

# IQBAL'S DEFENCE OF RELIGION AND POSITIVIST TRADITIONS

Dr. Mohammed Maruf

Iqbal took up defence of religion as a form of experience as early as 1929 when he delivered his famous lectures<sup>1</sup> at Madras and Hyderabad (India) particularly in his first lecture "Knowledge and Religious Experience", and then in his paper "Is Religion Possible?" which he presented to the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the Aristotelian Society in London in 1932.<sup>2</sup> In this lecture in particular he tried to refute Kant's famous rejection of the possibility of metaphysics because, as he believes, "his argument applies with equal force to the realities in which religion is especially interested"<sup>3</sup>. What interests us in this paper is that Iqbal's defence anticipates the logical positivists position on metaphysics and religion assumed much later and has offered answers which later critics of the movement were to offer subsequently. It is commonly believed that logical positivism emerged in 1930 as a result of interaction between the Cambridge School of Analysis and the Vienna Circle: at least the term appeared for the first time in 1930<sup>4</sup> though with some qualifications; but its application to the fields of morals, metaphysics and religion came as later as 1936 when A.J. Ayer first published his classical work *Language, Truth and Logic* (London)<sup>5</sup> and *The Foundation of Empirical Knowledge* in 1940 (London)<sup>6</sup>. The real threat to religion came through these works of Ayer as they directly attacked the realities with which both religion and metaphysics deal, and such attempts were not rife in the times of Iqbal, at least when he delivered his lectures.

As said before, Iqbal begins his defence of religion with an examination of Kant's famous position on the possibility of metaphysics. Dilating on the

---

<sup>1</sup> Iqbal Dr. M., *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (Lahore Sh. Ashraf, 1978).

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series-Vol.XXXIII, (London: Harrison, 1933), pp.47-64.

<sup>3</sup> Op.cit., *Reconstruction*, p. 182

<sup>4</sup> F. Waismann first formulated the verifiability principle in 1930. Cf. J. Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, (Penguin, 1980), pp. 368-69.

<sup>5</sup> Ayer A.J., *Language, Truth & Logic*, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1946).

<sup>6</sup> *The Foundation of Empirical Knowledge*, (London: Macmillan, 1940)  
*Logical Positivism*, (Illinois: Free Press, 1959).

significance of metaphysics for religion Iqbal says that “Science may ignore a rational metaphysics”, but religion cannot in so far as it aims at “the search for a reconciliation of the oppositions of experience and a justification of the environment in which humanity finds itself”<sup>7</sup>. Kant’s position as well as of those who followed him in this rejection of metaphysics, says Iqbal, is based on the following presuppositions:

1. All experience other than the normal level of experience is impossible;<sup>8</sup>
  2. There is only one single space-order and time-order which Kant calls the “Forms of Sensibility” which organize data into knowledge of objects and “percepts”;
  3. The term “fact” has been limited to “empirical facts” only which Iqbal calls “the optically present source of sensation”.<sup>9</sup>
  4. Discursive thought is the only kind of thought amenable to man.
1. Kant bases his position on metaphysics on the bifurcation between Phenomenon (Thing-as-it-appears) and the Noumenon (the Thing-in-itself), and holds that the latter falls beyond the pale of the manifold of senses” and hence is unknowable”. For him, “The thing-in-itself is only a limiting idea. Its function is merely regulative”<sup>10</sup>. Again, Kant made a distinction between what he called the “sensible intuition” and “intellectual intuition”, and denied that man possessed the latter<sup>11</sup>. This also contributes to his contention of the impossibility of metaphysics. Here Iqbal urges that “Kant’s verdict can be accepted if we start with the assumption that all experience other than the normal level of experience is impossible.<sup>12</sup> Iqbal refers to the evidence of religious experts of all ages and countries to prove that “there are potential types of consciousness lying close to our normal consciousness. If these types of consciousness open up possibilities of life-giving and knowledge-

---

<sup>7</sup> Op. cit, *Reconstruction*, p.2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 182.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 188.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 182.

<sup>11</sup> Kant I., *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Eng, tr. Norman K. Smith, (London: Macmillan, 1963), p. 268.

<sup>12</sup> Op. cit, *Reconstruction*, p. 182.

yielding experience the question of the possibility of religion as a form of higher experience is a perfectly legitimate one...”<sup>13</sup> He goes on to add, “These experiences are perfectly natural, like our normal experiences. The evidence is that they possess a cognitive value for the recipient,...”<sup>14</sup> Iqbal discusses the position of modern naturalists who allude to the determinants of these experiences and decry them as ‘neurotic or mystical’; but he agrees with William James that the questions concerning the nature, origin, and historical development of a thing are of quite a different order from the questions regarding their importance, meaning and values<sup>15</sup>. He says, “Psychologically speaking, all states, whether their content is religious or non-religious, are organically determined. The scientific form of mind is as much organically determined as the religious<sup>16</sup>”. He concludes, “The truth is that the organic causation of our mental states has nothing to do with the criteria by which we judge them to be superior or inferior in point of value”.<sup>17</sup> However, the question how to distinguish between what is really divine and what is counterfeit has always arisen in the mind of the religious people themselves. In such a situation, Iqbal, agreeing with James, recommends the use of the pragmatic test. James quotes Saint Teresa as saying of those who doubted her vision: “I showed them the jewels which the divine hand left with me;.. they were my actual dispositions”.<sup>18</sup>

About two centuries after Kant, the logical positivists made an attack on metaphysics and religion on the selfsame grounds, though they approached the problem from a different angle: they were not so much interested in the genuineness of an experience as in the “meaningfulness” (to use their own term) of statements in which an experience expresses itself; thus the main question with them being whether a given ‘statement’ is verifiable or not. As Iqbal believed in the cognitive aspect of “religious experience”, he would agree that they were expressible in the form of “statements” which were no less verifiable.

---

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189

<sup>15</sup> Maruf Dr. M., *Iqbal's Philosophy of Religion*, (London: Islamic Book Service 1977), p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, *Reconstruction*, p. 23.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>18</sup> James William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, (London: Longmans Green, 1952), p. 22.

He says, “Religious experience..., is essentially a state of feeling with a cognitive aspect, the content of which cannot be communicated to others, except in the form of a judgement”.<sup>19</sup> He adds that any judgement placed before anybody entitles him to ask the question, “Are we in possession of a test which would reveal its validity?” This question can legitimately and justifiably be asked about “statements” expressing religious contents also. To those critics who regard religion as a personal and subjective experience only Iqbal replies that “If personal experience had been the only ground for acceptance of a judgement of this kind, religion would have been the possession of a few individuals only”.<sup>20</sup> He is of the view that religious “statements” are perfectly verifiable; that we are in possession of tests “which do not differ from those applicable to other forms of knowledge”.<sup>21</sup> These he calls the Intellectual and Pragmatic tests. In his Second Lecture “The Philosophical Test of the Revelations of Religions Experience”<sup>22</sup>, Iqbal applies the Intellectual Test with a view to proving religious or spiritual realities of the universe.

2. Kant and his followers presume that the ordinary space-time order is the only order which he calls the “Forms of Sensibility”<sup>23</sup>, and it organizes data into “percepts”. This unilateral approach leads to a physical and material reality and has culminated in the famous Einsteinian General Theory of Space-Time Relativity in which Time, losing its identity and significance, is relegated to the fourth dimension of the space. It precludes any possibility of spiritual interpretation of the universe. This approach, according to Iqbal, is un-Islamic as Islam laid exclusive emphasis on the importance of Time: more than once he quotes a well known saying (Hadith) of the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH), viz., “Do not vilify time, for time is God”.<sup>24</sup> The Holy Quran includes suras named “Ad-dahr” (The Time)<sup>25</sup> and “Al-Asr” (Time through the Ages)<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Op. cit., *Reconstruction*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>23</sup> Wright W.K. *A History of Modern Philosophy*, (N.Y, Macmillan, 1962) Ch. XII, “Kant”, pp. 263 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Op. cit., *Reconstruction*, p.11.

<sup>25</sup> The Holy *Quran*, Sura LVI.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, Sura CIII.

wherein Allah swears by the Time. This convincingly brings home the importance which Islam attaches to Time, thereby opening the way to the mental and spiritual aspects of the universe. Iqbal discusses the possibility of other levels or orders of Space and Time. He refers to Ainal-Qudat al-Hamdani Iraqi (1098-1131 A.D.)<sup>27</sup> who propounded the view of various orders of Space and Time relative to the various levels of being. In his book *Kitab Lama't*, Iraqi conceives infinite varieties of time, relative to the varying grades of being, intervening between materiality and pure spirituality".<sup>28</sup> Right from gross bodies which have a time divisible into past, present and future, he moves on through to the "Divine time—time which is absolutely free from the quality of passage, ... It is above eternity; it has neither beginning nor end"<sup>29</sup>. Similarly he holds that there are various levels of space including a kind of space relative to God (the word proximity, contact, and mutual separation which apply to material bodies do not apply to God"<sup>30</sup>). "The existence of space", says Iqbal, "in relation to the life of God,..., cannot be denied; .."<sup>31</sup> Iraqi holds that there are three kinds of space—the space of material bodies, the space of immaterial beings, and the space of God. He further divides the space of material bodies into three kinds, i.e. "the space of gross bodies", "the space of subtle bodies, e.g., air and sound", and "the space of light".<sup>32</sup> He, then moves on to discuss the space of various classes of immaterial beings, e.g., angels; and finally "the Divine space which is absolutely free from all dimensions and constitutes the meeting point of all infinities".<sup>33</sup> If we go with Iraqi and conceive these various kinds of space and time orders, our whole conception of the nature of the universe would undergo a drastic change; for the admission of other space-orders and time-orders would open the way to non-materialistic, and spiritualistic interpretations of the universe, especially when primacy has been assigned to time in preference to space. How unlike the Einsteinian version where time has been reduced

---

<sup>27</sup> Op. cit., *Reconstruction*, p. 75.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 136-37.

to one of the dimensions of space which leads to the aforesaid presuppositions: viz., (I) there is only one kind of genuine human experience, and (ii) there is only one single space-time order.

The above presuppositions led to the concept of a physical world-order wherein the law of causation reigns supreme. Iqbal puts the question, “whether the causality bound aspect of nature is the whole truth about it? Is not the ultimate Reality invading our consciousness from some other direction as well? Is the purely intellectual method of overcoming nature the only method? “Iqbal here quotes a full passage from A. Eddington’s (1882-1944) book *The Nature of Physical World* <sup>34</sup> in support of his view that there are other directions as well from which the reality is invading the human consciousness. To quote a part of the passage, “... Feelings, purpose, values, make up our consciousness as much as sense-impressions. We follow up the sense impressions and find that they lead into an external world discussed by science; we follow up the other elements of our being and find that they lead not into a world of space and time, but surely somewhere”.<sup>35</sup> But what is the nature of that “somewhere” is no less important for the human study and research than the world of science and sense; it leads to the teleological and spiritual world of metaphysics and religion. Again, Iqbal says that the modern man has exclusively concentrated on the natural aspect of reality and consequently, “His naturalism has given him an unprecedented control over the forces of Nature, but has robbed him of faith in his own future”.<sup>36</sup> He regrets that “wholly overshadowed by the results of his intellectual activity, the modern man has ceased to live soulfully, i.e. from within”.<sup>37</sup> And as a result in “the domain of thought he is living in open conflict with himself; and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others”<sup>38</sup>. He has failed to control “his ruthless egoism and his infinite gold-hunger” which is “gradually killing all higher striving in him and bringing him nothing but life-

---

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, quoted From Eddington’s *The Nature of Physical World*, (Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. 323.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

weariness”.<sup>39</sup> Thus, Iqbal regrets that the one-sided approach of the modern man has brought about atrophy of the spiritual side, and has given rise to such movements in philosophy as logical positivism and existentialism. In a beautiful Persian verse in *Gulshane Raze Jadeed (The New Rose Garden of Mystery)*<sup>40</sup>, he says:

*If he should close one eye, it would be sin: It is by seeing with both eyes that he can gain the path..*<sup>41</sup>.

Modern empiricists and positivists have, thus, sinned by adopting only one-sided approach to reality – the external approach – which reveals to consciousness only the external or perceptual aspects of reality. This, according to Iqbal, is the chief malady of the modern Western approach. Logical positivists simply reduce the modern empiricist position to “statements” and use the “meaningful” and “meaningless”<sup>42</sup> denominators for them; hence labouring under the same one-sidedness which Iqbal has condemned.

3. This brings us to the third presupposition of modern science and philosophy, viz., the term “fact” is used in the sense of empirical fact only; fact which is, for Iqbal, “the optically present source of sensation”. The denomination of the term “fact” again forms the pivot of empirical position. Iqbal, however, denies that empirical facts are the only facts. He says, “The total Reality, which enters our awareness and appears on interpretation as an empirical fact, has other ways of invading our consciousness and offers other opportunities for interpretation. The facts of religious experience are facts among other facts of human experience and, in the capacity of yielding knowledge by interpretation, one fact is as good as another”.<sup>43</sup> This fact has been acknowledged decades later by A.C. Ewing in his article “Religious Assertions” thus: “The position that nothing can exist except the type of subjects we know

---

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 187-88.

<sup>40</sup> Iqbal, mathnavi, *Gulshan-e-Raz̤ Jadeed Maa Bandagi Nama/ Kulliyat-e-Iqbal* (Persian), (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1990)p.433.

<sup>41</sup> *The New Rose Garden of Mystery*, Eng. tr. Hadi Hussain, (Lahore: Sh. Ashraf, 1969), p.8.

<sup>42</sup> According to the positivists only those statements are “meaningful” which are verifiable by experience: others are called “meaningless” statements. They prefer these terms to “true” and “false” used in logic.

<sup>43</sup> *Op. cit.*, *Reconstruction*, p. 16.

in science and ordinary sense-experience is certainly not true, and if other things do exist there will certainly be facts about them (in a well-recognized sense of “fact”)<sup>44</sup>. He rightly adds, “The metaphysician may rightly claim to be giving “factual information”, though not about the empirical facts of ordinary life”.<sup>45</sup>

However, Iqbal makes an important distinction between, what he calls, “intellectual facts” and “vital facts”, adding that the facts with which religion deals are the latter kind.<sup>46</sup> By an intellectual fact” he appears to mean facts which are concerned with cognition and add to our knowledge when interpreted, whereas a “vital fact” is concerned with conation and becomes a part of our faith when understood; of course, not blind faith but faith well-grounded in knowledge.<sup>47</sup> This he calls the stage of “Discovery”.<sup>48</sup> This point is obvious from the opening sentence of his preface to his lectures, “The Quran is a book which emphasizes “deed” rather than “idea”.<sup>49</sup> While talking of “discovery” Iqbal says that “the experience which leads to this discovery is not a conceptually manageable fact; it is a vital fact, ...<sup>50</sup> which “can embody itself only in a world-making or world-shaking act; and in this form alone the content of this timeless experience can make itself effectively visible to the eye of history”<sup>51</sup>. This shows why this experience is more amenable to the pragmatic, rather than to the intellectual, test. Moreover, religious statements are more like the statements of history which have a cognitive as well as an evaluative aspect, and I believe that the positivists will have no objection to admitting statements of history as “meaningful” in the sense in which they are willing to use the word. Again, as Iqbal has emphasized, “there is no such thing as isolated fact; for facts are systematic wholes the elements of which must be

---

<sup>44</sup> *Philosophy*, Vol. XXXII, No. 122, July 1957, p. 213.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>47</sup> This appears to my mind Iqbal’s own implication.

<sup>48</sup> Op. cit., *Reconstruction*, p. 181. Where he recounts three periods of religious life, “Discovery” being the highest and deepest level.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface, p. V.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

understood by mutual reference:...”<sup>52</sup> It means that religious facts are, like other facts, systematic wholes with affective, cognitive and conative aspects; but the positivists keep these elements apart, especially in the case of metaphysical and religious facts, in order to disparage them in the light of their Principle of Verifiability, thereby violating their “systematic wholeness”.

This brings us to the important question of the “objectivity” of religious experience which has been questioned by its opponents over and again. They hold that the scientific knowledge is objective, while religious knowledge is “subjective” (the positivists condemn them as mere “emotive assertions”)<sup>53</sup>. Iqbal refutes the above position and urges that both religion and science aim at “pure objectivity” in their own respective spheres. While talking of the religious man Iqbal says, “His sense of objectivity is as keen as that of the scientist in his own sphere of objectivity He passes from experience to experience,...., as a critical sifter of experience who....; endeavours to eliminate all subjective elements, psychological or physiological... with a view finally to reach what is absolutely objective”.<sup>54</sup> “This final experience, he adds, “is the revelation of a new life process original, essential, spontaneous”<sup>55</sup>. Iqbal quotes a passage from the renowned Indian Sufi Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind<sup>56</sup> as an example of this objectifying process in the field of religion. He also refers to the banning of music as a part of worship in Islam with a view to preclude any subjective element in religious experience. Iqbal goes to the extent of saying that “..it must be said in justice to religion that it insisted on the necessity of concrete experience<sup>57</sup> life long before science learnt to do so”.<sup>58</sup> He concludes that “the experience reached is a perfectly natural experience.. It is the human ego rising higher than mere reflection, and mending its

---

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86

<sup>53</sup> Positivists like Maritz Schlick, C.L. Stevenson, A.J. Ayer and others relegate religious statements to mere “emotive assertions”—A.J. Ayer, *Logical Positivism*, (Illinois: Free Press, 1959), p. 247 ff.

<sup>54</sup> Op. cit., *Reconstruction*, p. 197.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

transiency by appropriating the eternal<sup>59</sup>. Iqbal further stresses the objectivity of this experience when he says, “The final act is.. a vital act which deepens the whole being of the ego, and sharpens his will with the creative assurance that the world is not something to be merely seen or known through concepts, but something to be made and remade by continuous action”.<sup>60</sup> This statement brings out two very important things: viz.,

- i. religious experience is basically conative rather than cognitive and
- ii. the religious facts are vital rather than intellectual facts. Thus, the main mistake of the positivists lies in their confounding them with cognitive facts and trying to judge them accordingly.

4. The last presupposition of the empiricists is that they take “thought” in a discursive sense only. Ever since Aristotle the Western thinkers have been believing in a duality of thought, viz., the Pure Thought (Reason) and the Practical Thought (Reason)<sup>61</sup>. Centuries later Kant named his famous volumes<sup>62</sup> *The Critique of Pure Reason & The Critique of Practical Reason*<sup>63</sup>, the former dealing with metaphysical problems of an analysis of human thought, the latter with the practical moral questions. The Westerners take thought in a finite and restricted sense to this day and it is basically analytical, and as a result they assign no important function to it in religious knowledge. Even Antony Flew, who in his *A Dictionary of Philosophy* (ed. 1979)<sup>64</sup>, has treated thought in three different senses, has failed to go beyond the superficial movement of thought and its discursive nature which involved dichotomy of the object and subject. Iqbal, however, recommends that we should go beyond this superficial nature of thought when he says in *Baal-I-Jibril* (The Gabriel’s Wing)

---

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>61</sup> Aristotle’s theory of Thought in which he distinguishes between Passive and Creative or Active Reason – F. Thilly, *A History of Philosophy*, (Allahabad, Central Book, 1958) pp. 112-13.

<sup>62</sup> English tr. By Norman Kemp Smith, (London: Macmillan, 1963).

<sup>63</sup> English tr. By T.K. Abbott, (London: Longmans Green, 1959), 6<sup>th</sup> Revised Edition.

<sup>64</sup> (London: Pan books Paperback, first pb. 1979) see “Reason”, pp. 278-79.

Go beyond the pale of reason as this light; Can show the way, not the goal<sup>65</sup>.

And Again

Having unravelled the knotty skein of Intellect; O Allah; bestow 'madness' on me<sup>66</sup>.

In the above two verses Iqbal has recommended to transcend both the Pure and Practical kinds of thought in order to fully appreciate the nature of thought itself. He says that thought, though finite “is capable of reaching an immanent infinite...<sup>67</sup>. According to him, thought “is a greeting of the finite with the infinite”<sup>68</sup>. He says, “The idea that thought is essentially finite, and for this reason unable to capture the Infinite, is based on a mistaken notion of the movement of thought in knowledge”<sup>69</sup>. He regrets that even such great thinkers as al-Ghazali and Kant “failed to see that thought, in the very act of knowledge, passes beyond its own finitude...”.<sup>70</sup> Again, acknowledging that thought is basically finite, Iqbal holds that the finitudes of nature are mutually and reciprocally exclusive but not “the finitudes of thought which is, in its essential nature, incapable of limitation and cannot remain imprisoned in the narrow circuit of its own individuality”<sup>71</sup>. This he calls “the deeper movement of thought”<sup>72</sup> as against its superficial movements discussed above, and in this movement thought comes very close to intuition. He regrets that modern philosophy, despite its so much emphasis on epistemology, has failed to see this fact and to realize “the implicit presence in its finite individuality of the infinite...<sup>73</sup>. Even Imam Ghazali, despite his admitting the importance of thought (intellect) in religion<sup>74</sup>, was forced by his own personal mystic experience “to draw a

---

<sup>65</sup> Iqbal Dr. M., *Baal-I-Jibril*, (Lahore: Ghulamali, 1976), p. 84. (Eng. tr. My own).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>67</sup> Op. cit., *Reconstruction*, p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6, 7.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4, 5.

line of cleavage between thought and Intuition...”.<sup>75</sup> It was al-Farabi<sup>76</sup> in the Muslim world who could see that “rational knowledge coincides with ecstasy and inspiration,”<sup>77</sup> and Iqbal appears to have taken inspiration from him in understanding a proper relationship between thought and intuition. He says, “They spring up from the same root and complement each other”.<sup>78</sup> He further says, “Both are in need of each other for mutual rejuvenation”. Both seek the vision of the same Reality which reveals itself to them...<sup>79</sup>. In *Javid Namah* he says more emphatically that

.....Love-led

Can reason claim the Lord and reason-lit

Love strikes firm roots. When integrated,

These two draw the pattern of a different world”<sup>80</sup>

The amalgamation of love and reason, says Iqbal, is necessitated by the fact that the Ultimate Reality “reveals its symbols both within and without”<sup>81</sup>, and that the “internal” aspect of the real is not less important than its “external” and “observable” aspects. “Reality lives in its own appearances;...<sup>82</sup> says he.

Again, Iqbal agreeing with Kant, holds that thought cannot be completely divorced from concrete experience in the domain of knowledge, and this is true of both scientific and religious knowledge. He agrees with the Freudians that “there are religions, ..., which provide a kind of cowardly escape from the facts of life, ...<sup>83</sup> but this is not true of all religion. Similar is the position of the logical positivists who

---

<sup>75</sup> Sharif M.M. (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963), Vol.I, “AlFarabi”, p. 462.

<sup>76</sup> Iqbal, *Rconstruction*, p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>80</sup> Ahmad S. Mahmood, *The Pilgrimage of Eternity*, Eng. tr. of Iqbal's *Javed Namah*, (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1961), vs. 1135-40, p. 54.

<sup>81</sup> Op. cit., *Rconstruction*, p. 25.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16

relegate religious statements to mere “emotive assertions”, having no grounding in concrete experience, and hence condemning them to be ‘meaningless’ statements. Against all such positions Iqbal urges, as said before, that religion insisted on the possibility of concrete experience in religious life long before science learnt to do so. He adds that higher religion is essentially experience and that it is “as critical of its level of experience as Naturalism is of its own level”.<sup>84</sup> This experiential nature of religion and its critical approach dispel the position held by the positivists that religious experience was purely subjective. Iqbal, while discussing the nature of intuition, sounds the warning that we must not regard it as a “mysterious special faculty” and adds that “the vista of experience’ opened to us by this faculty” is as real and concrete as any other experience. To describe it as psychic, mystical or supernatural does not detract from its value as experience “.<sup>85</sup> He aptly remarks that to “the primitive man all experience was supernatural”<sup>86</sup> “The total reality, which enters our awareness and appears on interpretation as an empirical fact, has other ways of invading our consciousness and offers further opportunities of interpretation”.<sup>87</sup> Once this fact is acknowledged, much of what appears to be mysterious about human life will be converted into hard facts of life requiring study and interpretation, and will enlarge the scope of human knowledge beyond its present limitations.

---

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*