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Muhammad Iqbal's Reconstructed Islam: The Foundations of His Political Theory

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"Political theology" is, in my view, an inadequate signifier of the matters it is meant to cover. For one thing, it is too nebulous. What does the term mean? At first glance it seems to signify either politicized theology and thus, as a scholarly category, the study of religious ideologies, or theology of politics and thus the study of how theological (but not necessarily ideological) conceptions relate to politics. If it means "theology of politics," that in itself is a nebulous category, for what is the relation it signifies? Is it how preexisting theological notions shape politics, or how politics can be understood from a theological perspective, or how a theology might be constructed or built upon to help believers come to terms with the political world in which they find themselves? And what of relations between religion and politics that are not theologically oriented—that is, not informed by any kind of formal theology? The term "theology" suggests a systematic rational conceptualization of God (or gods) and his relation to humanity, something along the lines of a philosophical theorization (the term was, after all, coined by Plato), but probably most of the interactions between religion and politics, even if they involve, loosely speaking, religious "ideas," are not theologically informed in the sense of theology as just defined. Is "political theology" meant to cover such phenomena too, and if so, isn't the "theological" part of the term in this case a misnomer? Or might the term refer to doing political theory from a particular theological or religious perspective, as for

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example from a Christian or a Muslim perspective? In practice, "political theology" seems to have emerged as a scholarly category with the work of Carl Schmitt, who used the term specifically in reference to how religious (and he had in mind specifically Christian) concepts continue to shape modern secular thought, even when modern secularists might be entirely unconscious of the fact and might want to deny it. But that is not always, or even usually, how subsequent scholars of "political theology" have used the term. Judging the category to be fundamentally incoherent, I therefore do not use it in the remainder of this essay. Specifically, this essay deals with how one man—Muhammad Iqbal—developed a political theory from a particular understanding of Islam's mission to humanity (not really, by the way, from a perspective of Muslim *theology*).

Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) had an enormous impact on modern Muslim political thought in South Asia and in the Middle East, on both Islamic "Modernist" and "Islamist" thought.[1] He was a leading public intellectual in pre-Partition India whose thoughts on politics were sought out by the most important political leaders of his day, in India and beyond, and whose political ideas were formative in the establishment of Pakistan after his death, but he was originally best known for his poetry and is today widely considered to be the greatest modern poet in each of two different languages, in Persian and in Urdu, the language of his native Punjab.[2] In this essay, I want to uncover the implicit foundations of Iqbal's political theory as suggested in his early Persian poems *The Secrets of the Self* (*Asrar-i-Khudi*) and *The Mysteries of Selflessness* (*Rumuz-i-Bekhudi*) and in his late, most fully developed philosophical work *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, composed in English.[3]

The Poetic Vision

The poems are filled with many powerful images and evocative metaphors, most of which we cannot address here. I instead give special attention to one in particular: the image of the mirror, a central Sufi metaphor relating especially to the condition of the

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soul that makes it capable of reflecting divine light; above all, the "heart" (*fuad* or *qalb*), the deepest center of the soul, must be cleaned and polished if the divine light is to shine brightly.[4] Although he was highly critical of popular forms of Sufism, Iqbal took what we might call high classical Sufism as the primary Islamic source for his ideas about love and spiritual knowledge, which play crucial roles in his ethical and political theory.[5] The "mirrors" should be understood in relation to the frequently referenced "secrets" and "mysteries" mentioned in the poem titles (a running theme in Sufi writings): with the help of the mirrors we can see into these; we acquire the kind of intuitive knowledge that transcends mere reason in the comparatively superficial Enlightenment sense.[6]

We find mirrors everywhere in the poems. Nature is a mirror. The prophets and saints are mirrors. Iqbal's primary spiritual guide in the poems, Jalaluddin Rumi—the great medieval Persian mystic—is a mirror. The self is a mirror, as is the community. Iqbal himself is a mirror, and all his poems are mirrors: in the dedication to *The Mysteries of Selflessness* he says it is his art to "fashion mirrors out of words" (*M*, 2). He suggests, moreover, that all these mirrors are meant to be mutually illuminating. More on Iqbal's mirrors is discussed below; here we may simply reflect that the point of mirrors is to help us see things, and as the poems are mirrors, and as education is a running theme in the poems, Iqbal apparently means us to understand each poem, and all of them together, as a kind of education.

Both *Secrets* and *Mysteries* begin with Iqbal's inspired passion, his burning quest for insight and his pained longing to help modern humanity, and the modern Muslim community in particular, recover their lost vitality. This beginning in passionate desire is not incidental to the message of the poems but is, rather, the heart of it. In the prologue to *The Secrets of the Self*, Rumi calls to Iqbal in a dream: "Up, and re-inspire every living soul! / Say 'Arise!' and by that word quicken the living!" Iqbal cries out in response: "Many a night I wept for Man's sake / That I might tear the veil from Life's mysteries / And extract the secret of Life's constitution" so that he

and those he weeps for could know how to live to the fullest. He will be able to fulfill this mission because he finds himself transformed by love: "My being was as an unfinished statue, / Uncomely, worthless, good for nothing. / Love chiseled me: I became a man and gained knowledge of the nature of the universe" (*S*, 9–10).

The "self" (*khudi*) is the theme of *The Secrets of the Self*, and the meaning of life is the unfolding of selves—of one's own self, of others', of God's. The source of the self's life is "desire" or "love," which gives birth to all that exists. Even reason is birthed from desire, and "science and art are servants of Life" as expressed through desire. Without desire there would be no seeking or striving, and no will to create. It is through desire that we discover the divine life in ourselves and are awakened to our purpose. It is desire that polishes the mirror of the soul, making it ready to receive the divine light. The self is "strengthened by Love.... By love it is made more lasting, / More living, more burning, more glowing. / From Love proceeds the radiance of its being / And the development of its unknown possibilities" (*S*, 19, 21).

In this as in so many other things, for the Muslim Muhammad is the chief inspiration and model. He is himself an object of love, and this love for Muhammad contributes greatly to kindling the love of God. Muhammad's own love for God was kindled in solitude, in private meditation and prayer. Iqbal calls on Muslims to "sojourn for a while on the Hira of the heart," alluding to the Prophet's habit of withdrawing to a cave on Mount Hira, near Mecca, for solitary spiritual retreat (*S*, 27). It was in such solitude that God gave Muhammad his revelations, commissioned him as a prophet, and made him his new "vicegerent" (*naib* or *mumin*), his representative and servant on earth. But though Muhammad was a singular prophet, the last and thus the "seal" of the prophets, the vicegerency was not for him alone but for the whole Muslim community. If Muhammad is the seal of the prophets, Muslims are meant to be "the Seal / Of all the peoples dwelling upon earth" in this precise sense of taking up the vicegerency (*M*, 1). If they have, as Iqbal thinks, neglected this calling, they can take it up again once properly disposed.[7]

The proper disposition requires a proper education, and this will involve three stages: obedience to divine law, self-control, and the vicegerency itself. In elaborating these steps, Iqbal employs the image of the camel, representing the serviceable self—the body, mind, will, and passions—which the individual must discipline if he is to fulfill his destiny as a creative actor, actualizing his own possibilities and those of his community through the creative use of personal powers and of nature. In the stage of obedience, the camel learns to serve and persevere in doing what is asked of it. It simply follows commands that it does not understand. At this stage, the person obeys the law of the Quran, but without much insight into its deeper meaning. But this is only a preparation for freedom. Obedience to the Quran is not the end but only the beginning.

Having trained the camel to obey the commands of another, the individual must in the next stage learn to direct it himself. Islam has provided pathways to this end with the Five Pillars: (1) the profession of faith ("There is no god but God, and Muhammad is his prophet"); (2) prayer; (3) fasting (especially during the month of Ramadan); (4) pilgrimage (to Mecca, as is required of every Muslim who can do it at least once before death); and (5) almsgiving. Concerning the First Pillar, Iqbal focuses on the initial phrase, "There is no god but God," typically understood as Iqbal does here to establish the principle of *Tawhid* or "Oneness," denoting not only monotheism but also the unique, singular personality and authority of God. Iqbal, like many Muslim interpreters, understands the Oneness of God's authority to imply a unique kind of freedom, a liberation from all merely human authorities. "[A Muslim's] heart is afraid of none but Allah," so he is no longer cowed by men (*S*, 56–57; *M*, 14–18). Remembrance of the First Pillar thus supplies the mental and spiritual fortitude required for achieving self-command. Prayer, however, is the heart of the faith: "The profession of Faith is the shell, but / prayer is the pearl." Prayer is both the path to intimacy with God and one of the great weapons for combating selfish desire. Fasting enables through its discipline mastery of the desires for pleasure and ease. Pilgrimage "destroys attachment to one's native land" in favor of the larger

community of believers. Almsgiving breaks the self free from the love of wealth and schools it in the "equality" of all (*S*, 57). All of the Pillars serve to subordinate the lower to the higher—the self to God, the lower self to the higher self, baser loves to nobler ones, the mere individual to the community.

Passing through the first two stages of education—obedience and self-control—the Muslim is ready for vicegerency: "If thou canst rule thy camel, thou wilt rule the world" (*S*, 58). Iqbal does not say much in *Secrets* about vicegerency except generally to suggest that in exercising it Muslims will fulfill God's creative purpose for humanity and will make a community on the pattern of the "perfect man" as represented by the great prophets and saints, and above all by Muhammad (*S*, 58–62).[8] Iqbal develops his vision of vicegerency at length in *The Mysteries of Selflessness*.

To understand the nature of vicegerency, we have first to understand the proper relation of the individual to the community. The vicegerency is a communal affair to which, however, the individuals who make up the community each make vital contributions. The individual needs the community for his own fulfillment; the community is lifeless apart from the vitality of its individual members. The individual person's "truest Self in the Community / Alone achieves fulfillment," Iqbal says, and "the Society is organized / As by comprising many such as he" (*M*, 5); "All [the self's] nature is / Entranced with individuality, / Yet only in Society he finds / Security and preservation . . . succor . . . in the war of life / In mutual bond, like workmen bent upon / A common task" (*M*, 8). But the bond of community is not merely utilitarian. As for Aristotle, the goal of society, wherein individual human beings find their fulfilment, is not merely living, but living well.[9] Unlike Aristotle, however, Iqbal understands living well in distinctly religious terms. The community will be bound together less by reason than by the "law of love" as revealed by Muhammad (*M*, 10).[10]

Reason, however, will play a leading role in the activity of ruling the earth, and Iqbal makes a point in both poems, and in *The Reconstruction* as well, to stress that reason or "intelligence" and love are, or should be, closely bound together. As a character puts

it in Iqbal's masterwork, *Javid-Nama*, "Only through love intelligence gets to know God, / love's labors find firm grounding in intelligence; / when love is companioned by intelligence / it has the power to design another world. / Then rise and draw the design of a new world, / mingle together love with intelligence" (*JN*, 58).[11] Love is the foundation of the self and the community and the driving force of their action, but love's instrument in the process of creation is intelligence.

How does the community that is to exercise the vicegerency come into being? It emerges from the influence of great spiritual leaders like the prophets. Iqbal summarizes the process this way:

> God discovers a man pure of heart / In His good time, who in a single word [revelation] / A volume shall rehearse; / a minstrel he Whose piercing music gives new life to dust. / Through him the unsubstantial atom glows / Radiant with life…Out of his single breath / Two hundred bodies quicken…that so Duality Expiring, Unity may come to birth…So unto one goal / Drawing each on, he circumscribes the feet / Of all within the circle of one Law, / Reschools them in God's wondrous Unity, / And teaches them the habit and the use / Of self-surrender to the Will Divine. (*M*, 9–10)

The man of God, then, communicates the divine revelation, and with or through it the divine life, to whomever will receive it. He thereby begins the process of education Iqbal has described, teaching through God's law, inculcating habitual obedience to God's will. At the core of the message revealed is the divine Unity, the *Tawhid*, and the outstanding characteristic of the community formed by accepting this message and obeying the related "one Law" is a corresponding unity of its own.

Iqbal elaborates this point in relation to the *shahada*, the Muslim profession of faith: "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is his prophet." The *shahada* is the foundation of the community's identity. Iqbal spoke before of the traditional Five

Pillars of Islam. Now he speaks of the First Pillar as itself composed of two pillars, the two halves of the *shahada*. The first of these, "the Unity of God," is the deepest foundation. That belief, when its significance is truly grasped, sets hearts ablaze so that "those steely mirrors [of souls are] liquefied / By Faith's consuming flame" (*M*, 12), and they reflect more perfectly God's perfect unity. They become one in service, "one in thought," one in "goal and purpose," in "form," in "fashion," "sharing one speech, one spirit and one heart." The unity of God is the "measure of [their] dream" for the community they will be (*M*, 13), the community's regulative principle.

The second pillar of the *shahada*, which Iqbal designates as the principle of "Apostleship," relates to vicegerency. Here he interprets apostleship expansively to include not only Muhammad's personal apostleship but also that of all the prophets who preceded him and, crucially, of the Muslim community itself as it continues through history. The community is united not only in its members' belief in God's oneness but also in their common mission to act as God's apostles or vicegerents. Whereas the first pillar of the *shahada* concerns the *belief* that binds Muslims together and shapes their singular way of life, the second pillar concerns their intended status as God-like world creators, representing God in the world through creative *action*.

Iqbal, again, intended all his poems, as well as certain figures, ideas, and images presented within them, to be mirrors and meant all these to be mutually illuminating. How are *The Secrets of the Self* and *The Mysteries of Selflessness* mirrors to each other? The themes of these poems as referenced in the titles suggest a paradox. In *Secrets* Iqbal asserted that the true way to life is the way of self-affirmation and actualization of the self's possibilities. But in *The Mysteries of Selflessness* he stresses the element of personal sacrifice in the religious life, sacrificing self to and for the community. There was in fact already a paradox about the formation of the self in *Secrets* in that the way to self-affirmation depended essentially on surrendering the self to God. How can self and selflessness, self-affirmation and surrender, be compatible, and not only

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compatible but necessarily interdependent? Iqbal puts the matter in *Mysteries* in terms of pride and humility: "Preserving self, staking and making self, / Nourishing pride in meek humility, [the divine "Light"] is a flame that sets a fire alight, / A spark that overshoots the blazing torch. . . . While pride of self / Pulls its own way, humility is not born; / Pull pride together, and humility / Comes into being." The result of this divine work is at once to make the self free and to bind it to community, where its strength is multiplied even as it humbly submits to service (*M*, 7). This is how the self is fulfilled in community. Thus self and community become mirrors: "Self" is "known . . . from Selflessness" (*M*, 6), and community becomes visible as a completion of individual selves. When the fire of divine light in the individual self "overshoots the blazing torch" to light up the community, as it does paradigmatically with the prophet, the result is, in fact, the formation of a communal self, a unified body of believers acting as one.

We have here a spiritual parallel to the liberal idea of society. Just as in liberal theory the union of wills makes a collective person empowered to act on behalf of consenting individuals to augment *their* power, so the agreement of believers on the fundamental truth of divine unity and the common mission of vicegerency empowers the community of the faithful for execution of the mission and facilitates the vitality and growth of individual members. Iqbal's conception is also something very like the Christian idea of the body of Christ bearing the divine life that makes use of divinely endowed "gifts" of individual believers, who working together make the community of faith function as one body (1 Cor. 12). That was, indeed, along with the conception of a covenant to which individual members were mutually committed, the oft forgotten background to liberal theory. Whether liberal principles and social relations can be quite adequate without this kind of spiritual foundation, without a substantive life underlying the abstract principles and legal formalities—Iqbal thinks not, as we shall see—is a question that merits further consideration.

Iqbal's vision of Islamic society looks like a spiritualized version of liberal society in more obvious ways as well. He says that the

"purpose of Muhammad's mission was to found freedom, equality, and brotherhood among all mankind" (*M*, 21), anticipating the French Revolutionary motto *liberté*, *égalité*, *fraternité*. Muhammad was a liberator from tyranny and a restorer of "rights." Believers in Muhammad's message become equal "brothers." These brothers, as in liberal theory, are covenanted in community, each becoming a "trustee to the whole," while the community at large is a "sure base" for the individual (*M*, 24). There is, however, a double equality among the believers: as brothers equal in rights and responsibilities and in their standing equally "before the tribunal of the Koran," where "master and slave are one" (*M*, 25).

The freedom of Muslims comes from love: "Love maketh all things possible to us" (*M*, 26). Their freedom, more specifically, is established by the love of God, who makes the community, though rooted in the material world, to transcend space and time. Muhammad was "in the world, but…not of the world";[12] so with the Muslim community. It is a global community with "the sacred charge to civilize" the world—in this sense it is very much in the world—but as a spiritual community it is not bound by "clay and water" (the body) (*M*, 30), nor to any national territory. As the true Muslim community is unbounded by space, it is also unbounded by time, since it was created by covenant with eternal God and its "survival" has been "divinely promised."[13] Its social contract, so to speak, was established by Muhammad's commitment, and that of his followers, to submit to the One God. ("Islam" literally means "submission," specifically submission to the One God whose will Muhammad presented most clearly.) "Islam's Community," in short, "is a divine / Undying marvel, having origin / In that great compact, *Yea, Thou art our Lord*" (*M*, 35).[14] Such a compact cannot be broken. History in fact shows the community's endurance: it survived the Mongols' devastating sack of Baghdad, that jewel of Islam's civilizational golden age, and lived to "blossom" again. Rome, Greece, and Egypt have all "failed in the great test of Time…Yet still the voice of the muezzin rings / Throughout the earth, still the Community / Of World-Islam maintains its ancient forms" (*M*, 35–36).

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If Muslims are free, theirs is an *ordered* liberty. Their community is specifically ordered by the law of the Quran. "The organization of the community," reads the subheading here, "is only possible through Law, and…the Law of the Muhammadan community is the Koran."[15] (Note: not the legal code of *sharia* exactly, but the Quran.) The perfection or maturity of the community is established from following this law. Obedience to the law, done in the right spirit, fosters wisdom, love, faith, and a distinctive order of life (*M*, 42). Through the "discipline" of the law, Muslims derive "good communal character" (*M*, 45), specifically a character of "lovingkindness; with both hand and tongue / [the Muslim] strives to be a mercy in the world" (*M*, 47).

A well-ordered community, Iqbal suggests, presupposes unity—the foundational principle of Islam and the basis of brotherhood—and a prerequisite of unity is having a common focus. Embodied spirits as human beings are, the community needs a visible as well as an invisible focal point. The invisible focal point for Muslims is the community's common purpose, "the preservation and propagation of Unitarianism," of the principle of *Tawhid* (*M*, 54). The visible point is provided by the Kaaba, the structure in Mecca supposed to have been made into a shrine to Allah by Abraham, and the literal center of global Muslim worship. On *hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca, Muslims from all over the world join in "congregation" in "circumambulation of its shrine," cementing their "oneness" in this common ritual act (*M*, 51). In addition to circling the Kaaba the pilgrims, facing the structure, kneel around it in prayerful "prostration," and in doing so *together* draw great strength (*M*, 52). (Indeed, Muslims around the world, wherever they are, pray in its direction—the *qibla*—during the appointed hours of daily prayer.)

Iqbal has painted an inspiring picture of Muslim community, but the context of his doing so was, as he saw it, a great modern spiritual crisis of Islam. *Mysteries* opens with a dedication "To the Muslim Community" in which Iqbal laments that Muslims have forgotten themselves, that they are "a people no more intimate / With its own soul," and he wants to recall to them their true

identity (*M*, 3). They can see themselves again through the mirrors Iqbal provides. In the *Javid-Nama*—Iqbal's greatest mirror-poem—the spirit of Rumi appears to Zinda-Rud (Iqbal's nickname), whom he will lead through the heavens to God, "upon [Rumi's] lips the hidden secret of Being…his speech was as a suspended mirror / knowledge commingled with an inward fire" (*JN*, 29). Rumi speaks to Zinda-Rud of three mirrors, three "witnesses," of life that he should look into: "The first witness is self-consciousness, / to behold oneself in one's own light; / the second witness is the consciousness of another, / to behold oneself in another's light; / the third witness is the consciousness of God's essence, / to behold oneself in the light of God's essence.…Life is to attain one's own station, / life is to see the Essence without a veil." The maturity or fulfillment of the self is a kind of intimate seeing and being seen. Zinda-Rud must ascend to God, meeting exemplary human beings along the way, in order to see himself in the mirror of these superlative others. "What is Ascension?" Rumi asks rhetorically: "The desire for a witness, / an examination face-to-face of a witness— / a competent witness…fairer it is to increase one's glow, / fairer it is to test oneself before the sun; / then chisel anew the crumbled form; / make proof of yourself; / be a true being!" (*JN*, 29–30).[16]

The reader will recall that the mirror of the heart is polished by love, and love is the key to everything here. "Love is immersed in the beauty of creation," Iqbal writes, "and boldly investigates the whole of Being" (*JN*, 93). Ultimately, the spiritual lover longs to see God himself in all his majestic brilliance. Zinda-Rud asks Mansur Hallaj, another great mystic, "What is the beholding of…God?" Hallaj answers, "First, to implant on one's soul the image of God, / then next to implant it on the world; / when the soul's image is perfected in the world, / to behold the commons is to behold God" (*JN*, 100). We remember Rumi's "three witnesses" and begin to see "the whole of Being" take shape as love, inspired by spiritual intuition, generates the creative self and community, and the image of God is reflected in these two mirrors. Thus awakened self and community, "chiseled by love," make God's image visible to all.[17]

Iqbal's personal mission is to restore Islam in the modern world by helping Muslims "learn / The mystery of ardor…/ And make your lodgment in the burning flame; / Lay Love's foundation-stone in your own soul, / And to the Prophet pledge anew your troth" (*M*, 1). He wants, then, to show how Muslims, thus renewed, can meet the challenges of the modern world and take up again their destined role of intelligent, creative leadership of humanity, manifesting the divine attributes through ever new labors of love.

Philosophical Elaboration

The foundations of Iqbal's ethical and political theory suggested in *The Secrets of the Self* and *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, we can extrapolate, are transcendentally inspired love and insight as the deep sources of social order and creativity; a unified order developed through obedience to divine law and command of spiritual resources; and vicegerency, or the creative, intelligent work of believers as representatives and carriers of the divine life as it flows through history. Of course, in the medium of poetry, even "philosophical" poetry like Iqbal's,[18] such matters can be presented only compactly; their meaning cannot be explored there in-depth. The real value of Iqbal's poetry is to awaken the love and intuition required to move such an exploration and to motivate action. A fully adequate grasp of the poetic insights requires a systematic philosophical elaboration, and for that we must look to his late work, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

Iqbal gives less attention in *Reconstruction* to the theme of love, his purpose there being to provide a dispassionate rational or "scientific" account of Islam. The focus in *Reconstruction* is rather on the meaning of *faith*, which Iqbal conceives as potentially productive of "religious knowledge." The functional equivalent of what he calls "love" in the poems is, however, clearly evident as the driving force of human development.

In *Reconstruction*, Iqbal describes the most fundamental philosophical questions thus: "What is the character of the general structure of the universe in which we live? Is there a permanent element in the constitution of this universe? How are we related to

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it? What place to we occupy in it, and what is the kind of conduct that befits the place we occupy?" (*R*, v). The basic questions, then, are those of order, permanence and change, and the nature of human "participation" in the "larger whole" of reality (*R*, 5). We may consider Iqbal's answer to these questions as his stab at uncovering what he called in *Secrets* "the secret of Life's constitution" and in *Javid-Nama* "the hidden secret of Being."

Iqbal's philosophical view of reality is much inspired by Henri Bergson's. Like Bergson, Iqbal sees the universe—"Being"—as an expanding process of creation in which human beings can order nature and their own lives in ever fresh forms of intelligent adaptation and improvement.[19] Unlike Bergson, however, Iqbal wants to stress that human creative activity unfolds within a permanent structure of reality in which a personal eternal God reigns over all. There are, moreover, permanent features of human nature and permanent patterns of right living under God, such that human life should retain a permanent form even as human potentiality creatively unfolds. God himself changes in the sense of constantly doing new things, even as he remains unchangeable in his essence and his essential attributes. As the "divine presence" is both in time and out of time, earth-bound human beings through participation in Him are a mix of time and timelessness, so that man may partake of immortality even in this mortal life. But if human beings are not entirely *of* this world, they are emphatically *in* it and have been tasked by God to improve it through their creative action.

The constitution of Life or Being consists for Iqbal, as indicated in the poems, of an arrangement of selves, most importantly one's own self, the selves of other human beings, and the self of God. The selves composing the universe are constantly changing, re-forming, and reconfiguring, and yet a permanent hierarchy of being endures (implicitly), with God on the top, then human community, then individual human persons in rank order, and below human beings the animals, plants, and inanimate matter, much as conceived by ancient Western thinkers.[20] At the same time, human beings should continually work to re-form themselves

and nature within this structure for the betterment of the human condition, both spiritually and materially, a process that might continue indefinitely.

But how does Iqbal know all this? The persuasive power of his vision will hinge on the extent to which he successfully presents faith as a source of knowledge that is consistent with and corroborated by reason. Iqbal's is a kind of "mystic philosophy," in which the philosopher's conceptual thinking is derivative from and guided by spiritual intuition. This spiritual intuition involves a kind of rational seeing—symbolized in the poem by the mirrors—and has a certain rational content. Philosophy and faith therefore go together. Philosophy, Iqbal elaborates, is driven by a spirit of "free inquiry. It suspects all authority. Its function is to trace the uncritical assumptions of human thought to their hiding places." But this pursuit of pure, verifiable knowledge eventually reveals "the incapacity of pure reason to reach the ultimate reality." Thus the need for faith. Faith, however, "is more than mere feeling. It has something like a cognitive content" that can constitute "general truths" (*R*, 1). Grasp of ultimate reality depends on the intuitive insight yielded by ascent to the divine presence, and therefore the great mystics like Rumi are more helpful for getting at ultimate foundations and ends than the usual representatives of philosophy. Yet philosophy, conceived as critical analysis, has its own essential contribution to make in the establishment of knowledge and its own unique domain of rational authority even in relation to religion, though that authority is limited. "Philosophy," as Iqbal puts it, "has jurisdiction to judge religion, but what is to be judged is of such a nature that it will not submit to the jurisdiction of philosophy except on its own terms" (*R*, 2). This formulation is similar to that of Leo Strauss, when the latter observes, "Philosophy demands that revelation should establish its claim before the tribunal of human reason, but revelation as such refuses to acknowledge that tribunal."[21] In contrast to Strauss, however, Iqbal does not conceive philosophy and faith to be fundamentally in conflict. Iqbal describes the precise relationship between these two sources of knowledge, as he sees it, thus:

> Nor is there any reason to suppose that thought [reason or intelligence] and [spiritual] intuition are essentially opposed to each other. They spring up from the same root and complement each other… Both seek visions of the same Reality which reveals itself to them in accordance with their function in life. In fact, intuition, as Bergson rightly says, is only a higher kind of intellect... [This is the sense in which Iqbal's philosophy could be described as "mystic philosophy."] In its deeper movement … thought is capable of reaching an immanent Infinite in whose self-unfolding movement the various finite concepts are merely moments. (*R*, 2–5)

Thought, Iqbal continues, is in its very nature "dynamic" and is itself a "participation" in the life of the "larger whole" of reality, including the "infinite." But this dynamic participation is fully activated and fulfilled only by experience of divine presence: "[Thought's] movement becomes possible only because of the implicit presence in its finite individuality of the infinite, which keeps alive within it the flame of aspiration and sustains it in its endless pursuit" (*R*, 5). This is the "love" of Iqbal's poems.

So Iqbal recognizes that philosophy, in the sense of "free inquiry," must not be restricted in the name of religious imperatives and at the same time insists on the prerogatives of religion as providing an access to ultimate reality that is simply not available to philosophy so conceived. But this difference between philosophy and religion should neither make philosophy anti-religious nor religion anti-philosophical. They should recognize their need for each other to obtain a complete and reliable view of reality in all its various dimensions. Any adequate philosophy must in the final analysis be religious, and religious knowledge ought to be "scientific" in the broad philosophical sense as well as in grappling with the latest scientific discoveries and innovations.

So what would properly philosophical and scientific religious thought entail? In developing the specifically religious side of the equation, Iqbal gives priority, as might be expected, to what the

Quran has to say on these matters. One point he stresses is that the Quran suggests an "empirical" approach to understanding reality, and he conceives the process as one of experience and symbolization. The Quran is rife with exhortations to consider God's "signs." God has given us in nature and in ourselves, as Q. 3:190 characteristically puts it, "signs for men of understanding."[22] The Quran's own language, then, suggests a divine call to contemplation and reflection. The Muslim's obedience to God is not to be an unthinking obedience, and obedience is in any case, as Iqbal has told us, only a beginning, not an end. The experience of God's "signs" or "symbols" includes both sense perception and perception of the "heart" (the *fuad* or *qalb*), the latter of which enables us to grasp not only the forms but also the life of nature, and not only these but the realities *beyond* nature (*R*, 13).[23]

How do we know religious experiences and interpretations of reality are sound? Beyond the direct, intuitive experience of the mystics, Iqbal offers two additional, more widely accessible tests, "the intellectual test and the pragmatic test." By the "intellectual test," Iqbal means "critical interpretation, without any presuppositions of human experience, generally with a view to discover whether our interpretation leads us ultimately to a reality of the same character as is revealed by religious experience." The "pragmatic test" judges religious experience "by its fruits." Iqbal adds that the intellectual test "is applied by the philosopher," the pragmatic test "by the prophet" (*R*, 23).

Iqbal identifies three levels of human experience—matter, life, and mind or consciousness—and examines each in detail. Only at the level of matter can modern science help us grasp reality. Both life and consciousness, as Bergson had argued, are beyond its ken. The natural sciences reveal only the "mechanism" of nature. They cannot explain the vital, creative impulse that courses through the mechanism, and above all they can tell us nothing definite about the "end" or "purpose" of things (*R*, 34–35) or "the *ultimate* nature of existence" (*R*, 39, italics added).

Among the levels of experience "conscience experience is [a] privileged case of existence" because it puts us in "absolute contact

with Reality." On that level human perception is not, as with sense perception, "superficial and external" but "internal, intimate, and profound." The meaning of conscious existence is revealed in the movement of the self in its inner life. The self "moves from the center outwards." It has an "efficient side" by which it moves us in "the world of space," but also a more subtle "appreciative side" that we notice "only in the moments of profound meditation, when the efficient self is in abeyance," in which "we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner center of experience." It is there that we sense the movement of Being itself (*R*, 39–40), the expansive life Iqbal identifies as divine. It is there also that we sense the trajectory of our "destiny" (*R*, 41–42). This destiny, we learn later, is not a fixed, predetermined fate but an indeterminate unfolding of possibilities through time among which we may freely choose. God determines our destiny only in determining the range of possibilities, which from the human perspective are endless in scope; *we* determine our destiny by which possibilities we choose to explore and actualize.

The "real function" of reason or thought in making sense of conscious experience, Iqbal says, is "to synthesize the elements of experience by employing categories suitable to the various levels which experience presents" (*R*, 43). We might say, as the ancient Western thinkers put it, that rational thought is one of the primary ways we participate in the order of being or, as Iqbal puts it, "the scale of being" (*R*, 46). Here is the "constitution of being" mentioned before. Among the realities experience presents, the "highest" reality in the scale is God. God's character is revealed in part through nature (*R*, 47), through reading God's natural "signs," and this is a work of rational reflection. But God can be known *directly* only through intuition, a direct "seeing," as Iqbal symbolized it in the poems, enabled by a direct encounter with the divine presence. "Thought" is "essentially symbolic in character"; "experience" allows a "direct revelation" and a more direct participation.

Iqbal's conclusion on reality as a whole is that "the ultimate Reality is a rationally directed creative life," life as "an organizing principle of unity." This is *Tawhid* in action. Ultimately, to be

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precise, reality must be understood in terms of "ego" or self and life as a divine "centralizing ego." The inner quest for ultimate reality, then, if pursued to the end, culminates in "prayer" (*R*, 50–51); or rather, the quest is *itself* a kind of incipient prayer culminating in a conscious awareness of and engagement with divine life (*R*, 75). Iqbal seems to understand the quest of faith along the lines of St. Anselm's *fides quaerens intellectum*, "faith seeking understanding"— seeking understanding, specifically, of *itself* as an experience of divine presence.

Iqbal has much to say about the nature of God and of prayer, but the key points for our purposes are that God is revealed as "a rationally directed creative will" and "the ultimate ground of all experience" (*R*, 52), and that we are fully grounded in Him and thereby have our own rationally directed creative wills fully activated and rightly directed ultimately through prayer (see *R*, 84–85). We must understand, however, that prayer is much more than merely making requests and giving thanks. It is an orientation of the self that culminates in "spiritual illumination" and participation in God's life, a "concrete living experience of God" (*R*, 73–74).

In a sense, divine revelation—which, note, is not restricted to the words of the Quran—is the beginning and end of knowledge and even of existence. "The world," Iqbal tells us, "in all its details, from the mechanical movement of what we call the atom of matter to the free movement of thought in the human ego, is the self-revelation of the 'Great I am' [and] we live and move and have our being in the perpetual flow of Divine life" (*R*, 60).[24] Observe: God is an individual person, an "I"—an "ego" in Iqbal's terminology— "the perfect individual," and his individuality, his utter uniqueness, is his leading characteristic (*R*, 52). But, paradoxically, human beings find *their own* individuality and uniqueness *in Him*, in his unfolding life. The human selves, individually and communally, must first become grounded in the divine ground of existence, and then they are inspired to pursue their own unique possibilities, their destinies, which become fully visible only from within the divine flow.

Failure to achieve destiny, of course, is always possible and is, if history is a guide, perhaps the most likely result. Iqbal counsels, however, against either optimism or pessimism regarding human prospects. There is no guarantee that individuals will fulfill their destiny, so life has a tragic dimension, and there will be no man-made utopia. (Iqbal here seems to moderate the exuberant expectation of world transformation suggested in the early poems.) It is, nonetheless, both rational (for making sense of human experience) and virtuous (in requiring the courage to be patient through life's uncertainties and hardships) to have faith in good's ultimate triumph over evil in God's good time. The proper attitude toward life consistent with what we know is "neither optimism nor pessimism [but] meliorism, which recognizes a growing universe and is animated by the hope of man's eventual victory over evil" (*R*, 67).

We have been discussing what Iqbal called the "intellectual test" of religious experience, applied by the philosopher. We now turn to the "pragmatic test," which Iqbal has said is applied by "the prophet." The philosopher wants simply to understand reality. His role is indispensable because adequate understanding of reality requires "free inquiry" and conceptual categorization. But conceptual knowledge is relatively superficial (*R*, 154) and does not get to the inner stuff of reality; moreover, the business of life is not only intellectual but also practical. A prophet both has a superior kind of knowledge through special revelation and is concerned to apply his knowledge directly in action. Because the prophet is practically rather than philosophically oriented, we should judge his religious experience less by the intellectual test and more by the pragmatic. Specifically, we should judge it by "the type of manhood that he has created and the cultural world that has sprung out of the spirit of his message" (*R*, 104). Iqbal defines a prophet as "a type of mystic consciousness in which [the] 'unitary experience' [characteristic of mystical experience] tends to overflow its boundaries and seeks opportunities of redirecting and refashioning the forces of collective life." The philosophic consciousness tends toward abstract thinking and conceptual "systems." The "prophetic consciousness," by contrast, is "a mode of economizing individual thought and

choice by providing ready-made judgements, choices, and ways of action" (*R*, 105). Such ready-made judgments, choices, and ways of action make the mystic's experience and insight partially accessible to ordinary people.[25] A prophet, moreover, lays down for believers specific practices to nourish the experience and make it practically effective.

The sources of knowledge just described—the mystical and the philosophical—begin to touch on politics in relation to the development of civilization. Iqbal implies that the foundations of civilization are a combination of knowledge and habit. People cannot advance without knowledge. That knowledge cannot become socially effective unless embodied in common habits. It is important for the full flowering of culture and civilization, Iqbal suggests, that philosophy or science and religion inform each other. A philosophy out of tune with the spirit will give a deficient view of reality and detach from and undermine trust in the foundations of vital existence. A rationally untenable religion cannot win respect from the intelligent people who must direct creative activity.

Iqbal's focus in *Reconstruction* is on specifically *Islamic* civilization's foundation in knowledge. The Prophet Muhammad possessed mystical knowledge and made it practically effective, but he did not map out and systematize that knowledge as such. This was done specifically by the Sufis (*R*, 107). The Sufis had a massive influence on Muslim culture through their saintly examples, but they also shaped Muslim intellectual culture through their development of a body of mystical knowledge. Once this body of distinctively religious knowledge was weighed philosophically or scientifically by the kinds of tests Iqbal is applying, as it was by the great medieval thinkers al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, it became a cornerstone of high Muslim civilization.

Concerning Muslims' knowledge of nature, Iqbal argues that Islamic religion lends itself to highly concrete thinking and that this orientation was a critical factor in the development by Muslim thinkers of the natural sciences. He takes this "empirical" orientation to be more in line with the spirit of Islam than the abstract rationalism of the Greek-inspired Muslim philosophers (*R*, 110–11,

119–20). This empirical orientation produced, Iqbal thinks, a superior understanding among Muslim thinkers (compared to the Greeks) of space and time. Their superior grasp of the time dimension facilitated, in turn, a superior grasp of history. The superlative example here is Ibn Khaldun, whose great work *Muqaddimah* Toynbee called "undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever been created by any mind in any time or place [and] the most comprehensive and illuminating analysis of how human affairs work that has been made anywhere."[26] Iqbal argues that Khaldun essentially established the discipline of "historical criticism" (*R*, 117–22).

Unfortunately, Muslims eventually lost all this, so that in the modern world they have, as Iqbal put it in the poems, lost themselves. They have lost touch with the vital religious experience and religious knowledge nourished by Sufism and articulated philosophically by the likes of Ghazali. They have lost even the memory of their vital traditions and their achievements in philosophy, science, and history and even, largely, the capacity for these disciplines. And as a result of all this, they have lost civilization. How can they get it back? How can they take up again their destined role as God's vicegerents on earth?

According to Iqbal, they must, first, recover the kind of vital religion he has symbolized and analyzed, must get regrounded in the ground of existence—in God (*R*, 123). They must, next, recover the principle of *Tawhid*, or unity—restore the original oneness of vision, the common focus on the divine "centralizing ego," and orient their lives intellectually, emotionally, and practically in line with that focus (*R*, 124). In its human implications, Iqbal explains, *Tawhid* means "equality, solidarity, and freedom" (*R*, 130)—that is, believers are equal in submission to God, unified in that submission and in love for the One God and his creation, and free from other submissions and, potentially, in being moved to pursue the opportunities that show themselves in the flow of the divine life. Muslims must learn to appropriately reconcile permanence and change, understanding that "eternal principles" are available to "regulate [their] collective life" but that within the framework of

those principles are infinite "possibilities of change" for the growth of knowledge and the enhancement of life (*R*, 124). In relation to the possibilities of change, Muslims need to understand "the principle of movement in the structure of Islam," which took concrete form historically in the practice of "*ijtihad*," or independent judgment concerning the development, requirements, and appropriate applications of Islamic law (*R*, 128ff.). Iqbal condemns the common view of Muslim religious scholars (the "mullahs") that "the door of *ijtihad*" is closed, that independent judgment about God's law is no longer necessary or even legitimate because the schools of Islamic law have established the final form of the law (*R*, 150). The door of *ijtihad*, Iqbal suggests, needs to be thrown wide open and permanently kept open so that the law always facilitates rather than impedes the endlessly unfolding possibilities of life. Political arrangements, church–state relations, arts and sciences, all need to be sufficiently flexible for that purpose.

In relation to political arrangements, Iqbal takes up the question of the caliphate. The original Muslim caliphate was simply that region of the world that lay under the rule of a caliph, a successor to the Prophet Muhammad, who represented and ruled over the whole Muslim community. In time, after the conquests and conversions of many non-Arab peoples, the caliphate was broken up into different nations and empires and became something like Christendom was to Christians—not a single political order but more like a civilizational unit bound less by political or even cultural ties than by simple belief. There was still a caliph, but he was now a political ruler only in his own nation or empire and, depending on the relative strength and preferences of the caliph, sometimes not even there. His role as leader of the Muslim world became primarily symbolic, and even as a religious figure his opinions did not carry the weight of a pope's. To understand the implications of someone's calling for "restoring the caliphate," it is thus necessary to ask what version of the caliphate that person has in mind.

Iqbal is not a Salafist.[27] He does not want to restore the caliphate in its original form. He does not even insist there must be a

formal caliphate at all. For guidance on this subject he turns to Ibn Khaldun, who mentioned three views about a universal caliphate: one that it was established by divine command and is therefore "indispensable"; a second that it was created as a matter of "expediency" and therefore not imperative in principle; and a third that there is no need for a caliphate at all (*R*, 132). Iqbal agrees with Khaldun's conclusion that the original establishment and the development of the caliphate were historically contingent and therefore that it is neither necessary nor, given radically different circumstances, desirable to restore some earlier form of caliphate. At the same time, Iqbal does like the *idea* of the caliphate as a unified community of all Muslims, and he even recommends some kind of political union of Muslims worldwide. He envisions as an ultimate goal a kind of "family of republics" bound by "a common [Islamic] spiritual aspiration." For him, politically speaking, "Islam is neither Nationalism nor Imperialism but a League of Nations which recognizes artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizons of its members" (*R*, 134).[28]

What would these "republics" look like internally? In what sense would they be "Islamic" republics? How would non-Muslims fit in? We have seen that Iqbal conceived of Islam as affirming certain principles associated with liberalism, such as the values of freedom and equality, so we might expect his Islamic republic would resemble a liberal order, and in many respects it no doubt would. But he did find liberalism wanting in some crucial respects. He says in *Reconstruction* that he "heartily welcome[s] the liberal movement in modern Islam," but he notes that "[l]iberalism has a tendency to act as a force of disintegration" and that this has included "a gradual displacement [in Europe] of the universal ethics of Christianity by systems of national ethics," a development that in Iqbal's view paved the way for the horrors of World War I (*R*, 137–38). (This point might apply doubly to the horrors of World War II, which Iqbal did not live to see.) Iqbal's use of the term "republic" is not rhetorical window-dressing, as with the "Soviet Republics" of the USSR or the "Republic of North Korea." He

means it in the usual Western sense of representative government. "The republican form of government" thus understood, he argues, "is not only thoroughly consistent with the spirit of Islam, but has also become a necessity in view of the new forces that are set free in the world of Islam" (*R*, 132). The spirit of Islam is also consistent with specifically *liberal* democracy in its affirmation of individual freedom and equality (*R*, 135–36). But as important as such liberal values are, they need a substantive grounding that liberalism in itself cannot provide. "Humanity needs three things today" that none of the modern political ideologies can provide: "a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual, and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis" (*R*, 150–51). As an abstract theory, liberalism cannot provide such spiritual foundations, and whatever sources may once have given spiritual substance to liberal forms have dried up—liberalism has been thoroughly despiritualized. "Modern Europe has, no doubt, built [noble] idealistic systems," Iqbal observes, "but experience shows that truth revealed through pure [critical] reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring" (*R*, 151). It was Iqbal's life mission to reawaken that living conviction as the indispensable ground for a sound interpretation of reality, for "spiritual emancipation," and for grasping the universal principles that should guide the use of emancipated powers.

Conclusion

The full practical import of Iqbal's vision cannot be understood apart from a careful study of his activity in Indian public life. My aim in the foregoing, however, has simply been to uncover the implicit foundations of his political thought, a grasp of which should help scholars to more adequately assess the significance his political rhetoric, practical proposals, and actions as a public figure. Considering Iqbal's political theory as a whole, we have a vision of the human person and of human community activated and fulfilled by the ardent love of God, his created world, and humanity and the practical application of faith and love through

the exercise of reason to maximally advance human potential. That love itself is inspired by religious experience—the "inner experience" of God—and the "intuition" of spiritual truths through faith, which can be in some measure corroborated philosophically and by their practical effects. Philosophy and faith, or reason and revelation, together turn out to be, along with love, the deep foundations of civilization. Indeed, philosophy, faith, and love without works, one might say, are dead. The creative intelligence of divine life must for its fulfillment be expressed and is supremely expressed in this world through human creation, through humanity's continuous creative ordering of life to make the most of ever-changing circumstances. It is a powerful vision, and reflecting on it might help us think more fruitfully about Islam's best potential in the modern world.

Notes

1. Modernists have sought to modernize the Muslim world while simultaneously reviving Muslim religious devotion and maintaining a distinctive Muslim identity over against the West. Islamists have likewise sought Islamic religious revival and adopted certain aspects of modernization (such as technological innovations) but have typically interpreted Islam more narrowly and rigidly, been more ambivalent about modern democracy, and taken a more aggressively hostile attitude toward the West. Above all, Islamists are distinctive for making Islam into a political ideology and ideological movement, insisting on an "Islamic state" based on supposed *sharia* principles as the goal of Islam. It would be fair to categorize Modernists as more "liberal" in the Western sense and Islamists as more "conservative" in terms of lifestyle, but Islamists are also more radical in their ideological orientation in that they want to overturn, one way or another, allegedly non-Islamic states in favor of *sharia* states. Despite his endorsement of what might loosely be called "Islamic politics," and despite Islamists' occasional embrace of him as one of their own, Iqbal really has much more in common with the Modernists than with the Islamists.
2. There are a number of good English-language studies on Iqbal's life and thought. The best short introduction is Mustansir Mir, *Iqbal* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. and Oxford University Press India in association with the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, 2006). The

best introduction to Iqbal's specifically religious thought is Annemarie Schimmel's meticulous *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963). For a good (but less scholarly) recent biography, see Zafar Anjum, *Iqbal: The Life of a Poet, Philosopher and Politician* (n.p.: Random House India, 2014). For a short overview of Iqbal's political life, see Riaz Hussain, *The Politics of Iqbal: A Study of His Political Thoughts and Action* (Lahore: Islamic Book Service, 1977). Iqbal Singh Sevea's *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) provides a longer, more scholarly account of Iqbal's political theory, but it is rather narrowly focused on Iqbal's views on nationalism. Rich essay-length assessments and reassessments of Iqbal's thought can be found in Chad Hillier and Basit Bilal Koshul, eds., *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

3. The *Secrets of the Self (Asrar-i-Khudi): A Philosophical Poem*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1915; rpt. 2013); *The Mysteries of Selflessness (Rumuz-i-Bekhudi)*, trans. A. J. Arberry (Kuwait: Dar al-Islamiyya, 1918); and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, new rev. ed. (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 2018). I rely on the English translations of the poems, originally in Persian. Iqbal composed *Reconstruction* in English. Hereafter *Secrets* is cited as *S*; *Mysteries* as *M*; and *Reconstruction* as *R*.
4. Sufism is Islamic mysticism. For a good historical overview and analysis of Sufism, see Carl W. Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 2016); for a more intimate perspective of Islamic mystical experience, see Annemarie Schimmel's classic *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975; rpt. with foreword, 2011).
5. As Iqbal understood it, "The function of Sufism in Islam has been to systematize mystic experience." Regarding the distinction between what we might call "higher" and "lower" Sufism, he said, "The masses of Islam [had come to be] swayed by the kind of mysticism which blinked actualities, enervated the people and kept them steeped in all kinds of superstition. From its high state as a force of spiritual education mysticism had fallen down to a mere means of exploiting the ignorance and the credulity of the people." *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, 4th ed., ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1995), 207, 231.

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6. Iqbal speaks of "mystical intuition as a source of knowledge" allowing "direct contact with the ultimate Reality" and appealing to "a standard higher than intellect itself." *Speeches, Writings and Statements*, 181, 78.
7. In Iqbal's understanding, every individual is potentially a vicegerent, and participating in vicegerency constitutes the fulfillment of the self, of *khudi*, individually as well as communally. Sharing in vicegerency with the community of believers is the ultimate fulfillment, much as Aristotle's "political animal" is fulfilled in the polis (Aristotle's *Politics*, Book I).
8. The "perfect man" was an important concept in Sufi literature. Iqbal presents the basic idea in this quotation from the classic Muslim mystic Abdul Karint al-Jilana: "Divine nature soars upwards, human nature sinks downwards; hence perfect human nature must stand midway between the two; it must share both the Divine and the human attributes, in one word perfect man must be the god-man" [meaning not a man who is God in the sense of the Christian Jesus but a man who participates in the Divine and thereby possesses divine qualities]. Iqbal, *Speeches, Writings and Statements*, 79. See Mustansir Mir's account of the Perfect Man as Iqbal understands it in Mir, *Iqbal*, 35. As Mir puts it, the Perfect Man for Iqbal is "the man in whom *khudi* [the human self] is fully developed."
9. Aristotle says this multiple times in the course of the *Politics*.
10. The difference with Aristotle here should not be exaggerated. Aristotle, like Plato before him and Augustine after him, takes agreement about the perceived human good to be what most fundamentally defines a community, and "the good" can be understood as what you love. Aristotle simply does not emphasize love as the bond of community as much as Plato and Augustine do. He puts the emphasis more on beliefs about the Good than on desire for it.
11. The *Javid-Nama* is an epic poem inspired, in part, by Dante's *Divine Comedy* and widely considered to be Iqbal's greatest masterpiece. In the poem, the central character Zinda-Rud (a name for Iqbal), led by Rumi (as Dante was led by Virgil, Beatrice, and Bernard of Clairvaux), journeys through the spheres to God, meeting real historical characters along the way from each of whom he gains some bit of wisdom. In the *Javid-Nama* Iqbal weaves together all the main ideas he addresses in *The Secrets of the Self* and *The Mysterious of Selflessness* into one dramatic story of spiritual education.
12. Cf. John 17:6–18.
13. Cf. Augustine's conception of the spiritual community in *The City of God*.

14. Cf. the Mosaic covenant between God and the Hebrew people as presented in the Book of Exodus.
15. Again, cf. the Mosaic covenant, centered as it was on the law God gave to Moses: the covenant was a communal promise to abide by that law.
16. As Iqbal puts it elsewhere, "The real test of a self is whether it responds to the call of another self." *Speeches, Writings and Statements*, 185.
17. Cf. Genesis 1:17: "So God created man in his own image."
18. He indicated his philosophical intent explicitly in the case of *The Secrets of the Self*, which he subtitled "A Philosophical Poem."
19. Bergson developed his theory in his influential book *Creative Evolution* and, in specific reference to human life, in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*.
20. See, e.g., St. Augustine's extraordinary formulation in Book 5, chap. 11 of *The City of God*.
21. Leo Strauss, "The Mutual Influence of Theology and Philosophy," in *Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 1934–1964*, trans. and ed. Peter Emberley and Barry Cooper (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993, 2004), 229.
22. From *An English Translation of the Holy Quran*, trans. Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali (Lahore, Pakistan: Fine Offset Printing, 1934).
23. See Annemarie Schimmel's comment on Iqbal's view of Islamic experience and symbolization in Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 74–75. By way of comparison, see Eric Voegelin, "Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History," in *Published Essays, 1966–1985*, ed. Ellis Sandoz, vol. 12 of *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 115–33.
24. Cf. Exodus 3:13–14 and Acts 17:28.
25. Cf. Nietzsche's insight that Christianity is in effect "Platonism for the people." Friedrich Nietzsche, preface to *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 2.
26. Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 11 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 21.
27. "Salafists" seek a return to the ways of the "*salaf*" or ancestors, to the way things were supposedly done by the first generations of Muslims.
28. On Iqbal's idea of the caliphate and related practical action, see Inayatullah Baloch, "Islamic Universalism, the Caliphate and Muhammad Iqbal," in *Revisioning Iqbal as a Poet and Muslim Political Thinker*, ed. Gita Dharampal-Frick, Ali Usman Qasmi, and Katia Rostetter (Heidelberg: Draupadi Verlag, 2010), 135–60.

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