppose that thought and intuition are opposed to each other. (p. 6) Instead, they are complementary and spring up form the same root. The difference between them is only in the way they deal with reality: the former grasps it piecemeal, the latter in its wholeness; the former fixes its gaze on the temporal aspect of reality, the latter on its eternal aspect. Following Bergson, intuition is regarded only as a higher kind of intellect, which is a generic term comprising thought and intuition. Thought and intuition are organically related; in other words, they are one in essence. Here Iqbal criticizes al-Ghazzali who, according to him, separates thought form intuition, and thus, like Kant, could not affirm the possibility of a knowledge of God; finally, moving to mystic experience, al-Ghazali found independent content for religion there. (p. 4) The separation of thought from intuition, therefore, leads to the impossibility of some kind of "philosophy of religion", since

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[6] Seaeeda Iqbal, Islamic Rationalism in the Indian Subcontinent, Islamic Book Service, Lahore, Pakistan, 1984, p. 252.

thought -- the faculty on which philosophy relies — in this construal is finite and thus could not speak about God, the Infinite. But it would not be the case if thought is understood as able to capture the Infinite. Iqbal takes this stance by asserting that in its deeper movement thought is capable of reaching an immanent infinitude; it is dynamic and, like a seed which from the very beginning carries within itself the organic unity of the tree, it unfolds its internal infinitude in time. (p 5) Thought, in its deeper movement, then, is nothing else than intuition. The difference between thought and intuition is in degree, not kind. The conclusion is: intuition — that faculty on which religion relies --may also be a source of knowledge in doing philosophy. So, while rejecting shallow rationalism of the Greek-based falsafa, Iqbal argues for another kind of philosophy that is capable of dealing with religion justly. To put it in another way, Iqbal argues for another kind of rationality, in which religious beliefs might be construed as rational. We would discuss this point again and Iqbal's answer to the Kantian challenge in the next section, as an example of how reconstruction works.

Concerning science, Iqbal shows much more receptivity. First, it is true that religion and science have their points of departure in human experience. Conflict between them, if it arises, is not because the one is experience-based while the other is not, but it is due to the misapprehension that both interpret the same data of experience. The specific region of human experience that religion tries to interpret is religious experience, which is irreducible to the data of any science. (p. 20) Saying that religious experience constitutes a specific region of human experience is not tantamount to saying that it is a (kind of) species of the genus experience, and that science deals with an exclusively different species of experience. The object of religion or scientific experience is, to some extent, the same: it is Reality (which might as well be called Nature); but each employs different methods (or sees it from different angles), so that one may go deeper than the other into its inner nature. That is, Iqbal makes a distinction between experience as a natural fact, significant of the normally observable behaviour of Reality, and experience as significant of the inner nature of Reality. Both are experience of the one and same Reality, but in its different 'manifestations'. Science tries to understand the meaning of reality in reference to its external behaviour, while religion tries to discover the meaning of reality in reference to its inner nature. So, both are descriptions of the same world, and their final aim is the

same: reaching the most real. (p. 155) In trying to reach the most real, both have to find its way to pure objectivity -- experience of Reality untainted by the scientist's or the mystic's subjectivity -- through "purification of experience". Scientist purifies the experience by taking an exclusive standpoint, creating a distance form the object of his investigation,[7] while in the religious process, the ego integrates its competing tendencies and develops a *single inclusive attitude resulting in a kind of synthetic transfiguration of his experiences. (p. 15)

The different standpoints, or methods, taken by science and religion result in different views of reality. 'Different' here does not necessarily mean 'conflicting'. Science is a mass of sectional views of Reality -- fragments of a total experience which do not seem to fit together. It cannot, if it is true to its own nature and function, set up its theory as a complete view of Reality. (p. 33) while religion demands the whole of reality. Different though the results of scientific and religious processes, they are complementary. Speaking about the meaning of prayer, which is a concrete living experience of God, he asserts that prayer must be regarded as a necessary complement to the intellectual activity of the scientist. "The scientific observation of Nature keeps us in close contact with the behaviour of Reality, and thus sharpens our inner perception for a deeper vision of it". (p. 72) In this sense, scientist who observes Nature is like a mystic in the act of prayer. (p. 73) So highly is Iqbal's appreciation of science that he regards it, and, in general, all search for knowledge, as a form of prayer.

So, Iqbal not only reconciles religion with science, but construes them as complementary to each other. Science, therefor, may help religion in constricting its metaphysics. And, if necessary, he is ready to suggest a modification of basic principles and presuppositions of science. For example, asking whether natural science, especially biology, is finally committed to materialism, he finds some supporting evidences from his contemporary

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[7] An example Iqbal gives for this is Hume's criticism to "emancipate empirical science form the concept of force, which has no foundation in sense experience." (p. 155) This statement may mean that since 'force' comes not form the experience of reality, it must come form the other party involved in the business of science: the scientist. Accepting this means accepting subjectivity, thus spoiling the purity of scientific process.

biologists to use the concepts of 'end' and 'purpose' instead of 'cause' and 'effect' in investigating living organisms. In some aspects of living organisms, the object of biology, an explanation in mechanical terms ('cause-effect') is still possible, but when it comes to the question of life, the concept of mechanism becomes inadequate. (p. 33-38)

We may conclude, then, that reconstruction, for Iqbal, is possible given our readiness to accept certain limitations of philosophy and science and, if necessary, to modify some of their presuppositions. Later when we give examples we will see more precisely how Iqbal sees the role of modern science and philosophy in his reconstruction.

But before that, there is one more thing worth-mentioning here in relation to Iqbal's attitude toward (western) science and philosophy, a well as knowledge from other civilizations. He regards them not something alien to Islam. Often he simply calls them "human knowledge' which means that it is universal in the sense that, in terms of knowledge they belong to the whole human race; every people have their own share in it. In the pursuit of truth, every man has the same goal to achieve, an, the same problems to overcome: In case of western civilization, Europe ha learnt from Islam many things that helped her to become something slid as "modern civilization", so it is not a shame at all that now, we, Muslim after our long intellectual stupor, learn from Europe, who has thought t the same problems we were so keenly interested. After all, we did the sank thing in our history: learning from other civilizations, mainly the Greek Persian, and Indian. That finally we departed from them shows that w still could maintain our critical attitude; the same thing should happen today. This seems to be Iqbal's stance.

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A striking point in Iqbal's reconstruction that would not escape our attention is the keen observance he gives to modern science. As we will briefly show soon, this is a characteristic present in many Muslim thinkers -- since about the second half of last century. There are at least two reasons for this: firstly, the colonialization of many Muslim lands by western countries, which are identified as advanced countries in terms of science and technology. Politically, economically, and culturally as well, this had left very deep impacts. Secondly, the remarkable development of modern science and

technology since, at least, the seventeenth century. Especially given the dramatic development of modern science in the last few centuries, and which reaches its peak in this century, no one would find this attention uncommon. The word "dramatic" here is hardly an exaggeration. When, scientific work was declining in Islam, the development of science in the West took a totally fresh direction. Beginning, at least, with Galileo, modern science has since made its successes one by one, and only in a period of three centuries it has, unexpectedly opened up many subtle regions of human experience that would be unimaginable had the scientific findings not been really "proven". Moreover, many of the "proofs" came it a very dramatic way, that is to say, they seemed to be even beyond the scientists' expectations -- as the theories of the great scientists such as Galileo, Newton and Einstein themselves testified. In addition to this, the more unimaginable development of modern technology which made use of those scientific findings, gave science more credibility. It is not surprising, therefore, that finally science became, almost, the most authoritative form of knowledge, if not the only valid one, especially in the west. Everything, then, seemed to be valid only if it had passed the test of science.

The beginning of the 20th century, especially, was the time of great optimism regarding the development of science. At that time Einstein's theory had already been proven dramatically by experiment. It is true that the victory of Einstein's theory of relativity also meant the demise of Newton's theory, which was unshaken for two centuries. But in another sense, it added to the scientific optimism, since this event also showed, as it were, that left to itself science could correct its own mistakes. This is also noted by Iqbal: "The present moment is quite favourable for [reconstruction of Muslim philosophy]. Classical physics has learned to criticize its own foundations. As a result of this criticism the kind of materialism, which it originally necessitated, is rapidly disappearing ..." (p. xxii) Regardless of the truth or falsity of this optimism, we can say that the spirit of the 19th and early 20th century is a scientific one.

It is important to note that this period happened to be the period of the "reawakening" of Islamic world. In fact, it seems that the two events were not merely a coincidence. The "reawakening" of Islamic world was mainly facilitated -- if not motivated -- by Europe's colonialism of the Islamic world.

At that time most of the Muslim world was colonialized by Europe. And the role played by the new advanced (military, especially) technology here cannot be exaggerated. The logic derived from this event was simple: Europe owes its victory to its science and technology, so if we, the Muslim world, want to defeat them we must also possess this science and technology. The West, then, became a symbol of power.

This kind of environment would naturally call Muslim intellectuals to give their response. we may also naturally expect to find two things in relation to their responses: the attitude toward their own tradition, and toward the values or culture of this modern, western civilization. Indeed, in the beginning; this attitude, to some extent, was hardly distinguishable from a mere feeling of frustration of a defeated people; and in Indian sub-continent it was perhaps best personified by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. This attitude was manifested in his naive rejection of the old (the Islamic tradition) and uncritical acceptance of the new, i.e. the modern science and technology, along with its "liberating forces". Among those "liberating forces" is explanation of events in terms of their immediate -- and most of the time, physical -- causes. In the west it helped liberating people from superstitions and the coercive grip of the Church. Now, with the same spirit, Sir Sayyid felt obliged to "emancipate" his fellow Muslim people by getting rid of the unnatural (read: supernatural) -- hence unscientific --elements from the Qur'an -- such that he had to find his own principle of exegesis.[8] we would better see how far Sir Sayyid's effort had gone if we compare him with another towering figure in the Sub-continent's history, namely, Shah wali Allah. Historically they were only separated by less than a century, which is nothing compared to the centuries-old intellectual tradition of Islam, but intellectually the gap was quite manifest. In Shah Wali Allah we could still easily recognize the intellectual traces, not t mention the style, of a tradition which had begun developing in Islam r, world since the time of the first Muslim scholar, and, though it had undergone many changes and modifications, this tradition still maintained its distinctive characters. There was still a continuation of the centuries-old tradition. But Sir Sayyid's ideas seemed to mark a break with the pas Especially, there seemed to be a clear

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[8] See. Maqalat-i-Sir Sayyid, published in 16 Volumes by the Board forAdvancement of Literature, Lahore.

and bold line separating this figure and Shah wali Ullah. He strikingly divides the history of Islam into the old and new world, which contains, respectively, the traditional and his own views of the basic beliefs of Islam .[9]

Now, the next generation of Muslim thinkers right after Sir Sayyid is Iqbal. It is very significant to note that Iqbal was perhaps among the firs I Muslims, especially in Indian sub-continent, who had the opportunity t learn the fine thoughts of the thinkers of the modern west, yet we can sal that he also had an access to the Islamic intellectual tradition. It is these two points, equipped with his critical attitude, which emerge from hi Reconstruction. That his concern was similar to his immediate predecessor is natural: both faced the same problems. The difference lies in his understanding of the intellectual tradition of Islam as well as the West which was incomparable to that of Sir Sayyid. And this is exactly the point that distinguishes Iqbal's response from the apologetic attempts as that o Sir Sayyid, that is, attempts to justify religious beliefs by showing them to be in full agreement with the modern science and philosophy -- even at tile expense of the beliefs. This kind of apologetic attempts stemmed from the common-sense view of science that regards science as a "proven" body of knowledge; showing that religious beliefs are justified by scientific findings means that the beliefs are "proven" as well.

Iqbal's understanding of the intellectual tradition of both Islam and the West was profound; he had a good appreciation of the Islamic intellectual tradition, as his letter also confirms,[10] even. though he is also critical of it. He was also well-versed in the thought of his contemporary western philosophers and scientists. This surely contributed to his self confidence in dealing with them, that he could maintain his critical attitude in face of the "tempting frontiers of modern science and philosophy. At this point, his stance is even better than many today's Muslim thinkers who are -still grappling with the same problems. Firstly, he shows that the harmony between religion, especially Islam, and science is not merely at the surface. We have mentioned that for him the activity of scientist is just another form

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[9] Ibid.

[10] See f. n. 4 of this paper.

of prayer: science has, to some extent, the, same aim with religion of reaching the most real. Furthermore, the anti classical spirit of Islam, i.e. that which fixes its gaze on the concrete, as manifested in Muslims' intellectual revolution against Greek tradition, is similar with that gave birth to modern science. So it is not only that there is an essential compatibility between religion and science, but, much further than that, it seems that both go in the same direction, to reach the same aim. But there is a question here: how would these two different enterprises interact?

Instead of taking scientific findings at their face-value, in which case religious ideas must be made in conformity with -- if not modified or interpreted to suit -- the findings, it seems that Iqbal takes them as a set among many ohter sets of evidences, which include, for example, theories of Islamic philosophy, sufi metaphysics, and modern philosophy. Or we may as well say that the scientific theories are taken as a kind of a 'source of inspiration', to widen the horizon of possibilities of how to see things: that they suggest new ways of looking at reality, while the discussion on reality itself, as a whole, is beyond the task and capability of science itself. It is one of the tasks of philosophy to interpret the scientific theories?[11] This, in our opinion, is Iqbal's position. An example for this is his discussion on Einstein's theory of relativity. (p. 30-32) this theory, while asserting that space is real but relative to the observer, rejects the Newtonian concept of an absolute space. there is no self-subsistent materially of classical physics. Iqbal further asserts his "personal belief that the ultimate character of Reality is spiritual: but in order to avoid a widespread misunderstanding it is necessary to point out that Einstein's theory, which, as a scientific theory, deals only with the structure of things, throws no light on the ultimate nature of things which possess that structure." (p. 31) And, after showing the philosophical value of the theory, he rejects one of its philosophical implications that construes time as unreal. For there time becomes a kind of fourth dimension of space. If it is so, then it is theoretically possible to make an effect precedes its cause, and thus the future is regarded as something already given, as

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[11] In fact, some modern philosophers themselves are of the opinion that it is the only task of philosophy. The statement above is not intended to mean this way, but that if we want to make use, philosophically, of scientific theories, what we do, then, is not science, but interpretation of scientific theories.

indictable fixed as the past. "Events do not happen; we simply meet them". (ibid.) This conclusion is definitely in conflict with the Qur'anic ideas: "Nature is not static, but it is a structure of events possessing the character f a continuous creative flow which thought cuts up into isolated immobilities out of whose mutual relations arise the concept of space and time." (p. 28) That is why Whitehead's interpretation is likely to appeal to Muslim students more than that of Einstein himself (time as the fourth dimension of space). (p. 106) Here we see how a scientific theory is interpreted to help explaining philosophical ideas. This is in line with our previous discussion before[12] that since science is a mass of sectional views of reality, fragments of a total experience which do not seem to fit together, it cannot, if it is true to its own nature and function, set up its theory as a complete view of Reality. (p.33)

Another e example is Iqbal's taking Heisenberg's uncertainty principle not at its face-value, but as an indication that Kant's categories -- especially that which concerns causality, the essence of which is serial time -- had been transcended since this theory is not compatible with the Newtonian strict principle of causality. this means that serial time is not the only possible construal of time. The fact that Kant's categories are transcended by scientific findings means that there might be another level of experience different from our normal level of experience; if this is so, thus the argument goes, it is an indication that reason may have an access to things- in-themselves, and thus there is a prospect for some kind theology. (p. 144)

Still another example is the one cited before, about Iqbal's discussion on the manner of Divine creation; there he makes use of Ash'arite theology, modern science and philosophy, but also metaphysics of the Sufis; he also shows which parts of As' arite theology that could be further explained, evaluated and, perhaps, corrected by new scientific findings.(p.

Besides that, modern science may also explain or reach a conclusion which otherwise would be unattainable, that could be taken as a further interpretation of what the sufis experience in their mystical experiences. The case for this is 'Iraqi of which Iqbal says "was unable to see the full implications of his thought partly because he was not a mathematician a

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[12] See p. 8 of this essay.

partly because of his natural prejudice in favour of the traditioional Aristotelian ideas of a fixed universe." (p. 109)

By taking this stance -- that science is not taken at its face-value, b philosophically interpreted by taking into account many other considerations outside science -- Iqbal could make use of new scientific findings, while, at the same time, avoiding their liability to change. There still possibility, to be sure, that his views would be affected by fun possible fundamental change of scientific theories, but, at least, it is h vulnerable than the other position. So if Iqbal's ideas that have bearings on scientific findings were very much up to date, it also means that now some of them might be outdated. This is the risk of the attempts such as Iqbal's But Iqbal himself claims no finality of his thoughts; in general, he asserts that. there is no such thing as finality in philosophical thinking: "As knowledge advances and fresh avenues of thought are opened, other view and probably sounder views than those set .forth in these lectures, a possible. Our duty is carefully to watch the progress of human thought and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it." (p. xxii) The is another way of seeing Iqbal's reconstruction. One of the characteristics of philosophy is that, unlike mathematics, for example, which could satisfied by one proof, the greater the number of proofs for a philosophical ideas is the better.[13] Therefore proofs from modern scientific findings m: straighten the arguments for an idea.

Finally, about the notion of "reconstruction" itself, there are also some interesting observations and criticisms by Fazalur Rahman and S. M Naquib al-Attas, as mentioned in the beginning of this essay. The criticisms come form their disagreements with Iqbal regarding his evaluation of the Islamic intellectual tradition and modern science and philosophy -- the two most important characteristics of reconstruction. Rahman sees that the tradition of Islamic philosophy as represented by figures such as al-Faro Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, and the Ash'arite and Mu'tazilite theologians, "essentially a product of history and bears little direct relationship to the Qur'an and the Prophet themselves."[14] In another place he says that in its material or content aspect

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[13] Murtada Mutahhari, "An Outline of Muslim Contribution to Philosophy", A1-Tawhid, vol. X, No. 1, p. 86.

the philosophical system such as built by Ibn Sina is "Hellenistic throughout".[15] Although the system itself, as a whole, has an indubitably Islamic stamp, and tries to reckon with the religious metaphysics of Islam, "that it does only in so far as the rational Greek character of the material would allow."[16] Up to this point Iqbal might be in agreement with Rahman, since he criticizes this Greek-based Islamic philosophy and theology on the same basis:" while Greek philosophy very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers, it on the whole, obscured their vision of the Qur'an they read the Qur'an in the light of Greek thought." (p. 3) But then, Iqbal also observes that later they realized their mistake, "and the result of this perception [that the spirit of the Qur'an was anti-classical]. was a kind of intellectual revolt ...." (Ibid.) While Rahman seems not to make this differentiation between the earlier and later philosophical thought in Islam. It is clear for him that there is a need for elaborating an Islamic metaphysics, but it has to he done on the basis of the Qur'an.[17] This is Rahman's key-point. His strong criticisms of Iqbal, as well as of the Muslims theologians and philosophers, is that their philosophical systems are not systematically based on the Qur'an.[18] In this context, he mentions "reconstruction", most probably with Iqbal's working in his mind, saying, "One should perhaps say that Islamic theology/philosophy has to be rebuilt afresh on the basis of the Qur'an, rather than reconstructed from this medieval heritage. How does one reconstruct, for example, the medieval theological doctrines of God and His Attributes?"[19]

Concerning Iqbal's Reconstruction itself Rahman observes that Iqbal's aim was the reawakening of the stagnant Muslim community of his time.

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[14] Islam, p. 257.

[15] Ibid., p. 117.

[16] Ibid.,

[17] Cf. idem., Islam and Modernity, the University of Chicago Press, 1982 pp. 133, 151-154, 157-158.

[18] Ialam, pp. 256-257.

[19] Ialam, p. 257, italics mine; cf. Ialam and Modernity, pp. 151-152.

And to achieve that aim, on one hand, he "did not carry out any systematic inquiry into the teaching of the Qur'an but picked and chose on its verse -- as he did with other traditional material -- to prove certain theses at least some of which were the result of his general insight into the Qur'an but which, above all, seemed to him to suit the most contemporary needs of a stagnant Muslim society."[20] On the other hand, he criticizes Iqbal's attempts as very much dated, "since he took seriously his contemporary scientists who tried to prove a dynamic free will in man on the basis of the new subh-atomic scientific data, which they interpreted as meaning that the physical world was 'free' of the chain of cause and effect!"[21] Indeed, Rahman admits that in modern times the Reconstruction is the only systematic attempt at building an Islamic metaphysical system, "But despite the fact that Iqbal had a certain basis and rare insight into the nature of Islam as an attitude of life, this work cannot be said to be based on Qur'anic teaching: the structural elements of its thought are too contemporary to be an adequate basis for an ongoing Islamic metaphysical endeavour ..."[22] This insistence on making the Qur'an -- in a systematic way -- as the basis or foundation upon which any Islamic intellectual endeavour must be built is Rahman's special characteristic. He does not deny that any systematic interpretation of the Qur'an, which is the only way of making a theological or metaphysical system truly Islamic, will necessarily be influenced by contemporary modes of thought, such as what happened to Iqbal philosophical system. Furthermore, "this is also required in the sense that only in this way can the message of the Qur'an becomes relevant to the contemporary situation. But it is quite another thing to couch the Qur'anic message in terms of a particular theory...[23] Here are Rahman's two related points of disagreement with Iqbal formulation of certain concepts, such as the concept of God, in terms contemporary scientific

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[20] Ialam and Modernity, pp. 153-154.

[21] Ibid., p. 132

[22] Ibid., p. 132

[23] Ibid., p. 154

theories, and the method by which he attempts deduce the concepts from the Qur'an.[24]

From a very different point f view, S.M. Naquib al-Attas' criticisms Iqbal also end up in his rejection of the term "reconstruction". He sees tit the reconstruction is basically an attempt at a reasoned simplification of the Sufi method of approaching a complex vision of the nature of reality, and that Iqbal could never have formulated his philosophy without sufficient knowledge of Sufi theology, psychology, and metaphysics -- although " himself did not clearly and positively acknowledge his profound debt the sufis of the school of wahdat al-wujud."[25] But what is objected by Attas is his fusing this with certain elements derived from modern science and philosophy, and thus amounts to an impossible combination, while misinterpreting the Sufi metaphysics.[26] An example of this fusion in the idea

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Al-Attas, op.cit., p. 459. But regarding his ideas as expressed in his Asrar. Khudi and Rumuz-i-Bekhudi, Iqbal writes

One word more. In my notes which now form part of your introduction to Asrar-i-Khudi, I deliberately explained my position in reference to Western thinkers, as I thought this would facilitate the understanding of my views in England. I could have easily explained myself in the light of the Qur'an and Muslim Sufis and thinkers e.g., Ibn Arabi and Iraqi (Pantheism), Wahid Mahmud (Reality as a Plurality), Al-jili (the idea of teh Perfect Man)nad Mujaddid Sarhindi (the human person in relation to the Divine Person). As a matter of fact, I did so explain myself in my Hindustani introduction to the Islam edition of the Asrar..

I claim tht the_philosophy of the Asrar is a direct development out of the experience and speculation of old Muslimsufis and the thinkers. Even Bergson's idea of time is not quite foreign to our sufis. The Qur'an is certainly not a book of metaphysics, but it takes a definite view of the life and destiny of man, which must eventually rest on propositions, especially when it is done in the light of religious experience and philosophy invoked by that great book, is no putting new wine in old bottles. It is only a restatement of the old in the light of the new .

See Dicources of Iqbal, editede Shahid Hussein Razzaqi, Sh. Ghulam Ali, Lahore, 1979, p. 196.

[26] Ibid, p. 460 Regarding Iqbal's misunderstanding of Islamic intellectual tradition, there is another example, as shown by Muhammad Suheyl 'Um which concerns his view on Ibn 'Arabi and the theory of wahdat al-wujud. Suheyl Umar lists 19 causes identified by Iqbal of the decline of Islamic community e source of which he ascribes to Ibn 'Arabi or his

of evolution found in both . modern science and Muslim (especially sufi, and failasuf metaphysics: the former refers to a biological evolution nature, while the latter refers to the spiritual evolution of the soul of ma But here Iqbal reads modern scientific theories and philosophy into t Muslim metaphysics. This brings us to the other criticism, concerning t merits of modern philosophy and science.

In contrast with Iqbal, al-Attas sees that there is divergence between Islamic metaphysics and modern science and philosophy which is "root in their respective positions concerning the, sources and methods knowledge and the epistemological process...[27] He sees that mode: philosophy has become the interpreter of science, and organizes the rest of the natural and social sciences into a wrold-view. "The interpretation turn determines the direction in which science is to take in its study nature. It is this interpretation of the statements and general conclusions science and the direction of- science along the lines suggested by the interpretation that must be subjected to critical evaluation, as they pose for us today the most profound problems that have confronted us generally the course of our religious and intellectual history.[28] while science its■ has narrowed its method, and, consequently, the range of reality it wants deal with: "The study of nature ought not to be reduced to the methods empiricism and rationalism that operate solely on the world of objects events in space and time and their relations."[29]

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followers, or tasawwuf in general, especially their view of wahdat al-wujud. But upon a closer examination of Ibn 'Arabi's works themselves, it seems that Iqbal misunderstands them. And this stemmed from his bad access to them; many times he has to rely only on secondary sources. See Muhammad Suheyl 'Umar, "Contour of Ambivalence: Iqbal and Ibn 'Arabi in Historical Perspective," Studies in Traditions, vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 67-81, and No, 2, pp. 75-88, Karachi, Pakistan, 1992.

[27] S. M. N. al-Attas, op. cit., p. 464.

[28] Ibid. pp. 560-461. For a more elaborate discussion on his criticisms of modern science see his Islam and the Philosophy of Science, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, Kuala Lumpur, 1989, especially pp. 3-9.

[29] Ibid., p. 465.

Furthermore, al-Attas sees that in Islamic tradition itself, there already a unified system that overcomes the too narrow methods empiricism and rationalism in modern science. this system integrates reason and experience with their higher orders in the suprarational and transempirical levels of human consciousness, and it discloses the ultimate Reality in positive terms. And this Islamic metaphysics "is but another name for philosophical Sufism.[30] It is into this system that the reformulation of the statements and general conclusion derived from the methods of sciences, and the modification of the methods themselves must be integrated. The recognition of this system brings him to the following conclusion:

What we need, then, is not a reconstruction, but a restatement of the statements and general conclusions of Islamic metaphysics in accordance with intellectual perspective of our times and the developments in the domains of knowledge; and this entails a realignment, where relevant or necessary, of the direction of developments in the various sciences such that they become integrated with it.[31]

Even though Rahman and al-Attas reject the term "reconstruction", which is implied by their rejections of some of Iqbal's evaluations of Islamic intellectual tradition and modern science and philosophy, there is one

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[30] Ibid. Al-Attas' above criticisms of Iqbal are discussed in the Epilogue of the book we are referring to, A Commentary on the "Hujjat al-Siddiq" of Nur al-Din al-Raniri. This book is basically an elaboration of that metaphysical system identified above as philosophical Sufism, through an extensive commentary on the work of Nur al-Din al-Raniri, the most prominent Malay Muslim thinker of 17th century whose views are identified by al-Attas as belonging to this school. (See p. 44) He identifies the proponent of this school as follows: "Among the notable early representatives of this school of Sufis 'after al-Junayd were Abu Nasr al-Sarraj, 'Ali al-Hujwiri, Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri and 'Abd Allah al-Ansari. to this school also belonged al-Ghazali, But their chief exponent was Ibn 'Arabi, who first formulated what is originally given in the intuition of existence into an integrated metaphysics expressed in rational and intellectual terms. Among his erudite commentators were Sufis such as Sadr al-Din Qunyawi, 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Qashani, Dawud al- Qaysari, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jami; and his doctrine of the Perfect Man (al-insan al-Kamil) was developed by 'Abd al-Karim al-jili. the philosophical expression of the transcendent unity of existence [wahdat al-wujud] was formulated by Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, called Mulla Sadra." (pp. 44-45).

[31] Al-Attas, op. cit, p. 465.

important point on which all of them agree. Namely, that there is today a need for stating Islamic metaphysics in the "modern" language, that is to say, the language familiar to Muslims living in this modern world; a language which is very much coloured by modern scienctific-philosophical theories. In other words, this is a problem of communication. In. Iqbal's letter cited above he emphasizes this point as the aim of his reconstruction; and for Rahman, an Islamic theological or metaphysical system built through a systematic interpretation of the Qur'an will necessarily be influenced by contemporary modes of thought if we want to make it relevant,to the contemporary situation; while al-Attas' restatement exactly addresses this problem, and, moreover, he even mentions that the understanding of the unified metaphysical system mentioned above in rational and intellectual terms "had to wait till our present age, when scientific developments in our understanding of nature have advanced considerably, before its profound significance can be realized.[32] the difference between them lies in the extent to which an Islamic metaphysics may accommodate modern scientific and philosophical theories.

In his Reconstruction Iqbal has tried to meet this challenge of communicating Islamic metaphysics, as he understood it, to the young modern Muslims who had been "influenced by modern philosophy"[33] However, it seems that there are still some problems here, especially regarding the terminology he used. Both Rahman[34] and al-Attas disapprove Iqbal's couching of the Islamic metaphysical concepts in a particular scientific or philosophical theory – despite their views above regarding the necessity of modern expression of Islamic metaphysics. Surely there is a very fine line between these two things; and Iqbal, according to them, has fallen into the former. For; example, as observed by Al-Attas, Iqbal used terminology which is derived form modern, western evolutionist philosophy and science as represented by Bergson, Nietzche and Whitehead, and thus obscuring the ideas itself: "The ultimate Reality is not to be conjectured

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[32] Ibid, p. xv.

[33] See his letter cited in p. 4 above.

[34] Islam and Modernity, p. 154.

vaguely as Force, Energy, Elan Vital, Space- Time, Movement, Change, or Becoming, in line with the statements, conclusions and interpretations of modern science and philosophy.[35] These are the (modern) terms chosen by Iqbal in expressing his vision of Islamic metaphysics. But, to do justice to Iqbal, we should also remember that his Reconstruction was one of the first attempts at expressing Islamic metaphysics in a modern language; even today merely translating an Islamic metaphysical work into a modern European language remains problematic. The difficulties faced by Iqbal should, therefore, have been greater.

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In the beginning of this essay we characterized the Reconstruction as Iqbal's attempt at facing the problem of modernity; we also said that his problem arose as a result of the unavoidable direct contact with modern, western civilization. In the last few decades of the so-called post modernity, the contact intensifies greatly through many kins of media. In any case there is no choice except to face it. Seen in this perspective, Iqbal's deliberation of bringing Islamic metaphysics into contact with modern science and philosophy, which he regards simply as "human knowledge" (p. xxii), was natural. Today we are in a better position to do efforts such as Iqbal's reconstruction, since, firstly, there have been increasingly many works addressing the problem Iqbal tried to solve, whether they are in the context of Islam or not, and-thus the subtlety of this problem has become more manifest And, secondly, we also have a better access to our own intellectual tradition, thanks to the scholarly efforts of many Muslim scholars as well as 'orientalists.

Above all criticisms of him, Iqbal had, given a starting point from which the pursuit of the solution of this problem might proceed. As response to the problem, we may say that Reconstruction was among the first serious works devoted to answering this problem -- the one that is genuine and, in many ways, still fares much better than many of the works of today's Muslims scholars.

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[35] Commentary, pp. 464-5.

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3. In the quotations below all italics are mine.

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9. Ibid.

10. See f.n. 4 of this paper.

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12. See p. 8 of this essay.

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14. Islam, p. 257.

15. Ibid., p. 117.

16. Ibid.,

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18. lalam, pp. 256-257.

19. Ialam, p. 257, italics mine; cf. Ialam and Modernity, pp. 151-152.

20. Ialam and Modernity, pp. 153-154.

21. Ibid., p. 153.

22. Ibid., p. 132.

23. Ibid.,p. 154.

24. Ibid.

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27. S. M. N. al-Attas, op. cit., p. 464.

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29- Ibid., p. 465.

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31. al-Attas, op. cit., p. 465.

32. Ibid., p. xv.

33. See his letter cited in p. 4 above.

34. Islam and Modernity, p. 154.

35. Commentary, pp. 464-5.