ISLAM AND MODERNITY: IQBAL ON SELF, COMMUNITY AND THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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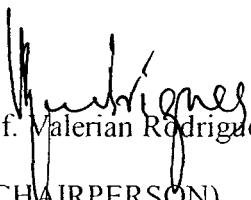## NEW DELHI-110067
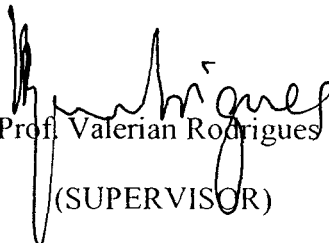## INDIA
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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "*ISLAM AND MODERNITY: IQBAL ON SELF, COMMUNITY AND THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE*" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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PREFACE

In post-colonial societies like India, Western modernity received distinct intellectual and political responses. In India, Western modernity percolated down mainly through the process of colonialism. Modernity transmitted via colonialism labeled indigenous beliefs and practices as superstitious and aimed to replace them with rationally tested modern values. Thus the Western modernity carried forward its agenda of 'civilizing' the colonized world by assuming that the colonized societies are trapped into superstitions and they lacked a 'rational' understanding of their inner and outer lives.

The project of Western modernity in India has been understood and treated differently by different social and political groups. Nevertheless, colonialism played a vital role in shaping the lives of these groups. And it became almost obvious that colonialism became the reference point through which one engaged with the West. Iqbal, the poet-philosopher[1] of colonial India was not an exception. Iqbal discussed the issues pertaining to Western modernity both from philosophical and political perspectives[2]. However before we discuss Iqbal's position on the Western modernity, it is important here to problematize the theme.

Problematizing Western Modernity

Western modernity is a term with wide reference and different theorists have defined it differently. Generally speaking, the term is regarded as a particular variant of modernity, which is Western. Historically, the idea of Western modernity is usually traced back to seventeenth century Enlightenment, which is marked by the growth of science and technology and the belief in human reason.

The term 'Western modernity' denotes epistemological, social as well as political meaning. Different scholars emphasized on different features of Western modernity. The term has been used to include 'a theory of knowledge, a conception of

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[1] Hafiz Malik uses these words for Iqbal. For further detail see Hafeez Malik (ed.), *Iqbal Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972.

[2] Iqbal discussed the phenomena of colonialism in his text *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Iqbal's two poems 'The Mosque of Cordoba' and 'Shikwa' deal with the consequences of colonialism on the Islamic civilization.

rationality, modern science, political values, such as liberalism, individualism, development and other universalizing discourses.'[3] Western modernity claims universality to the social and political ideas propagated by it and it is based on the assumption that the values upheld by it are 'culture-neutral'[4] To put it differently, Western modernity premises itself on the fact that all cultures possessing certain 'character' i.e. the modern values are bound to undergo similar form of transformation and thus would converge with one another. Thus by claiming its universality Western modernity commits the historical mistake of overlooking 'cultural pluralism'. In other words, Western modernity while arguing for universal values, institutions and discourses becomes insensitive to cultural and contextual 'differences' as a result of which it has invoked critical responses in non-Western societies.

Charles Taylor argues that 'the dominant theories of modernity over last two centuries have been of *acultural* sort.[5]Taylor challenges the particular understanding of '*acultural* theory of modernity,'[6] which believes that modernity comes from one single universal applicable operation i.e. to say that *acultural* theory of modernity assumes that modernity arises through the dissipation of certain unsupported religious and metaphysical beliefs and the different civilizations of the world are bound to converge.

Taylor criticizes *acultural* theory of modernity and argues that. the "exclusive reliance on an acultural theory unfits us for what is perhaps the most important task of social sciences in our day: understanding the full gamut of alternative modernities in the making in different parts of the world. It locks us into an ethnocentric prison, condemned to project our own forms onto everyone else and blissfully unaware of

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[3]Sarah Joseph, 'Modernity and its Critics: A Discussion of Some Contemporary Social and Political Theories', in V.R. Mehta and Thomas Pantham (eds) *Political Ideas in Modern India: Thematic Explorations*. New Delhi: Sage, 2006, p. 419.
[4]The term has been used by Charles Taylor in his article 'Two Theories of modernity.' Taylor uses this word to highlight how the transformation from the tradition to the modern is understood in 'Acultural Theory' of modernity.
[5]Charles Taylor, 'Two Theories of Modernity', *The Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Mar. – Apr. 1995, p. 25.
[6]A cultural theory of modernity is the dominant theory on modernity. This theory propagates the universality of western modernity and is based on the assumption that the universal values and institutions propagated by it are culturally neutral.

what we are doing."[7] In order to overcome this ethnocentrism of *acultural* theory, Taylor pitches for '*cultural* theory of modernity'[8] which not only highlights the 'making' of alternative modernities in the non-western world but also proposes a kind of modernity which is sensitive towards cultural pluralism and differences.

Taylor argues that ever in the West, the transformation from tradition to modernity happened in certain background conditions and history, which were specific to its culture. He claims that 'the belief that modernity comes from one single universally applicable operation imposes a falsely uniform pattern on the multiple encounters of non-Western cultures with the exigencies of science, technology and industrialization'[9] because different cultures have different histories; they value different understandings of selves, others and goods. These differences are essence of context-sensitive multiple modernities. Taylor points out that Western modernity is deeply caught in its context-specificity and its claims of universality are misleading.

Thus Charles Taylor by questioning the universality and the linear growth of Western modernity hints the making of 'alternative modernities' in the different parts of the world. Generally it is believed that the alternative modernity is an offshoot of the creative interaction between the western modernity and indigenous traditions. However alternative modernity should not be understood as patchwork modernity, which has features of both modern and tradition.

Though the phenomenon of alternative modernity is not easy to be defined, Rajeev Bhargava in his article 'Are there Alternative modernities?' convincingly argues that-"when western modernity began to interact with local cultural systems, something like a hybrid culture began to emerge, possibly by creative adaptation, for which an analogue can be found neither in western modernity nor in indigenous tradition. These new phenomena resemble western modern and traditional entities and can be mistaken one for the other but they escape the interpretative grid and discourse relating to both. This cluster of newly developed phenomenon forged out of Western

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[7]Charles Taylor, 'Two Theories of Modernity', *The Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Mar. – Apr. 1995, p. 28.
[8]Cultural theory of modernity contests the claims of western modernity which believes that western modernity is neither unique nor universal and it is caught in its historical and cultural specificity.
[9]Charles Taylor, 'Two Theories of Modernity', *The Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Mar. – Apr. 1995, p. 28.

modern and indigenous traditional cultural system belongs to what can be called an alternative modernity."[10] Bhargava further elaborates this point and argues that mere change in the structures (both social and political) should not be mistaken as total transformation because the basic social practices (cultural forms) which inhabit hierarchy may remain intact. Hence he agues that the essence of alternative modernity lies in the transformation of basic cultural forms, this change in cultural form for Bhargava comes 'not when people say that they have become different or when their more explicit beliefs are altered but rather with a change in the understanding inscribed in their social practices.'[11]

Summarizing the above discussion it can be argued that though the *cultural theories* of modernity as discussed by Charles Taylor and Rajeev Bhargava question the universality and the culturally-neutral operations of western modernity, they hold that 'having originated in the West, modernity has travelled to other parts of the world.'[12] The *cultural* theories of modernity 'debunk the view that different regions of the world have developed their very own distinctive, sui generis conceptions of modernity.[13] Thus by highlighting modernity as the 'unique' Western phenomena the cultural theory of modernity denies the possibility of other modernities which might have preceded Western modernity.

Iqbal as a Response to Western Modernity[14]

There have been diverse intellectual and political responses to the project of western modernity in India. However, among these responses to the project of Western modernity, that of Iqbal occupies a unique position. The central question of inquiry in this dissertation is two-fold: firstly, to explore Iqbal's understanding of Western modernity and secondly, to argue in what way Iqbal proposes his project of alternative modernity?

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[10]Rajeev Bhargava, 'Are There Alternative Modernities?' in N. N. Vohra (ed.) *Culture, Democracy and Development in South Asia*. New Delhi: IIC/Shipra, 2001, p. 17.

[11]Rajeev Bhargava, 'Are There Alternative Modernities?' in N. N. Vohra (ed.) *Culture, Democracy and Development in South Asia*. New Delhi: IIC/Shipra, 2001, p. 17.

[12]Ibid., p. 15.

[13]Ibid., p. 15.

[14]There is diverse scholarship on Iqbal's understanding of the Western civilization. Scholars like Freeland Abbot in Hafiz Malik (ed) (1972) *op. cit.*, Iqbal Ahmad Ansari in Asloob Ahmad Ansari (ed) (1978) *op. cit.*, Syed Abdul Hasan Ali Nadwai (1973), Md. Hanif Shahid (1977) and S.E. Ashraf (1978) have written on this theme.

Iqbal criticises Western modernity on the grounds of its epistemology and the social and political ideas integral to it. Iqbal's engagement with Western modernity is held to be important for the following three reasons. Firstly, Iqbal believed that some of the most creative aspects of the project of western modernity were a further extension of some of the important phases of the civilization of Islam. Iqbal questioned the 'uniqueness' of Western modernity and argueed that Western modernity is constituted by the intellectual contribution made by the civilization of Islam.

Secondly, Iqbal's response towards Western modernity is triggered by prevailing stagnancy in the civilization of Islam. Iqbal believed that instead of debunking the project of western modernity, Muslims should adopt independent critical attitude towards it and 'reconstruct' their 'religious thought' in light of the developments that took place in the West. Iqbal believed that ascetic Sufism and the institution of priesthood have made the civilization of Islam stagnant. Iqbal criticizes 'ascetic' Sufism for propagating 'other-worldliness and breeding inaction.' He also rejects the institution of priesthood[15] and argues that in order to overcome the prevailing stagnancy Islam has to be reconstructed in the light of modern scientific and social developments that took place in the West.

Thirdly, Iqbal not only argues for having an independent critical attitude towards the project of western modernity but he endeavors to propose an alternative version of modernity which is more context-sensitive. His alternative version of modernity entails not merely the adjustment of Islam in the changed modern conditions but it has the serious aspect of realizing the goal of 'spiritual democracy.'[16] He questions the 'uniqueness' of Western modernity and anticipates

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[15]Iqbal's rejection of the institution of priesthood should be seen in the light of its intellectual value. Iqbal's rejection of the institution of priesthood signifies the fact that only the Prophet was the last man who had mystic experience and Muslims today should adopt critical attitude towards all those personal authorities which claim supernatural origin.

[16]Iqbal argues that that Europe today is the greatest danger to mankind. He argues that though Europe has made huge progress in the realm of scientific knowledge it was unable to realize its ideals on which it is premised. Iqbal believes that every civilization should aim at realization of three ideals-(a) spiritual interpretation of the universe, (b) spiritual emancipation of the individual and (c) spiritual emancipation of the community. Iqbal believed that only Islam can realize these three ideals as unlike Europe Islam is not based on pure reason. Iqbal argues that Islam is based on revelation which gives even a less enlightened Muslim the fire of conviction to realize these ideals. It is on these ideals Iqbal's conception of spiritual democracy is foregrounded.

the availability of alternative modernity based on Islamic values. In questioning the uniqueness of western modernity Iqbal, diverged from a cultural theory of modernity, which bases itself on the assumption that *'originally,* modernity, a complex cultural system, was exclusively western.'[17] A distinct conception of the self, community and epistemology are characteristics of Iqbal's alternative formulation of modernity.

Outline of Present Study

There are two central questions around which this dissertation has been written. Firstly, to examine Iqbal's understanding of Western modernity and secondly, to critically review Iqbal's project of an alternative modernity? For this purpose, this study has been divided into three chapters-

The first chapter, titled 'Critique of Modernity' deals with Iqbal's criticisms of western modernity. It highlights Iqbal's engagement with the scholarship on modernity[18] which regards it as unique, comprehensive and inescapably western. Iqbal's criticisms of the project of Western modernity on the ground of its epistemology and social and political ideas are considered here. In this chapter Iqbal's views on modern ideas such as secularism[19], nationalism[20] and democracy[21] are discussed in detail. However, the core of the chapter is the questioning of the uniqueness of Western modernity by Iqbal that anticipates the formulation of an alternative conception of modernity.[22]

The second chapter titled as 'Conception of Self in Iqbal'[23] deals with Iqbal's understanding of self. In this chapter it has been argued that Iqbal constructs his

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[17] Rajeev Bhargava, 'Are There Alternative Modernities?' in N. N. Vohra (ed.) *Culture, Democracy and Development in South Asia.* New Delhi: IIC/Shipra, 2001, p. 15. The emphasis was given by the author himself.

[18] It should be noted here that most of the prevailing theories of modernity regard modernity as a Western phenomena. It is interesting to note that even the cultural theories on modernity, which argue for exploring the making of alternative modernities in the different parts of world regard modernity as essentially a western phenomena which has been transmitted to different parts of the world.

[19] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam* Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003; Shamloo, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal,* Lahore: Al – Manar Academy, 1948 and Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, *Composite Nationalism and Islam,* New Delhi: Manohar, 2005.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] It should be noted here that by the term alternative modernity I am referring to the modernity which is constituted through Islamic values.

[23] See Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam* Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003; *The Secrets of the Self* (tr. R.A Nicholson), *The Mysteries of Selflessness* (tr. A.J Arberry) and *Poems From Iqbal* (tr. V.G. Kiernan0

notion of self in the backdrop of Sufism and modernity. It is pointed out here that Iqbal's notion of self might be different from that of the Sufis or modern self, but it still posseses certain characteristics which specifically belong to Sufism and modernity. It is argued here that Iqbal's notion of self is the result of its creative engagement with Sufism and modernity. While it discloses itself as an alternative version of self which is different from the Sufi understanding of self or the modern self, it is still related to them.

The third chapter titled 'Conception of Community in Iqbal'[24] deals with Iqbal's understanding of Islamic community. Core of Iqbal's cherished endeavors was to reconstruct Islamic community, which he believed had become stagnant. Iqbal suggests that the 'reconstruction' of Islam should neither mean giving up the elements of 'conservation' nor an uncritical march of 'liberalism' in the name of the civilization of Islam. Iqbal argues that the Islamic community should possess the characteristics of permanence and change. Iqbal believed that Islamic community should be foregroundeed on the 'eternal' principles of *Tauhid*[25] and finality of Prophethood[26] He argues that the community should evolve itself in the changed circumstances. And 'change' for Iqbal comes through the mechanism of *Ijtihad*. The core element of the chapter is Iqbal's endeavor to negotiate between the spiritual and temporal aspects of life through an alternative version of community.

This study suffers from certain limitations. Due to time constrains it was not possible to evaluate all the writings of Iqbal. This work is further constrained due to my incompetence in the Persian and Urdu languages. Nevertheless, to overcome barriers of language it was consciously decided to use only the standardized translations.

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[24]See Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam* Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003; *The Secrets of the Self* (tr. R.A Nicholson), *The Mysteries of Selflessness* (tr. A.J Arberry) and *Poems From Iqbal* (tr. V.G. Kiernan); *Letters and Writings of Iqbal* (compiled by B.A. Dar).

[25]*Tauhid* refers to oneness and uniqueness of God. It is based on the assumption that since God is one so is humanity.

[26] It means that Muhammad was the last Prophet and after him there can be no personal authority claiming supernatural origin. It highlights the fact that Islamic community should rely on the resources left by Prophet throughout its life.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY

The project of Western modernity occupies significant importance in the post-colonial societies, like India, which had a direct encounter with it. The encounter between the Western modernity and the indigenous cultures of the post-colonial societies are mediated through colonialism and it is due to this reason that the kind of modernity which is percolated down to these societies is often referred to as 'colonial modernity.'

The term 'colonial modernity' highlights the fact that it is through the phenomena of colonialism that modern institutions and values such as rationalism, liberalism, secularism, nationalism and democracy have percolated down to the colonized world. These modern values, however, are culture-specific and they originated in particular time and space. Due to the difference in the context of their origin these modern values when transmitted to the colonized world led to consequences which are not merely different but, were in fact problematic. Therefore, the universalizing claims of Western modernity have been contested very differently in the colonized world.

This chapter deals with Iqbal's position on the phenomena of Western modernity. Herein, it is pointed out that Iqbal criticizes the project of Western modernity at two levels. Firstly, Iqbal criticizes the project of western modernity by questioning its 'uniqueness' and secondly, he criticizes it on grounds of its epistemology and the social and the political ideas (such as, secularism, nationalism and democracy) propagated by it. Nevertheless, the concern of this chapter is not merely to highlight Iqbal's position on the phenomena of western modernity but rather to explore in what way Iqbal constructs an alternative version of modernity.

Iqbal's Understanding of Western Modernity

We have referred above that Iqbal criticizes the project of western modernity at two levels. On the one hand, Iqbal criticizes the project of Western modernity by

questioning its 'uniqueness', whereas on the other hand, he criticizes it by questioning the universality of the 'universal' social and political institutions propagated by it. This section of the chapter attempts to evaluate both the grounds of Iqbal's criticisms of Western modernity but, it is worthwhile to review the available scholarship on this theme before.

Undoubtedly, the contemporary scholarship on Iqbal has sufficiently reflected on his views towards western civilizations. Almost all the scholars from Freeland Abbott[1] to Iqbal Ahmed Ansari[2] and from Abdul Anwar Beg[3] to Hafeez Malik[4] point out the fact that, in Iqbal one finds only a criticism of the West not its rejection. Nevertheless, none among them realize the fact that Iqbal's criticism of Western civilization is 'unique' and forms the foundation of his alternative version of modernity.

Freeland Abbott argues that there is nothing new in Iqbal's criticism of the Western civilization as such criticism has already been leveled by a range of scholars belonging to its own traditions. To justify this, Freeland cites the contribution of Romanticism and other thinkers such as Arnold Whitehead, William Wordsworth and Shelly. Thus, in discussing Iqbal's criticism of the Western civilization, Freeland Abbott overlooks the complexities of Iqbal's arguments which, I believe, not merely counter the project of Western modernity but also question its very claim of 'uniqueness.'

Iqbal has high regards for the modern sciences and the scientific and technological developments made by the Western civilization. He believes that the 'reconstruction' of Islam should take place in the light of modern scientific developments. However, he suggests that the scientific attitude of interpreting the universe and matter is not purely western. He emphasizes on the 'anti-classical'[5] spirit

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[1]Freeland Abbott, 'View of Democracy and the West', in Hafeez Malik (ed) *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan.* New York and London and New York: Columbia University Press, 1971, pp. 174-183.

[2]Iqbal Ahmad Ansari, 'Iqbal's attitude to the west', in Ashob Ahmad Ansari (ed) *Iqbal: Essays and Studies,* New Delhi: Ghalib Academy, 1978.

[3]Abdul Anwar Beig, *Poet of the East,* Lahore: Qaumi kutub khana, 1939.

[4]Hafeez Malik, *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan,* New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972

[5] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 74.

of Quran and criticizes Spengler, who believes that 'the spirit of European culture is through and through anti-classical. And this anti- classical spirit of European culture is entirely due to the specific genius of Europe and not to any inspiration she may have received from the culture of Islam...'[6]

Iqbal counters this view of Spengler and argues that, 'the anti- classical spirit of modern world has really arisen out of the revolt of Islam against Greek thought.'[7] Iqbal agrees that, 'Greek philosophy has been a great cultural force in the history of Islam.'[8] However, he suggests that ' a careful study of the Quran and the various schools of scholastic theology that arouse under the inspiration of Greek thought disclose the remarkable fact that while Greek philosophy very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers, it, on the whole, obscured their vision of the Quran.'[9] Iqbal is highly critical of the tradition of Muslim theology which endorses Greek 'speculative' philosophy in interpreting the Quran. While reflecting on the traditions of Muslim theology which interpreted the Quran under the influence of 'speculative' Greek philosophy, Iqbal argues that, 'Not realizing that the spirit of the Quran was essentially anti- classical and putting full confidence in Greek thinkers, their first impulse was to understand the Quran in the light of Greek philosophy. In view of the concrete spirit of the Quran, and the speculative nature of Greek philosophy which enjoyed theory and was neglectful of fact, this attempt was foredoomed to failure. And it is what follows their failure that brings out the real spirit of the culture of Islam, and lays the foundation of modern culture in some of its most important aspects.'[10]

Iqbal is highly critical of certain aspects of Greek philosophy, such as Plato's theory of forms and Aristotle's conception of universe and logic. While criticizing Socrates and Plato, Iqbal argues that 'Socrates concentrated his attention on the human world alone. To him the proper study of man was man and not the world of

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[6]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 152.
[7]Ibid.
[8]Ibid., p. 3.
[9] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 3.
[10]Ibid, p. 135.

plants, insects and stars.'[11] Iqbal believed that such an attitude of Socrates is against the 'spirit of Quran', 'which sees in the humble bee a recipient of Divine inspiration and constantly calls upon the reader to observe the perpetual change of the winds, the alternation of day and night, the clouds, the starry heavens, and the planets swimming through infinite space!'[12]

Reflecting on Plato's theory of forms, Iqbal argues that 'as a true disciple of Socrates, Plato despised sense- perception which, in his view, yielded mere opinion and no real knowledge.[13] Iqbal believed such an attitude of Plato is not consonance with the Quran, 'which regards 'hearing' and 'sight' as the most valuable Divine gifts and declares them to be accountable to God for their activity in this world.'[14] Iqbal emphasizes that Islam does not distinguish between the ideal and real aspects of reality. He argues that the noteworthy feature of the Quran is the emphasis that it lays on the 'observable aspect of reality.[15]

Iqbal discusses the 'observable aspect of reality' by highlighting the change as observed in nature i.e. the physical environment. He discusses this aspect of reality by highlighting the importance of the nature as mentioned in the Quran. Iqbal argues that 'no doubt, the immediate purpose of the Quran in this reflective observation of nature is to awaken in man the consciousness of that of which nature is regarded a symbol. But the point to note is the general empirical attitude of the Quran, which engendered in its followers a feeling of reverence for the actual and ultimately made them the founders of modern science.'[16] Thus, Iqbal emphasizes on the factual and the empirical attitude of Islam which not merely forms the foundation of the modern sciences but also enables Islam to build a 'durable civilization.'

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[11]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 3.
[12]Ibid., p. 3.
[13]Ibid., p. 3.
[14]Ibid., p. 4.
[15] Ibid., p. 13.
[16] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 15.

Iqbal constructs the anti-classical spirit of Muslim culture by foregrounding his argument on the principle of 'finality of the Prophethood.'[17] While discussing the spirit of Muslim culture, he highlights the 'cultural value' of the principle of finality of the Prophethood and argues that 'the idea is not to give you descriptions of the achievements of Islam in the domain of knowledge. I want rather to fix your gaze on some of the ruling concepts of the culture of Islam in order to gain an insight into the process of ideation that underlies them, and thus to catch a glimpse of the soul that found expression through them.'[18] The stress is on a philosophy of science inspired by Islam in the domain of knowledge through the principle of finality of the Prophethood.

Iqbal argues that, 'in Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition. This involves the keen perception that life cannot forever be kept in leading strings, that in order to achieve full self consciousness man must finally be thrown back on his own resources.'[19] He discusses the 'intellectual value' of the principle of finality of the Prophethood and argues that this principle 'tends to create an independent critical attitude towards mystic experience by generating the belief that all personal authority, claiming a supernatural origin, has come to an end in the history of man. This kind of belief is a psychological force which inhibits the growth of such authority.'[20] Iqbal argues that the function of the principle of finality of the Prophethood is to 'open up fresh vistas of knowledge in the domain of man's inner experience.'[21] He suggests that 'the abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Quran, and the emphasis that it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality.'[22] Thus, Iqbal believed that the principle of the finality of the Prophethood aims not merely to develop a critical attitude towards the mystic experiences but also it encourage similar attitude towards nature and history which according to the Quran are the important sources of knowledge.

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[17]The principle of finality of Prophethood highlights the fact that Muhammad is the last Prophet sent by god. And humanity should rely on the resources revealed by God through him.
[18]Ibid., p. 132.
[19]Ibid., p.133.
[20]Ibid., p. 134.
[21]Ibid., p. 134.
[22]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 133.

Iqbal, as it was mentioned earlier, emphasizes on the observable aspect of reality which manifests as our exteriority. He criticizes Greek philosophy for overlooking the observable aspects of reality, which according to him is the symbol of God. He argues that the anti-classical spirit of Islam arose out of the revolt against the Greek philosophy in the domain of knowledge. He emphasizes that this revolt against the Greek philosophy of science is manifest in all the realms of knowledge including, mathematics, astronomy and medicine. However, he prefers to target the 'speculative' philosophy of Greeks as expressed in Aristotle's conception of 'logic'.

Iqbal criticizes the deductive nature of Aristotelian logic and argues that 'the dissatisfaction with purely speculative philosophy means the search for a new method of knowledge.'[23] After discarding the 'speculative' influence of Greek philosophy, the anti-classical spirit of Islam was evident in the various realms of knowledge. He highlights the series of intellectual developments which took place in the world of Islam. He states,

> 'It was, I think, Nazzam who first formulated the principle of 'doubt' as the beginning of all knowledge. Ghazali further amplified it in his **Revivification of the Sciences of Religion**, and prepared the way for the 'Descartes method'...It was Ishraqi and Ibn-I-Taimiyya who undertook a systematic refutation of Greek logic. Abu Bakr Razi was perhaps the first to criticize Aristotle's first figure, and in our own time his objection, conceived in a thoroughly inductive spirit, has been reformulated by John Stuart Mill. Ibn-I-hazm, in his Scope of Logic, emphasizes sense perception as a source of knowledge, and Ibn-I-Tammiya, in his *Refutation of Logic*, shows that induction is the only form of reliable argument...It is mistake to suppose that the experimental method is a European discovery. Duhring tells that Roger Bacon's conceptions of science are more just and clear than those of his celebrated namesake. And where did Roger Bacon receive his scientific training? In the Muslim university of Spain. Indeed part 5 of his 'Opus Majus' which is devoted to 'perspective' is practically a

[23] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 135.

copy of Ibn-I-Haitham's Optics. Nor is the book, as a whole, lacking in evidence of Ibn-i-Hazm's influence on its author. Europe has been rather slow to recognize the Islamic origin of her scientific method.'[24]

Thus, the central argument of the above quoted paragraph is to highlight the fact that the intellectual developments on which modernity is foregrounded are not the result of Europe's genius. Iqbal suggests that the 'anti-classical' spirit of the modern world, on the contrary, is the result of the revolt by the Islamic civilization against the Greeks. And, in order to prove this argument, Iqbal highlights the above quoted intellectual contributions from the world of Islam, which he felt was not recognized by Europe.

By highlighting the 'anti-classical' spirit of Islam, Iqbal, not merely draws attention to the limitations of the western civilization but he endeavors to question the very 'uniqueness' of its project of modernity, which he believes is not the result of the Europe's genius but, in fact, is constituted by the intellectual contribution made by the world of Islam. Iqbal suggests that the intellectual revolt of Islam against the Greek learning is the outcome of the very realization of the 'anti-classical' spirit of Islam as demonstrated by its principle of the 'finality of the Prophethood, whose purpose is to urge man to rely on his critical faculties in order to achieve his full 'self consciousness.'

For Iqbal the birth of Islam is the birth of the 'inductive intellect' and the Prophet is the practitioner of this 'inductive intellect.' Iqbal highlights this point by elaborating the Prophet's attitude towards matter, that is, the environment. He argues that the Prophet realized the fact that, 'Man is primarily governed by passion and instinct. Inductive reason, which alone makes man master of his environment, is an achievement; and when once born it must be reinforced by inhibiting the growth of other modes of knowledge.'[25] He argues that, according to the Prophet, only inductive intellect helps man in controlling the 'concrete' situations of life. And it is this attitude of the Prophet to the environment that made Iqbal to suggest that, 'the

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[24] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, pp.135- 136.
[25]Ibid., p. 133.

Prophet of Islam seems to stand between the ancient and the modern world. In so far as the source of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the ancient world, in so far his spirit of revelation is concerned he belongs to the modern world.'[26]

Therefore, there is nothing 'unique' of the western project of modernity. Iqbal premises the intellectual contribution made by the world of Islam on the inductive intellect propagated by the Prophet and argues that 'knowledge must begin with the concrete. It is the intellectual capture of and power over the concrete that makes it possible for the intellect of man to pass beyond the concrete.'[27]

Summarizing the above discussion it can be argued that Iqbal suggests that the 'anti-classical' spirit of Western modernity is contributed by the civilization of Islam. And, it is due to its anti-classical spirit that Islam has led to the growth of many ideas, (such as reckoning the importance of sense- perception, premising the knowledge on the principle of 'doubt' and on the experimentation) which form the bedrock of the project of Western modernity. Therefore, for Iqbal, modern Europe, 'on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam.'[28]

Besides questioning the 'uniqueness' of the western modernity, Iqbal also questions the 'universality' of modern epistemology and the social and political ideas and institutions propagated by western modernity. Some of Iqbal's criticisms pertaining to the universal claims of western modernity are discussed below:

Epistemological Critique

One of the grounds on which Iqbal criticizes the project of Western modernity is related to its 'theory of knowledge' which propagates 'universal truths, objective knowledge and master narratives.'[29] These features of modernity are the result of certain intellectual developments in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe which

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[26] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 133.
[27] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 139.
[28] Ibid., p. 5.
[29] Sussane Hoeber Rudolph, and Lloyd L. Rudolph, *Postmodern Gandhi and Other Essays Gandhi in the World and at Home*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.

paved the way for scientific thinking. The scientific temper of modern epistemology is highly influenced by the scientific aptitude of natural sciences and it aims at replacing the knowledge based on religious beliefs with the scientific universal laws.

Iqbal contests modern epistemology in various ways. However, the central ground of his change is provoked due to sidelining of religion from the modern scientific knowledge. Iqbal argues that for the purpose of knowledge of reality 'the region of mystic experience is as real as any other region of human experience and cannot be ignored merely because it cannot be traced back to sense-perception.'[30] Iqbal criticizes the 'naturalism' of natural sciences and argues that 'the modern man with his philosophies of criticism and scientific specialism finds himself in a strange predicament. His naturalism has given him an unprecedented control over the forces of nature, but has robbed him of faith in his own future.'[31] Iqbal suggests that the 'naturalism' of sciences, while emphasizing on man's capacity to dominate nature has led to uncontrollable 'egoism' which manifests itself in both, the realm of thought and the social and economic life of Europe. In order to check the problems manifested due to the 'naturalism' of science, Iqbal suggests that the 'religious experience' should be treated as the source of knowledge.

While distinguishing between the 'facts' which religion and science interpret, Iqbal argues that,

> 'No doubt, religious beliefs and dogmas have a metaphysical
> significance, but it is obvious that they are not interpretations of those
> data of experience which are the subject of the sciences of Nature.
> Religion is not physics or chemistry seeking an explanation of nature
> in terms of causation; it really aims at interpreting a totally different
> region of human experience- religious experience- the data of which
> cannot be reduced to the data of any other science. In fact, it must be
> said in justice to religion that it insisted on the necessity of concrete
> experience in religious life long before science learnt to do so. The
> conflict between two is due not to the fact that one is, and the other is

[30]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 24.
[31]Ibid., p. 196.

not, based on concrete experience. Both seek concrete experience as a point of departure. Their conflict is due to the misinterpretation that both interpret the same data of experience. We forget that religion aims at reaching the real significance of a special variety of human experience.'[32]

Iqbal argues that 'the religious and scientific processes, though involving different methods, are identical in their final aim.'[33] Iqbal believed that both science and religion aim at reaching the same 'real', by which it means that both of them aim at acquiring the knowledge of the 'ultimate ego.' However, Iqbal criticizes the modern sciences for breeding 'conceptual' knowledge and argues that the knowledge based on concepts provides fragmentary and 'sectional' picture of reality and it is only through 'religious experience' we can have the knowledge of the wholesome nature of reality.

Iqbal suggests that the present conflict in the realm of thought is due to the fact that science emphasizes on pure 'rationality' whereas, religion is assumed to be primarily based on intuitions. For Iqbal, it is wrong to posit intellect against intuition, as he feels that both intellect and intuition aims at the knowledge of same reality. The only difference between them is that intellect gives us sectional or fragmented view of reality, whereas intuition reveals reality in its totality. To put the same in the words of Iqbal, he claims that there is no reason to suppose that, 'thought and intuition are essentially opposed to each other. They spring up from the same root and complement each other. The one grasps reality piecemeal, the other grasps it in its wholeness. The one fixes its gaze on the eternal, the other on the temporal aspect of reality. The one is present enjoyment of the whole of reality, the other aims at traversing the whole by slowly specifying and closing up the various regions of the whole for exclusive observation. Both are in need of each other for mutual rejuvenation. Both seek visions of the same reality which revels itself to them in accordance with their function in life. In fact, intuition, as Bergson rightly says, is only a higher kind of intellect.'[34]

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[32]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 27.
[33]Ibid., p. 206.
[34]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 3.

Thus, Iqbal argues that intuition is the higher form of intellect which is constituted by man's concrete experiences. He believes that in order to view reality in its totality it is necessary that intuition must be supplemented with sense perception and intellect. Like the 'spirit' of the Quran, Iqbal emphasizes on the 'observable' aspect of reality. It is only through such knowledge that one can establish connection with the universe and knowledge is 'sense-perception elaborated by understanding.'[35] Further, while reflecting on man's appropriation of the 'observable' aspect of reality, Iqbal argues that 'the naturalism of the Quran is only a recognition of a fact that man is related to nature, and this relation, in view of its possibility 'as means of controlling her forces, must be exploited in the interests, not of unrighteous desire for domination, but in the nobler interest of free upward movement of spiritual life. In the interests of securing complete vision of reality, therefore, sense-perception must be supplemented by the perception of what Quran describes as' Faud' or 'Qalib', i.e. heart.[36]

According to Iqbal, the 'heart' plays the vital role in constituting knowledge and its importance in this regard should not be sidelined. Iqbal emphasizes that 'the 'heart' is a kind of inner intuition or insight which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense-perception. It is, according to the Quran, something which 'sees', its reports, if properly interpreted, are never false. We must not, however, regard it as mysterious special faculty; it is rather a mode of dealing with reality, in which sensation, in the physiological sense of the word, does not play any part. Yet the vista of experience thus opened to us is as real and concrete as any other experience.[37]

Iqbal feels that, the "intellect, divorced from Love, is a rebel (like Satan) while Intellect, wedded to Love, has divine attributes".[38] It should be noted here that Iqbal

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[35] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p.13.

[36] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003,, p. 16.

[37] Ibid., p. 16.

[38] Iqbal quoted in Hafiz Abbadullah Farooqi, 'Iqbal's Theory of Knowledge', in *Hundred Years of Iqbal Studies*, compiled by Waheed Ishrat, Pakistan Academy of Letters, Islamabad, 2003, p. 478.

uses the word 'love' in a "very wide sense".[39] For him, love "means the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and ideas, and the endeavour to realize them. Love individualises the lover as well as the beloved."[40] "Knowledge, which cannot be circumscribed within consciousness and which is the final stage of Truth, is also called Love or Intution."[41]

Thus, Iqbal's conception of epistemology is directed towards the realization of 'hitherto unsurpassed mutual harmony'[42] between religion and science. To what extent Iqbal succeeds in his endeavor is the matter of debate. However, from the above discussion, it is evident that Iqbal rejects the attitude of modern epistemology towards religion and argues that it is religion which is more anxious to arrive at the knowledge of ultimate reality.

Critique of Modern Socio-Political Values and Institutions

According to Iqbal, modern epistemology based on 'pure reason' led to the origin of conflicts, both in the realm of 'thought' and in the 'economic and political life of Europe. He feels that the 'ruthless egoism' propagated by 'pure reason' led to the growth of phenomena such as democracy and nationalism. This section of the chapter discusses Iqbal's critique of modern values such as secularism, nationalism and democracy.

Secularism[43]

The modern doctrine of secularism is based on the private/public distinction. It means that religion is the matter of our private choice and state has nothing to do with it. Iqbal has serious problems with this understanding of secularism, which he believes is the result of the history of 'European political ideas.'[44] Iqbal points toward

[39] R.A Nicholson, 'The Secrets of Self', London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1920, pp.7-31.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Iqbal quoted in Hafiz Abbadullah Farooqi, 'Iqbal's Theory of Knowledge', in Hundred Years of Iqbal Studies, compiled by Waheed Ishrat, Islamabad: Pakistan Academy of Letters, 2003, pp. 471-480.

[42] Mohammad Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, preface.

[43] It is interesting fact to point out that Iqbal does not use the category of 'secularism'. However he conveys the meaning of secularism by highlighting the separation of religion from the state. Thus in this sense, Iqbal while discussing the issues pertaining to secularism, has its western definition in his mind.

[44] Mohammad Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 165.

the historical-specificity of the doctrine of secularism and suggests that, the doctrine of secularism emerges in Europe largely due to the fact that in Europe, 'Primitive Christianity was founded, not as a political or civil unit, but as a monastic order in a profane world, having nothing to do with civil affairs, and obeying the Roman authority practically in all matters.. The result of this was that when the State became Christian, State and Church confronted each other as distinct powers with interminable boundary dispute between them. Such a thing could never happen in Islam, for Islam was from the very beginning a civil society, having received from the Quran a set of simple legal principles which like the twelve tables of the Romans, carried, as experience subsequently proved, great potentialities of expansion and development by interpretation.'[45] Thus , Iqbal points toward the historical-specificity of the doctrine of secularism, which he suggests emerged in Europe due to the failure of 'Primitive Christianity' to establish itself as 'political and civil unit', which could have otherwise governed all aspects of man's life.

Therefore, for him, the doctrine of secularism is an 'ancient historical mistake'[46], which 'arouse out of the bifurcation of the unity of man into two distinct and separate realities'[47]of the temporal and spiritual world. Iqbal argues that Islam believes in the 'unity of man'[48] and the kind of dualism which existed in Europe does not exist in the world of Islam. Iqbal contests the doctrine of secularism and argues that 'in Islam the spiritual and the temporal are not two distinct domains.'[49] He feels that 'the nature of an act, however secular in its import, is determined by the attitude of mind with which the agent does it. It is the invisible mental background of the act which ultimately determines its character.'[50]

Iqbal argues that, 'an act is temporal or profane if it is done in a spirit of detachment from the infinite complexity of life behind it, it is spiritual if it is inspired

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[45] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p.165.

[46]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 164.

[47]The doctrine of 'unity of man' highlights the fact that only god is sovereign and the human beings should be accountable to him rather than to the temporal authorities.

[48]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003,p. 164.

[49]Ibid., p. 163.

[50]Ibid., p. 164.

by that complexity.'[51] However, Iqbal believes that 'in Islam it is the same reality which appears as the church looked at from one point of view and the state from another.'[52] And 'it is not true to say that the church and the state are two sides or facets of the same thing. Islam is a single unanalysable reality which is one or the other as your point of view varies.'[53]

Therefore, secularism rests on 'dualism' and bifurcation of the 'unity of man.' Iqbal argues that Islam does not distinguish between the temporal and the spiritual world and its ultimate aim is the realization of the spiritual principles of *Tauhid.*[54]

Nationalism

Nationalism in the scheme of Iqbal's thought is regarded as an alien category. Iqbal believes that nationalism is a European or western phenomenon, which constitutes the 'black' side of modernity'[55] and one should denounce it. Iqbal believes that the phenomenon of nationalism is a result of modern 'egoism.' [56] He explains that, 'wholly overshadowed by the results of his intellectual activity, the modern man... finds himself unable 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 weariness.'[57] Iqbal argues that the emergence of nationalism signifies the 'despairing' state of humanity and in order to overcome it, humanity needs a religion which can alone 'ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of the modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him the attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter.[58]

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[51]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 164.
[52]Ibid.
[53]Ibid., pp. 164-165.
[54]*Tauhid* has two fold meanings: one is that it emphasizes on the 'uniqueness' and 'oneness' of God. The other meaning is that it aims at realizing the spiritual values of equality, freedom and solidarity.
[55]Barbara D. Metcalf, 'Introduction', in Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani's *Composite Nationalism and Islam*, New Delhi: Manohar, 2005, p. 41.
[56]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 198.
[57]Ibid., pp.197-198
[58]Ibid., p.199.

While reflecting on the nationalist movement in India, Iqbal argues that "the nationalist struggle in India could not be described as 'India's revolt against the West' because in this struggle 'the people of India are demanding the very institutions which the west stands for'."[59] This unease with nationalism as a western category is basically due to its exploitative and destructive character.

Iqbal argues that there is a nexus between nationalism and imperialism, and regards the latter as the western conception of nationalism. In his debate with Maulana Hussain Ahmad, he claims that "I have been repudiating the concept of nationalism since the time it was not well- known in India and the Muslim world. At the very start it had become clear to me from the writings of foreign authors that the imperialistic designs of Europe were in great need of this effective weapon – the propagation of European conception of nationalism in Muslim countries – to shatter the religious unity of Islam to pieces."[60] Thus, Iqbal views nationalism as antithetical to universalizing aspects of Islam as it divides co-religious people into variety of groups, based on geography, ethnicity and race.

Further, Iqbal draws distinction between nationalism as a geographical category and as a political category. Iqbal as quoted in Maulana Hussain Ahmed's book *Composite Nationalism and Islam* argues that "...the Maulana's statement that nations are formed by lands is not open to any objections."[61] It is only when a simple love of native land becomes a 'political concept or 'social order'[62] it becomes objectionable for Iqbal, who favors the order based on Islam. In other words, Iqbal would have no problem if one loves the territory in which he or she resides. But once the love for one's territory takes the shape of narrow ethics based on national or racial grounds, Iqbal begins to have problems with it. This is basically due to the fact that Iqbal believes in the universalizing aspects of Islam, whose main concern is not to divide people but to unite and organize them despite their natural distinctions.

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[59]Javed Majeed, *Muhammed Iqbal, Islam Aesthetics and Postcolonialism*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2009, p. 76.
[60]Ibid., p. 76.
[61]Barbara D. Metcalf, 'Introduction', in Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani's *Composite Nationalism and Islam*, New Delhi: Manohar, 2005, p. 41.
[62]Ibid.

Iqbal's uneasiness with the phenomena of nationalism is further evident from the similarities, which he draws between nationalism and the *Ahmediyya* movement. It is to be noted here that *Ahmadias* are those who question the finality of Prophet Mohammed. Iqbal argues that both *Ahmediyya* and nationalism '[took] up a position in addition to what divine law [had] prescribed and defined for them for all time to come.'[63]

Thus, while summing up the discussion, we can argue that Iqbal's critical stance towards the territorial conception of nationalism is largely motivated by two factors: firstly, Iqbal believed that nationalism constitutes the 'black' aspect of modernity and it had led to grooming of other unethical and destructive phenomena such as 'materialism, imperialism and consumerism.'[64] This view of Iqbal seems to be carved out of his understanding of modern self, which for him has become perverted in the process of fulfilling its desires. Secondly, Iqbal has the vision of realizing the universal ethics of Islam in real life. This vision of Iqbal cannot be compatible with nationalism, which relies on national ethics based on ethnicity and race. As a result, Iqbal becomes an obvious critic of European nationalism, which is an offshoot of its project of modernity.

Democracy

Iqbal is critical of western understanding of democracy. He believed that Western democracy is a hindrance in the 'ethical advancement'[65] of men. To put in the words of Iqbal, "humanity needs three things today-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. Modern Europe has, no doubt, built idealistic system on these lines but experience shows that truth revealed by pure reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring. This is the reason why pure thought had so little influenced men while religion has always elevated individuals, and transformed whole societies. The idealism of Europe never became living factor in her life, and the

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[63] Barbara D. Metcalf, 'Introduction', in Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani's *Composite Nationalism and Islam*, New Delhi: Manohar, 2005, p. 43.

[64] Ibid., p. 41.

[65] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 190.

result is a perverted ego seeking itself through mutually intolerant democracies, whose sole function is to exploit the poor in the interest of the rich."[66] Thus, Iqbal believed that Europe had enough resources of spiritual emancipation of individual and society but she has failed to internalize these ideals in her life. The institution of Western democracy for Iqbal is the marker of this unaccomplished spiritualization of the Europe. Iqbal argues that modern Europe emphasizes too much on pure thought and overlooked the importance of religious experiences and revelation. As a result, western democracies are reduced to a sphere where 'perverted ego' tends to maximize their selfish interest without having due consideration for the well-being of others. Thus, Iqbal believed that the Western democracy propagates 'egoism' because of which, it is not only exploitative but is also a hindrance towards the ethical advancement of the individual and society. Iqbal further claims that,

> 'The democracy of Europe – fear overshadowed by socialistic agitation and anarchical – originated mainly in the economic regeneration of European societies. Nietzsche, however, abhors this 'rule of the herd,' and hopeless of the plebian, he bases all higher culture on the cultivation and the growth of an aristocracy of supermen. The democracy of Islam did not grew out of the extension of economic opportunity, it is the spiritual principle based on the assumption that every human being is the centre of latent power the possibilities of which can be developed by cultivating certain type of character. Out of the plebian material Islam has formed men of noblest type of life and power. Is not then, the democracy of an early Islam is an experimental refutation of the ideas of Nietzsche?'[67]

Two crucial points can be highlighted from the above passage; firstly, Iqbal understood the nexus between economic liberalism and Western democracy. He argues that unlike the 'Democracy of Islam', the Western democracy is the result of expansion of economic opportunities. Thus, Iqbal seems to suggest that the economic liberalism precedes the rise and growth of Western democracy. Iqbal argues that Western democracy led to the concentration of wealth in the hands of few, as the

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[66] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 190.

[67] Mazher-ud-din Siddiqui, 'Iqbal on Islamic democracy' in *Hundred years of Iqbal studies* (ed) Dr Waheed Ishrat, Islamabad: Pakistan Academy Letters, 2003, p. 335.

result of which Europe today is marred by the socialist agitations, claiming equal distribution of wealth and income. Iqbal shows his deep concerns for the socialist movement and this is evident from his critique of private property and from his quest for just and egalitarian society. Nevertheless, Iqbal had certain reservations for endorsing the doctrine of socialism and these were largely due to the position which socialism relegates to religion. Iqbal, while reflecting on socialism, points out that 'modern atheistic socialism, which posseses all the fervor of a new religion, has a broader outlook, but having received its philosophical basis from the Hegelian of the left wing, it rises in revolt against the very source which could have given it strength and purpose.'[68]

Secondly, Iqbal believe that the 'Democracy of Islam' is based on spiritual principle, which emphasizes that every human being possessing certain type of 'character' is the 'centre of latent power.' Iqbal in his philosophical poem 'The Secrets of the Self' (Asrar-i-khudi) argues for establishing the kingdom of god on the earth. He emphasizes that, "the kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth."[69] Iqbal believes that man becomes unique by creating in himself the attributes of God, who for him is the embodiment of a unique individuality. Iqbal believes that the "full development of the individual presupposes a society, he finds the ideal society in what he considers to be the Prophet's conception of Islam. Every moslem, in striving to make himself a more perfect individual, is helping to establish the Islamic kingdom of god upon earth."[70]

Thus, summarizing the above discussion, it can be pointed out that Iqbal criticizes Western democracy for acting as a hindrance in the 'ethical advancement' of humanity. He suggests that Western democracy grows out of the expansion of 'economic opportunities.' As the result, it has become the platform where the rich

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[68]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p.198.
[69]R. A Nicholson, *The Secrets of the Self*, London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1920, p.28.
[70]Ibid., p.8

exploits the poor. Iqbal advanced the case for 'spiritual democracy'[71] and argued that only in 'spiritual democracy' the ethical advancement of humanity is possible.

Constructing the case for Alternative Modernity- A reflection on Iqbal's understanding of Western Modernity

No doubt, the vast scholarship on Iqbal's thought does regard him as 'modernist'[72] and for few scholars like Aziz Ahmed Iqbal's philosophy is one of 'Speculative Neo-Modernism'.[73] These scholars view Iqbal as Modernist or Neo-Modernist largely because of Iqbal's 'dynamic' approach towards *ijtihad*.[74] However, none of the contemporary scholars tried to look into the larger complexities of Iqbal's thought which I believe suggests the case for alternative modernity premised on the 'fundamentals' of Islam.

Iqbal's case for the alternative modernity can be understood at three levels. Firstly, Iqbal constructs the case for alternative modernity by questioning the 'uniqueness' of Western modernity. Iqbal argues that Western modernity is not 'unique' and it is constituted by the intellectual contributions made by the world of Islam. He claims that western civilization, 'on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam.'[75] Interestingly, Javed Majeed throws light on this aspect of Iqbal's work and points out that 'Iqbal internalizes the narrative of modernity, he argues that there is nothing unprecedented about European modernity. His work suggests that there is no stable moment of modernity, and that European self-conception about their own modernity relies on a deliberate forgetting of their Islamic predecessors in order to postulate a unique and unprecedented moment for 'their' modernity.'[76] Majeed points out that the sole purpose of Iqbal in questioning the 'uniqueness' of western modernity is 'not just

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[71] R. A Nicholson, *The Secrets of the Self*, London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1920, p.190. Iqbal believes that the 'spiritual democracy' is based on the religious experience as reveled to the Muslims through Prophet. The spiritual democracy is based on the assumption that every human being is the 'centre of latent power' given the condition that they posses certain 'character' which is akin to the most unique individual i.e. god. The spiritual democracy aims at countering the 'ruthless egoism' as advocated by the western democracy and it emphasizes on both thought and intuitions.

[72] Barbara Metcalf uses this term for 'dynamic' approach of Iqbal

[73] Aziz Ahmed, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan (1857 – 1964)*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

[74] *Ijtihad* is an instrument of legal evolution.

[75] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 7.

[76] Javed Majeed, *Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism*, New Delhi: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2009, p. 122.

concerned with the recovery of repressed narrative of Islam's contribution to progressive modernity...'[77] but to seek one's attention in analyzing the process of ideation and trace the influence of Islam on the 'historical level'.

However, it seems that Majeed has overlooked the complexity of Iqbal's argument. Though it is true that Iqbal aims to highlight the intellectual contribution made by Islam, he does not restrict himself to it. He argues that 'the idea is not to give you a description of the achievements of Islam in the domain of knowledge. I want rather to fix your gaze on some of the ruling concepts of the culture of Islam in order to gain an insight into the process of ideation that underlies them, and thus to catch a glimpse of the soul that found expression through them.'[78]

Majeed fails to understand that Iqbal discusses the process of ideation not merely to trace the influence of Islam on the 'historical level' but rather he has the serious aim of catching the 'glimpse of the soul' that finds expression through these concepts. Majeed overlooks the fact that Iqbal, was engaging with the decadent Islamic culture and his sole purpose of highlighting the intellectual contributions made by the civilization of Islam is not merely to trace the influence of Islam at the 'historical level' but it was rather to uncover the 'anti-classical' spirit of Islam. Iqbal believed the 'anti-classical' spirit of Islam was overshadowed by the influence of Greeks. Thus, while citing the intellectual developments made by Islam Iqbal, self-consciously constructs an alternative version of modernity based on the 'fundamentals' of Islam.

Majeed overlooks the fact that, Iqbal weaves the intellectual contribution made by the civilization of Islam around the 'anti- classical' spirit of Islam as demonstrated by the Prophet. Iqbal argues that it is the Prophet who taught us to premise our knowledge on the 'inductive intellect' and to fix our gaze on the 'concrete.' Iqbal discusses the 'intellectual value' of the principle of the 'finality of Prophethood' and cites extensively from the Quran to demonstrate the fact that the

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[77] Javed Majeed, *Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism*, New Delhi: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2009, p.120.
[78] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p.132.

Quran is essentially anti-classical and its real spirit gets disclosed only if we conceive it as an 'intellectual' revolt against the Greeks.

Thus Majeed, though points out the facts in Iqbal's argument, he is unable to understand the larger concern of Iqbal, which aims at demonstrating the 'anti-classical' spirit of the Quran via the intellectual developments made by the world of Islam. In doing so, Iqbal is not merely questioning the 'uniqueness' and 'linear' growth of Western modernity but he self-consciously constructs an alternative version of modernity through the Quran and the distinctive figuration of Prophet. Thus undoubtedly, by questioning the 'uniqueness' and the 'linear' growth of the Western modernity, Iqbal anticipates the possibility of other 'modernities' existing in the world.

Secondly, Iqbal also proposes the case for alternative modernity by propounding a unique epistemology. Iqbal's epistemology aims at knowing the ultimate nature of reality which for him is essentially 'spiritual' in nature. The ultimate reality for Iqbal, is embodied in the 'ultimate ego', that is, God. Iqbal argues that both science and religion aim at knowing the same reality. However, science while emphasizing on 'pure reason' tries to comprehend the reality through 'concepts' because of which it provides only 'sectional' picture of reality'. Iqbal criticizes modern science for propagating 'pure reason' and argues that it is due to the undue importance accorded to 'pure reason' that there exists conflict in Europe in the realm of 'thought' and its social and political life.

Iqbal criticizes modern epistemology for undermining the importance of the 'religious experience', i.e. intuitions. He argues that in order to comprehend the ultimate nature of reality, 'pure thought' needs to be supplemented by 'intuitions.' Iqbal, thus aims at bringing science and religion together in the domain of knowledge. And, such a combination constitutes the essence of an alternative modernity which Iqbal endeavors to construct.

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Thirdly, Iqbal's alternative modernity is also evident from the way he endorses the Prophet.[79] In Iqbal's work, the Prophet is invoked in a very distinct way. Iqbal suggests that 'the Prophet of Islam seems to stand between the ancient and the modern world. In so far as the source of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the ancient world, in so far as the spirit of revelation is concerned he belongs to the modern world. In him life discovers other sources suitable to its new direction.'[80] Habermas has argued that 'the defining feature of aesthetic modernity is a changed consciousness of time, in which the relation between the 'modern' and the 'classical' has lost fixed historical reference. The loss of this fixed historical reference is also evident in the exaltation of the present in the modern aesthetic.[81] Iqbal while situating the Prophet between the 'ancient' and the 'modern' world tries to overcome the fixed 'historical reference' of the 'ancient' and the 'modern.' While arguing that the Prophet of Islam stands in the modern world, Iqbal exalts the 'present.' Iqbal argues that the Prophet emphasizes on knowledge based on the 'concrete situation of life.' And it is due to this reason that Iqbal believed that the Prophet, in his spirit of revelation stands in the modern world. Thus, by figuring the Prophet between the 'ancient' and the 'modern' world, Iqbal demonstrates 'the changed consciousness of time' which forms an essence of alternative modernity.

Thus, summarizing the above discussion, it can be argued that Iqbal, by questioning the 'uniqueness' and linear growth of western modernity anticipates the availability of alternative modernity in the Islamic world. Iqbal endeavors to construct the alternative version of modernity by demonstrating the 'anti-classical' spirit of the Quran and of Prophet. However, only a part of my argument is discussed here, the remaining one is discussed in the chapters to follow.

Conclusion

This chapter deals with Iqbal's critique of western modernity. In this chapter, Iqbal's critique of western modernity is discussed at two levels. On the one hand, it deals with Iqbal's contestation of the 'uniqueness' of western modernity. It highlights

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[79]Here Prophet stands for Mohammad.

[80]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 133.

[81]Javed Majeed, *Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism*, New Delhi: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, p. 117.

Iqbal's criticisms of modern epistemology and some of the core ideas of Western modernity. Iqbal not merely criticizes the social and the political ideas of modernity but by questioning the 'uniqueness' and linear growth of western modernity, he anticipates the possibility of alternative conceptualization of 'modernities' although he restricts himself substantially to elaborate the same with regard to Islam.

Iqbal begins to construct the alternative version of modernity through the Quran and the distinctive figuration of Prophet. His quest for an alternative version of modernity should not be understood as mere adjustment of Islam to the changed 'modern conditions' but it is a self-conscious endeavor to demonstrate the fact that 'spiritual democracy'[82] is the 'ultimate aim' of Islam.

Having discussed Iqbal's critique of modernity, the next chapter would deal with his conception of self.

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[82]Iqbal argues that 'spiritual democracy' is a democracy of unique individuals possessing the characteristic of God. Iqbal's spiritual democracy aims at realizing three goals-firstly, spiritual interpretation of the universe. Secondly, spiritual emancipation of the individual. And thirdly, it aims at reaching the basic principles of the universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis. See Muhammad Iqbal *Reconstruction of Religious Islam in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers and Exporters, 2003.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTION OF SELF IN IQBAL

The conception of *Khudi* i.e. self is central to Iqbal's work. In the first chapter, we have argued that Iqbal not merely criticizes the project of western modernity but also endeavors to construct an alternative notion of modernity. Iqbal undertakes the project of constructing an alternative notion of modernity at two levels. Firstly, Iqbal contends that the contributions made by Islamic civilization to the project of modernity have not been dually acknowledged by its proponents. Secondly, Iqbal propounds his alternative to western modernity by founding his philosophical thought on the centrality of self. It is the latter preposition which is explored in this chapter.

The Context

After examining the scholarship on Iqbal, it can be easily pointed out that Iqbal's understanding of other-worldliness constitutes an important dimension in his conception of the self. The idea of other-worldliness involves the distinction between spirit and matter and in doing so, primacy is accorded to the former. It is discussed elsewhere in this study that Iqbal traces the separation of spirit from matter as a Greek legacy from whose influence even the Islamic civilization was not sparred.

For Iqbal the other-worldliness in the Islamic civilization is manifest in the form of a particular kind of Sufism which has larger repercussion on the Islamic conception of self and the community. Iqbal thinks that Sufis sought to dissociate self from earthly engagement through *fana*.[1] The Sufi notion of *fana* refers to lose one's self in its quest for realizing god. Such a mystical understanding of the human self is contrary to Iqbal's understanding of the self, as he believed that the self has a larger responsibility of reforming 'this-world.' It calls for engagement with this world and a specific politics proceeds therefrom.

Beside the other-worldliness of the 'ascetic Sufism'another important context around which Iqbal works out his conception of the self is the nature of the self

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[1]*Fana* is the sufi terminology which refers to passing away or effacement.

propagated by western modernity. To be more concrete, Iqbal's conception of the self stands apart from the modern instrumental self^2 as represented by colonialism. Thus, Iqbal works out his conception of self in the backdrop of a double context; one against medieval Sufism and the other, against colonial modernity. It is argued in this chapter that Iqbal pioneers an alternative version of modernity by founding his philosophy on a particular conception of self.

The Sufi Other-Worldliness and its Consequences on the Conception of Self in Islam

Iqbal's critical attitude towards the other-worldly character of the Sufism is evident in his doctoral thesis *The development of metaphysics in Persia* and his *masnavi^3*, *The secrets of the self* and *The mysteries of the selflessness*. According to Francis Robinson, the critique of the other-worldly religion has shaped the modern notion of the self in the western civilization and "this should prompt us at least to consider the extent to which a similar change might have helped to shape Muslim senses of the self in South-Asia."^{4} Drawing from Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*, Robinson suggests that the developments among the nineteenth and the twentieth century Indian Muslims were "not dissimilar from those experienced by post-Reformation Western Europeans."^{5} In making this observation, Robinson endeavors to suggest that the growth of the individualism and personal responsibility which is a distinct feature of post-Reformation Europe becomes an essential constituent of the nineteenth and twentieth century this-worldly Islam.

This-worldly nature of Islam challenges the feeling of complacency among Muslims that God will intervene as the savior to safeguard the Islamic community. This-worldliness has direct consequences for a conception of self in Islam as it expects every individual to undertake the responsibility of transforming their community. Thus, This-worldly Islam while emphasizing on individual responsibility fosters an individualism of a particular kind. It calls upon individuals to shoulder the larger social responsibility of establishing a just and equal society. This aspect of

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^{2}The term 'instrumental self' refers to a particular understanding of self which emphasizes on pure reason and overlooks the importance of intuition while engaging with the other.
^{3}A long poem in rhyming couplets.
^{4}Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 106.
^{5}*Ibid.*, p. 8.

individualism is discussed latter in the chapter. The individualism celebrated by Iqbal is much different from the 'desiring' Sufi self, which in its quest for other-worldliness negates the possibility of human action in reforming this-world.

The quest for *fana* in Sufism arises from the distinction which it draws between spirit and matter and its belief that it is only the former which is real. Iqbal is highly critical of the other-worldly character of Sufism as it emphasizes too much on unity with god, resulting in *be-khudi*, i.e. selflessness. The term *be-khudi* signifies the absence of individual self, i.e. *khudi* and it is to be noted here that it is *khudi* rather than *be-khudi* which occupies a vital significance in Iqbal's scheme of thought.

The Sufi notion of *fana* not merely led to extinction of the self in the absolute, i.e. god but also breeds inaction. As a result a person overlooks his responsibility to transform 'this- world.' Such an attitude of Sufism towards matter led to the relaxation of the self. Contrary to the relaxation of the self Iqbal argues that the individual self should involve in action of transforming 'this- world.'

Iqbal criticizes Sufism for breeding inaction and quietude in the individual. His critique of the Sufi self is the key theme of his *masnavi* in *The secrets of the self.* Iqbal believed that the nature of poetry reflects the condition of civilization. He argues that the Sufi poetry not only reflects the decadence of Islamic civilization but by preaching other-worldliness it further led to decay in the civilization. Such a role of Sufi poetry is criticized by Iqbal in *The secrets of the self.*

According to Annemarie Schimmel, *The Secrets of the Self* was written 'as a protest of "Arabic" Islam against the Platonic and personalizing philosophy of medieval and largely of modern Islam...' [6] This analysis of Schimmel holds true and it is clearly evident from the first edition of the *masnavi.* The opening pages of *The Secrets of the Self* start with Iqbal's criticism of the mystical poet Hafiz, who eulogizes the importance of 'other-worldliness.' The quest for other-worldliness in Hafiz is evident from the following verses:

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[6]Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal.* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963, p. 340.

Come, let us scatter roses and throw wine in the glass—

Let us pierce the heavenly ceiling and throw down a new law.[7]

Thus Hafiz like many Sufi poets emphasizes on penetrating the 'heavenly ceiling.' To put it differently, Hafiz prioritizes the individual's quest for other-worldliness and in the process the role of the individual self in the social and the political life of 'this-world' is overlooked. Such an attitude of Hafiz prompts inaction in this-worldly affairs and Iqbal criticizes him in the following words-

Beware of Hafiz the wine drinker,

For his cup's supply is the poison of death;

He pawned his hair shirt to the cup- bearer...

Wine is the cure for the heat of his fervor...

He is the cleric of the wine-drinkers nation;

He is the priest of the religion of the hapless.

His harp's melody is the proof of decadence,

His muse is the Gabriel of decadence.

A rose-bed snake endowed with pure poison,

Proceeds by first lulling its prey to sleep...[8]

In the above quotation[9] Iqbal counters the intoxicating character of Hafiz's poetry, who through his style of writing, breeds a negative attitude of inaction among his listeners. Iqbal invokes the analogy of 'wine' to suggest drunkenness which follows from reading Hafiz's poetry. He argues that it is due to the intoxicating effect of poetry like that of the Hafiz that has led to the decadence of the Islamic community.

However Iqbal's criticism of Hafiz does not mean that Iqbal does not draw any inspiration from the Sufi tradition in constituting his philosophy. R. A Nicholson

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[7]Hafiz quoted in Yaseen Noorani 'Islamic Modernity and the Desiring Self: Muhammad Iqbal and the Poetics of Narcissism', in *Iran,* Vol. 38 , 2000, p. 123.

[8]Hafiz quoted in Yaseen Noorani, 'Islamic Modernity and the Desiring Self: Muhammad Iqbal and the Poetics of Narcissism', in *Iran,* Vol. 38 , 2000, p. 125.

[9]Here it is important to note that the above quoted verses are taken from the first edition of *The Secrets of the Self* which was finally removed from its second edition following the controversial depiction of Hafiz, the mystical poet. However Iqbal's criticism of Sufi poetry still remained the central idea of the *masnavi* though in a different form.

in the introduction to *The Secrets of the Self* highlights the influence of mystic poets Hallaj and Rumi on Iqbal. It should be noted here that Iqbal considered Jalaluddin Rumi as his spiritual guide and like him, Iqbal is 'fond of introducing fables and apologues to relieve the argument and to illustrate his meaning with more force and point than would be possible otherwise.'[10] Nicholson further argues 'Much as he(Iqbal) dislikes the type of Sufism exhibited by Hafiz, he pays homage to the pure and the profound genius of Jalaluddin, though he rejects the doctrine of self-abandonment taught by the great Persian mystic and does not accompany him in his pantheistic flights.'[11]

Now the central question which needs to be addressed here is to what extent Sufi mysticism had influenced Iqbal's notion of the self? We have aleready pointed out that Iqbal proposes his conception of the self against the mystic conception of *fana*. However Iqbal's criticism of the mystic notion of *fana* does not mean that that Iqbal was anti-mystic. Schimmel, in her book *Gabriel's wing - A Study into the Religious Thought of Sir Muhammad Iqbal,* highlights the mystical aspect of the Iqbal's personality. Schimmel argues that the notion of *Ana-i-haqq* of Hallaj, the mystic poet, has "deeply influenced Iqbal's conception of the ego."[12]

Ann-i-haqq literally means that 'I am the creative truth.' Schimmel discusses the multiple interpretations of this saying and points out that Iqbal invokes this in a similar way as his spiritual guide Rumi. It is to be noted here that *Ann-i-haqq* refers to the unity of the experiences of the lover i.e. individual with that of the beloved, i.e. god. Rumi's interpretation of the *Ann-i-haqq* is different from the dominant Sufi understanding of the saying. In the dominant Sufi tradition the unity of the experience is understood in terms of the lover losing his individuality after the union with the beloved. In Rumi while there is the union of the lover with the beloved, it is to be understood not in terms of losing one's individuality but in taking possession of divine attributes which specifically belong to one's beloved, i.e. God.

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[10]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self,* (tr.) Reynold A. Nicholson , London: Macmillan. 1920, p. xxx.

[11]Ibid., p. xiv.

[12]Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal,* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963, p. 349.

Iqbal adheres to Rumi's interpretation of *Ann-i-haqq* and in his text *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* he put forward his interpretation in the following words:

> 'Devotional Sufism alone tried to understand the meaning of the unity of inner experience which the Quran declares to be one of the three sources of knowledge, the other two being History and Nature. The development of this experience in the religious life of Islam reached its culmination in the well known words of Hallaj- 'I am the creative truth.' The contemporaries of Hallaj, as well as his successors, interpreted these words pantheistically , but the fragments of Hallaj, collected and published by the French orientalist, M. Massignon, leave no doubt that the martyr saint could not have meant to deny the transcendence of god. The true interpretation of his experience, therefore, is not the drop slipping into the sea, but the realization and bold affirmation is an undying phrase of the reality and permanence of human ego in a profounder personality. The phrase of Hallaj seems almost a challenge flung against the Mutakallimin. The difficulty of modern students of religion, however, is that this type of experience, though perhaps perfectly normal in its beginnings, points, in its maturity, to unknown levels of consciousness.'[13]

Thus Iqbal believes in the elevation of the individual through his engagement with God. The idea of unity of egos for Iqbal does not end in the loss of one's individuality. Iqbal argues that 'in the higher Sufism of Islam unitive experience is not the finite ego effacing its own identity by some sort of absorption into the infinite ego, it is rather the infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite.'[14] Such an understanding of human ego in Iqbal is contrary to Sufism of a particular kind which justifies *fana*. Iqbal understood the 'unity of experience' as a station in the development of the human ego through which it develops certain characteristics which are akin to god. However the passing of the divine ego in the finite ego should

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[13]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar, Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 101.
[14]Ibid., p. 115.

not be understood as the replacement of those characteristics which are specific to the individual.

Now the question is – how Iqbal's understanding of matter, i.e. man's external environment, helps in shaping his conception of the self? Iqbal does not distinguish between spirit and matter. He believes that 'matter is spirit in space-time reference.'[15] He suggests that reality is essentially spirit and the ultimate reality is ego. He argues that there are degrees of egohood and even matter is an ego. In his words: 'the world, 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'. Every atom of Divine energy, however low in the scale of existence, is an ego. But there are degrees in the expression of egohood. Throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of egohood until it reaches its perfection in man. That is why the Quran declares the Ultimate Ego to be nearer to man than his own neck-vein. Like pearls do we live and move and have our being in the perpetual flow of Divine life.'[16]

In *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* Iqbal discusses the relationship between the ego and environment. He argues that 'The life of the ego is a kind of tension caused by the ego invading the environment and environment invading the ego. The ego does not stand outside this arena of mutual invasion. It is present in it as directive energy and is formed and disciplined by its own experience.'[17] This view of Iqbal about the matter is contrary to that of Plato and Sufism of a particular kind which underplays the importance of matter and 'teaches us to run away from it instead of absorbing it.'[18]

Iqbal argues that the individual through his directive energy should make and remake the world. To put the same in the words of Iqbal, he claims that 'The final act is not an intellectual act, but a vital act which deepens the whole being of the ego and sharpens his will with the creative assurance that world is not just something to be

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[15] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* Srinagar, Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 164.
[16] Ibid., p. 76.
[17] Ibid., pp. 107-108.
[18] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self,* (tr.) Reynold A. Nicholson , London: Macmillan, 1920, p. 23.

seen and known through concepts, but to be made and remade by continuous action.'[19] Iqbal's emphasis on the individual's role in shaping and reshaping the external environment highlights the responsibility of the self to transform the world around his environs. Such an understanding of the self in Iqbal's philosophy is characterized by Francis Robinson as the evidence of the 'self-instrumentality' in the nineteenth and twentieth century this-worldly Islam.

It is worth pointing out here that the instrumentality of the self in Iqbal's writings is contrary to the Sufi notion of the self which in its quest for the other-worldliness is totally indifferent towards the external environment. This strand of Sufism totally overlooks the necessity of reforming the world.

According to Iqbal the self is not a thing but an act. He argues that 'you cannot perceive me like thing in space, or a set of experiences in temporal order – you, must interpret, understand and appreciate me in my judgments, in my will – attitudes, aims and aspirations.'[20] In his *masnavi* *The Secrets of the Self* Iqbal discusses the importance of desires and aspirations in setting up the ideals for individual self. Iqbal argues that:

> 'The true person not only absorbs the world of matter; by mastering it
> he absorbs God Himself into his Ego. Life is a forward assimilative
> movement. It removes all obstructions in its march by assimilating
> them. Its essence is the continual creation of desires and ideals, and for
> the purpose of its preservation and expansion it has invented or
> developed out of itself certain instruments, *e.g.* senses, intellect, etc.,
> which help it to assimilate obstructions... The ego attains to freedom
> by the removal of all obstructions in its way. It is partially free,
> partially determined, and reaches fuller freedom by approaching the
> individual who is most free-God. In one word, life is an endeavour for
> freedom.'[21]

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[19] Mohammad Iqbal quoted in Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 113

[20] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar, Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 109.

[21] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, (tr.) Reynold A. Nicholson London: Macmillan, 1920, pp. 20-21.

Thus from the above discussion it is evident that Iqbal does not underplay the importance of 'desire,' which for him forms the ground for assimilative action. Such an understanding of Iqbal is not only contrary to the pantheism of a particular kind, which celebrates the desiring self as one with the absolute, but also has strong consequences for human action. Iqbal in his *masnavi The Secrets of the Self* highlights the importance of desire in creating the self, he claims: 'Desire is an emotion of the Self: It is a restless wave of the Self's sea. Desire is a noose for hunting ideals, A binder of the book of deeds. Negation of desire is death to the living, Even as absence of burning extinguishes the flame.'[22] Iqbal argues that desires help in the formation of the ideals towards which the lives of all the individuals strive for. Iqbal perceives desires as something which motivate men to act.

Iqbal insists that an individual should act in a particular way so that he grows more and more in his personality and becomes like the 'unique individual', i.e. god. In order to realize the 'ideal' of the 'unique individual' Iqbal argues that an individual's actions should be supplemented with 'Love.' Iqbal claims that 'The ego is fortified by love (ishq). This word is used in a very wide sense and means the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and ideals and the endeavour to realize them. Love individuates the lover as well as the beloved. The effort to realize the most unique individuality individualizes the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker. As love fortifies the ego, asking *(su' al)* weakens it. All that is achieved without personal effort comes under *su'al.* The son of a rich man who inherits his father's wealth is an 'asker' (beggar); so is everyone who thinks the thoughts of others. Thus in order to fortify ego we should cultivate love i.e. the power of assimilative action, and avoid all forms of 'asking' i.e. inaction. The lesson of assimilative action is given by the life of the Prophet, at least to a Mohammadan.'[23] Thus Iqbal believed that the individual should act in such a way that he realizes the characteristics of the fuller individual, i.e. god. Does not assimilative action which Iqbal urges every individual to perform endanger distinct individualities?

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[22] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self,* (tr.) Reynold A. Nicholson London: Macmillan, 1920, p. 24.

[23] Ibid., pp. 25-26.

For Iqbal 'Love' is the condition for realizing fuller personality. Love not only individualizes the lover i.e. the individual but also the beloved i.e. the god, in the quest of whom the lover is continuously performing actions. However the individual's affinity with god should not be mistaken as the destruction of the individual self. The unity of experience 'is not the finite ego effacing its own identity by some sort of absorption into the infinite ego, it is rather the infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite.'[24] Thus Iqbal recognizes the problem of assimilation and he upholds the distinctiveness of the every self. Javed Majeed while discussing Attar's[25] and Iqbal's interpretation of love points out that 'For Attar, the vale of love is a station on the way to the vale of fana; for, Iqbal, in contrast, it is a force which further individualizes the self, and it is at the root of its assimilating expansiveness. The self seeks to assimilate others through its love, but at the same time individualizes these others since nothing else can satisfy it. Assimilation would result in the loss of its own selfhood. It is tied to others in reciprocal bonds of individuality.'[26]

For Iqbal 'The moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation but self-affirmation and he attains to this ideal by becoming more and more individual, more and more unique.'[27] Francis Robinson after analyzing this aspect of Iqbal's philosophy argues that Iqbal eulogizes the affirmative character of the self. Robinson, however believes that'There is, however, an essential tension between this- worldly Islam's desire to empower humankind on earth on the one hand and on the other, to continue to focus their attention on godly ends.[28] In other words, Robinson believes that the affirmative self in Iqbal's writings is constrained by 'godly purposes.'

Robinson is right that the affirmative character of the self in Iqbal is a qualified one. However to suggest that Iqbal's conception of the self is constrained by 'godly purpose' and that there exists a tension between a reformist conception of Islam and the fulfillment of 'godly ends' is problematic. Robinson's understanding is

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[24]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Srinagar, Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 115.
[25]A mystical Iranian poet, whom Jalaluddin Rumi considered his spiritual teacher.
[26]Javed Majeed, *Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2009, p. 27.
[27]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*,(tr.) Reynold A. Nicholson, London: Macmillan, 1920, p. 15.
[28]Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 114.

far too caught in a specific understanding of the idea of self in the 'Western' civilization. To put it differently, Robinson while taking post-Reformation Europe as the vantage point in analyzing the nineteenth and twentieth century conception of self by Islamic scholars argues that there are many similarities in both these versions over the question of the development of the self.

Robinson overlooks the specificities of Iqbal's notion of self which aims at actualizing 'godly ends' in real life to realize 'the kingdom of god' on the earth. Iqbal argues, 'The kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided by the most unique individual possible on this earth.'[29] Thus it is evident from this argument that though Iqbal's idea of an 'unique individual' as discussed earlier is overloaded with the mystical overtones yet it shoulders the huge responsibility of reforming the Islamic community. Thus to say that the Iqbal's notion of the self is constrained by the 'godly ends' is a mistake as for him these ends are the actual sources for reforming this-worldly Islam.

Thus concluding the above discussion it can be argued that Iqbal propounds his conception of the self in the backdrop of a particular kind of Sufism. Iqbal's conception of self entrusts huge responsibility on the Muslim to transform the existing world in view of establishing more just and equal community of believers. The idea of personal responsibility for transforming the world essentially demands action on the part of every Muslim, such an instrumental understanding of the individual leads to the cultivation of a specific individuality.

Iqbal's Stand on Individualism

In the above discussion it has been pointed out that Iqbal's insistence on the individual to fulfill his responsibility for transforming the society led to the growth of a strong sense of individualism. In what ways this individualism is different from the variant of modern individualism of the West? Before answering this question let us lay down the characteristics of Iqbal's notion of individualism-

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[29] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self,* (tr.) Reynold A. Nicholson, London: Macmillan, 1920, p. 28.

Self-Instrumentality[30]

In the above discussion it was pointed out that Iqbal emphasizes on the individual to act in order to shape and reshape the world. The instrumental understanding of the self is further evident by the manner in which Iqbal interprets certain sections of Koran. In *The reconstruction of the religious thought in Islam* Iqbal points out why God bestowed 'trust' in men and not in other existing things of nature. He quotes from the Quran: '*Verily We proposed to the Heavens and to the Earth, and to the mountains to receive the "Trust" but they refused the burden and they forced to receive it. Man undertook to bear it, but hath proved unjust, senseless!'(33:72)*[31] Thus Iqbal believed that the God has bestowed faith on men and it due to this fact he (god) has made men his representative on the earth. The sole purpose of bestowing the trust in men is that it is only he who can transform the existing order of the world so that the 'kingdom of god' can be established.

Thus by interpreting the verses of Koran in a particular way Iqbal seems to highlight the huge responsibility which god has bestowed on man. Thus in light of this interpretation of the Koran Iqbal endeavors to carve out the responsibility of the individual in fulfilling the commands of god.

Self-affirmation:

The idea of self-affirmation constitutes an important aspect of Iqbal's notion of individuality. The affirmative character of the individual is depicted in Iqbal through many ways. However, one of the crucial aspects of the affirmative characteristic of Iqbal's notion of individual is evident when he argues that the moral and the religious ideal of every Muslim should be of realizing his 'unique' personality like that of god. Another way through which the affirmative individual expresses himself is the appropriation of Islam. Iqbal believed that the birth of Islam is 'the birth of the inductive intellect.'[32] He argues: 'man is primarily governed by passion and instinct. Inductive reason, which alone makes man master of his environment, is an achievement; and when once born it must be reinforced by inhibiting the growth of

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[30]This term has been taken from Francis Robinson's classification of the conception of self in Islam. See Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000.

[31] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar, Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 101.

[32]Ibid., p. 133.

other modes of knowledge.'[33] However, Iqbal's justification of affirmative individuality should not be mistaken as one which is constrained free. Iqbal while discussing the stages of growth of individuality emphasizes obedience to the law of the shari'a as the essential condition which every Muslim needs to adhere.

Islamic self

Another important characteristic of Iqbal's notion of the individuality is that it is an essentially Islamic category. Iqbal argues a community is the essential condition for the individual to realize the 'unique' individuality. As in the introduction to *The Secrets of the Self*, R.A Nicholson points out that Iqbal believed that 'the full development of the individual presupposes a society, he finds the ideal society in what he considers to be the prophet's conception of Islam.'[34]

The Islamic character of the self is, of course, writ large in Iqbal when he discusses the stages through which the self need to pass through in order to realize fuller individuality. Iqbal in *The Secrets of the Self* lists three stages in the development of the self in the sequence as discussed below.

a) Obedience to the law

The first stage in the development of the self is the obedience to the law of the shari'a. Herein Iqbal highlights the importance of the law and urges men to possess the qualities of camel which does not refuse to carry forward its duty even in the harsh circumstances. Iqbal believes that obedience to the law of the shari'a is for the betterment of the individual and it should be obeyed not out of compulsion but through the individual's willingness to obey it. As Iqbal argues 'By obedience the man of no worth is made worthy; / By disobedience his fire is turned to ashes./ Whoso would master the sun and stars,/ Let him make himself a prisoner of Law! 829-832'[35] He further claims: 'Since law makes everything strong within,/ Why dost thou neglect this source of strength?/ O thou that art emancipated from the old Custom,/ Adorn thy

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[33] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar, Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 133.
[34] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self* (tr.) Reynold A. Nicholson, London: Macmillan, 1920, p. 8.
[35] Ibid., p. 73.

feet once more with the same fine silver chain/ Do not complain of the hardness of the Law, / Do not transgress the statutes of Mohammed! 843-848'[36]

Thus it is evident from the above discussion that Iqbal conditioned the affirmative self to adhere to the law of *shari'a,* the sole purpose of which is not only to fulfill religious duty but also to enhance one's own individuality. Thus to say that the self is constrained by the law is problematic as the good of both the individual and the community need to be negotiated in order to realize the ideal notion of the individual and the community. Nevertheless, such an understanding of Iqbal about man and his law is not problem-free. Iqbal, while asking man not to transgress the laws of Muhammad, overlooks the possibility of tensions that might arise between an individual and the law.

b) Self-control

The second stage in the evolution of self is self-control. Self-control is highest form of self consciousness or egohood. To have control over one's self means to overcome fear. Iqbal suggests that there are four ways to have control over self: prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and almsgiving. In his words: 'the profession of Faith is the shell, but prayer is the pearl:/ The Moslem's heart deems prayer a lesser pilgrimage./ In the Moslem's hand prayer is like a dagger/ Killing sin and forwardness and wrong./ Fasting makes an assault upon hunger and thirst/ And breaches the citadel of sensuality./ The pilgrimage enlightens the minds of the Faithful:/ It teaches separation from one's home and destroys attachment to one's native land;/ It is an act of devotion in which all feel themselves to be one,/ It binds together the leaves of the book of religion./ Almsgiving causes love of riches to pass away/ And makes equality familiar;/ It fortifies the heart with righteousness,/ It increases wealth and diminishes fondness for wealth./ All this is a means of strengthening thee:/ Thou art impregnable, if thy Islam be strong./ Draw might from the litany "O Almigty One!"/ That thou mayst ride the camel of thy body. 875-892'[37]

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[36] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self* (tr.) Reynold A. Nicholson, London: Macmillan, 1920, p. 74.
[37] Ibid., pp. 77-78.

c) Divine vicegerency

The divine vicegerency is the final stage of the development of the human ego on the earth. Iqbal in introduction to *The Secrets of the Self* defines vicegerency. He claims that 'The *na'ib* (vicegerent) is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is the completest Ego, the goal of humanity, the acme of life both in mind and body; in him the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony. The highest power is united in him with the highest knowledge. In his life, thoughts and action, instinct and reason, become one. He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity, and all the trial of a painful evolution are justified because he is to come at the end. He is the real ruler of the mankind; his kingdom is the kingdom of God on earth. Out of the richness of his nature he lavishes the wealth of life on others, and brings them nearer and nearer to himself. The more we advance in evolution, the nearer we get to him. In approaching him we are raising ourselves in the scale of life. The development of humanity both in mind and body is a condition precedent to his birth. For the present he is a mere ideal; but the evolution of humanity is tending towards the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents. Thus the Kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth.'[38]

Thus Iqbal propounds his notion of the self on the fundamental principles of Islam. His notion of the self is one which is not only affirmative but it is also sensitive towards the sensibilities of the Islamic community. This conception of the individual marks it off from that proposed by colonial modernity.

Colonialism and *khudi*

It is evident that colonialism forms one of the important background condition in shaping Iqbal's notion of the self. There exist plenty of issues pertaining to the nature of colonialism, however the problem of inquiry in this section is how Iqbal counters the problem of colonialism through his conception of *khudi*? To be more specific this section deals with the juxtaposition of the self manifested through the colonialism with that of Iqbal's notion of *khudi*. However, it is important for us to point out the grounds on which Iqbal criticizes the phenomenon of colonialism.

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[38]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self,* (tr.) Reynold A. Nicholson , London: Macmillan, 1920, pp. 27-28.

Iqbal lays down the Islamic ground for criticizing the phenomenon of colonialism and believed that such a phenomenon is the result of the 'perverted ego.' For him there is close nexus between imperialism and nationalism and he says that they 'rob us of paradise' and 'make us strangers to each other, destroy feelings of brotherhood, and sow the bitter seed of war.' Iqbal believed that colonialism is a variant of nationalism, which started breeding on the soil of the western civilization at first.

Iqbal proposes a humanistic Islamic self against the instrumental self of colonialism and constructs the former in the backdrop of certain philosophical and the political issues, some of which are discussed below:

Colonialism and Instrumental Rationality

Iqbal believes that the western civilization is based on pure rationality and practicality as the result of which it overlooks the importance of the intuitions. Iqbal seems to suggest that the colonialising character of the western civilization is largely due to its underplaying of the importance of intuition. In his text *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam'* Iqbal discusses two aspects of the self, one he calls the appreciative self, the other as efficient self. Iqbal argues that the colonizing tendency in the western civilization is due its eulogizing of the efficient self in contrast to the appreciative self. He argues that the self on its efficient side 'enters into relation with what we call the world of space. The efficient self is the subject of associationist psychology-the practical self of daily life in its dealing with, the external order of things which determines our passing states of consciousness and stamp on these states their own spatial feature of mutual isolation. The self here lives outside itself as it were and, while retaining its unity as a totality, discloses itself as nothing more than a series of specific and consequently numerable states.'[39]Thus Iqbal believed that the efficient side of the self is one which engage with the 'other' in view of fulfilling its own desires and interests. Unlike the appreciative self whom Iqbal calls as the inner self, the efficient self is least concerned with the deeper analysis of our conscious actions and experiences. Iqbal believes that the western civilization has so far only

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[39]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 50.

developed the efficient side of the self as the result of which it has led to breeding of such phenomenon as colonialism, nationalism and imperialism.

Iqbal argues that the appreciative self can be realized only through continuous reflection on one's actions. To ensure this Iqbal suggests that the compulsory prayers should be resorted to by every individual, who is Muslim. Thus the appreciative self, according to Iqbal is not merely the self which engages with the practical aspects of the day to day life but one which is spiritually connected to God and aims at realizing godly ends through conscious actions. These actions according to Iqbal should not be premised on pure rational grounds but they should be supplemented by the philosophy of love.

Thus Iqbal believed that the phenomenon of colonialism is due to the inability of the Western civilization to groom the appreciative aspect of the self which recognizes the importance of both rationality and feelings in course of engaging with the 'other.'

The Decline of Islam

The second ground of Iqbal's criticism of colonialism is largely motivated by his concern of major Islamic countries falling in the hands of the imperial West. Such a concern of Iqbal is clearly evident from two of his poems, one being *The Mosque of Cordoba* and the other being *Shikwa*. In both these poems Iqbal bemoans over the lost glory of Islam and argues for the revival of its past glory.

In *'The Mosque of Cordoba,'* Iqbal depicts the lost Islamic glory in the soil of the Andalusia. Iqbal, while praising the architectural beauty of the mosque, symbolizes it as an embodiment of the Islamic glory in the past. Barbara Metcalf while reflecting on Iqbal's mood in *The Mosque of Cordoba* argues that 'In focusing on Cordoba, Iqbal found a symbol of past Muslim glory more evocative than any other. It represented the farthest reach of the great early empires, and, specifically, a

time when Muslims ruled over the Europeans and far surpassed Europeans in both morality and the arts and sciences of civilization.'[40]

Iqbal believed that the Muslim rule was better than the European regime. He emphasizes that the Muslim rule was morally more superior than the Europeans as the latter was founded to 'command' humanity rather than to 'serve' it. The nostalgic frame of Iqbal's mind is evident from the sixth and the seventh stanzas of the poem wherein the poet dreams of the glorious days of Andalusia. The poet puts forward his nostalgic feeling in the following words, he dreams as if

Even to-day in its breeze fragrance of Yemen still floats,
Even to-day in its songs echoes live on of Hejaz.[41]

Such a nostalgic feeling of the poet about the Andalusia gets shattered once the poet breaks from his dream and realizes that in the real world the Islamic glory is no longer a fact. Iqbal in *The Mosque of Cordoba* not only argues for the revival of the Islamic glory, but also highlights the deepening crisis in Europe. Barbara Metcalf while reflecting on Iqbal's *Mosque of Cordoba* points out that Iqbal 'thinks of the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution and hints that now the caravan of *ishq* has found its new halting place in the soul of Islam.'[42] Iqbal is highly critical of Protestant Reformation and French Revolution.[43] He argues that only the social order based on Islam can emancipate humanity.

Thus *'The Mosque of Cordoba'* reflects the present crisis in Islamic civilization and while reflecting on the decline of Islam, the poet urges Muslims to revive their glorious past which treats humanity as something to be served rather

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[40]Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India Pakistan.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 293.

[41]Muhammad Iqbal, 'The Mosque of Cordoba', in *Poems from Iqbal,* (tr.) V.G. Kiernan, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 108.

[42]Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India Pakistan,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 291.

[43]Iqbal criticizes them because he believes that those events led to the replacement of universal ethics of Christianity with the narrow ethics based on national interest. In his view, it is because of the distortion of Christian ethics, the Western civilization became the breeding ground for the contemporary problems such as the Great European Wars and colonialism. See Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers and Exporters, 2003.

being commanded. The poet mourns over the loss of Andalusia to the Europeans and this decline in the power of Islamic civilization forms the background condition around which Iqbal constitutes his notion of the self.

Similar concern towards the decline of political Islam is also echoed in Iqbal's poem *Shikwa*. Iqbal in this poem complains to god that it is the Muslim community which has propagated his commands and messages on the earth. However, still Muslims remained in poor condition whereas the non-Muslims who have not taken any pains of carrying forward god's message are more blessed by him. The twenty-fifth stanza of the poem *Shikwa* depicts the mental state of the poet who claims that

> Strangers revel in the garden, besides a stream they are sitting,
>
> Wine goblets in their hands, hearing the cuckoo singing,
>
> Far from the garden, far away from its notes of revelry,
>
> Your lovers sit by themselves awaiting the moment to praise You.
>
> Rekindle in your moths the passion to burn themselves on the flame,
>
> Bid the old lightning strike, brand our breasts with Your name.[44]

Thus in both the poems - *The Mosque of Cordoba* and *Shikwa*, Iqbal discusses the decline of the Islam. The political decline of the Islamic civilization had the serious consequences on the Islamic self. The concern over decline is evident from the unanimity of the Muslims from all over the world in supporting the khilafat agitation. In both of the above discussed poems colonialism constitutes the key context which led to the decline of Islam. Iqbal emphasizes on the revival of the Islam which in the past had the civilizing influence on the humanity. His quest for the Islamic revivalism made him to propagate Pan-Islamism which he viewed as the counter-hegemonic project to colonialism.

To sum up, so far in this chapter it has been argued out that Iqbal propounds his conception of the self in the backdrop of the double contexts: one is Sufism whereas the other is colonialism. Iqbal not merely counters the philosophies of the self as propagated by Sufism and colonialism but also attempts to construct an alternative version of modernity based on his notion of *khudi*.

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[44] Muhammad Iqbal, *Shikwa and Jawab-i-Shikwa – Complaint and Answer: Iqbal's Dialogue with Alla*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 52.

Conceptualizing Iqbal's notion of self

So far in this chapter we have contextualized Iqbal's notion of self. It is pointed out that Iqbal constructs his notion of self in the backdrop of Sufism and Western modernity. We have also pointed out that though Iqbal criticizes Sufism and modernity his notion of self possesses certain characteristics which are specific features of Sufism and modernity.[45] Now the central question which arises here is what is unique about Iqbal's notion of self? Or is his notion of self mere hybridization of the characteristics of the Sufi and the modern self?

Undoubtedly, Iqbal's notion of self possesses many characteristics of the Sufi and the modern self. Iqbal's notion of self is dialectically related to Sufism and modernity and it is not the result of mere hybridization of the features of the Sufism and modernity. Iqbal approaches both Sufism and modernity with certain degree of criticality. And this is evident from the preceding discussion where it has been pointed out that though Iqbal believed in the 'unity of experience' of higher Sufism, he rejects the Sufi quest for getting fana. Similarly his notion of self possesses the modern characteristics of self-instrumentality and affirmation, yet he rejects the modern self as manifested through colonialism.

Iqbal's notion of self is the result of the creative interplay between Sufism and modernity. Iqbal critically appropriates the modern notion of the self and urges an individual to shape and reshape the world i.e. external environment. However, at the same time he emphasizes that man should realize godly ends. The question here is whether Iqbal's notion of self is modern or traditional?

By possessing the characteristics of Sufism and modernity Iqbal's notion of self escapes the 'interpretive grid' of the theories and the discourses related to both of them. Iqbal's notion of self cannot either be regarded as modern, nor can it be labeled as traditionalist. However it is still related to both of them. 'This cluster of newly developed phenomena forged out of western modern and indigenous traditional

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[45]For instance, Iqbal's insistence on the unity of the experience between man and God is specifically the feature of the conception of self in Sufism whereas his emphasis on the affirmative and instrumental characters of the self are the features of the modern self.

cultural systems belong to what can be called alternative modernity.'[46] Iqbal's notion of self negotiates critically with traditional cultural system i.e. Sufism and with the western modernity. His notion of self discloses itself as the alternative version of self which is though different from the Sufi and the modern self, but is still related to them.

Iqbal's notion of self is not merely a patchwork of Sufism and the western modernity. In fact, Iqbal questions the very 'embedded understanding' of the 'cultural form' of Sufism. For instance, Iqbal rejects Sufism for propagating other-worldliness. And instead of endorsing temporal modern self he appropriates the Hallajian notion of Ann-i-haqq.[47] Such an appropriation of Sufism by Iqbal highlights the fact that Iqbal questions the embedded understanding of Sufism, which essentially urges man to get fana. Iqbal's questioning of the embedded understanding of Sufism is evident from the way he distinguishes between the Prophetic and mystic types of consciousness. Iqbal argues that "The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of 'unitary experience'; and even when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The Prophet's return is creative, He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world of ideals. For the mystic the repose of 'unitary experience' is something final; for the Prophet it is the awakening, within Him, of world-shaking psychological forces, calculated to completely transform the human world. The desire to see his religious experience transformed into a living world-force is supreme in the Prophet. Thus his return amounts to a kind of pragmatic test of the value of his religious experience.'[48]

By reading the above quotation in the backdrop of Sufism one can point out that both mystic and Prophetic consciousness emphasize on the 'unity of experience.'

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[46]Rajeev Bhargava, 'Are There Alternative Modernities?', in N. N. Vohra (ed.) *Culture, Democracy and Development in South Asia*, New Delhi: IIC/Shipra, 2001, p. 17.

[47]*Ann-i-haqq* means the unity of experience. According to it, the lover in his quest for the union with beloved loses his own personality. Iqbal interprets the Sufi notion of 'unity of experience' in a very different way. Iqbal emphasizes on the union of the lover with the beloved but for him this union does not mean the extinction of the personality of the lover. In fact, Iqbal believes that the unity between the lover and the beloved should be understood in taking possession of certain divine attributes which belongs to the beloved.

[48]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 131.

However, Iqbal suggests that unlike the mystic, the return of Prophet from the repose of the 'unitary experience' has many consequences for humanity. Iqbal argues that the mystic does not wish to return from the repose of the 'unitary experience' and in course of unity with the beloved, he totally gets alienated from the external environment and his self gets extinguished i.e. he reaches the stage of selflessness, i.e. *be-khudi*. Iqbal criticizes this embedded understanding of self in Sufism and argues that the repose of the 'unitary experience' should not be understood as the final stage in the life of man. Instead, Iqbal argues that man should transform the world in the light of his religious experience. The quest for transforming the world in the light of religious experience highlights the instrumental character of the self which is a specific feature of the modern self.

Such an interpretation and the endorsement of the Sufism highlight the fact that Iqbal's notion of self as represented by the Prophet is not merely an adjustment between Sufism and modern conditions of life. In fact, Iqbal's notion of self is a result of the interplay between Sufism and modernity. Iqbal questions the 'embedded understanding' of the Sufi self and that of temporal-centric modern self and screens an alternative version of self which is different from both Sufi and the modern self and yet related to both of them.

Iqbal's alternative version of modernity is further evident from the way he negotiates between the temporal and the spiritual world. Iqbal claims that in Islam the temporal and the spiritual are 'not two facets of the same thing.'[49] Instead he believes that 'Islam is a single unanalysable reality which is one or the other as your point of view varies.'[50] Iqbal urges man to continuously engage with the matter.[51] He argues that 'The true person not only absorbs the world of matter; by mastering it he absorbs God Himself into his Ego.'[52] Thus the point which is worth mentioning here is that Iqbal believes that man's engagement with matter is virtually a step towards the realization of 'godly ends.'

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[49]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 164.

[50] Ibid.

[51]It is worth pointing out here that Iqbal defines matter as a spirit in space-time reference.

[52] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self* (tr.) Reynold A. Nicholson, London: Macmillan, 1920, p.20.

Iqbal urges man to transform the world in the light of his religious experience. He argues for realizing the 'Kingdom of God' on the earth. Thus to generalize that there is 'an essential tension between this-worldly Islam's desire to empower humankind on earth on the one hand and on the other, to continue to focus their attention on godly ends.'[53] Robinson while making such a generalization overlooks the specificities of Iqbal's notion of self which aims at negotiating between the temporal and the spiritual.

Yaseen Noorani while discussing Iqbal's contribution in formulating an alternative version of modernity points out that 'Iqbal's achievement goes beyond the mere dressing of a pre- existing conception of modernity in Islamic garb. In the manner of European Romantic and Modernists writers, he was able to generate a critique of Europe's rationalist and capitalist social order out of a distinctive figuration of the human condition. Like his European counterparts, from whom he learned a great deal, Iqbal founded his alternative version of modernity on the poetic representation of an ideal modern self characterized by its fundamentally aesthetic or creative mode of being rather than by any capacity for "ratiocination." He derivers this representation, however, not from the Romantic artist or hero of European literary tradition, but from the desiring self of the classical Persian ghazal. In order to do this, Iqbal had to turn what I will characterize as the "Dionysian" self of the classical *ghazal* into a modern form of subjectivity radically distinguished from nature and inscribed with a historical trajectory.'[54]

Noorani further points out that 'By changing the polarity of the classical representation of the desiring subject, Iqbal produced a "narcissistic" self which served as the basis of the doctrine of selfhood (khudi)... The transformation that Iqbal worked to create in the in the narrow compass of the ghazal is therefore the key to his hegemonic vision of an authentic, Islamic modernity destined to transform the world.[55] Thus Noorani believes that unlike the modern notion o the self which is

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[53]Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 114.
[54]Yaseen Noorani 'Islamic Modernity and the Desiring Self: Muhammad Iqbal and the Politics of Narcissism', *Iran*, Vol. 38, 2000, p. 123.
[55]Ibid., p. 123.

based on the ratiocination, the Iqbal's notion of the self is derived from the 'desiring self' of the classical *ghazal.*

Noorani argues that Iqbal abandons the 'Dionysian' nature of the self as depicted in the *ghazal* and incorporates its 'desiring self' in order to realize the communal ideals. Thus Noorani further argues that, In recasting the *ghazal* for political purposes, Iqbal's challenge was to turn a lyrical genre centered on passionate love and the subversion of social norms into a blueprint for communal self realization, a tool for the moral reform of the Muslim nation.'[56] Such an understanding of the ghazal made Iqbal to propagate 'selflessness' i.e. bekhudi.

Thus Noorani believed that Iqbal formulates his notion of self from the tradition of classical ghazal rather than from the Romantic western tradition. He argues that Iqbal's depiction of the self through the remodeled version of the ghazal forms the premise of the alternative version of the modernity. Noorani argues that for Iqbal '...modernity is nothing more than the authentic selfhood embodied by Islam, the means for transforming the earth into heaven and humanity into divinity. The modernity of west is a historical wrong turn, an inauthentic form of relating to the world akin to the decadence of the classical *ghazal.*'[57]

Though Noorani is correct in arguing that Iqbal's notion of self aims at transforming the world, yet, to claim that Iqbal formulates his notion of self only from the tradition of classical Persian *ghazal* is problematic. In making this claim Noorani not only overlooked the Western intellectual traditions which shaped Iqbal's conception of self[58] but also denied its uniqueness. Noorani overlooked the fact that Iqbal's conception of self was neither akin to classical Persian *ghazal* nor to the modern self, in fact it is the result of the creative interplay between them.

[56]Yaseen Noorani 'Islamic Modernity and the Desiring Self: Muhammad Iqbal and the Politics of Narcissism', *Iran*, Vol. 38, 2000, pp. 123-124.
[57]Ibid., p. 133.
[58]Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal,* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963.

Conclusion

It has been pointed out earlier in this chapter that Iqbal handles the project of western modernity at two levels, one by questioning the uniqueness of western modernity and highlighting the contribution made by the world of Islam in constituting it and another by foregrounding his philosophy on a particular notion of self which provides a critique of the modern rational self.

This chapter constructs Iqbal's notion of self in the double context of Sufism and colonialism. While foregrounding Iqbal's notion of self in these contexts it is argued that Iqbal's notion of self preaches individualism of a particular kind which is contrary to the one upheld by the capitalist and imperialistic order.

In this chapter an attempt has also been made to counter Francis Robinson's framework of assessing the Islamic self. It has been pointed out that though Robinson is partially correct while arguing that there is similarity in the Post-Reformation European self and nineteenth and twentieth century Islamic self but in drawing this comparison he underplays the importance of the cultural systems which shaped the conception of self in Islam.

The final section of the chapter deals with the specificities of Iqbal's notion of the self. We have sought to know how Iqbal's notion of the self helps us to constitute an alternative version of the modernity. We have also argued that for Iqbal the notion of modernity is one which recognizes the dignity of every individual through the realization of 'kingdom of god' on earth.

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTION OF COMMUNITY IN IQBAL

In the last chapter it was argued that Iqbal criticizes the project of western modernity for concentrating its focus only on the affairs of this world and not aiming to realize the spiritual goals for individuality. Iqbal suggests that modernity is one that aims at realizing the spiritual ideals and for him it can be realized only by means of actualizing the 'kingdom of god' on the earth. The 'kingdom of god' signifies the ideal community of the 'unique individuals' which one realizes by being akin to the most 'unique individual' i.e. God himself.

The ideal community of Islam is also viewed as the pan-Islamic community. To understand the relationship between the ideal and the pan-Islamic community of Iqbal we can divide this chapter into two sections. In the first section, the attempt is to show in what ways Iqbal's understanding of community is different from those that eulogize 'other-worldliness' and treat the earthly community as something which is inferior. To put it differently, this section of the chapter deals with the juxtaposition of Iqbal's ideal community with the particular notion of community which draws the distinction between spirit and matter and considers spirit as the ultimate reality.

The second section of the chapter deals with the context of colonialism and Iqbal's notion of the pan-Islamic community. In this section, an attempt is made to explore the politics of Iqbal's pan-Islamic community which he constructs as the counter-hegemonic project against colonialism. The chapter, thus, aims at exploring the ideal and real aspects of Iqbal's community. Nevertheless, the key concern of this chapter would be to find out where is Iqbal's conception of community situated in his scheme of the alternative version of modernity?

The Western Other-Worldliness and its Consequences for the Community – The Iqbalian Perspective

In the introduction to this chapter, it was pointed out that Iqbal constructs his conception of community in the backdrop of the spirit and matter divide quite central

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to the making of the western civilization. Iqbal believes that such a dichotomous understanding of spirit and matter has severe consequences for the community as it either leads to eulogizing of the community which is trapped into the material world or one which is concerned only with the world existing elsewhere.

Iqbal suggests that in the case of the western civilization both these consequences are applicable. This section of the chapter deals with Iqbal's perspective on the 'other-worldliness' of the western civilization and its consequences for the community. Before we actually dwell on this point, it is worth mentioning that Iqbal believes that the 'other-worldly' character of the western civilization owes a lot to Plato's philosophy. Plato distinguishes between the sensuous and super-sensuous world, i.e. the world of ideas, and emphasizes that real world is the world of ideas and the objects which we see around us are mere copies of their ideas. Thus, Plato in eulogizing the world of ideas propagates an idealism which takes the individual away from the hard realities of this world.

Iqbal in his philosophical poem *The Secrets of the Self* caution us against the dangers of distinguishing the ideal world from the real. He criticizes Plato for worshipping idealism and argues that, 'my criticism of Plato is directed against those philosophical systems which hold up death rather than life as their ideal systems which ignore the greatest obstruction to life, namely, matter, and teach us to run away from it instead of absorbing it.'[1] Iqbal regards Plato a *'sheep in man's clothing*[2] which misleads us and take us away from the material realities of this- world.

Iqbal argues that Greek civilization had influenced the world of Islam in many ways. He believed that the rise and the growth of ascetic Sufism in the world of Islam is due to the influence of the Greeks. Iqbal criticizes the growth of ascetic Sufism and

[1] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self* (tr.) R.A. Nicholson, London: Macmillan, 1920, p. 22.

[2] Iqbal in section VI of *The Secrets of the Self*, discusses the story of the tiger and the sheep. The tiger signifies the Islamic community whereas as sheep is the signifier of the Platonic idealism. Iqbal points out that the sheep is so cunning that it convinces the tiger to do certain acts which destroys the natural strength of the tiger. The lesson of the story is that the idealism propagated by Plato leads to the breeding of the 'other-worldliness' in the world of the Islam and 'obscures man's vision of very important aspect of Islam as social polity'. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self* (tr.) R.A. Nicholson, London: Macmillan, 1920, p. 57.

believes that the other- worldly character of this particular kind of Sufism 'obscure man's vision of a very important aspect of Islam as social polity.'[3]

Iqbal further emphasizes that the purpose of Islam is of actualizing the ideal. He argues that the 'Kingdom of God' on the earth, by which he means the, 'democracy of more or less unique individuals',[4] can be realized only by developing certain characteristics which are akin to God. Thus, for Iqbal, the real purpose of Islam lies in encompassing both the ideal and the real worlds, which are not dichotomous but in fact are parts of one reality i.e. Islam.

The other-worldly character of western civilization, particularly of Christianity is also vehemently attacked by Iqbal. He argues that the failure of western civilization i.e. Christianity is largely due to its other-worldliness. Iqbal argues that Christianity, unlike Islam failed to become civil society. In his words, 'the primitive Christianity was founded not as a political or a civic unit, but as a monastic order in the profane world, having nothing to do with civil affairs...'[5]

Iqbal believed that the negligence of Christianity in the matters governing the civil life of the individual had severe consequences for its conception of community. Iqbal in his text, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*' argues that Christianity, 'by setting up an ideal of other-worldliness, no doubt, did succeed in spiritualizing life but its individualism could see no spiritual value in the complexity of human social relations.'[6] Thus, Iqbal believed that in order to understand the complexities of human relationship society requires legal laws, which Christianity does not possess.

Iqbal points out towards the speculative side of the other-worldliness and argues that the other- worldliness in its speculative side is a 'form of free thought and in alliance with rationalism.'[7] He thinks that due to the speculative nature of Christian other-worldliness, Christianity lacks the concrete principles which can direct the

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[3]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 160.
[4]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self* (tr.) R.A. Nicholson, London: Macmillan, 1920, p. 28.
[5]Ibid., p. 165.
[6]Ibid., p.176.
[7]Ibid., p.159.

social, political and economic life of the individual and the community. He argues that the problem of other-wordiness is unlikely to arise in the world of Islam because in Islam there is no distinction based on the spiritual and the temporal and the life of the Islamic society itself is governed by the spiritual laws of the *shari' a*[8] enshrined in the Koran and *Hadis*.[9]

Thus, Iqbal believed that Christianity in its quest for other-worldliness has totally overlooked the social and the political life of the community and has failed to inculcate concrete legal laws which could have otherwise regulated the life of the community in the changed circumstances. Iqbal argues that only those civilizations which posses the characteristics of permanence and change can survive in the changing circumstances. He argues that the failure of Christianity and the stagnancy in Islam is due to their inability to posses the characteristic of permanence and change. He invokes the doctrine of 'permanence and change' to evaluate both Christianity and Islam an aspect which is discussed below.

Western Civilization and Iqbal's 'Doctrine of Permanence and Change

In the changed circumstances, Iqbal believed that only that civilization would thrive which possesses the characteristic of permanence and change. According to the 'doctrine of permanence and change', he argued that a civilization should not only evolve with the changing time but it should also keep its eternal principles intact. According to him, the failure of early Christianity and the stagnancy in the world of Islam were due to their inability to adhere with the doctrine of the permanence and change.

Iqbal in his text *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* thought that the failure of Christianity was on account of its inability to breed the universal system based on the eternal principles, which could unify humanity. He felt that only Islam provides an emotional system of unifying humanity. He argued that unlike Christianity Islam rejected blood-relationship as the basis of human unity and it did not believe in the ties based on caste, colour and creed. Iqbal emphasized that the

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[8] In general terms, a prophetic religion in its totality, within Muslim discourse it refers to the rules and the regulation derived mainly from the Quran and Hadis.

[9] It refers to those laws which are derived from the tradition of Prophet Mohammad especially his oral narratives and the acts which he approved during his life.

'psychological foundation of human unity becomes possible only with the perception that human life is spiritual in its origin,'[10] which means that there is one god and human beings should be responsible to God rather to anyone else.

According to him, Humanity aspires for the common goal of spiritual emancipation and the purpose of Islam is to help humanity in realizing its goals. He thought that the spiritual emancipation of humanity can be realized by adhering to the Islamic principle of *Tauhid*. The principle of *tauhid* forms the practical basis of human unity and it treats Islam as a polity in which individual's loyalty is only to God and not to the throne. God, according to Iqbal, is 'the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, loyalty to God virtually amounts to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature.'[11] For him, 'the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, as conceived by Islam, is eternal and reveals itself in variety and change. A society based on such a conception of reality must reconcile, in its life, the categories of permanence and change.'[12]

For him, any civilization should posses the eternal principles in order 'to regulate its collective life, for the eternal gives us a foothold in the world of perpetual change.'[13] However, Iqbal's quest for the eternal principles should not be understood that he subscribed to the status-quo and was not concerned with the changing circumstances. He argued that, 'we heartily welcome the liberal movement in modern Islam, but it must also be admitted that the appearance of liberal ideas in Islam constitutes also the most critical moment in the history of Islam. Liberalism has a tendency to act as a force of disintegration, and the race-idea which appears to be working in modern Islam with greater force than ever may ultimately wipe off the broad human outlook which Muslim people have imbibed from their religion. Further, our religious and political reformers in their zeal for liberalism may overstep the proper limits of reform in the absence of a check on their youthful fervor.[14] Thus while welcoming the change as manifested through the march of liberalism in the world of Islam, Iqbal cautions Muslim leaders of its consequences.

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[10]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 155.
[11] Ibid., p. 156.
[12]Ibid., p. 157.
[13]Ibid.
[14]Ibid., pp. 172-173.

He felt that Islamic civilization should learn from the experiences of the West and not repeat the mistakes committed by it. He argues that, "we are today passing through the period similar to that of the Protestant revolution in Europe, and the lessons which the rise and outcome of Luther's movement teaches should not be lost on us. A careful study of history shows that the Reformation was essentially a political movement, and the net result of it in Europe was a gradual displacement of the universal ethics of Christianity by the system of national ethics. The result of this tendency we have seen with our own eyes in the Great European war which far from bringing any workable synthesis of the two opposing systems of ethics, has made the Europe situation still more intolerable. It is the duty of the leaders of the world of Islam today to understand the real meaning of what has happened in Europe, and then to move forward with self control and the clear insight into the ultimate aim of Islam as a social polity."[15]

Thus, from the above discussion it can be argued that Iqbal criticizes the Western civilization, particularly Christianity, for its inability to sustain its universal ethics which in the post-Reformation period came to be replaced by the fissiparous national ethics. Iqbal argues that it was due to the replacement of the universal ethics of the Christianity with the national ethics that the great European war erupted. Iqbal urges Islamic civilization to comprehend the real consequences of the uncritical march of the Reformation in the Western civilization before realizing the goal of Islam as the social polity.

Thus, Iqbal believed that the community should possess the characteristic of permanence and change and he begins to constructs his notion of community based on this principle.

Contextualizing Iqbal's Conception of the Community

Inconsistent with its character, the state in Europe started appropriating religion for its own purposes. However, the appropriation of religion by the state led to the conflict between the church and the state. The root cause of the conflict between the church and state was over the issue of exercise of authority over one

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[15]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 173.

another. Eventually, the net result of this conflict was that the state emerged victorious.

The victory of the state over the church led to the secularization in the Europe. According to the process of secularization, the state and the religion were separated from each other and neither of them could intervene in the realm of the other. To put it differently, secularization led to separation of religion and politics and while doing so it relegated religion to the private spheres.

The separation of religion and the state constituted an important feature of western modernity and it was Machiavelli who propagated this idea in a grand manner. Machiavelli believed that good governance was unlikely when the religion glorified 'the humble and contemplative man.' It is because of his anti-religious views Machiavelli is regarded as the first modern thinker by the several scholars.

The 'secular' character of the Western modernity, which adheres to the strict separation of the religion from the politics, has several consequences for the conception of the community. This is more so because the community devoid of the religious values would be unethical and exploitative. What determines the character of such a community is not the morality based on religion but the narrow interests of the nations and its individuals.

Iqbal took a serious note of the Western separation of religion from politics and began to construct the ethical community of Islam in its backdrop. Besides secularism, the important characteristics of western modernity which shaped Iqbal's conception of community were nationalism and imperialism.

The Ethical Community of Islam

In the above discussion it was pointed out that Iqbal criticizes the western civilization at two levels: one, at the level of other-worldly character of religion that it subscribes to; and the extent of modern ideas that it propagates. By analyzing Iqbal's position at these two levels it can be pointed out that, though Iqbal criticizes the western civilization at different levels yet there is a certain continuity of the grounds on which he criticizes it.

The ground on which Iqbal provides the holistic criticism of the western civilization is its failure to possess any mechanism through which it can actualize its ideals. To put the same in the words of Iqbal,

'Humanity needs three things to day-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. Modern Europe has, no doubt, built idealistic system on these lines but experience shows that truth revealed by pure reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring. This is the reason why pure thought had so little influenced men while religion has always elevated individuals, and transformed whole societies. The idealism of Europe never became living factor in her life, and the result is a perverted ego seeking itself through mutually intolerant democracies, whose sole function is to exploit the poor in the interest of the rich. Believe me, Europe today is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement. The Muslims on the other hand, is in possession of these ultimate ideals on the basis of a revelation, which speaking from the inmost depths of life, internalizes its own apparent externality. With him the spiritual basis of the life is a matter of conviction for which even the least enlightened man among us can easily lay down his life, and in view of the basic idea of Islam that there can be no further revelation binding on man, we ought to be spiritually one of the most emancipated peoples on the earth. Early Muslims emerging out of the spiritual slavery of pre- Islamic Asia were not in a position to realize the true significance of this basic idea. Let the Muslims of today appreciate his position, reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve out of hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam that that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam.'[16]

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[16]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 191.

Summarizing the above quotation, it can be pointed out that Iqbal believed that the failure of western civilization is due to its inability to actualize its ideal that all the lives have a spiritual basis. Iqbal believed that only in Islam the spiritual basis of the life is a matter of conviction as this ideal is transmitted to the Muslims not through pure thought but through the prophetic revelation. Iqbal argues that the ultimate goal of the Islamic community should be of actualizing its spiritual ideals and in view of this principle he begins to construct his notion of community. Iqbal argues that the western civilization throughout its history has been unable to actualize its spiritual ideals and this is the probable reason why this civilization is facing so many problems in the present times.

One of the key parameters through which Iqbal evaluates the viability of any community is that whether the community possesses the characteristic of permanence and change. In the preceding discussion, it was pointed out that Iqbal, on one hand, criticizes Western civilization for not possessing the characteristic of permanence and, on other hand, rebuffs contemporary Islam for not possessing the characteristic of change. Iqbal believed that only in the 'Ideal' Islamic community the characteristics of the permanence and change can be realized.

Iqbal believes that the element of permanence provides 'foothold' to the community in the world of perpetual change and in case of the 'Ideal' Islamic community it is constituted by the principle of *Tauhid*. The principle of *Tauhid* has two aspects: on the one hand, it emphasizes on the oneness and uniqueness of God and on the other hand, it deals with the realization of freedom, equality and brotherhood among the Muslims.

Iqbal in *'The Mysteries of Selflessness'* emphasizes the psychological significance of the principle of *tauhid*. He argues that the principle of *tauhid* while emphasizing oneness of God fosters unity in the society. Iqbal holds the view that since God is one so the human race is also one and the differences based on the colour, country and race are earth-based and they do not hold any importance. Iqbal believed that *tauhid,* not only creates unity among human beings it also inculcates uniformity in all men, their thoughts and actions. To put same in the words of Iqbal,

Well-pointed arrows of one quiver are we,

One showing, one beholding, one in thought;

One is our goal and purpose, one the form,

The fashion, and the measure of our dream.

Thanks to His blessings, we are brothers all

Sharing one speech, one spirit and one heart.[17]

Thus, from the above discussion, it can be pointed out that through the eternal principle of *tauhid* Iqbal attempts to construct a homogeneous Islamic community, which is not bounded by time and space. He also emphasizes on the practical side of the *tauhid* and argues that the ultimate purpose of the Islam is to foster the feeling of equality, freedom and brotherhood among all the Muslims. Iqbal in *The Mysteries of selflessness* discusses this practical aspect of tauhid through the analogy of *Ubaid* and *jahan*[18] and that of *Sultan Murad* and the *architect*.[19]

Besides *tauhid*, another principle which constitutes the element of permanence in Iqbal's 'Ideal' Islamic community is the doctrine of the finality of the Prophethood. Iqbal discusses the doctrine of finality of Prophethood in both *The Mysteries of selflessness* and in *The Reconstruction of the Religious Thought in Islam*. The doctrine of finality of the Prophethood suggests that Muhammad is the last prophet sent by the God on the earth and the Muslims of the world should not expect the march of another Prophet after him and they should rely upon the resources reveled through him.

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[17]Muhammad Iqbal, (tr.) Arthur J. Abberry, *The Mysteries of Selflessnes – A Philosophical Poem*, London: John Murray Publishers, 1953, p. 13.

[18]Iqbal discussed the story of king Ubaid and the captive, Jahan. Jahan was the general in the army of Yazdajird, the last Sassanian king of Persia. In course of war with the Muslim army of King Ubaid, Jahan was made captive. When the king Ubaid came to know that Jahan was a Muslim, he ordered his armymen not to kill Jahan. Ubaid argued that though Jahan is a foe, he is a Muslim, so they could not kill him. Iqbal discussed the story of Ubaid and Jahan in order to demonstrate Islamic brotherhood. It should be noted here that Islamic brotherhood highlights the practical aspect of the principle of *Tauhid*. Muhammad Iqbal, (tr.) Arthur J. Abberry *The Mysteries of Selflessnes – A Philosophical Poem*, London: John Murray Publishers, 1953, pp. 23-24

[19]Iqbal in his text *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, discusses the story of Sultan Murad and the architect. In this story Sultan Murad asks the architect to build a beautiful Mosque. However Sultan does not like the Mosque built by the architect and cut-off his hand. The architect appears before the judge and registers his grievances. The judge tried the Sultan according to Islamic laws and punished him for the crime. Iqbal discussed this story to demonstrate the fact that all Muslims are equal before law. Muhammad Iqbal, (tr.) Arthur J. Abberry *The Mysteries of Selflessnes – A Philosophical Poem*, London: John Murray Publishers, 1953, pp. 24-25.

Bashir Ahmad Dar points out that Iqbal discusses the doctrine of the finality of Prophethood from two different perspectives. In *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, Iqbal discusses the doctrine of the finality of the Prophethood 'as a remedy against the disintegration of the Islamic community'.[20] Herein, Iqbal attempts to construct the pan-Islamic community with the Prophet at its center. Whereas in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* he perceives it as mean through which independent critical attitude toward all mystical experiences is fostered among the Muslims. Iqbal argues that 'the Prophet of Islam seems to stand between the ancient and the modern world. In so far as the source of revelation is concerned, he belongs to the ancient world; in so far as the spirit of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the modern world. In him life discovers other sources of knowledge suitable to its new direction.... In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition. This involves the keen perception that life cannot forever be kept in leading strings; that in order to achieve full self- consciousness, man must finally be thrown back on his own resources.'[21] Iqbal argues that the principle of finality of Prophethood is important because it inculcate independent critical attitude towards all personal authorities claiming supernatural origin. He argues that 'the abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Quran, and the emphasis it lays on nature and history as source of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality.'[22]

Iqbal though discusses the doctrine of finality of Prophethood from two different standpoints, his reason for emphasizing the doctrine remained same. To put it more explicitly, in both the above discussed view points, Iqbal's consideration for maintaining cohesiveness in the community remained intact. In the latter case, Iqbal sees the purpose of the doctrine of finality of Prophethood as to enhance critical faculty among the Muslims, but at same time he qualifies the invocation of critical faculties by prioritizing communal emancipation as the necessary condition for interpreting the resources revealed by Muhammad. Such an interpretation of the doctrine of finality of the Prophethood by Iqbal is largely motivated by his quest to actualize the pan-Islamic community.

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[20]Bashir Ahmad Dar, *A Study in Iqbal's Philosophy*, Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1944 , p. 280.
[21]Ibid, p.282.
[22]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 133.

Summarizing the above discussion, it can be pointed out that Iqbal emphasizes that the Islamic community is based on two eternal principles, one is *tauhid* and another is the finality of Prophethood. Islamic community, according to Iqbal, should set its destiny in actualizing these eternal principles of *tauhid* and finality of the Prophethood. Iqbal holds the view that when eternal principles are ' understood to exclude all possibilities of change which according to the Quran al–kerim, is one of the greatest 'signs' of God, tends to immobilize what is essentially mobile in its nature.'[23] Iqbal argues that the present stagnancy in the world of Islam is due to immobility of the eternal principles and this immobility can be overcome by introducing the principle of change in the structure of Islam. This principle of change in the structure of Islam is also known as *ijtihad.*

Ijtihad deals with the question of evolution of Islamic laws. To put it differently *ijtihad* posits the question whether Islamic laws are able to adjust themselves in the changed circumstances or not. Iqbal argues that historically Islamic laws had adjusted themselves with the changed environment but from past five hundred years Islamic laws had not evolved and as a result, Islam became stagnant.

Iqbal emphasizes that the stagnation in Islam is due to the conservatism of priesthood and the growth of the ascetic Sufism, which, he argues, had conquered the spirit of the change in the structure of the Islam. He criticizes the conservative section among the Muslims for treating the principles of Quran as dogmas and not allowing them to evolve. Iqbal argues that Quran possesses dynamic outlook and 'it is obvious that with such an outlook the holy book of Islam cannot be inimical to the idea of evolution.'[24] Iqbal criticizes those Islamic schools which claim finality of their interpretation of the Quran and support the claims of generation of Muslim liberals 'to re-interpret foundational legal principles, in the light of their own experience and the altered condition of modern life.'[25]

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[23] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.* Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p.157.
[24] Ibid., p. 177.
[25] Ibid., p. 179.

The other reason because of which Islam, according to Iqbal, has become stagnant is related to the rise and growth of ascetic Sufism. Iqbal criticizes the other-worldliness of ascetic Sufism and suggests that the other-worldliness of ascetic Sufism is due to the Greek influence on the world of Islam. Iqbal argues that the spirit of total other-worldliness in later Sufism 'obscured men's vision of very important aspect of Islam as a social polity,' which aims at actualizing the spiritual ideals in to the temporal world.

Thus Iqbal believed that Islam can overcome its stagnancy only by recognizing the freedom of *ijtihad* i.e. movement in the structure of Islam. To be more specific *ijtihad* deals with the freedom of legislation in the matters of law i.e. to say who should have responsibility to interpret the Islamic law of *shari'a*. Iqbal emphasizes that *ijma*[26] is suitable medium to practice *ijtihad* an aspect which is discussed below:

Ijma as the mode of *Ijtihad*

The term ijma is basically referred to the Muslim legislative assembly which has authority to interpret the laws of the *shari'a*. *Ijma*, according to Iqbal, is constituted of the republican values of deliberation and it aims at securing 'contribution to legal discussion from layman who happens to possess a keen insight in to affairs.'[27]

Iqbal argues that the *ijma* would be constituted by the elected representatives and the decisions in such an assembly would be reached through consensus. Iqbal also emphasizes that the *Ulema* should occupy a vital position in the assembly. His emphasis on the *Ulema* to constitute the integral part of the assembly is motivated by two reasons- firstly, Iqbal feared that in the absence of the *Ulema* the assembly might make more errors and secondly the Iqbal's emphasis for the *Ulema* in the legislative assembly will be able to ensure elements of conservation.

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[26] It refers to the legislative assembly which has an authority to interpret laws. It is expected to seek the opinion of laymen before interpreting the laws. .
[27] Ibid, p. 184.

Iqbal argues that the *Ulema* possess the knowledge of the Islamic laws and only the *Ulema* are in a position to guide the assembly to ensure that laws are interpreted properly. He fears that the young Muslims in their liberal fervor might totally destroy the body of the Islamic laws. To ensure that such tendencies are kept in check Iqbal argues that the presence of the *Ulema* becomes all the more necessary.

However, the above discussed position of Iqbal should not be understood as self-contradictory. It is true that Iqbal stood for the change in the system of the legal evolution but for him change does not mean pure transformation. To quote Iqbal,

'We should not forget that life is not change, pure and simple. It has within it the elements of conservation also. While enjoying his creative activity, and always focusing his energies on the discovery of new vistas of life, man has a feeling of uneasiness in the presence of his own unfoldment. In his forward movement he cannot help looking back to his past, and faces his own inward expansion with the certain amount of fear. The spirit of man in its forward movement is restrained by the forces which seem to be working in the opposite direction. This is only another way of saying that life with the weight of its own past on its back, and that in any view of social change the value and function of the forces of the conservatism cannot be lost sight of.'[28]

Thus Iqbal, argues that the critical spirit of man needs to be reconciled with the elements of conservation. And it is only through such reconciliation that 'modern Rationalism ought to approach our existing institutions.'[29] Iqbal believed that the reconciliation of the critical spirit with the elements of conservation is inevitable as it is only through conservation the 'inwardness' of the community and its institutions can remain intact. Iqbal anticipates the criticisms of reconciling the critical spirit with the elements of conservation and argues that 'the critic of these institutions must therefore try to secure, before he undertakes to handle them, a clear insight into the ultimate significance of the social experiment embodied in Islam. He must look at

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[28] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 177.
[29] Ibid.

their structure, not from the standpoint of social advantage or disadvantage to this or that country, but from the point of view of the larger purpose which is being gradually worked out in the life of mankind as a whole.'[30]

Summarizing the above discussion it can be argued that Iqbal's quest for inclusion of the *Ulema* in the legislative assembly is motivated not only by his concern to include the elements of the conservatism but also to check the uncritical march of the liberal fervor among the Muslims. However, in spite of its qualification *ijma* constitutes as a vital cog in the 'dynamism' of Iqbal's philosophy and it is considered as an important instrument in the legal evolution of Islam.

Thus, Iqbal emphasizes that the 'Ideal' community of Islam should posses the characteristic of permanence and change. He understood 'change' mainly in terms of evolution of the Islamic laws. He envisages the *ijma* i.e. the legislative assembly to interpret the laws and 'change' in such an assembly is ensured through deliberations.[31]

Interrogating the politics of Iqbal's community-

Iqbal in his Presidential address at the annual session of the All- India Muslim league at Allahabad, 1930 highlights the political aspect of the Islamic community. He argues that Islam is 'an ethical ideal plus a certain kind of polity'[32] which he viewed as a social structure regulated by a legal system and animated by a specific ethical ideal.[33] These ethical ideals are revealed to the Islamic community through the Prophet. Iqbal argues that Islam does not distinguish between the ideal and the real. He emphasizes that the purpose of the Islamic political community should be of actualizing its ideals into the real. Thus according to Iqbal there should not be any difference between the Ideal and the Political community of Islam and the ultimate goal of the Political community should be of realizing the ideals of spiritual

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[30] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 178.

[31] Farzana Sheikh in her book *Community and Consensus in Islam- Muslim Representation in Colonial India 1860-1947*, Bombay: Cambridge University Press in association with Orient Longman, 1991 points out that most of scholars try to relate *ijma* with the western popular democracy. However, Sheikh argues that Iqbal remained 'characteristically averse to any easy co-relation between *ijma* and the norms of Western popular democracy' (p. 26).

[32] Shamloo, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, Lahore: Al-Manar Academy, 1948, p. 3.

[33] Ibid., p. 4.

emancipation of the individual and community. It is this quest for realizing the ideals that defines the nature of Iqbal's notion of the political.

Iqbal's notion of community acquires significant importance in the context of colonialism. He appropriates the idea of Pan-Islamism as a counter-hegemonic project to colonialism and attempts to replace the de-humanizing self of the latter with more humanistic self of the former. He has a very different take on pan-Islamism. He discusses his understanding on pan-Islamism with a Bombay based journalist before he left for England to participate in the Second Round-Table Conference.[34]

He believed that the term pan-Islam has both metaphysical and political connotations. In his interview, he suggests that his understanding of pan-Islamism shares a lot in common with Jamaluddin Afghani's interpretation of the term. On Jamaluddin Afghani's invocation of the expression pan-Islam, Iqbal argues that 'I do not know if he used the same expression, but he actually advised Afghanistan, Persia and Turkey to unite against the aggression of Europe. This was purely a defensive measure, and I personally think that Jamaluddin was perfectly right in his view.'[35] Thus, Iqbal advocated pan-Islam as a 'defensive measure' to counter the colonial project of the Europe.

Besides the invocation of pan-Islam as the 'defensive measure' Iqbal also points towards another interpretation of the term. He argues that '...there is another sense in which the word should be used and it does contain the teaching of the Quran. In that sense it is not a political project but a social experiment. Islam does not recognize caste or race or colour. In fact, Islam is the only outlook on life which has really solved the colour question, at least in the Muslim world, a question which modern European civilization with all its achievements in science and philosophy, has not been able to solve. Pan-Islamism, thus interpreted, was taught by the Prophet and will live forever. In this sense pan-Islamism is only pan-Humanism. In this sense every Muslim is a Pan-Islamist and ought to be so. Indeed the word Pan ought to be dropped from the phrase Pan-Islamism, for Islamism is an expression which

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[34] Iqbal gave this interview to the representative of *The Bombay Chronicle* before he left for England to attend the Second Round Table Conference (17 Sep.- Dec. 31, 1931).

[35] Bashir Ahmad Dar *(ed) Letters and Writtings of Iqbal*, Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1967, p. 56.

completely covers the meaning I have mentioned above.'[36] Thus, Iqbal believed that pan-Islamism is not only a 'defensive measure' to counter imperialism of Europe, but also a 'social experiment' which carries forward the 'humanistic' message of the Quran in rejecting the discriminations based on caste, race and colour and treating all human beings as equals.

One of the important aspects of Iqbal's poetry is denoting of the geographical expansion of the Islam. In his poetry, he often tries to highlight 'sacred' Islamic spaces through a poetic imagination of the same. For instance in 'The Mosque of Cordoba' the poet while dreaming of the glorious past of the Andalusia imagines that the echo of the 'songs' of the 'breeze' flowing in the Andalusia is heard at *Hejaz*.[37] He argues,

Even to-day in its breeze fragrance of Yemen still floats
Even to-day in its songs echoes live on of Hejaz.[38]

The point worth noting here is that Iqbal by invoking the images of the 'sacred' Islamic spaces to recall the past glory of the decadent Andalusia de-temporizes the spaces. As the result of his de-temporizing of the space, he reveals the geographical expansion of Islam through his poetic imagination. However Iqbal's poetic revelation of the geography should not be understood as political revivalism of Islam. Iqbal juxtapose the past glory of Andalusia with the prevailing decadence in Europe. His purpose of highlighting the past glory of Andalusia was to highlight the fact that the Muslim rule was much better and more sensitive towards human life than that of the Europeans.

Further Iqbal points out the pan-Islamic aspect of the Islamic community in the Presidential address of All India Muslim league, wherein, he viewed 'Islam as a living force for freeing the outlook of man from its geographical limitations.'[39] He

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[36] Bashir Ahmad Dar *(ed) Letters and Writtings of Iqbal*, Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1967, p. 56.
[37] This refers to the north-western part of the Arabic peninsula as the birthplace of Islam and for Muslims also therefore its spiritual centre. For further details see 'glossary' in Javed Majeed, *Muhammad Iqbal Islam, Aesthetics and Pustcolonialism, New Delhi:2009*
[38] Muhammad Iqbal, 'The Mosque of Cordoba', in *Poems from Iqbal*, (tr.) V.G. Kiernan, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 108
[39] Shamloo, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal,* Lahore: Al-Manar Academy, 1948, p. 7.

argues that Islam is a non-territorial religion and its ultimate purpose is to help humanity to overcome the territorial ties created by the nation-states.

The humanitarian aspect of Iqbal's notion of pan-Islamism is evident from his rejection of race, nation and colour as the basis of human relationship. Iqbal criticizes the Western civilization for propagating the relationships based on these ties. He argues that all lives have a spiritual basis and there exists a 'unity of god' which means that god is one and so is humanity. He believes that only Islam has the potential to realize the spiritual emancipation of the individual and community as it is only in Islam spiritual basis of all lives is regarded as a matter of conviction. Iqbal believes that colonialism and the 'Great European war' is due to the failure of western civilization to realize that all the lives are one and the ultimate purpose of humanity is not to fight with each other for the material benefits but to act in order to actualize the 'spiritual democracy.'

Now the question which arises here is how does Iqbal's ethical politics masks a 'consolidated Muslim state' within India, given the fact that he rejects the idea of nationalism? Iqbal, as it was pointed out in the first chapter rejects the doctrine of European nationalism as he believes that nationalism leads to the replacement of the 'social-order' based on religion with one based on the fissiparous national interests. However, still in his presidential address at the annual session of All India Muslim league, Iqbal pointed out that the formation of the 'consolidated Muslim state' is in the 'best interests of India and Islam.' He argues that, 'For India it means security and peace resulting from an internal balance of power; for Islam an opportunity to rid itself of the stamp that Arabian imperialism was forced to give it, to mobilize its law, its education, its culture and to bring them into closer contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times.'[40]

Iqbal's claim for the 'cosolidated Muslim state' though contrary to his views on nationalism is in consonance with his idea of actualizing the pan-Islamic community. Iqbal believed that the 'free development' of Muslims is possible only in the 'Muslim state' and he viewed the claim for a separate 'Muslim state' as an

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[40] Shamloo, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal,* Lahore: Al-Manar Academy, 1948, p. 15.

opportunity for the Muslims to revive their 'original spirit' and to achieve the 'ideals' set-up by Islam. Thus, there is continuity in Iqbal's claim for the separate 'Muslim state' amd his concern for realizing the 'Ideal' community of Islam.

The politics of Iqbal's community though based on the principle of realizing the 'ethical Ideals', it at the same time also attempts to replace the universalism of Western civilization with the another universal civilization i.e. pan-Islamism. Such an attempt by Iqbal is dangerous and it involves range of issues concerning the fate of minorities, an aspect on which he little reflected on.

Iqbal discusses the question of minorities in his presidential address delivered at the annual session of All India Muslim league in 1930. While addressing the question of minorities in the countries of Islam outside India, he points out that:

> 'The countries of Islam outside India are practically wholly Muslim in population. The minorities there belong, in the language of a Quran, to the "people of the Book." There are no social barriers between Muslims and the "people of the Book." A Jew or a Christian or a Zoroastrian does not pollute a food of a Muslim by touching it, and the law of the Islam allows inter-marriage with the "people of the Book." Indeed the first practical step that Islam took towards the realization of a final combination of humanity is to call upon peoples possessing practically the same ethical ideal to come forward and combine. The Quran declares; "O people of the Book; Come let us join together on the word (Unity of God) that is common to us all." The wars of Islam and Christianity, and later, European aggression in its various forms, could not allow the infinite meaning of this verse to work itself out in the world of Islam.'[41]

Thus, Iqbal endorses the Quranic perspective in addressing the question of the minorities in the countries dominated by the Muslims. However, it seems that Iqbal while emphasizing on the realization of the common ethical ideals underplays the

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[41]Shamloo, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal,* Lahore: Al-Manar Academy, 1948, p. 32.

importance of the cultural practices of the minorities which might not merely be different from the Islamic beliefs but may be even contrary to them.

Summarizing the above discussion, it can be argued that Iqbal constructs his notion of pan-Islamic community to counter the 'de-humanizing' influence of colonialism. Iqbal's pan-Islamic community is more of a 'metaphysical' category and it should not be understood in pure political terms. His pan-Islamic community is prone to criticisms for being less sensitive towards the non-Islamic minorities. Nevertheless, this criticism against Iqbal does not hold much ground, as he believed that the 'ultimate' purpose of humanity should be of realizing the goal of 'spiritual democracy.' Iqbal suggests that all religions sharing common 'ideals' should join together in realizing the 'Unity of God.'[42] However the wars between Islam and Christianity and the European imperialism in the latter stages hinder the possibility of realizing the 'Unity of God.' Thus it would be wrong to consider Iqbal's pan-Islamic community as a part of his political project. His notion of pan-Islamism should be rather understood in the light of developments which were influenced by western modernity.

The Essence of the Alternative Modernity - A Case for Iqbal's Community

In the above discussion it is demonstrated that Iqbal reconstructs the 'Islamic community' in the backdrop of Western civilization, in general and Western modernity, in particular. In undertaking his project of reconstructing 'Islamic community,' he not merely advances a critique of certain modern values such as, rationalism, liberalism, secularism, nationalism and imperialism but also attempts to construct an 'ethical community' which is integral to his conception of an alternative modernity. Some of its core elements are as follows:

God in the Background[43]

Western modernity is based on a particular understanding of God according to which God is attributed less significance in the political and the social life of the community. The best example of this minimalist presence of God in the social and the

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[42]The term 'Unity of God' demonstrates the idea that God is one and so is the humanity.

[43]This heading is taken from Charles Taylor's 'Two Theories of Modernity', in *The Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Mar. – Apr., p. 28.

political life of the community is evident from the western doctrine of the secularism. The western doctrine of the secularism draws the strict distinction between the spiritual and the temporal domains, and insists that, the former should limit itself to the private realm and should not intervene in the public life of the state.

Iqbal has huge problems with the western distinction of the spiritual and the temporal and argues that every act of the agent is determined by the 'invisible mental background,'[44] which in Islam is essentially spiritual in character. Iqbal argues that the purpose of the Islamic community is to realize the spiritual principle of the *tauhid* as the basis of human unity and it is due to actualization of this spiritual principle that state in Islam, is known as theocratic. It is to be noted here that the Iqbal does not adhere to the particular definition of theocracy, which treats king as the representative of God on earth.

Iqbal seems to suggest that there is a certain background understanding which had been transferred to us through our predecessors. One among them is that, in Islam, the temporal and the spiritual are part of the same reality. Such a view of Iqbal is contrary to the modernist understanding of the community, as modernity while emphasizing on individual rationality circumscribes the individual in the temporal world and conceals his vision for the spiritual emancipation.

From the above discussion, it can be pointed out that Iqbal's conception of the ethical community is different from both modern secular state and theocracy. Though the modern secular state is different from theocracy in many aspects, one of the differences is that while the former recognizes the liberal spirit of the individual, the latter is based on the conservatism of priesthood. However, both the modern state and the theocracy converge at one point i.e. while emphasizing their sovereignty both modern state and the theocracy demand loyalty from the people. To put it differently, both the modern state and the theocracy aim at maintaining the rigid cohesiveness by demanding loyalty from the people. Iqbal' s ethical community, no doubt, is constituted by the Muslims but still it does not entail cohesiveness in a rigid sense, as

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[44]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.* Srinagar: Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 163.

he believed that the people should be loyal to God and not to the throne and loyalty towards to God eventually means loyalty towards one's own 'ideal' character.

To sum up, it can be argued that though Iqbal aims at maintaining the cohesiveness of the ethical community through the eternal principles of *tauhid* and the finality of the Pophethood, he has the larger purpose of realizing the spiritual emancipation of the mankind while propagating it. Such an understanding about the community can constitute the essence of an alternative idea of modernity.

Quest for Dynamism

In the preceding discussion it was pointed out that one of the key characteristic of the Iqbal's ethical community is the doctrine of permanence and change. It was argued that by change, Iqbal does not mean pure and simple change. And he insists on retaining the elements of conservatism.

Iqbal argues that the community should evolve with the changing time but its evolution must be self-reflective and it must not blindly import modern values. In other words, Iqbal adheres to the approach which is an amalgamation of both progressive and conservative elements. The best example of this dynamic approach of Iqbal is *ijma*, which is the instrument of legal evolution.

As we had discussed earlier *ijma* (legislative assembly) on one hand, insists on the republican values of deliberation to reach a consensus and on the other hand, it emphasizes on retention of the elements of the conservatism by making the *Ulema* an essential constituent of the assembly. *Ijma* highlights the dynamism of Iqbal's approach as it is 'modern' in its spirit whereas it is 'conservative' in its form. Thus, it is this dynamism of Iqbal's approach which can be identified neither as 'modern' nor as 'traditional' but still in a particular way is related to both modernity and tradition, and constitutes an essence of an alternative idea of modernity.

However, the alternative conception of modernity should not be understood as a 'hybrid' of the modern and tradition. The alternative conception of modernity is the creative interplay of modernity and tradition and the net result of this interplay is

'third' distinct realm, which can be neither defined as the 'modern' nor can it be understood as 'tradition' but is still related to the modern and the traditional.

Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been argued that Iqbal's conception of political community is in consonance with his 'ideal' notion of community. It has been pointed out here that there is no contradiction in Iqbal's stand on nationalism and his justification for the 'consolidated Muslim state.' It seems clear that Iqbal's claim for the 'consolidated Muslim state' is in consonance with his vision of realizing the pan-Islamic community which for him is largely a metaphysical category. Iqbal's notion of pan-Islamism does not aim at complete endorsement of the past. It is rather a step towards the realization of the spiritual goals of humanity.

Nevertheless, the larger issue involved in this chapter is the argument that Iqbal's notion of community is not merely different from the other-worldly Christian community but it is also different from this-worldly modern notion of the community. It has been pointed out here that Iqbal endeavors to construct an alternative notion of modernity through his conception of community which aims at not merely reforming the temporal but also attempts to realize divine end of actualizing the 'kingdom of god' on earth.

However, in his quest for constructing an alternative notion of community Iqbal does not handle issues pertaining to culture, customs and traditions with sensitiveness. As a result, his project of alternative modernity is prone to criticism from various strands of social and political thought. Nevertheless, much of this criticism of Iqbal does not hold true as Iqbal believed that the distinction based on the race, caste, region and culture are 'earthly-rooted' and they hinder the 'unity' of men.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This study suggests that Iqbal contests the project of Western modernity in variety of ways and in doing so, he endeavors to formulate an alternative version of modernity based on a critical reading of Islam. Iqbal criticizes the project of the Western modernity for its inability to foreground the 'ideals' of the spiritual emancipation of the individual and community. He argued that the prevailing western modernity spelled the greatest danger for mankind. However, it was not only the Western modernity which worried Iqbal, he was equally concerned about the stagnant Islamic civilization. To address these concerns, Iqbal formulated an alternative version of modernity incorporating within a new paradigm elements of both Western and Islamic civilizations.

Iqbal does not debunk the project of Western modernity in toto. In fact he had a huge regards for the scientific temperament given expression to in Western modernity and he urged Muslims caught within a stagnant Islamic civilization to interpret their present condition in the light of 'modern thought' and 'experience.' Iqbal believed that modernity is not something which is alien to the world of Islam. He argued that on its 'intellectual side' the modernity of the West was mere expansion of some of the important phases of Islamic thought. He laid bare a series of intellectual contributions made by Islamic scholarship which helped in constituting the prevailing modernity and suggested that modernity is not unique and an inescapably western phenomenon. By highlighting Islamic legacy in constituting the project of modernity Iqbal not only questioned the 'uniqueness' of western modernity but also argued for the existence of the preconditions of modernity resting on Islamic thought which historically preceded its western counterpart.

Iqbal argued that the spirit of the Islam is fundamentally 'anti-classical.' He depicted the 'anti-classical' spirit of Islam through a distinctive figuration of the Prophet. The Prophet was the practitioner of inductive intellect and it was he who taught man to premise the knowledge on the concrete situations of life. However, it

was Iqbal's view that the 'anti-classical' spirit of Islam has been overshadowed by the ascetic Sufism and the institution of priesthood. Consequently, for the past five hundreds years the civilization of Islam has been stagnant. Iqbal endeavored to overcome the stagnant nature of Islamic civilization by not merely adjusting Islam to the changed modern conditions but also recasting modernity appropriately for the purpose. In fact his project of reconstructing Islam has the solemn objective of realizing the goal of spiritual democracy.

Iqbal criticized the project of Western modernity for excluding religion[1] from the realm of thought and the economic and political life of man. In particular, Iqbal rejected the view of modernity which believed that modernity essentially entails the substitution of religion with universal laws derived through rationality. He criticized Western modernity for treating scientific experience as only the authentic source of knowledge. Beside scientific methods there are other ways too through which one can comprehend reality. Iqbal highlights the importance of religious experience[2] in comprehending the nature of reality and argued that it is only through religious experience that one can realize the ultimate nature of reality.[3] Iqbal suggested that both science and religion deal with the same reality. The only difference being that science tries to comprehend reality through concepts whereas religion is essentially a non-conceptual way of dealing with it. Thus by highlighting the fact that religion and science aim at comprehending the same reality, Iqbal not only criticized modernity for eulogizing the scientific experiences, but also, endeavored to formulate a distinctive epistemology which anticipated the unity between science and religion.

Iqbal suggested that the conflict in the realm of modern thought has even affected the practical life of Europe. Undue emphasis on pure rationality has led to the

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[1] It is interesting to point out that Iqbal premised his alternative version of modernity not merely on Islam. In fact in his text *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* Iqbal pointed out the importance of religious experiences in reaching the knowledge of the ultimate nature of the reality. Iqbal suggested that the natural sciences only provide us a 'sectional' view of the reality and it is only religion through we can have holistic glimpse of the reality. For further details see chapter 7 titled *Is Religion Possible?* pp. 191 -209.

[2] Iqbal suggested that it is not possible to define religious experience in terms of concepts. Experience which is constituted through the unity of man with the ultimate ego is known as religious experience. Iqbal suggested that the religious experience is limited to one who has experienced it and it cannot be communicable to others. However he did suggest the possibility of religious experience getting socialized when 'others begin to live through it with a view to discover for themselves its effectiveness as a method of approaching the Real.' p. 194

[3] Reality for Iqbal is essentially spiritual in nature and it is manifested in the form of an ego.

growth of ruthless egoism. The rise and growth of liberal democracy and nationalism in Europe was an evidence of such egoism. Europe, according to him has become the greatest danger to mankind. Only through religion the prevailing crisis in Europe can be overcome. He goes on to claim 'surely the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture. The modern world stands in need of biological renewal. And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter.'[4]

Iqbal also questions the universality of the modern values such as secularism, nationalism and liberal democracy. These modern values according to him originated in a particular historical background and remained deeply caught in their context-specificities. For instance, phenomena such as, liberal democracy arose due to expansion of 'economic opportunities', secularism due to bifurcation of the 'unity of man' and nationalism due to the Reformation and the replacement of the universal ethics of Christianity. Such an understanding of these modern values by Iqbal suggests that he realized the fact that these modern values have essentially originated in the West and they are not liable to get universalized.

Iqbal's alternative version of modernity not merely aims at exploring the divine origin of mankind. In fact it aims at providing better future for humanity wherein it can overcome the despair caused by phenomena such as nationalism, secularism and liberal democracy. Iqbal argues that the present crisis of mankind can be overcome only if man realizes his unity with his fellow-beings. Iqbal's quest for providing the psychological basis for human unity is evident from his text 'The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.' He rejected the discrimination based on race, caste and colour and urged man to realize his divine origin. Iqbal suggested that the biological renewal of mankind can be realized only through religious experience. It is in the light of this prevailing crisis of humanity that Iqbal formulated his distinctive notion of self which is humanizing in its attributes.

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[4]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Srinagar, Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p.199.

Iqbal's quest for formulating an alternative version of modernity goes hand-in-hand with the 'reconstruction' of religious thought in Islam. In this dissertation Iqbal's alternative version of modernity has been put forth through his conception of the self and community. The central argument around which Iqbal's alternative version of modernity is constituted is that unlike the Western modernity Iqbal did not distinguish between the spiritual and the temporal aspects of life. In fact he endeavors to transform the temporal world into the spiritual by realizing spiritual goals for humanity.[5] This study argues that Iqbal's alternative version of modernity is not a mere adjustment of religion i.e. Islam to the changed conditions of the modern life. In fact Iqbal's modernity promises the good life wherein spiritual emancipation of the individual and the community can be concretized.

Iqbal works out an alternative version of modernity through his conception of self. He constructs his notion of self in the backdrop of Sufism and modernity. His notion of self is the result of the creative interplay between Sufism and modernity. And it neither purely resembles the traditional notion of self nor its modern counterpart[6]. However it is still related to both of them and can be mistaken as one or the other. Thus by overcoming the 'interpretive grid' of discourses and theories

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[5] Yaseen Noorani makes similar kind of an argument. However my argument is different from Noorani's argument in following ways. Firstly, Noorani by arguing that Iqbal formulates his conception of the self from the desiring self of the classical Persian ghazal overlooks the inspiration and the commonalities which Iqbal's self shares with the modern affirmative and instrumental self. The tenets of the modern self in Iqbal are clearly evident from the way he interprets the Quran and depicts the Prophet in his text. Secondly, to claim that Iqbal's conception of self is formulated only through classical ghazal is further problematic as it overlooks the contributions of the Western intellectual traditions which influenced Iqbal. Thirdly, Iqbal's notion of self is neither a modern category nor a traditional one. I believe that Iqbal's conception of self is result of the creative interplay between the Sufism and modernity. And to claim that Iqbal's notion of self is only drawn from the tradition of ghazal or from the modern intellectual tradition is to deprive it of its uniqueness. See Yaseen Noorani 'Islamic Modernity and the Desiring Self: Muhammad Iqbal and the Politics of Narcissism', Iran, Vol. 38, 2000.

[6] I believe that both Francis Robinson and Yaseen Noorani by treating Iqbal's notion of self from the point of view of modern and traditional perspectives overlooked the distinctiveness of Iqbal's notion of self. Robinson by analyzing nineteenth and twentieth century Islamic self points out that the Islamic self shares certain characteristics which are akin to post Reformation European self. He extends the same argument for Iqbal and highlights the affirmative and instrumental aspects of Iqbal's self. Robinson does not even make an attempt to highlight the Sufi influence on Iqbal's self and he generalize his argument that there is an essential tension between this-worldly Islam to reform the world on the one hand and on the other hand to realize godly ends. Contrary to Francis Robinson, Noorani premises Iqbal's notion of self on the tradition of classical ghazal, but overlooks the 'modern' characteristics of Iqbal's self. See Yaseen Noorani 'Islamic Modernity and the Desiring Self: Muhammad Iqbal and the Politics of Narcissism', Iran, Vol. 38, 2000 ; Francis Robinson, Islam and Muslim History in South Asia. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000.

related to modernity and tradition, Iqbal's notion of self discloses itself, akin to what Rajeev Bhargava calls as the 'cluster of newly developed phenomena forged out of western modern and indigenous traditional cultural systems that belong to what can be called an alternative modernity'.[7]

However, the 'form' of Iqbal's self is only one aspect through which it discloses itself as an alternative to modern and traditional notion of self. Another ground on which Iqbal's notion of self can be regarded as an alternative to the modern and the traditional notions of the self is from the point of view of the objectives which it aims to realize. Iqbal's notion of self oscillates between the temporal and the spiritual world and it aims at transforming the temporal into the spiritual. His notion of self has solemn characteristic of realizing the goal of spiritual democracy. Iqbal argues that spiritual democracy can be realized only if every man possesses certain characteristics which are akin to the most unique individual i.e. God. The individual according to Iqbal gets the unique individuality by doing particular kind of an act. Iqbal's notion of self is *a doing self* which aims at engaging with the matter. However, Iqbal suggests that the act of the individual should not aim at dominating the environment. In fact, the act should be such that it paves the way for 'free upward movement of the spiritual life.'[8]

Iqbal criticizes the modern self for eulogizing pure rationality. He believes that the rationalized self of Western modernity is responsible for the present crisis prevailing in the modern culture. Iqbal argues that the present crisis of modernity can only be overcome through the biological renewal of mankind. Iqbal argues that the biological renewal of mankind is only possible if each ego strives for realizing the unity with God. He suggests that it is only after reaching the final stage of religious experience that man will realize the roots of his divine origin and his inescapable unity with his fellow beings.

Iqbal argues that the 'unity of experience' is not the final stage in the life of the ego. In fact he emphasizes that once the ego returns from its unity with God it

[7] Rajeev Bhargava, 'Are There Alternative Modernities?', in N. N. Vohra (ed) *Culture, Democracy and Development in South Asia.* New Delhi: IIC/Shipra, 2001, p. 17

[8] Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.* Srinagar, Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p. 16

should act towards transforming the world. He argues that 'the ultimate aim of the ego is not to see something, but to be something. It is in the ego's effort to be something that he discovers his final opportunity to sharpen his objectivity and acquire a more fundamental 'I am' which finds evidence of its reality not in the Cartesian 'I think' but in the Kantian 'I can.' The end of the ego's quest is not emancipation from the limitations of individuality; it is, on the other hand a more precise definition of it. The final act is not an intellectual act, but 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 re-made by continuous action.'[9] Thus Iqbal argues that elevating oneself to the level of God should not be regarded as the final stage in the life of the ego. In fact he suggests that the ego must return from its unity with God and should transform the world in the light of his religious experience.

In this way, Iqbal tries to negotiate between the temporal and the spiritual world. In doing so Iqbal not merely provides a critique of temporal-centric Western modernity but he also criticizes the other-worldly Sufism. Iqbal argues that Western modernity by emphasizing on pure rationality has led to degeneration of humanity. And to overcome the present crisis of the modern culture one need to strive for the biological renewal of the mankind.

To sum up, it can be argued that Iqbal by negotiating between the spiritual and the temporal world endeavors to construct the humanizing self which counters the dehumanizing aspects of the modern self. His alternative version of modernity seeks important position for religion and it promises better future wherein discrimination based on nation and racial ties are replaced by the quest for realizing the spiritual democracy.

Further, the alternative version of Iqbal's modernity is also evident from the way he attempts to reform the Islamic community. Iqbal argues that a community should possess the elements of permanence and change. He argues that the elements

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[9]Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Srinagar, Gulshan Publishers, 2003, pp.208-209.

of permanence[10] provide the 'foothold' in the world of perpetual change whereas the elements of change[11] allow the community to adapt itself to the changed modern conditions.

Iqbal's understanding of the Islamic community displays a creative interplay between modernity and tradition. His quest for creative adaptation between the modern 'republican' values of participation and the cultural systems of Islam is evident from his conception of *Ijtihad*. Iqbal believes that ijma is the best instrument for the evolution of Islamic laws. According to Iqbal, *ijma* is a legislative assembly which aims at interpreting the Islamic laws through the consultation of the people. However, in order to control the uncritical liberal fervor among the Muslims, Iqbal qualifies the modern aspect of *ijma* by incorporating conservative elements. Iqbal emphasizes that the Ulema should occupy 'vital' position in the legislative assembly. He argues that the incorporation of the Ulema is necessary as in the absence of the Ulema the assembly may make 'grave mistakes' in interpreting the laws. Thus by creatively adapting the features of both modern and tradition Iqbal's conception of *ijma* displays itself as 'the cluster of newly developed phenomenon'[12] which form the essence of an alternative conception of modernity.

To sum up, it can be argued that Iqbal by creatively adapting modern values with traditional cultural systems endeavors to formulate an alternative version of modernity which is more context-sensitive. Iqbal's alternative modernity is not a mere adjustment of Islam to the changed modern conditions. In fact, it makes a serious bid to realize the goal of spiritual democracy. However, there is limitation of this argument as there is always a possibility of slippage either to the realm of the tradition or the modern.

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[10]According to Iqbal, the principle of *tauhid* and the finality of the Prophethood constitute the permanent elements of the Islamic community. See Mohammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Srinagar, Gulshan Publishers, 2003, p.156.

[11]Iqbal understood 'change' mainly in terms of legal evolution of the Islamic community.

[12]Rajeev Bhargava, 'Are There Alternative Modernities?, in N. N. Vohra (ed) *Culture, Democracy and Development in South Asia*. New Delhi: IIC/Shipra, 2001, p. 17.

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