OVERCOMING NIHILISM THROUGH SUFISM:

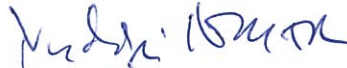MUHAMMAD IQBAL, HIS PHILOSOPHY, AND POLITICAL THEOLOGY

by

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in partial fulfillment of
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OVERCOMING NIHILISM THROUGH SUFISM:
MUHAMMAD IQBAL, HIS PHILOSOPHY, AND POLITICAL THEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

OVERCOMING NIHILISM THROUGH SUFISM: MUHAMMAD IQBAL, HIS PHILOSOPHY, AND POLITICAL THEOLOGY

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Ph.D. Dissertation, August 2016

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Keywords: Nihilism, Sufism, political theology, pantheism, fatalism

This dissertation is interested in how Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy (1877 – 1938), one of the leading modern Muslim philosophers, is interpreted and analyzed in the literature. Arguing that existing interpretations lack a philosophical perspective in approaching Iqbal and his ideas, this study contributes to Iqbal literature by offering an alternative interpretation and narrative of Iqbal's ideas and intellectual development from a philosophical perspective. In doing this, this study situates Iqbal in a philosophical context and problematic and shows how he discusses this problem. Analyzing Iqbal's writings from 1900 to 1934, this dissertation demonstrates that Iqbal's philosophy and intellectual development is best analyzed and understood within the context of, and as a response to, the problem of nihilism in its epistemological, metaphysical, moral and political dimensions. Accordingly, this study also demonstrates that Iqbal's response, or solution, to the problem of nihilism is a reconstructed form of Sufism.

ÖZET

NİHİLİZMİ SUFİZM İLE AŞMAK:
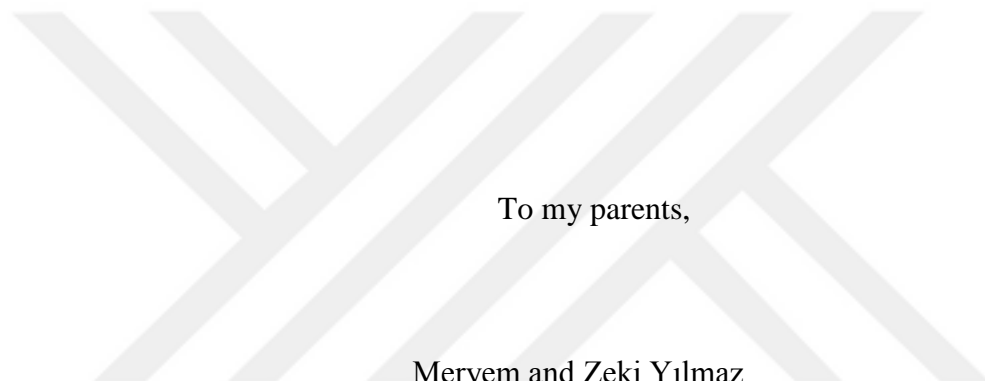## MUHAMMED İKBAL'İN FELSEFESİ VE SİYASET TEOLOJİSİ

FEYZULLAH YILMAZ

Doktora Tezi, Ağustos 2016

Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Nedim Nami Nomer

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nihilizm, Sufizm, siyasal teoloji, pantheizm, fatalizm

Bu tez, Modern Müslüman filozofların önde gelenlerinden Muhammed İkbal'in (1877 – 1938) felsefesinin mevcut literatürde nasıl yorumlandığı ve analiz edildiği ile ilgilenmektedir. Mevcut çalışmaların, İkbal'in düşüncelerinin analizinde felsefi bir yaklaşımdan mahrum olduklarını iddia eden bu çalışma, mevcut literatüre İkbal'in düşüncelerini ve entelektüel gelişimini felsefi bir bakış açısıyla ortaya koyan alternatif bir analiz ve yorum getirerek katkı yapmaktadır. Bu tez sözkonusu iddiasını, İkbal'in düşüncelerini felsefi bir bağlam ve sorunsal üzerine yerleştirerek ve İkbal'in bu felsefi sorunu nasıl tartıştığını göstererek ortaya koymaktadır. İkbal'in 1900'den 1934'e kadarki çalışmalarını analiz ederek bu tez, İkbal'in felsefesinin ve entelektüel gelişiminin en iyi şekilde nihilizm problemi bağlamında – epistemolojik, metafizik, ahlaki ve siyasi boyutlarıyla – ve nihilizm problemine bir cevap olarak analiz edilebileceğini ve anlaşılabileceğini göstermektedir. Buna bağlı olarak, bu çalışma aynı zamanda İkbal'in nihilizm problemine olan cevabının Sufizm'in yeniden yorumlanmış bir formu olduğunu göstermektedir.

To my parents,

Meryem and Zeki Yılmaz…

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There have been various individuals and institutions that helped me in different ways in researching and writing this dissertation. During my PhD studies, I first came to be interested in Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy as well as in the newly emerging field in political theory which is called 'comparative political theory' in 2010. These happened when taking Şerif Mardin's course on revivalist and reformist movements in the Muslim world. Even after being in academia for decades, Mardin was still very interested in and excited about cutting edge developments in political theory as well as relatively less studied research areas, such as, modern Islamic political theory. First of all, I should thank Şerif Mardin for introducing us to the new subfield called comparative political theory and to various modern Muslim thinkers.

In 2013, I went to the department of Study of Religions at Södertörn University in Stockholm as an exchange student. There I continued working on Iqbal and wrote the earliest versions of two of my chapters. I presented these two chapters at the Research Seminar which was held at the department of Study of Religions, and I benefited from the comments and criticisms of the participants of the seminar group. In this respect, I would like to thank Jørgen Straarup, Simon Sorgenfrei, Anne Ross Solberg, Ann Af Buren, David Thurfjell, and Jenny Berglund. In particular, I would like to thank Susanne Olsson for her valuable feedback on my chapters and her support throughout my stay at Södertörn University. Her comments and feedbacks were very crucial at this early stage of my research.

Last but not least, I should thank the two members of the Sabancı University Writing Center, Daniel Lee Calvey and Ceren Aydın for their feedbacks and comments on various chapters of my dissertation.

Finally, I acknowledge that I alone am responsible for any kind of omissions and possible errors of this work.

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Meryem and Zeki Yılmaz, who has constantly supported me throughout my graduate studies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

During the last two decades, there has been an increasing interest in philosophy and political philosophy literature toward non-European/Western traditions in general and to the tradition of Islamic philosophy and Islamic political philosophy in particular. As David Cooper states, previously non-Western/European philosophical traditions were not included into the so-called 'history of philosophy' anthologies or studied as philosophy proper, or from a philosophical perspective, because 'the wisdom of the East' has usually been considered as "too indelibly 'religious', 'irrational' and 'mystical' to warrant a place on today's hard-nosed, 'analytical' curriculum."[1] Accordingly, Cooper observes that at the beginning only a few Muslim/Arab thinkers were included into history of philosophy books, and this was mainly because these Muslim/Arab thinkers wrote commentaries on Aristotle and in a way influenced the medieval Christian thought. In this regard, they were deemed worthy of inclusion because of their involvement with originally European/Western thinkers, such as Aristotle.[2] Thus, there seems to be two problems that are related to each other. One is the conception that non-Western thought is religious, irrational and mystical, thus not philosophical. The second problem is that even when non-Western traditions of thought are included into the history of philosophy this was not done because of their philosophical contributions, that is, how they provided solutions to some of the problems of philosophy, but because they were considered to have served at the transmission process of ancient Greek philosophy to Europe.

Working on Islamic philosophy, Oliver Leaman points out to these problems. As for the first problem, Leaman argues that Islamic philosophy is first of all philosophy, and in this respect its content is similar to the content of philosophy in general.[3] For instance, he argues that "some problems, especially the most abstract metaphysical ones, appear to be

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[1] David E. Cooper, *World Philosophies: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 1.
[2] Cooper, *World Philosophies*, 1.
[3] Oliver Leaman, Introduction to *History of Islamic Philosophy* by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London: Routtledge, 1996), 32.

common to a whole range of cultures."[4] However, he adds that there are still some differences of Islamic philosophy, and this is a result of the context of the Islamic culture. Accordingly, when such common problems are being analyzed in Islamic philosophy, the thinkers in that tradition may put the emphasis upon a different aspect of the problem depending upon the nature of that culture.[5] For the second problem, Leaman argues that this is mainly a result of Islamic philosophy being studied by orientalists and with a 'history of ideas' perspective, instead of being studied by philosophers and with a philosophical perspective. The difference between two perspectives is that looking from a history of ideas perspective, the scholar tries to understand how a certain idea has moved from one thinker, or one period, or one school of thought to another. He takes up a term, an idea, an argument in a thinker as its subject, and then traces its origins and its development. Although Leaman admits that important and valuable knowledge is produced through orientalist studies, he argues that approaching Islamic philosophy only from an orientalist approach often results in the loss or confusion of the philosophical point of an argument.[6] Looking from a philosophy perspective however, the scholar puts forward a philosophical problem, and if necessary, shows the different historical sources of that problem in previous thinkers. However, the main point of the philosophical perspective is to demonstrate how a philosophical problem is solved by a certain philosopher.

Similar problems are being debated in political theory for some time as well, and as a result of these debates a new approach, which is called 'comparative political theory' (CPT), has emerged within political theory both as a subfield and also as a methodology, and various scholars, such as Fred Dallmayr, Roxanne Euben, Andrew March, Bhikhu Parekh, Anthony Black, Farah Godrej, Anthony J. Parel, Takashi Shogimen and Hwa Yol Jung started to lay down the building blocks of the field.[7] CPT aims to challenge the existing norms and

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[4] Leaman, Introduction, 39-40.

[5] Ibid., 39-40.

[6] Oliver Leaman, *An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), ix.

[7] See, Cary J. Nederman and Takashi Shogimen, *Western Political Thought in Dialogue with Asia* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008); Anthony Parel and Ronald C. Keith, *Comparative Political Philosophy: Studies under the Upas Tree* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003); Fred Dallmayr, *Border Crossings: Toward a Comparative Political Theory*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 1999); Jin Y. Park, *Comparative Political Theory and Cross-Cultural Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Hwa Yol Jung* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009); Anthony Black, *The West and Islam: Religion and Political Thought in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Andrew F. March, "What is Comparative Political Theory?," *The Review of Politics*, 71, no. 4, (2009): 531-565; Roxanne L. Euben, "Comparative Political Theory: An Islamic Fundamentalist Critique of Rationalism," *The Journal of Politics*, 59, no. 1, (1997): 28-58.

standards of political theory which until recently has been understood as an enterprise that is produced and associated with 'Western civilization'.[8] In 'standard' historical analyses of political theory, the conventional way was to focus on problems of 'Western civilization' as they have been analyzed by Western philosophers, and while doing that, one would usually follow the historical route of ancient Greece, medieval Europe, early modernity, modern period and contemporary period, and analyze the ideas of philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Augustine, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Arendt, Foucault and so on. The aim of CPT is to work against this parochialism and "move beyond the false 'universality' traditionally claimed by the Western canon."[9]

However, it would be a mistake to think that CPT aims to annihilate the distinctions between different cultures and philosophical traditions completely or ignores them, and thus create a so-called 'global political theory' canon. Rather, the aim is to remove the old view which considers non-Western/European philosophical traditions as religious, irrational and mystical, thus non-philosophical, due to the West/Europe's parochial conceptions of what philosophy, religion and rationalism are. To that end, CPT aims to expand political theory canon by introducing both 'non-Western' problems and thinkers into political theory and also "non-Western perspectives into familiar debates about the problems of living together, thus ensuring that 'political theory' is about human and not merely Western dilemmas."[10] For instance, Andrew March makes a comparison between Islamic and liberal conceptions of citizenship and political obligations to demonstrate that two conceptions can meet each other in 'an overlapping consensus.'[11] In another study, Roxanne L. Euben deals with the question of modern rationality, and by drawing upon the ideas and criticisms of Sayyid Qutb (1906 – 1966), she seeks the possibilities of

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[8] Roxanne L. Euben, "Contingent Borders, Syncretic Perspectives: Globalization, Political Theory, and Islamizing Knowledge," *International Studies Review*, 4, no. 1, (2002): 24.
[9] Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory," *Perspectives on Politics*, 2, no. 2, (2004): 253.
[10] Roxanne L. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism: A Work of Comparative Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 9.
[11] Andrew F. March, *Islam and Liberal Citizenship: The Search for an Overlapping Consensus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Also see, Andrew F. March, "Islamic Foundations for a Social Contract in non-Muslim Liberal Democracies," *American Political Science Review*, 101, no. 2, (2007): 235-252.

overcoming the limitations of rationality as it is understood in the Western context.[12] In this regard, CPT involves "an effort of cross-cultural learning, of acquiring the ability to move, translate, and interpret across different (though by no means monolithic) cultural traditions."[13] By doing that, CPT makes it possible to establish many hitherto undetected connections and conversations between different traditions of political theory, and thus provides us with a better understanding of the place, role and meaning of the philosophers and their solutions to various problems of political theory.

Paying attention to the ideas of Leaman and situating myself in CPT, in this dissertation I am interested in how Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy (1877 – 1938), one of the leading modern Muslim philosophers, is interpreted and analyzed in the literature. I gather existing interpretations of Iqbal's philosophy roughly within three categories: studies that adopt a comparative approach, studies that adopt 'a piecemeal thematic approach,' and those that adopt 'a global systematic approach.'[14] The general problem all these approaches have is that they lack a philosophy perspective when approaching Iqbal and his ideas. That is, they do not situate Iqbal in a philosophical context and problematic, and show how he discussed these problems, and perhaps even solved them. In addition to this general problem, each approach also suffers from certain disadvantages. While comparative approach is concerned solely with showing how Iqbal's certain ideas are different from the ideas of Western/European thinkers, the piecemeal approach only focuses on individual aspects of Iqbal's philosophy and thereby fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of Iqbal's ideas. The global approach suffers from various ideological and political misinterpretations regarding the main motivation behind Iqbal's philosophizing and intellectual development which I will discuss in details while reviewing the global systematic approach below and what I call 'the established narrative' on Iqbal's life and intellectual development. Although I will also adopt 'a global systematic approach' in this study, the main difference of this dissertation from the studies mentioned above is that it approaches Iqbal as a philosopher

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[12] Roxanne L. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism: A Work of Comparative Political Theory*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Roxanne Euben, "Comparative Political Theory: An Islamic Fundamentalist Critique of Rationalism," *The Journal of Politics*, 59, no. 1, (1997): 28-58.

[13] Fred Dallmayr, *Comparative Political Theory: An Introduction*, ed. Fred Dallmayr, (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2010), 3.

[14] I borrowed the terms 'a piecemeal thematic approach' and 'a global systematic approach' from Bernard Reginster. Reginster uses these terms to describe the studies in Nietzsche literature. Bernard Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism* (Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2009), 2.

and his ideas from a philosophy perspective. This means that I analyze Iqbal's ideas by situating them within the context of a philosophical problem and then demonstrate how Iqbal discusses and solves this problem. Thus, the main goal of this dissertation is to contribute to the existing literature on Iqbal by offering an alternative interpretation and narrative which has a philosophical, systematic and global approach to Iqbal's philosophy. I will explain the details of my alternative interpretation and narrative toward the end of this chapter (1.4. An Alternative Narrative and the Structure of the Dissertation) In accordance with the main goal of the dissertation, I argue that Iqbal's philosophy is best analyzed and understood within the context of, and as a response to, the problem of nihilism as a philosophical problem in its epistemological, metaphysical, moral and political dimensions as it emerged during the late 19th and early 20th centuries modern philosophy. I will discuss how Iqbal conceives the problem of nihilism while presenting the details of my alternative interpretation and narrative; however, crucial to note here is that Iqbal does not conceive nihilism solely as a modern, European or Christian problem, but as a common one to different cultural/philosophical traditions. For this reason, he analyzes it in the context of both European/Western and Islamic philosophical traditions.

In the following pages, I will first provide a brief account of Iqbal's life. I believe that this will make it easier to understand the problematic points of the existing interpretations of Iqbal's philosophy. Then, I will make a review of these existing interpretations on Iqbal as well as 'the established narrative' and discuss their problems in details. I believe that discussing these problems first is helpful because this way it becomes easier to understand how my alternative interpretation is different from the existing interpretations and 'the established narrative.' Following that, I will present the general outlines of my alternative interpretation and narrative where I will argue that Iqbal has been concerned with and interested in the problem of nihilism from the beginning of his intellectual development until the end of his life. The remaining chapters of the dissertation (Chapter II, III and IV) will provide an analysis and interpretation of Iqbal's writings in the light of this main argument. The details of this process will become clearer at the end of the chapter where I provide a roadmap to explain how the rest of the dissertation will progress.

1.2. Iqbal's Life

Muhammad Iqbal was born in Sialkot in India on the 9th of November in 1877.[15] His family is originally from Kashmir area and has a Brahman background. After his grandfather converts to Islam, the family migrates to Punjab area and settles in Sialkot.[16] When Iqbal was 5 years old, he became a student of Sayyid Mir Hasan (1844 – 1929) who was a deeply religious person with leanings towards Sufism, and headed a madrasah (religious school) in the city.[17] In 1897, Iqbal finished university at the Government College Lahore and received his bachelor's degree in philosophy, English literature and Arabic. In 1899, he received his master's degree in philosophy from the Punjab University in Lahore. In 1900, he started working as MacLeod Reader in Arabic in Oriental College in Lahore where he taught philosophy until 1904.[18] As Annemarie Schimmel tells, Iqbal met the famous English orientalist Sir Thomas Arnold during his university years. It did not take long for Arnold to recognize Iqbal's talents, and following his return to England, Arnold motivated his previous student to pursue higher education in England.[19]

In 1905, Iqbal went to England to pursue higher studies at Cambridge University in Trinity College under the famous neo-Hegelian philosopher John McTaggart Ellis McTaggart and James Ward. At that time, Cambridge University was not conferring doctoral degree, and therefore, following the recommendation of Thomas Arnold, Iqbal went to Germany to study Ph.D. He first went to Heidelberg in 1907 to learn German, and then registered at the University of Munich. He submitted his dissertation entitled *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy*[20][1] (*Metaphysics*) to the University of Munich in November 4, 1907, and became a doctor of

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[15] Though it is now agreed that Iqbal's date of birth is on the 9th of November 1877, there was also a debate in Iqbal literature regarding the exact date of birth of Iqbal. One can read S. A. Vahid's article on the issue to learn more about the details of this debate. S. A. Vahid, "Date of Iqbal's Birth," *Iqbal Review*, http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct64/2.htm, accessed June 21, 2016.

[16] M. Mouziddin, "A Short Biography of Allamah Iqbal," in *The World of Iqbal: A Collection of Papers*, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1982), vii.

[17] Mustansir Mir, *Iqbal: Makers of Islamic Civilization,* (India: IB Tauris and Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.

[18] Mir, *Iqbal,* 4.

[19] Saeed E. Durrani, "Iqbal: His Life and Work," *Iqbal Review*, http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct90/6.htm, accessed June 21, 2016.

[20] The book was published for the first time in London in 1908. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy* (London: Luzac Co., 1908); Later, it was also published by a Pakistani publishing company. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy* (Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1954).

philosophy.[21] During the research of this thesis, Iqbal studied some Muslim philosophers which were not so well-known in Europe, such as Suhrawardi. As Schimmel says, Iqbal "was perhaps the first to draw attention on the works of Suhrawardi Maqtul, whose importance for the history of Sufism has recently been brought into relief through H. Corbin's researches."[22] Also, Iqbal studied on Abdulkarim al-Jili, and it can be said that his ideas on 'the perfect man' and on the ascension of the soul, which are analyzed in details in the *Metaphysics*, have influenced Iqbal's own concept of man's spiritual development.[23]

After getting his Ph.D. degree from Germany, Iqbal returned to London and passed his law examination at Lincoln's Inn in 1908 and qualified for the Bar.[24] In 1908, Iqbal returned to India, to Lahore, where he started working as a professor of philosophy at the Government College Lahore and also practiced law for a short while. After quitting practicing law and after resigning from his university position in 1911, he devoted his time and energy to literary studies. In 1911, he wrote a famous poem in Urdu entitled as *Shikwa* (The Complaint) where Iqbal deplores against God about the backwardness of the Muslims all around the world. This poem was followed by *Jawab-i-Shikwa* (The Answer) in 1913 where God responds to Iqbal's complaints. In 1915, Iqbal wrote one of his most popular poems called *Asrar-i-Khudi* (The Secrets of the Self) where he offered his theory of the self/personality in poetry form. This poem was followed by another one in 1918, *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* (The Secrets of Selflessness), which provided Iqbal's views on society. These were followed by three other poetry books. The first was written as a response to Goethe's *West-Oestlicher Divan*. It was titled as *Payam-i-Mashriq* (The Message of the East) and was published in 1923. The second was titled as *Bang-i-Dara* (The Call of the Caravan Bell) and was published in 1924 which was a collection of Iqbal's Urdu poetry which included poems written from 1905 up until 1923. The third was written in 1927 and was titled as *Zabur-i-Ajam* (Persian Psalms). Since I will discuss some of these writings in Chapters 3, where I will analyze Iqbal's nihilistic crisis, I am now only mentioning them to give a general idea about Iqbal's writings.

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[21] Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 36-38.
[22] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 38.
[23] Ibid., p. 38.
[24] Abdul Haq Moulvi, "Sir Mahomed Iqbal," in *Tributes to Iqbal*, ed. Muhammad Hanif Shahid, (Lahore: Sangemeel Publications, 1977), 15.

In 1922, Iqbal was given knighthood by the British Crown. It was also during that time that the social and political situation both in India and in the world was worsening. It was around this time Iqbal showed more interest in practical politics of India. In 1927, he was "elected to the Panjab Legislative Council, and was also Secretary to All India Muslim League, from which he resigned in 1928 because of differences of opinion."[25] During the same period, Iqbal was also "deeply involved in the preparation of lectures for the Universities of Hyderabad, Madras, and Aligarh which he delivered at the end of 1928 and during the first weeks of 1929."[26] These lectures were later published in 1932 with the title of *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.*[27] In 1932, Iqbal gave a seventh lecture in England at the Aristotelian Society in London, and with the addition of this lecture to the existing six lectures, the second edition of the book was published in 1934 – this time with the title of *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.*[28] Between 1932 and 1938, Iqbal published five more poetry books which are *Javidnama* (1932), *Bal-i-Jibril* (Gabriel's Wing, 1935), *Zarb-i-Kalim* (The Rod of Moses, 1936), *Pas Chih Bayah Kard ay Aqwam-i-Sharq*, (What should then be done O People of the East, 1936), and *Armaghan-i-Hijaz*, (The Gift of Hijaz, 1938). The most famous of these is *Javidnama* which Iqbal dedicated to his son Javid. It was a poem in which Iqbal meets his spiritual guide, Maulana Rumi, and rises up in the spheres of existence with the guidance of Rumi to meet various poets, thinkers, politicians and religious leaders to discuss with them various issues about life, politics, ethics and existence. Some of these figures Iqbal meets in these different spheres are Jamaladdin Afghani, Said Halim Pasha, Hallaj Mansour and Friedrich Nietzsche.[29] The last years of Iqbal's life were troubled by financial difficulties and illnesses. In March 1938, his illness started to get worse, and on April 21, 1938 Iqbal passed away.[30]

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[25] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 48.

[26] Ibid., 49.

[27] The first edition, 'Lahore Edition,' included six chapters and was titled as *The Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.*

[28] This second edition is also known as 'the Oxford Edition.'

[29] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 52-54.

[30] Ibid., 59.

1.3. Reviewing the Literature and 'the Established Narrative' on Iqbal

I mentioned above that I gather existing studies in Iqbal literature within three categories which are studies that adopt a comparative approach, studies that adopt a 'piecemeal thematic approach,' and those that adopt 'a global systematic approach.' Studies in the first category make comparisons between Iqbal and various other philosophers, mostly Western/European philosophers, to show whether and to what extent Iqbal's philosophy is influenced by these Western/European thinkers. While this is actually understandable since Iqbal himself had a life-long commitment to cross-cultural approach in philosophizing[31], the studies in this group suffer from a serious problem. As Leaman states, this emphasis on 'influence' "has had a pernicious influence itself on the study of Islamic philosophy and science, and has helped position them more in the history of ideas than in philosophy and science as such, a reflection of the orientalist assumption that Muslims could not really create original work all by themselves." [32] The problem is that it is this 'orientalist assumption' that has been the main driving force behind almost all of comparative studies on Iqbal. Accordingly, while some scholars, for instance Edward G. Browne, argued that Iqbal's philosophy was merely 'an oriental adaptation' of the Nietzsche's philosophy[33], others, for instance, Nazir Qaiser and Mohammed Ma'ruf, argued that Iqbal has in fact not been influenced by European thinkers and that the primary source of influence and frame of reference for Iqbal was the Qur'an and other Muslim thinkers, such as Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207 – 1273).[34] Although such studies are important in situating Iqbal vis-à-vis other thinkers and the ideas by which he was influenced, since they are motivated by 'the

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[31] While approaching a philosophical problem, Iqbal almost always considered it as a problem to be common to more than one culture and tradition and benefited from what he learned from various traditions of philosophy, such as Islamic, European, Buddhist, Magian, Christian and Zoroastrian, in solving the problem he was dealing with.

[32] Oliver Leaman, "The Influence of Influence: How not to Talk about Islamic Culture," *Dialogue of Philosophies*, Ishraq: Islamic Philosophy Yearbook, no. 1, (2010): 35. http://iph.ras.ru/uplfile/smirnov/ishraq/1/leaman.pdf , 04.02.2016, accessed February 4, 2016.

[33] Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia: Modern Times (1500-1924)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 431. The same argument can also be seen in another study. Bilal Ahmad Dar, "Iqbal and Nietzsche's Concept of Eternal Recurrence," *Intellectual Discourse* 19.2 (2011): 281-305. Dar writes: "Iqbal's sufi conception of the Perfect Man differs from Nietzsche's Superman in the ability to deploy creativity and freedom for remoulding of the self and appropriating divine attributes." Also see, R. Bilquees Dar, "Iqbal and Nietzsche: Perfect Man versus Superman," *International Journal of English and Literature*, 4, no. 9, (2013): 449-450. Dar writes: "This paper tries to bring nothing but the fact that Nietzsche's *Superman* (ubermench) was in no way Iqbal's *Perfect Man*, for Iqbal himself acknowledges it a number of times that he was influenced by Nietzsche's philosophy, which according to him was very near to Islam. He says even at that and though he being an atheist, he felt his heart is a believer, even if his mind is an unbeliever."

[34] Nazir Qaiser, *Iqbal and the Western Philosophers: A Comparative Study* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2001), xiv; Mohammed Maruf, *Iqbal and His Contemporary Western Religious Thought* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1987) VIII.

orientalist assumption' described above they merely look like a list of similarities and differences between Iqbal's and Western philosophers' ideas. More importantly, since they do not explain the philosophical problem(s) Iqbal was concerned with, it becomes impossible to understand why Iqbal developed such ideas. Accordingly, they fail to understand how Iqbal's engagement with Nietzsche's ideas is related to the nihilistic crisis Iqbal experienced, which I analyze in the second chapter (Nihilism and Iqbal: The Crisis (1909 – 1927)), and how they influenced Iqbal's struggle with the problem of nihilism. In different parts of the dissertation, I will also show sometimes by which philosophers or ideas Iqbal was influenced; however, my main goal and concern will be to analyze how these philosophers or ideas have contributed to Iqbal's understanding of and solution to the philosophical problem he was dealing with.

There is, however, a study which is comparative, and it also approaches Iqbal's ideas by connecting them to a philosophical problem. Robert D. Lee, in his book *Overcoming Tradition and Modernity: The Search for Islamic Authenticity*, analyzes the ideas of Muhammad Iqbal along with some other Muslim thinkers in modern period, such as, Sayyid Qutb, Ali Shari'ati, and Mohammed Arkoun. According to Lee, the problem is that there is the monolithic idea of modernity, that is, modernity means only a particular set of developments, such as replacement of monarchy/aristocracy with democracy, of religion with secularism, agriculture with industry, and that all non-European societies will follow the same course of development.[35] Accordingly, non-European societies want to develop and become modern as well; however, they want to achieve this development according to their own cultural lines which Lee calls 'authentic.'[36] I agree with Lee that Iqbal perhaps can also be read through these lenses, but I think that his approach misses the philosophical problem with which Iqbal deals, and situates him in a level of philosophical, historical and socio-political context that may not accurately suit Iqbal and his philosophy. In short, I disagree with Lee regarding his choice of the problem to analyze Iqbal's ideas, and I argue that Iqbal is best understood within the context of the problem of nihilism. Accordingly, I

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[35] Robert D. Lee, *Overcoming Tradition and Modernity: The Search for Islamic Authenticity* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 2-3.

[36] In most general terms, Lee describes authenticity as the idea that as a person one should be who she/he is and not someone else. The person should be guided by his/her own instincts, and not follow others for ethical behavior and success. He extends to societies, and argues that similarly, societies should be guided by the cultural heritage of their own peoples. Lee, *Overcoming Tradition and Modernity*, 1.

argue that Iqbal and his philosophy should be situated in 18th-19th century modern philosophy and analyzed within the context of, and as a response to, the problem of nihilism as a philosophical problem with epistemological, metaphysical, moral and political dimensions.

In the second category, I bring together studies which adopt 'a piecemeal thematic approach.' I refer to them as piecemeal and thematic because they focus on various individual aspects of Iqbal's philosophy in an isolated manner, such as his views on God, man, universe, epistemology, time, immortality and metaphysics.[37] The first problem with these studies is that while analyzing Iqbal's ideas on these issues, they do this without relating Iqbal's ideas to a philosophical problem, problematic and motivation. Without such a connection, these studies fail to explain why Iqbal was concerned with such issues in the first place, and consequently they sound merely like descriptive explanations of Iqbal's ideas on these issues. For instance, Iqbal's conception of 'the perfect man' is usually understood within the framework of the conditions of the Muslim World which was under colonial rule and in a politically, economically and socially backward situation. Various scholars who focus on this concept argue that Iqbal was trying to point to the decline and backwardness of the Muslim World in general and Indian Muslims in particular, and trying to show them the root of their problem, that is, lack of strong will, lack of strong personality, lack of strength and personhood. I agree with this argument; however, I argue that Iqbal was not interested in the concept of 'the perfect man' merely for political reasons and motivations, and he was not exclusively targeting the Muslim World and the Muslims who are in decline and in a backward situation. Instead, I argue that the concept in Iqbal's usage is rather a philosophical concept that is developed to deal with a philosophical problem. The concept of 'the perfect man' is developed to deal with the problem of nihilism, and it has a similar function to that of Nietzsche's 'overman'. That is, it plays a

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[37] Mohammed Maruf, "Iqbal's Concept of God: An Appraisal," *Religious Studies*, 19, no. 3 (1983): 375-383; Muhammad Shabbir Ahsen, "Iqbal on Self and Privacy: A Critical Analysis in the Light of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations," in *Classic Issues in Islamic Philosophy and Theology Today*, ed. A. T. Tymieniecka and Nazif Muhtaroglu, vol. 4 of Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue, (London: Springer, 2010): 79-88; Jamila Khatoon, *The Place of God, Man and Universe in the Philosophic System of Iqbal* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1963); Khursid Anwar, *The Epistemology of Iqbal* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1996); Alessandro Bausani, "The Concept of Time in the Religious Philosophy of Muḥammad Iqbal," *Die Welt des Islams* 3, no. 4, (1954): 158-186; Mohammed Maruf, "Allama Iqbal on 'Immortality'," *Religious Studies* 18, no. 3 (1982): 373-378; Hasan Ishrat Enver, *The Metaphysics of Iqbal*, (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, 1944).

certain role in the process of overcoming nihilism. Secondly, since these studies are only interested in certain individual aspects of Iqbal's philosophy, they fail to explain how different aspects and concepts of Iqbal's thinking, such as his ideas on knowledge, on God, on man and on nature, are related to each other, and how they all play different roles and functions in providing a solution to the problem of nihilism. Accordingly, they fail to provide us with a comprehensive, systematic and consistent understanding of Iqbal's philosophy.

Studies in the third category follow 'a global *systematic* approach.' They are systematic and global in that they both provide an explanation regarding the main motivation behind Iqbal's philosophizing and also a comprehensive and consistent account of Iqbal's philosophy and intellectual development. However, I argue that these studies misplace the motivation for Iqbal's philosophizing, and consequently fail to situate Iqbal and his philosophy in its correct philosophical/intellectual context and problematic. Instead of analyzing Iqbal's philosophy vis-à-vis a philosophical problem, they make it seem like Iqbal's main problem is rather about politics and religion. According to Iqbal Sevea Singh and G. S. Sahota, "much of the scholarship on Iqbal seeks to appropriate him in support of the demand for Pakistan and to denounce him as a 'Muslim separatist', or to claim him as an Indian nationalist."[38] This allows these scholars to construct a narrative, which I call 'the established narrative', where they provide a comprehensive and consistent picture regarding Iqbal's life and intellectual development through different periods, but since it suffers from various ideological and political misinterpretations, the consistency of this narrative becomes doubtful as well. It creates a gap in Iqbal's thinking by describing his intellectual development through a rupture or a complete break which in fact does not exist. As Sevea Singh rightly argues such attempts "detract from a comprehensive study of the continuities, complexities and evolution in the thought of Muslim intellectuals."[39] And, in the case of Iqbal, such an approach makes a deeper understanding of Iqbal's thinking and

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[38] Iqbal Singh Sevea, *The political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 25-26; G. S. Sahota, "Uncanny Affinities: A Translation of Iqbal's Preface to Payam-e Mashriq," *Postcolonial Studies*, 15, no. 4 (2012): 437.
[39] Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, 27.

its evolution difficult.[40] I will now make a detailed analysis of these studies, and discuss their problems.

According to 'the established narrative,' which is shared by various scholars[41] (such as, Annemarie Schimmel, Alessandro Bausani, Javid Iqbal, Mustansir Mir, John L. Esposito, Fazlur Rahman, Gerhard Bowering, Nazir Qaiser, S. Razi Wasti, Saeed A. Durrani, Moinuddin Aqeel, Anwar A. Beg, Iqbal Singh, and Dayne E. Nix), Iqbal's life and intellectual development is divided into three periods which are pre-Europe (until 1905), Europe (1905 – 1908) and post-Europe (1908 and onwards). This periodization drives from the claim that three years Iqbal spent in Europe made dramatic impacts on Iqbal's political orientation and intellectual development and caused significant changes in his thinking. It is claimed that before going to Europe, Iqbal was an enthusiastic supporter of Indian nationalism and a pantheist. During his stay in Europe from 1905 to 1908, it is argued that Iqbal went through a major political and intellectual transformation turning away from Indian nationalism and pantheism. What is more, after 1908, Iqbal turned into a theist and a Muslim nationalist. To support their claims, the above mentioned scholars turn to Iqbal's writings which Iqbal wrote before going to Europe and after returning to India.

As for the change from being an Indian nationalist to a Muslim nationalist, they refer to some of Iqbal's poetry and to one of his political statements. The most usually referred

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[40] Ibid., 27.

[41] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 39-40.; Mir, *Iqbal*, 8; John L Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 57-58; Saeed A. Durani, "Encountering Modernity: Iqbal at Cambridge," in *Muhammad Iqbal: A Contemporary, (Articles from the International Seminar held at The University of Cambridge (June 19-20th, 2008), Celebrating the Centenary of Iqbal's Stay in Europe (1905-1908),* ed. Koshul, Basit Bilal, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2010), 61;Moinuddin Aqeel, *Iqbal: From Finite to Infinite: Evolution of the Concept of Islamic Nationalism in British India,* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2008), 44-45;Anwar A. Beg, *The Poet of the East: Life and Work of Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, The Poet-Philosopher, With a Critical Survey of His Philosophy, Poetical Works and Teachings, with a foreword by Dr. R. A. Nicholson,* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2004), xv; Fazlur Rahman, "Muslim Modernism in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 21, no. 1 (1958): 93-94; Gerhard Bowering, "Iqbal: A Bridge of Understanding Between East and West," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 1, no. 2 (1977): 12-21; Iqbal Singh, *The Ardent Pilgrim: An Introduction to the Life and Work of Mohammed Iqbal,* (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1951), 48-51; Dayne E. Nix, *The Integration of Philosophy, Politics, and Conservative Islam in the Thought of Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938): The Restoration of Muslim Dignity Against the Tide of Westernization* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), 63; Nazir Qaiser, "Was Iqbal a Pantheist?," *Iqbal Review*, http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct83/5.htm 08.06.2016, accessed 8 June, 2016; Razi S. Wasti, "Dr. Muhammad Iqbal – From Nationalism to Universalism," *Iqbal Review*, http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/jan78/3.htm, accessed 08 June, 2016; Javid Iqbal, "*Religious Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal,*" *Iqbal Review*, http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr02/01-RELIGIOUS%20PHILOSOPHY%20OF%20MUHAMMAD%20IQBAL.htm, accessed 08 June, 2016.

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poems are 'Ode to India' (also known as 'The Indian Anthem'[42]) and 'The Anthem of the Islamic Community.'[43] The first poem, which Iqbal wrote before going to Europe, is claimed to symbolize Iqbal's support for Indian nationalism where he writes: "The best land in the world is our India; We are its nightingales; this is our garden. If we are in exile, our heart resides in our homeland. Understand that *we* are also where our heart is. […] Religion does not teach us to be enemies with each other: We are Indians, our homeland is our India."[44] The second poem, which Iqbal wrote after 1908, is analyzed to demonstrate Iqbal's changing views on nationalism, and his support for Muslim nationalism.[45] In the poem, he writes: "China and Arabia are ours; India is ours. We are Muslims, the whole world is ours. God's unity is held in trust in our breasts. It is not easy to erase our name and sign. […] The Lord of Hijaz is the leader of our community; From this name comes the peace of our soul."[46] The political statement that is always referred to is Iqbal's presidential address to 'All-India Muslim League' which was delivered in December 29, 1930. In this statement, Iqbal says: "I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single-state. Self-government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India."[47]

However, as Khurram Ali Shafique, Neil Krishan Aggarwal and Iqbal Sevea Singh demonstrate, it is an oversimplification to say that Iqbal was a supporter of Indian nationalism before 1905 and became a supporter of Muslim nationalism after 1908 based on those poem because both before 1905 and also after 1908 Iqbal wrote both kinds of poetry, that is, poetry in which he praised India as his homeland, and poetry in which he

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[42] It is referred to as 'The Indian Anthem' because as Durrani points out, the poem is "still widely regarded as the unofficial national anthem of India today." Durrani, "Encountering Modernity: Iqbal at Cambridge," 61-62.

[43] Some of the other poems which are also referred to and which Iqbal wrote before going to Europe are: 'The Himalayas,' 'The National Anthem For the Indian Children,' and 'A New Altar.' These are analyzed to refer to Iqbal's support for Indian nationalism.

[44] Muhammad Iqbal, "The Indian Anthem," in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, p. 150, http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/786.pdf, accessed 26 July, 2016.

[45] Some of the other poems which are also referred to and which Iqbal wrote after returning from Europe are: 'Patriotism,' 'Address to the Muslim Youth.' These are analyzed to refer to Iqbal's support for Muslim nationalism.

[46] Muhammad Iqbal, "The Indian Anthem," 178.

[47] Muhammad Iqbal, "Presidential Address All-India Muslim League," in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 11.

praised Islam and Muslim solidarity.[48] Furthermore, Shafique argues that the interpretation above is actually a misconception that is based on an underlying political concept. According to this misconception, it was argued that in colonial India, Indian nationalism developed first and Muslim nationalism emerged later – even as a response to or a reaction against Indian nationalism. Shafique argues that "if you believe in this dogma, then you also tend to believe that Iqbal must have followed the same path: nationalist first and Islamist later."[49]

Iqbal's statement mentioned above was also interpreted in accordance with this misconception. Accordingly, it was argued that in this statement Iqbal called for the creation of an independent Muslim state, and this goal was later realized in 1947 with the creation of Pakistan. It is also as a result of this misconception that it became possible to define Iqbal as 'the poet-philosopher of Pakistan' as well as 'the spiritual founder of Pakistan,' although Pakistan was officially created 9 years after Iqbal's death.[50] Iqbal Sevea Singh states that there was in fact such a plan for Pakistan, 'Pak Plan,' which was declared in Iqbal's life time. According to the founder of the plan, Chaudhari Rahmat Ali (1895 – 1951), there was first going to be a number of independent Muslim nation states, such as Pakistan, Munistan, Safistan, Haideristan, Siddiqistan, the Alam and Ammen Islands, and the Asan and Balus Islands, and then they were going to come together to form one Muslim nation-state, Pakistan. Sevea Singh adds that Iqbal rejected this plan.[51] Accordingly, by contextualizing Iqbal's thought and work within the socio-political and intellectual environment of the period, Sevea Singh successfully demonstrates that in the statement above Iqbal does not call for the creation of a separate Muslim nation-state, but rather an autonomous political structure within a federal state. Sevea Singh shows that by calling for a federal state Iqbal aimed to maintain that the central state would not dominate the whole country with a unified system, and that various other communities and religious groups in

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[48] Khurram Ali Shafique, "Response to Saeed A. Durrani's Paper "Iqbal at Cambridge," Iqbal Review, http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct08/5.htm 08.06.2016, accessed 8 June, 2016; Neil Krishan Aggarwal, "Muhammad Iqbal's Representations of Ram and Nanak," *Sikh Formations* 4, no. 2 (2008): 139-140.

[49] Khurram Ali Shafique, "Response to Saeed A. Durrani's Paper, "Iqbal at Cambridge."

[50] For instance, Hafeez Malik refers to Iqbal as 'the poet-philosopher of Pakistan,' see Hafeez Malik and Lynda P. Malik, "The Life of the Poet-Philosopher," in *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 3. Kavi Ghulam Mustafa referrs to Iqbal as 'the architect of a new state', i.e. Pakistan. See, Kavi Ghulam Mustafa, "Iqbal: The Philosopher-Poet," *Iqbal Review*, http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr60/4.htm, accessed 8 June, 2016.

[51] Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, 196.

India, such as Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Jains, could develop according to their own cultural and religious characters.[52]

With respect to Iqbal's pantheism one can analyze three groups of writings Iqbal published before 1908: his poems, his article on Abdul Karim al-Jili[53] which was published in 1900, and his doctoral dissertation which was published in 1908. Yet, scholars who argue that Iqbal was a pantheist in this period do not base their claims on a detailed analysis of Iqbal's writings where they show that Iqbal conceives God as immanent in existence – inside the universe.[54] Rather they postulate it based on some similarities between Iqbal and certain thinkers/poets who are regarded as pantheists. For instance, Iqbal's son, Javid Iqbal (1924 – 2015), who is regarded as an authority person in Pakistan on his father's life and ideas, bases his claim about his father's pantheism during the pre-Europe period by looking at his father's poetry in this period and seeing the influence of Hafiz (1325 – 1389), 'the great Persian pantheistic poet', on Iqbal's poetry.[55] Looking at Iqbal's doctoral dissertation, M. M. Sharif claims that the dissertation was written when Iqbal was an admirer of pantheism. He thinks that Iqbal's appreciative words for Ibn al-Arabi (1165 – 1240) – a Sufi poet and philosopher who is famously known for his doctrine of 'wahdat al-wujud' ('doctrine of the unity of being', or 'doctrine of the unity of existence') which is generally regarded as the prime example of pantheism – in the introduction chapter of the dissertation proves this point. It is true that Iqbal talks approvingly about Ibn al-Arabi in the dissertation, but he also talks positively about various other philosophers from different traditions, such as Kant, Hegel and Kapila (6th century B.C.E.).[56] Secondly, and more importantly, Iqbal's

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[52] Ibid., 182-183.

[53] Muhammad Iqbal, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani", *Indian Antiquary*, (1900): 237-246. The article can also be found in Muhammad Iqbal, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani," in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 77-97.

[54] Pantheism, at its most general, "may be understood positively as the view that God is identical with the cosmos, the view that there exists nothing which is outside of God, or else negatively as the rejection of any view that considers God as distinct from the universe." William Mander, "Pantheism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), forthcoming URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/pantheism/>. 12.07.2016.

[55] Muhammad Iqbal, *Stray Reflections: The Private Notebook of Muhammad Iqbal* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2006), 169-170.

[56] For instance, He writes: "The most remarkable feature of the character of the Persian people is their love of Metaphysical speculation. Yet the inquirer who approaches the extant literature of Persia expecting to find any comprehensive systems of thought, like those of Kapila or Kant, will have to turn back disappointed, though deeply impressed by the wonderful intellectual subtlety displayed therein." Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy*, (Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1954), x.

appreciative words about Ibn al-Arabi do not actually have anything to do with the content of Ibn al-Arabi's philosophy or ideas, but rather with respect to the systematicity and comprehensiveness of his philosophy – like the systematicity and comprehensiveness of philosophies of Kant, Hegel and Kapila.[57] Accordingly, Iqbal's appreciative words for Ibn al-Arabi cannot be taken to mean his endorsement of Ibn al-Arabi's ideas. Interestingly, nobody has shown any interest in Iqbal's article on al-Jili.

With respect to Iqbal's theism, scholars usually refer to another book Iqbal wrote after he returned to India – *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (*Reconstruction*) which was published in 1932.[58] In this regard, they see *Metaphysics* as evidence of Iqbal's pantheism and *Reconstruction* as evidence of his theism. To support the general claim that Iqbal has changed his views on pantheism to theism, they argue that *Metaphysics* represents 'the marks of immaturity'[59], 'the first stage of Iqbal's development'[60] and the product of 'merely a passing phase'[61] because they consider it as Iqbal's first philosophical study. Hence, Sharif argues that when Iqbal developed more mature thoughts, Iqbal completely repudiated the pantheistic world view.[62] Iqbal's other book, *Reconstruction*, however, is considered as the product of Iqbal's mature thoughts since it was Iqbal's last philosophical study.

Against this, two things can be said. Firstly, it is not accurate to consider *Metaphysics* to represent Iqbal's immature thoughts because it is not about which thinkers or ideas Iqbal agrees or disagrees with, but rather about developing a historical narrative of the development of metaphysics in Persia from its pre-Islamic to post-Islamic periods. In the Introduction, Iqbal himself acknowledges that original thought should not be expected from

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[57] Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, x.

[58] The *Reconstruction* is a collection of the lectures Iqbal gave in various universities in India between 1928 and 1930. The first edition, Lahore Edition, included six chapters and was titled as: *The Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. In 1932, Iqbal gave a seventh lecture in England, and with the addition of this lecture, the second edition of the book (Oxford edition) was published in 1934. This time, it was titled as *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. This second edition is also known as the Oxford Edition. In this dissertation, I am using the Stanford University Edition of the *Reconstruction* which was published in 2013, and is based on the Oxford Edition. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2012).

[59] M. M. Sharif, Foreword to *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy*, by Muhammad Iqbal (Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1954), v.

[60] Sharif, Foreword, v.

[61] Javid Iqbal, Afterword to *Stray Reflections: The Private Notebook of Muhammad Iqbal*, by Muhammad Iqbal, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2006), 170.

[62] Sharif, Foreword, v.

a study, the aim of which is purely historical, and adds that the object of his dissertation is "to prepare a ground-work for a future history of Persian Metaphysics."[63] Secondly, Iqbal's doctoral dissertation which was published in 1908 cannot be regarded as 'the first stage of Iqbal's development' and Iqbal's first philosophical study because Iqbal wrote a scholarly article in 1900 entitled "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani."[64] Although it did not attract the attention of Iqbal scholars – in fact, to my knowledge, there is no study that focuses on this article alone – I consider this article to be a very important source in understanding Iqbal's philosophy because it is like a prototype of Iqbal's almost whole thinking.[65] It provides us with information about various attributes of Iqbal's way of thinking, such as his Sufism, his cross-cultural approach, the scope and extent of his study in philosophy, as well as the central philosophical problem, i.e. the problem of nihilism, he was interested in at the beginning of his intellectual development. Most of these attributes and interests will remain with Iqbal throughout his intellectual development, although will go through certain changes. Hence, if one wants to understand how Iqbal's thinking about these issues has changed in time, this article has to be the starting point of any analysis.

The importance of the article for the ongoing discussion here is that, I argue that the article provides us with information regarding Iqbal's pantheism before going to Europe. Contrary to Sharif and others mentioned above, I argue that the article demonstrates us that before returning to India in 1908, Iqbal did not have a pantheistic conception of God where God is immanent in existence. Nevertheless, I argue that Iqbal did not have a theistic conception of God where God is transcendent either. In agreement with Robert Whittemore, Charles Hartshorne and John W. Cooper, I argue that Iqbal's conception of God can most accurately be defined as panentheistic where God is both transcendent and immanent.[66] In

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[63] Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, xi. Also for Iqbal, the importance of the dissertation lies mainly in the material that is used by him – i.e. certain Arabic and Persian manuscripts which were used for the first time in the literature.

[64] Iqbal, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani," pp. 237-246.

[65] Iqbal scholars ignored this article, and focused rather on Iqbal's later period book, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. I think that this ignorance was even extended to Iqbal's doctoral dissertation because, as I showed above while discussing Sharif's and others' ideas, it was believed to be a product of Iqbal's immature thinking, and it was also believed that it did not reflect Iqbal's 'real' ideas about philosophical problems. For such 'real' ideas, Iqbal scholars argued that one needs to look at the *Reconstruction*.

[66] Charles Hartshorne, "Iqbal (1877 – 1938): A Moslem Panentheist," in *Philosophers Speak of God*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), 294-297; John W. Cooper, "Muhammad Iqbal: Islam," in *Panentheism: The Other*

other words, God is both inside and also outside the existence (man and universe). As Whittemore states, "Iqbal's conception is not pantheism but panentheism, understanding by this latter 'the doctrine that the world is not identical with God (pantheism), nor separate from God (deism), but in God (theism), who in His divine nature transcends it"[67], I argue that Iqbal had a panentheistic conception of God both before 1908 and also after 1908. I will discuss this issue when analyzing the article on al-Jili in details in the next (second) chapter.

Until now, I have analyzed the existing approaches to Iqbal in the literature, and discussed their problems. As opposed to 'the established narrative' and to overcome the disadvantages of individual and comparative studies on Iqbal, I will now present the details of my alternative narrative and also provide a roadmap about the structure of the rest of the dissertation.

1.4. An Alternative Narrative and the Structure of the Dissertation

Above, I argued that Iqbal's philosophy is best analyzed within the context of, and as a response to, the problem of nihilism as a philosophical problem. However, certain questions, doubts or concerns can be raised against such a claim. For instance, some could argue that in his 'magnum opus', *Reconstruction*, Iqbal does not use the term 'nihilism' at all, and throughout the whole book he only discusses Nietzsche's ideas in 6 pages of the book. Considering that the whole book consists of seven chapters and has 157 pages[68], the number, ratio and intensity of references to Nietzsche and his ideas are clearly very few. Moreover, in all of his writings, Iqbal uses the term 'nihilism' only once, and it is in a short

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God of the Philosophers: From Plato to the Present, (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic Publications, 2006), 229-231.; Robert Whittemore, "Iqbal's Panentheism," *The Review of Metaphysics*, 9, no. 4, (1956): 681-699. "'Panentheism' is a constructed word composed of the English equivalents of the Greek terms "pan", meaning all, "en", meaning in, and "theism", meaning God. Panentheism considers God and the world to be inter-related with the world being in God and God being in the world. It offers an increasingly popular alternative to both traditional theism and pantheism. Panentheism seeks to avoid either isolating God from the world as traditional theism often does or identifying God with the world as pantheism does. Traditional theistic systems emphasize the difference between God and the world while panentheism stresses God's active presence in the world. Pantheism emphasizes God's presence in the world but panentheism maintains the identity and significance of the non-divine.", Culp, John, "Panentheism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/panentheism/>. 12.07.2016.
[67] Whittemore, "Iqbal's Panentheism," 691-692.
[68] The Stanford Edition.

article entitled "Islam and Mysticism" which was published in July 1917.[69] Within the light of these figures and facts, the critics might ask how can it be that it is within the context of the problem of nihilism, which is usually associated with Nietzsche's name and philosophy, that Iqbal's philosophy should be understood and analyzed? If Nietzsche occupies so little space in Iqbal's discussions, how can it be supported that Nietzsche's ideas, his concerns, and his problems, i.e. the nihilistic crisis, the problem of nihilism, are at the center of Iqbal's philosophy as well, and that it is to these problems and concerns Iqbal attempts to develop a response in the *Reconstruction*?

In responding these very legitimate concerns, questions and claims, I develop a narrative of Iqbal's intellectual development from the earlier periods, beginning with 1900 when Iqbal wrote his first scholarly article[70], up until the publishing of the first and second editions of the *Reconstruction* in 1930[71] and 1934.[72] This helps me show that nihilism was at the center of Iqbal's thinking and philosophy from the earliest periods up until the *Reconstruction*. In this process, it will become clear that for Iqbal nihilism is not an exclusively a Nietzschean concern or problem, and that it has a broader meaning and history beyond Nietzsche. Crucial to note here is that Iqbal first comes to learn about the problem of nihilism through the history of Islamic philosophy and modern German philosophy, particularly 'the pantheism controversy', or *Pantheismusstreit*, which preoccupied most of the great thinkers in Germany from the end of the eighteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century.[73]

Hence, the main goal of this dissertation is to contribute to the existing literature on Iqbal by offering an alternative narrative which has a philosophical, systematic and global approach to Iqbal's philosophy. It is philosophical because it situates Iqbal's ideas in the context of a philosophical problem, that is, the problem of nihilism, and discusses how Iqbal analyzes it and provides a solution to it. Here, I use 'systematic' in the way Bernard

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[69] Muhammad Iqbal, "Islam and Mysticism," in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 154-156.
[70] Here, I am referring to Iqbal's article on Abdul Karim al-Jili's doctrine of absolute unity which was published in September 1900. Iqbal, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani", 237-246.
[71] Lahore edition which consists of six lectures in total.
[72] Oxford edition which is published after the edition of the seventh lecture – "Is Religion Possible?"
[73] Frederick, C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1987), 44.

Reginster uses, and refer to the principle that organizes a philosopher's thought.[74] In this regard, I argue that the principle that organizes Iqbal's thoughts in his different writings and in different periods is a particular *problem* or *crisis* – the problem/crisis of nihilism. Accordingly, the systematicity of Iqbal's philosophy is determined by the requirements of his response to the problem/crisis of nihilism that emerged in late modern European culture. Conceiving Iqbal's philosophy as a systematic response to the crisis of nihilism also enables us to make sense of his main philosophical ideas and concepts because these are also different tools by which Iqbal develops his solution to the problem of nihilism. In fact, I believe that similar to Martin Heidegger's (1889 – 1976) claim that nihilism was at the center of Nietzsche's philosophy, the same thing can be said for Iqbal. According to Heidegger, all of Nietzsche's ideas, concepts and doctrines, such as 'revaluation of all values,' 'will to power,' 'eternal recurrence of the same,' and 'overman' could only be understood within the framework of nihilism.[75] This also means that for Heidegger, Nietzsche's concepts and doctrines are not merely isolated and independent aspects of Nietzsche's metaphysics. Instead, they are all related to each other in a unified way and form different aspects of Nietzsche's solution to the problem of nihilism.[76] Similarly, I argue that the problem of nihilism was situated at the center of Iqbal's philosophy, and various ideas and concepts in Iqbal's philosophy, such as 'the perfect man', his Sufism, his conception of God, man and universe, are not isolated and independent aspects of Iqbal's thinking. Instead, they are related to each other and form different dimensions of Iqbal's solution to the problem of nihilism.

The approach is also global because it provides a comprehensive and consistent account of Iqbal's philosophy and intellectual development as a whole – from the earliest writings of Iqbal which were published at the beginning of 1900 until the last ones in 1930s. Finally, I argue that Iqbal considers Sufism as solution to the problem of nihilism. I should add that when analyzing Iqbal's philosophy within the context of the problem of nihilism, I am more interested in demonstrating how Iqbal's philosophy is motivated by the problem of nihilism, and how it is an attempt to deal with it. Therefore, I do not make a critical analysis

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[74] Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life*, 3-4.
[75] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics*, vol. 3, trans. Joan Stambaugh, David Farell Krell, and Frank A. Capuzzi (Harpercollins, 1987), 9-10.
[76] Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 189-190.

of Iqbal's solution to discuss whether it is a valid, successful, logically coherent and consistent solution or not. I should also add that Iqbal uses the terms 'Sufism', 'mysticism', 'mystical experience', 'intuition', 'religion', and 'religious experience,' interchangeably because he thinks that 'mystical experience' is the 'religious experience.' In a way, he associates mystical experience with religious experience. Throughout the text, I will also use them interchangeably.[77] In my alternative narrative, I identify three periods in Iqbal's analysis of and response to the problem of nihilism which are: 'First Overcoming' (1900 – 1908), 'Nihilistic Crisis' (1909 – 1927), and 'Second Overcoming' (1928 – 1938). These are also the titles of the chapters of this dissertation.

In the first period, 'First Overcoming', which is also the second chapter of the dissertation, I analyze how the problem of nihilism has been the central philosophical concern for Iqbal from the beginning of his intellectual development in 1900 when he was a recently graduated master's student of philosophy until 1908 – the date for the publication of his doctoral dissertation and end of his three years stay in Europe for higher education. Here, I analyze how Iqbal first comes to learn about the problem of nihilism through the history of Islamic philosophy and modern German philosophy, particularly 'the pantheism controversy', or *Pantheismusstreit*, which preoccupied most of the great thinkers in Germany from the end of the eighteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century.[78] From these two sources, Iqbal conceives the problem of nihilism in this period as the consequence of reason (philosophy) failing to provide man with a plausible answer/solution to his most fundamental metaphysical questions, which Iqbal calls 'the human enigma,' borrowing the term from Carl Du Prel. By 'the human enigma', Du Prel refers to our most fundamental metaphysical problem, that is, the mystery of existence and the place of man in it.[79] Accordingly, in dealing with this problem one needs to answer the questions, such as, what is man?, What is universe?, What is God?, What is existence?, and What are the origins of existence, man and the universe . Additionally, one needs to provide an explanation for the place of man and God in the universe and existence as well – that is,

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[77] This is a result of Iqbal's Sufism and his adherence to the Sufi school of thought in the history of Islamic philosophy/thought. The other main schools of thought in the history of Islamic thought are theology (kalam) and philosophy (falasifa).

[78] Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 44.

[79] Carl Du Prel, *The Philosophy of Mysticism*, (London: George Redway, 1889), xxvi.

how they are all related to each other in an order. These answers and explanations provide man a reasonable orientation and order between himself, God and universe, thus enable him to know his place, purpose, goals and meaning in the whole existence vis-à-vis other beings and pursue a meaningful and fulfilled life. Without such an orientation, man finds himself disoriented and in a nihilistic crisis which is very nicely illustrated by Friedrich Nietzsche in the famous story of 'the madman.' Losing his orientation after the death of God, 'the madman' asks: "Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Where is it moving to now? Where are we moving to? Away from all suns? Are we not continually falling? And backwards, sidewards, forwards, in all directions? Is there still an up and a down?"[80]

Learning the problem of nihilism from Islamic philosophy and 'the pantheism controversy' makes Iqbal think that failing to provide a plausible solution to 'the human enigma' means leading man to pantheism, atheism, fatalism, thus nihilism. Leading to pantheism is considered as a failure because in pantheism the distinctions between man, God and the universe gets blurred, or even removed, and this makes man's objective existence problematic, even unreal. Atheism is also considered as a failure because without some kind of an origin, such as God of religions, or 'the prima causa' ('the prime mover') of philosophers, which gives man and universe their existence, the objective existence of man and universe becomes problematic and unreal as well. Fatalism is problematic because it destroys man's freedom. This way, man becomes like a machine without any freedom and which does not have any control over his own life, while his life is determined by various external forces, such as 'the laws of nature,' cause-effect mechanism, or fate. I consider this brief explanation to be sufficient for now since I will discuss in details how reason leads to pantheism, atheism, fatalism and nihilism when analyzing 'the pantheism controversy' in the next (second) chapter. Since Iqbal thinks that nihilism in this period is the consequence of reason (philosophy) failing to provide man with a plausible answer/solution to 'the human enigma,' Iqbal believes that the solution is found not in reason (philosophy), but in mysticism/Sufism – more specifically, in the metaphysical system of al-Jili. To establish that al-Jili's metaphysical system is a successful solution to 'the human enigma', Iqbal

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[80] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 120.

demonstrates that it provides a plausible orientation of man, God and the universe with an acceptable conception of man's freedom and will – in other words, it does not lead to pantheism, atheism, fatalism, thus nihilism.

Finally, I argue that it is as a result of considering the metaphysical system of al-Jili as a plausible solution to 'the human enigma,' which provides a plausible orientation of man, God and the universe with an acceptable conception of man's freedom and will, Iqbal does not feel disoriented, and that he does not fall into a nihilistic crisis in this period. It is for this reason I call this period as 'First Overcoming.' According to this solution, 'the human enigma,' or the mystery of existence, is explained in the following way: Firstly, there is God, 'the Absolute,' the origin of existence. It leaves its absoluteness to realize itself in existence, and by existence al-Jili refers to man and the universe. Iqbal thinks that in Hegel's philosophy this is called 'the doctrine of self-diremption of God.' After God/the Absolute realizes itself in existence, it returns to itself and to its absoluteness. This return to itself in al-Jili's metaphysics takes place through the figure of 'the perfect man.' In this respect, 'the perfect man' serves as a link between man and God. It is in fact like 'the world historical individual' of Hegel. 'The perfect man', or 'the world historical individual' is the transitional figure from man to God, from universe to God, or from the existence to God because on its way to its return to its absoluteness, God returns to itself through the perfect man. Thus, the perfect man is the joining link between man and God, between universe and God, between the existence and the God. The difference between al-Jili's and Hegel's conceptions according to Iqbal is that whereas an exemplar of 'the perfect man' in al-Jili's metaphysics is Muhammad, it is Christ in Hegel's system.

But then, what happens to man and the universe, in other words, the existence, after God returns to itself? Here, Iqbal emphasizes an important distinction that is found in al-Jili's metaphysics and in al-Jili's solution to the problem of human enigma. Iqbal demonstrates that al-Jili's metaphysics does not promote 'the doctrine of fana', the goal of returning to God and to get dissolved and lost in its absoluteness, which is promoted by the pantheistic forms of Sufism. On the contrary, in al-Jili's metaphysics man continues his existence together with the universe. While during the process of God returning to its own

absoluteness 'the perfect man' serves its function as being a joining link from man to God, when this process ends, man remains man, and God remains God. This means that the existence of man and the universe continues apart from God as well.

Very briefly, this was the main metaphysical framework Iqbal had in his mind from 1900 until 1908 when he believed that he has found a plausible solution to 'the human enigma,' thus to the problem of nihilism. The metaphysical system he finds in al-Jili's ideas, and a kind of equivalent of that in Hegel's philosophical system, provides a plausible solution to the human enigma and gives Iqbal an orientation. Accordingly, Iqbal does not feel disoriented, and does not fall into a nihilistic crisis. In contrast to the periodization of 'the established narrative' which ends the first period in Iqbal's intellectual development in 1905, I extend this period until 1908 which is the end of Iqbal's three year stay in Europe. The reason for this is that whereas 'the established narrative' is based on the idea that Iqbal has gone through a significant intellectual transformation during these three years in Europe, I argue that Iqbal did not go through any significant intellectual change/transformation between 1900 and 1908. Throughout this period, Iqbal was interested in and concerned with the problem of nihilism, and the solution he found to this problem remained the same from 1900 until 1908. However, this situation changes after 1908 and 1909 when Iqbal starts reading Nietzsche, and this is the subject of the third chapter where I analyze how Iqbal falls into a 'nihilistic crisis.'

In the third chapter, 'Nihilistic Crisis', which roughly covers the years between 1909 and 1927, I analyze a new period regarding Iqbal's engagement with the problem of nihilism. In this period, I analyze how Iqbal becomes dissatisfied with the previous solution he has found in the metaphysical systems of al-Jili and Hegel, and consequently falls into a 'nihilistic crisis' around the year of 1909 after starting reading Nietzsche. It is for this reason that I call this period as that of 'Nihilistic Crisis.' When explaining how Iqbal himself experienced nihilism as a crisis, or how he fell into a nihilistic crisis, I refer to David Storey's explanation regarding 'the advent and spread of nihilism' – or 'nihilistic

crisis', as I call it. After surveying some of the most important narratives of nihilism[81], Storey arrives at the conclusion that "the advent and spread of nihilism is linked with changing conceptions of (humanity's relation to) nature." [82] "At root", Storey says, "nihilism is a problem about humanity's relation to nature, about a crisis in human freedom and willing after the collapse of the cosmos, the erosion of a hierarchically ordered nature in which humans have a proper place."[83]

In the same way, Iqbal becomes dissatisfied with the previous solution he has found to 'the human enigma', that is, the metaphysical systems of al-Jili and Hegel, because he starts to think that in these systems the process had fatalistic characteristics, and therefore seemed like a closed-ended process. For instance, in these systems, 'the Absolute,' or God, leaving its absoluteness and self-realizing itself in existence (in man and universe) was already destined to a certain end. In other words, the end was already predetermined, and it was already known where the absolute was going to, or leading to. Since the end was already predetermined, it left no room for originality, for creativity and for freedom. For instance, In Hegel's system, the Absolute leads to the Prussian state as form of state, or in the political-social level, and leads to a certain form of Christianity, Protestantism, as a form of 'consummate religion.'

This gives rise to a fatalistic conception of man because the choices and actions of man do not really matter because they are already to some extent predetermined. This problem manifests itself in Hegel's conception of man – in particular, 'the world historical individual.' The main actor of social, moral and political change and development in al-Jili's metaphysical system is 'the perfect man,' and in Hegel's system, it is 'the world historical individual.' While Hegel's world historical individual acts and contributes to the self-realization of God in the universe, it is al-Jili's perfect man that is the agent of this

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[81] Such as, Nishitani Keiji, *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, trans. Graham Parkes, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990); Michael Gillespie, *Nihilism Before Nietzsche*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Stanley Rosen, *Nihilism: A Philosophical Study*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969); Donald A. Crosby, *The Specter of the Absurd: Sources and Criticisms of Modern Nihilism*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988); Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966); Karl Löwith, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism*, trans. Gary Steiner, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); David Michael Levin, *The Opening of Vision: Nihilism and the Postmodern Situation*, (New York: Routledge, 1988).
[82] David Storey, "Nihilism, Nature, and the Collapse of the Cosmos," *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 7, no. 2 (2011): 6.
[83] Storey, "Nihilism, Nature, and the Collapse of the Cosmos," 6.

change. While al-Jili seems more interested in the moral change and improvement, Hegel seems to have a more comprehensive interest which covers not only the religious and moral change and improvement, but also social and political change and improvement. It is for this reason that Hegel considers the world historical individuals, such as Christ, Caesar and Napoleon, as the main agents that founds societies, states, and religions. However, looking at the details of Hegel's conception of the world historical individuals, the problem about their freedom emerges. In Hegel's system, these individuals do not really have freedom of will and agency because they are construed as the 'means' of Reason, Geist, Spirit, the Absolute, God, to realize itself and its goals in the external world. Although on the surface it may seem like human individuals are in control of their own thoughts and actions, in a deeper level they are actually being manipulated by Geist, Spirit, or Reason. Hence, it is for this reason Hegel considers history as 'the cunning of Reason.'[84]

Iqbal was aware of this aspect of Hegel's and al-Jili's metaphysical systems, namely that according to these systems man does not have real freedom of will, or freedom. In both al-Jili's and Hegel's system, it was the Absolute who had real freedom, or uncaused freedom, and man only had caused freedom, that is, it was caused by the Absolute. Similarly in al-Jili's metaphysics, Iqbal thinks that there was this kind of a conception of freedom of man. There is freedom for man, or man has freedom, but his freedom is not absolute freedom. It is caused by the uncaused, by the uncaused freedom of the absolute, or God. This view was not unacceptable for Iqbal from 1900 to 1909, yet it turned into a problem after Iqbal started reading Nietzsche around 1909. The earliest direct references to Nietzsche's ideas start to appear in Iqbal's writings in 1910, and after that, one can see increasing number of references to Nietzsche's name and to his ideas in Iqbal's writings and at the same time Iqbal increasing concern with the lack of freedom and free will of man. I suggest that this period starts after 1909 and lasts until the end of 1920s; however, this does not mean that Iqbal's crisis period takes that long. Iqbal's crisis does not take that long because I argue

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[84] Hegel writes: "The special interest of passion is thus inseparable from the active development of a general principle: for it is from the special and determinate and from its negation, that the Universal results. Particularity contends with its like, and some loss is involved in the issue. It is not the general idea that is implicated in opposition and combat, and that is exposed to danger. It remains in the background, untouched and uninjured. This may be called the *cunning of reason* — that it sets the passions to work for itself, while that which develops its existence through such impulsion pays the penalty, and suffers loss." Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, with Prefaces by Charles Hegel and the translator, J. Sibree, (Canada: Batoche Books, 2001), 47.

that in this period Iqbal both experiences 'the nihilistic crisis,' and also struggles to develop a new orientation to 'the human enigma' to overcome the crisis. Accordingly, in this period, one sees both evidence of strong pessimism and despair in Iqbal's writings, and also step by step attempts at overcoming this pessimism and despair. With the end of the 1920s, Iqbal already had in his mind a new orientation and a new solution to 'the human enigma.' The old solution that he believed that he has found in the metaphysical systems of al-Jili and Hegel was in some ways left behind, and a new metaphysical system was developed in its place. Iqbal developed this solution throughout the 1910s until the end of 1920s in his different writings. He discussed the social, political, moral and personal dimensions of the crisis, and developed new orientations to them. What he needed to do was to bring together these scattered ideas in his previous writings, to work on them, to systematize them, and to bring them together to form a comprehensive response to the problem of nihilism in all its dimensions, such as epistemological, metaphysical, moral and political.

In the fourth chapter, 'Second Overcoming', which covers the years between 1928 and 1938, I analyze the details of this new solution to the problem of nihilism in its epistemological, metaphysical, moral and political dimensions. Since this amounts to a solution to the problem of nihilism and thus an exit from the state of crisis, I refer to this period as 'Second Overcoming.' By the end of the 'crisis period,' Iqbal is now ready to bring together the rather spread and disorganized writings of almost 20 years of intellectual striving (from the 1910s to the beginning of 1930s) in a systematic and comprehensive book. The product of these efforts is brought together by Iqbal in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* in 1934 which is most often regarded as the magnum opus of Iqbal where he presents his new solution/response to the problem of nihilism, and therefore in this chapter, I mainly focus on this book. For the 'First Overcoming', I stated that Iqbal offered Sufism as a solution to the problem of nihilism. When the previous Sufi solution that was provided by the metaphysical system of al-Jili collapsed, Iqbal reconstructed this solution, and accordingly, I argue that Iqbal's solution to the problem of nihilism in this period is a 'reconstructed form of Sufism.' By 'reconstructed form of Sufism,' I refer to the distinction Iqbal makes between two types of Sufism which are life-negating and self-

denying type of Sufism and life-affirming and self-affirming type of Sufism. While Iqbal becomes critical of the former type, he approves the latter one.

Compared to the previous metaphysical system of al-Jili and Hegel Iqbal had in his mind as a solution to 'the human enigma,' the metaphysical system that was put forward in the *Reconstruction* as a solution to the human enigma had certain changes. Even though the basic structure, or framework of the previous metaphysical system remains the intact, certain important aspects of this basic framework faces changes. Perhaps, more correctly, the framework remains intact, but the 'working' of the framework goes through fundamental changes. After this point onwards, the freedom of man aspect of the metaphysical solution Iqbal thought that he has found in al-Jili's and Hegel's metaphysical systems goes through changes. The fatalistic aspects of the solution disappear, and openness and freeness of the solution becomes stronger and more emphasized. For instance, in the new metaphysical system/solution, Iqbal develops a new conception of man's freedom and free will. Whereas in the previous system/solution, man's freedom was simply caused by the uncaused freedom of God, it now becomes a freedom and free will in and of itself. This is one of the changes that prevent the new solution/system from being a fatalistic one, yet there are also other changes which make the solution/system to be open-ended and free. Such changes come as a result of the change in Iqbal's understanding of the ultimate nature of Reality, and how it works in existence. Previously, he understood it as 'the Absolute' with certain attributes, and in *Reconstruction*, he understood it as 'ego' with different attributes. How the ultimate nature of Reality is understood made important changes in the metaphysical system and in its working. So, then how is the ultimate nature of Reality is understood in the *Reconstruction* and what changes did it bring?

In *Reconstruction*, Iqbal defines ego as 'rationally directed creative will.' The ultimate nature of reality is ego means that whatever exists is an ego. Accordingly, man, God and the universe are egos. This means that all egos are essentially same because they are of the same substance. They are also similar to each other because they have the same characteristics, attributes, that is, they have power, freedom, rationality, creativity, and will. However, this does not mean that they are identical to each other. The difference between

God, man, and universe is that although they are all egos, they are different from each other with respect to the level of their individuality, and the difference of individuality brings changes in the attributes of egos. As a result of this, all egos have different levels of freedom, rationality, creativity and will. While all egos have freedom, rationality, creativity and will, it is usually nature that has the lowest level of individuality, and thus has the lowest degree of rationality, will, creativity and freedom. Man has a higher level of individuality compared to nature, but a lower one compared to 'the Ultimate Ego' – God. Yet man has another distinguishing attribute which is that he has the capacity to improve his selfhood and thus increase his level of individuality. With this, man can rise in the level of beings and becomes a 'perfect man,' and his attributes, such as rationality, will, creativity, freedom and so on, become more powerful. 'The perfect man' is the closest level of being to 'the Ultimate Ego' in terms of the level of individuality.

Defining egos in this way makes an important difference on how the self-realization process takes place. Since none of the egos, not even 'the Ultimate Ego,' has absolute attributes, this makes the self-realization process an open-ended, free and creative one to which all egos, man, God and nature, contribute and participate in with their respective level of power, rationality, freedom, will and creativity. Since none of the actors have absolute power or control over the process, neither God, nor man, nor nature alone can absolutely and completely control, manipulate or determine the end of the process, or the course of the process. Accordingly, in this metaphysical system, man is no longer conceived as a mere tool manipulated by the Ultimate Ego, God. Although in terms of individuality God has the highest level of individuality, this does not mean that God has absolute control over things, such as can suppress the freedom of man, or he can completely manipulate man and nature. All egos strive for things, aim for things and try to realize themselves in the existence. None of them has absolute control, so they are all in interaction, sometimes in cooperation, and sometimes in a struggle with each other in the process of increasing and realizing their power, freedom, will and creativity, hence in the process of realizing themselves in the existence. Just like God, 'the Ultimate Ego,' has the aim of realizing its own self in existence, man and nature, also being egos and sharing the same attributes with 'the Ultimate Ego,' have same purposes and goals.

As I stated above, these changes emerged as a result of Iqbal's dissatisfaction with the previous solution he had found to the problem of nihilism in the metaphysical system of al-Jili, and which served Iqbal as a plausible solution from 1900 to 1908. It is now to this period I turn to in the next chapter in order to begin my analysis of Iqbal's life-long interaction and struggle with the problem of nihilism.

2. Nihilism and Iqbal: First Overcoming (1900 – 1908)

My main goal in this chapter is to analyze how Iqbal encounters with the problem of nihilism at this early stage of his intellectual development (in 1900, Iqbal was a recently graduated master's student and 23 years old), and how he overcomes this problem through the solution he believes that he finds in the metaphysical system of Abdulkarim al-Jili.[85] To demonstrate this, I analyze Iqbal's article on al-Jili which is also Iqbal's first scholarly publication.[86] Here, Iqbal presents al-Jili's metaphysical system as a plausible solution to the problem of 'the human enigma,' by showing how it does not lead to pantheism, atheism, fatalism, thus nihilism. In the rest of the chapter, I first analyze the sources of Iqbal's knowledge of nihilism which are modern German philosophy, particularly 'the pantheism controversy,' and Islamic philosophy. This will help us understand how Iqbal perceives the problem of nihilism between 1900 and 1908. Then I briefly discuss al-Jili's metaphysical system as presented and analyzed by Iqbal to describe the general structure of his solution. Finally, I analyze how Iqbal demonstrates that al-Jili's metaphysical system does not lead to pantheism, atheism, fatalism, thus nihilism. Furthermore, contrary to 'the established narrative' which claims that Iqbal was a pantheist before going to Europe in 1905, in this chapter I will also demonstrate how Iqbal's conception of God is not pantheistic, but panentheistic.

2.1. Sources of Iqbal's Knowledge of Nihilism I: 'The Pantheism Controversy'

With respect to modern German philosophy, Iqbal's knowledge of nihilism problem is due to his substantial knowledge in 18th-19th centuries modern German philosophy – beginning

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[85] Abdu-l-Karim al-Jili was born in Jil, Baghdad. Ibrahim Kalin writes that there is little known about his life, and that even the dates of his birth and death have not been firmly established. Nevertheless it is thought that he was born in 767/1366 and died either in 1408/811 or in 1417/820. According to Kalin, al-Jili "continued the tradition of Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 1240) by expanding and commenting upon such key terms of the school of Ibn al-'Arabi as the unity of being (*wahdat al-wujud*), exterior (*zahir*) and interior (*batin*), and the selfdisclosure (*tajalli*) of God", and wrote two dozen books - the most famous of them being *al-Insan al-kamil* which was a classic manual of Sufi metaphysics and spiritual psychology. Ibrahim Kalin, "Al-Jili, 'Abd al-Karim (*c.* 1366–1408 or 1417)", in *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Oliver Leaman, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 261-262.

[86] Iqbal, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani," 237-246. When Iqbal wrote this article in 1900, he made a mistake about the name of the thinker whose ideas he was analyzing. The original title says that the article will analyze 'The Doctrine of Absolute Unity' as expounded by Abdu-l-Karim Al-Jilani. However, Iqbal realizes this mistake later while writing his doctoral dissertation, and this time he corrects the name from Abdu-l-Karim al-Jilani to Abdu-l-Karim al-Jili. (Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, 116.) The article can also be found in Iqbal, *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, 77-97.

with Kant and ending with Schopenhauer – and his knowledge of 'the pantheism controversy' (*Pantheismusstreit*) where the problem of nihilism was first discussed as a philosophical problem and where the term 'nihilism' was first used by Friedrich Jacobi (1743 – 1819) to define this problem.[87] Frederick R. Beiser describes 'the controversy' as 'the most significant intellectual event in the late eighteenth-century Germany' along with the publication of Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Critique of Pure Reason) in 1781.[88] Although it started as a private debate between Jacobi and Moses Mendelssohn (1729 – 1786) in the summer of 1783 over the question of whether or not Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729 – 1781) was a Spinozist, thus pantheist, in the two years that followed, 'the controversy' became public and gradually included almost all the important thinkers of the late eighteenth century Germany and then some of the greatest thinkers of the nineteenth century.[89] As Beiser states, "almost every notable thinker of the 1790s developed his philosophy as a response to this controversy. Herder, Reinhold, Kant, Rehberg, Hamann, and Wizenmann all wrote contributions to the dispute; and the notebooks of the young Schlegel, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Novalis, and Hölderlin reveal their intense involvement in it."[90]

According to Beiser, Jacobi chooses Spinoza's philosophy for his attack because he sees it as the perfect example of the Enlightenment philosophy with its sole reliance on reason and its solely rationalist, materialist and mechanistic approach in explaining the whole existence, such as the origin of the universe, existence of man, God, the working of the universe (nature) as well as the issue of freedom of man.[91] As Paul Franks explains, the

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[87] It was first Martin Heidegger who argued that it was Jacobi who was the first to use the term 'nihilism' in a philosophical sense. Heidegger writes: "The first philosophical use of the word nihilism presumably stems from Friedrich H. Jacobi. The word nothing appears quite frequently in Jacobi's letter to Fichte." See: Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 3; In addition to Heidegger, Michael A. Gillespie argues that there were also some other thinkers before Jacobi who used the term 'nihilism' as well, but admits that their uses did not have any philosophical relevance. He writes: "The first to use the term in print was apparently F. L. Goetzius in his *De nonismo et nihilism in theologia* (1733). […] The term reappeared in the late eighteenth century when it was used by J. H. Obereit and more importantly D. Jenisch, who characterized transcendental idealism as nihilism in 1796 in his *On the Ground and Value of the Discoveries of Herr Professor Kant in Metaphysics, Morals, and Aesthetics*. He uses the term to describe the work not of Kant (or even Fichte) but of the extreme Kantians who teach that the thing-in-themselves are nothing for our cognition. While Jenisch employs the term, however, he never really develops a concept of nihilism." See: Michael Allen Gillespie, *Nihilism Before Nietzsche*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 65.
[88] Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 44.
[89] Ibid., 44.
[90] Frederick C. Beiser, "The Enlightenment and Idealism," in *The Cambridge companion to German idealism*, ed. Karl Ameriks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 26.
[91] Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 2.

deeper concern and interest of Jacobi was to demonstrate that any thinker who, like Spinoza and Lessing, develops "a maximally *consistent* version of the rationalist conception of reasons as explanatory grounds, would be led inexorably to a system that was (A) monistic [pantheistic], (B) atheistic, (C) fatalistic, and (D) nihilistic."[92] Accordingly, during the debate Jacobi first shows that Lessing's philosophy is in fact Spinozism, and Spinozism in turn is pantheism/monism. He later argues that pantheism is actually equal to atheism, and atheism in turn leads to nihilism. In order to illustrate his point, Jacobi attempts to show that Lessing's philosophy is Spinozism with its sole reliance on and belief in the authority of reason in bringing us indubitable knowledge about reality, and thus providing us with a solution to our most fundamental metaphysical problems.[93] In fact, the Enlightenment philosophy was such a solution which was provided on the basis of a harmony between 'reason' and 'faith' (revelation), or 'philosophy' and 'religion' – a harmony that is similar to that of the medieval period in Europe which provided a harmony between Christianity and ancient Greek philosophy which was called 'the scholastic philosophy/theology'. In the context of this harmony, the Enlightenment philosophy was based on the fundamental principle that every belief should be put to trial by reason, and that when this is done, reason can support them – metaphysical beliefs, moral beliefs and social and political beliefs. This, Beiser says, was considered as 'a more effective sanction' than that was provided by the authority of tradition, revelation and scripture.[94]

However, this harmony was challenged with the outbreak of 'the pantheism controversy', which, according to Beiser, brought the eventual downfall of the *Aufklarung,* the Enlightenment. This happened through Jacobi's "success in casting doubt upon the central dogma of the *Aufklarung:* its faith in reason."[95] If Jacobi could show that reason does not have such an authority, then he could prove that relying on reason as means to knowledge would not provide a solution to our most fundamental metaphysical problems. In such a situation, we would find ourselves in a position where we would have to deny all knowledge that was acquired by reason. Our existence, the existence of others, the universe

[92] Paul Franks, "All or Nothing: Systematicity and Nihilism in Jacobi, Reinhold, and Maimon," in *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, ed. Karl Ameriks, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 97.
[93] Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 77.
[94] Ibid., 2.
[95] Ibid., 45-46.

as well as the moral, religious and political beliefs and truths, such as the existence of God, soul, freedom or morality, would become uncertain. In the best scenario, the veracity of all such knowledge would become dubious, if not outright false.

Beiser argues that in casting doubt upon the central dogma of the Enlightenment, i.e. faith in reason, Jacobi in effect showed that reason was not a self-sufficient thing. By applying the same principle of the Enlightenment to reason itself, that is, by putting reason to a critique by reason, Jacobi shows that reason was not a self-sufficient thing as it needs the support of another principle or force. This, in turn, shows that reason is not only not able to deliver what it has promised, that is, 'a more effective sanction for all moral, religious and commonsense beliefs', but also more dangerously is in fact undermining all these fundamental truths and beliefs as well as the social, moral and political order.[96] In short, Jacobi shows that "all rational speculation, if only consistent and honest, as in the case of Lessing, had to end in Spinozism; but Spinozism amounted to nothing more than atheism and fatalism."[97] So, what Jacobi was trying to do was that by attacking Lessing for being a Spinozist, and by showing that Spinozism, which is in fact pantheism, ends in fatalism and atheism, he aimed to show the tragic dead-end of reason and the Enlightenment philosophy: 'nihilism.' But, how is it that Spinozism is equal to pantheism, and how it in turn ends in atheism and fatalism?

According to Beiser, it was Kant's new proof of the existence of God which he explained in his *Der einzig mogliche Beweisgrunde zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes* (The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God) that gave Jacobi the idea to associate Spinozism with pantheism.[98] In Jacobi's view, Kant's new proof was valid only for Spinoza's God, thus a pantheistic conception of God. According to Kant's proof, the existence of God was prior to everything else, and everything else, for their existence, depended on God's existence. This could lead to a pantheistic conception of God if there was no distinction between God's essence and his existence. In this regard, it would be possible to equate God and the existence that depended on God, such as man and

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[96] Ibid., 45-46.
[97] Ibid., 77.
[98] Ibid., 55.

the universe. Beiser states that "Kant himself would not be so hasty in equating God's existence with his essence. In his view, God's existence preceded *his* possibility as well as that of all other things; God had other properties which made him a specific kind of existent."[99] However, Jacobi, with 'his tendentious reading of Kant's work' argued that there was no distinction in Kant's proof between God's essence and God's existence, and therefore, whatever existed was actually equal to God's existence – hence a Spinozist, or pantheistic conception of God. Consequently, "for better or for worse", adds Beiser, "it was Kant who originally convinced Jacobi that all speculative philosophy ends in Spinozism."[100] After explaining the link between Lessing's alleged Spinozism and pantheism, I will now continue to explain how pantheism in turn means atheism, for Jacobi, and thus nihilism.

Jacobi claims that Spinoza's philosophy was guided by a main principle, 'the principle of sufficient reason', and this, according to Jacobi, was also the governing principle behind all mechanistic and naturalistic philosophy.[101] According to this principle, whatever happens must have been caused by some previous conditions, or cause. And what happens as a result of this previous cause happens out of necessity. It is this simple principle, Beiser states, Jacobi sees as the very heart of Spinoza's philosophy.[102] According to Beiser, "Spinoza admitted no exception to the principle of sufficient reason, so that there had to be a cause for every event, such that the event could not be otherwise."[103] This in turn made it possible for Jacobi to conclude "that given such a principle there cannot be God or freedom, which presuppose spontaneity, a first cause not determined by a prior cause."[104] As a result of his consistency and ruthlessness, unlike most philosophers, in applying this principle into his analysis, Jacobi thinks that "Spinoza affirms the infinity of the world and a system of complete necessity."[105] Accordingly, if we believe in the existence of God, and try to prove it through reason, then we would need to accept that the incapability of reason to do that for Spinoza's system to work there needs to be a first cause of all causes which is

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[99] Ibid., 55.
[100] Ibid., 55.
[101] Ibid., 83.
[102] Ibid., 83.
[103] Beiser, "The Enlightenment and Idealism," 26-27.
[104] Ibid., 26-27.
[105] Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 84.

uncaused by nothing before that and must be the beginning of all succeeding causes. Obviously, this first cause must consist in an arbitrary determination to avoid an infinite regress of cause and effect. Given the necessity of such an arbitrary determination to explain or make sense of the entire existence, Jacobi thinks that the idea of a first arbitrary cause indicates a weakness of the system at stake, that is, it needs to posit a self-sufficient cause or first cause without really explaining it through reason. With this, it becomes clear that reason is not self-sufficient, and accordingly, we would need to accept that it cannot support the belief in existence of God, hence atheism.

In addition to leading to atheism, for Jacobi, Spinozism also ends in fatalism. As Franks states, rationalism of a Spinozist type "is fatalistic insofar as it excludes the purposive, free acts of both infinite *and finite* personality altogether, recognizing only the blind operations of fate."[106] This means that in a Spinozist universe, there would be no such thing as human freedom, or free human action since every event, every movement in the universe, including the movements and actions of man, is explained in a mechanistic way through the mechanism of cause and effect. If every event, every movement in the universe, including the movements and actions of man, is caused by some previous condition or cause and happens out of necessity, this means that there is no possibility for moving or acting outside this mechanism either. This in turn means that there is no room for the freedom of man, hence fatalism.[107]

As Franks claims, "systematic monism, atheism, fatalism, and nihilism were irrefutable, because they were inevitable results of the rationalist project of demonstrating, comprehending or explaining everything without limitation." [108] Therefore, "to refute rationalism by demonstrating its falsehood or inadequacy would only be to continue the project!" [109] This means, according to Beiser, that the Enlightenment thinkers were presented with a dramatic dilemma: either they had to accept the inevitable consequence of their rationalism and sole reliance on reason, that is, a rational atheism and fatalism, or they had to leave reason and take an irrational leap of faith. In other words, they would either

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[106] Franks, "All or Nothing," 98.
[107] Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 84.
[108] Franks, "All or Nothing," 99.
[109] Ibid., p. 99.

embrace a rational materialism, or follow Jacobi's solution, '*salto mortale*' (leap of faith), and affirm the existence of God, providence, and freedom through faith. Accordingly, "there was no middle path, however, which would attempt to prove faith through reason."[110] It will be seen below (in section 2.3. The Article on Abdulkarim al-Jili) that finding a way out of this dilemma will be one of the main goals of Iqbal, and he will attempt to do this by putting reason under the guidance of the mystical faculty of knowledge, heart/qalb.

2.2.   Sources of Iqbal's Knowledge of Nihilism II: Islamic Philosophy

After introducing 'the pantheism controversy,' I will now briefly discuss how the history of Islamic philosophy contributed to Iqbal's knowledge of nihilism. As I mentioned above, the second source of Iqbal's knowledge of nihilism is through Islamic philosophy – particularly through the intellectual debates that took place among different schools of thought that existed between 8th and 12th centuries in the history of Islamic philosophy. Some of these schools of thought, according to Iqbal, are rationalism, materialism, idealism, mysticism and skepticism, and these issues are discussed widely by philosophers (falasifa), theologians (mutakallimun) and mystics (Sufis). To do this, I analyze Iqbal's doctoral dissertation which was submitted to the University of Munich in 1907 and was published in the same year with the title of *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy*.

Referring to the nihilistic character of this period, Iqbal writes: "Such a period, in the intellectual history of a people, must be the epoch of rationalism, scepticism, mysticism heresy forms in which the human mind, swayed by the growing force of subjectivity, rejects all external standards of truth."[111] He considers the emergence of the multiplicity of philosophical and religious views as a necessary consequence of speculative activity, and in this regard, he likens this period in the history of Islamic thought, where one could see rationalists, materialists, theologians, idealists, skeptics like al-Ghazali and then Sufis, to

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[110] Beiser, "The Enlightenment and Idealism," 27.
[111] Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, 38.

the 18th and 19th century German philosophy where there was also a great intellectual activity. Such an activity reaches high points in Germany after Kant, and it reaches a high point in Islam after the Mutazila. In Iqbal's words:

> "The multiplicity of philosophical and religious views – a necessary consequence of speculative activity – is apt to invoke forces which operate against this, religiously speaking, dangerous multiplicity. In the 18th Century history of European thought, we see Fichte, starting with a sceptical inquiry concerning the nature of matter, and finding its last word in Pantheism. Schleiermacher appeals to Faith as opposed to Reason, Jacobi points to a source of knowledge higher than reason, while Comte abandons all metaphysical inquiry, and limits all knowledge to sensuous perception. De Maistre and Schlegel, on the other hand, find a resting place in the authority of an absolutely infallible Pope."[112]

For Iqbal, the main idea that emerged as a result of the centuries long debates in the history of Islamic philosophy is that pure rationalism (sole reliance on reason as in the case of philosophy) leads to skepticism, pantheism, thus atheism and fatalism. This was the main crux of the problem.[113] Thus, Iqbal thinks that the philosophical school, or 'neo-Platonic Aristotelians,' as Iqbal refers to them, along with the Mutazila thinkers, whom Iqbal calls as 'rationalists,' or 'materialists,' created a controversial situation in the intellectual atmosphere of the time due to their sole reliance on reason as means to knowledge and their rather materialist conception of the universe.[114] According to Iqbal, "the most important contribution of the advocates of Rationalism to purely metaphysical speculation is their explanation of matter."[115] In this regard, Iqbal refers to Nazzam (c. 775 – c. 845) as a rationalist who was mainly concerned with "the exclusion of all arbitrariness from the orderly course of nature."[116] Removing all arbitrariness from the universe would mean denying the existence of miracles and thus a personal God as well as the freedom of man. Yet Iqbal adds that although "the Rationalist thinkers did not want to abandon the idea of a Personal Will, yet they endeavoured to find a deeper ground for the independence of individual natural phenomena. And this ground they found in matter itself."[117] In this

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[112] Ibid., 46-47.
[113] Ibid., 45-46.
[114] Ibid., 43-44.
[115] Ibid., 42.
[116] Ibid., 42.
[117] Ibid., 42.

respect, Nazzam considered matter to be infinitely divisible – in other words, made up of 'atoms' – and by doing that he obliterated the distinction between substance and accident.[118] Hence, according to these thinkers, the ultimate reality of the universe was matter, and they explained matter through the atom. Atoms existed there, and God actualized their potentialities. In Nazzam's words, existence was "a quality super-imposed by God on the pre-existing material atoms which would have been incapable of perception without this quality."[119] And creation, according to Nazzam, was "only the actualisation of pre-existing potentialities (Tafra)."[120] Atoms started to move and follow their qualities through the principle of causality, known as 'the Law of Universal Causation.' Since the ultimate reality of the universe was matter, hence atom, everything that existed in the universe was also some kind of matter, such as animals, plants, and man. Indeed, for these thinkers soul was also a finer kind of matter.[121] As a result of Nazzam's attempt to exclude all arbitrariness from the orderly course of nature, the functioning of everything in the universe and the universe itself is explained in accordance with the predetermined route of the atoms. As said above, once the atoms were given their initial movements, they were simply following their trajectories. Although this made it possible for God to have freedom, it meant that there was no freedom of will, personal will, or creative action for man and for the rest of the universe. Conceiving the whole universe as consisting of different forms of atoms, Iqbal argues, also makes it impossible to distinguish between things, individuals, and different souls because in this conception soul too is understood as just a finer form of matter.[122] It seems like there is only one thing that exists in the universe, that is, atom, and nothing is outside of it or independent of it. This way, individuality of different things is lost together with the objective, real and independent existence of their own.

This rationalist and materialist conception of the universe of the philosophical school paved the way for the emergence of its rivals. The response to the philosophical school and the ideas of the Mutazila thinkers came from the theological school. As part of this, Iqbal analyzes the ideas of Ash'arite thinkers the ideas of whom Iqbal likens to the idealism of

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[118] Ibid., 42.
[119] Ibid., 42-43.
[120] Ibid., 43.
[121] Ibid., 43.
[122] Ibid., 42-43.

Berkeley.[123] Iqbal does not find Ash'arite's approach plausible either because, according to Iqbal, in defending the authority of revelation, Ash'arite actually does nothing more than applying the dialectical method to the defense of the authority of revelation. In other words, they were using the methods of philosophy in defending revelation. Another problem was that "the interest of pure monotheism was too strong for them."[124] Since they were too much interested in dogmatic theology and that their criticism of Mutazila, or the Rationalist theories and ideas was actuated by too much of a pious desire to defend the idea of divine creation, they became kind of 'blinded' to see or acknowledge the reality, external materiality, objective and independent reality of the things, of the matter.[125] Accordingly, while the Ash'arites wanted to defend the idea of divine creation, their criticisms toward the objective reality of the atom reduced the universe to a mere show of ordered subjectivities.[126] Hence, Iqbal thinks that "the necessary consequence of their analysis of matter is a thorough going idealism like that of Berkeley."[127]

But Iqbal argues that "a more important and philosophically more significant aspect of the Ash'arite metaphysics, is their attitude towards the Law of Causation."[128] In opposition to the rationalists and "with a view to defend the possibility of miracles, they rejected the idea of causation altogether."[129] According to Iqbal, the orthodox thinkers believed both in the possibility of miracles and in 'the Law of Universal Causation,' and they explained this by saying that during the normal course of things, 'the Law of Universal Causation' was at place and things were happening in accordance with this principle; however, when God wanted to perform a miracle, He just suspended the operation of this law for a moment, and intervened in the orderly functioning of the universe.[130] Iqbal adds that the Ash'arite rejected this explanation because this, in their view, would make God's omnipotence a meaningless thing. In other words, this would limit God's power with certain principles,

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[123] Ibid., 54.
[124] Ibid., 57.
[125] Ibid., 56-58.
[126] Ibid., 54-55.
[127] Ibid., 57.
[128] Ibid., 58.
[129] Ibid., 58.
[130] Ibid., 58.

reasons or logical processes, and for the Ash'arite, God cannot be limited with respect to His power.[131]

Until now, I have demonstrated that both 'the pantheism controversy' and Islamic philosophy gave Iqbal the idea that neither the philosophical approach with its sole reliance on reason and consequent materialism, nor the theological approach with its dogmatism, reliance on a subjective faith and thus consequent idealism were plausible solutions to 'the human enigma.' The philosophical approach (rationalists) was problematic because although they saved the objective existence of nature by conferring objective reality to atoms, they destroyed the freedom and will of man as well as 'the personality of God' and reduced God to a mere metaphysical concept. The antirationalist movement, i.e. the Ash'arite movement, on the other hand, considered atom as a 'fleeting moment in the Will of God', and thereby saved the dogma of personality of God, but by doing that they destroyed 'the external reality of nature,' or the objective existence of nature, perhaps man as well.[132] In Iqbal's view, for a successful solution, there needs to be another approach which saves both 'the external reality of nature' and 'the personality of God' so that there can be both regularity and law in the functioning of the universe and also freedom and free will for man and God.[133]

This approach or solution for Iqbal is found in Sufism. He states that "the God-intoxicated Sufi who stands aloof from the theological controversies of the age, saves and spiritualises both the aspects of existence, and looks upon the whole Universe as the self-revelation of God – a higher notion which synthesises the opposite extremes of his predecessors."[134] Hence, Iqbal thinks that Sufism had managed to go beyond these two rival schools of thought and develop 'a higher source of knowledge' that is more successful than its rivals. In Iqbal's words, this "marks the quiet victory of Sufism over all the rival speculative

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[131] Ibid., 58.
[132] Ibid., 62-63.
[133] Ibid., 62-63.
[134] Ibid., 61-62.

tendencies of the time."[135] I will now turn to Iqbal's article on al-Jili were he demonstrates this solution that he finds in Sufism/mysticism.[136]

2.3.   The Article on Abdulkarim al-Jili

The article begins with Iqbal's critique of European scholars' in their approach to Islamic philosophy as part of their studies on non-European philosophy. He states that while European scholars pay great attention to 'ancient Hindu philosophy', they approach 'Muslim philosophy' only as 'an unprogressive repetition of Aristotle and Plato.'[137] While in fact Iqbal has no problem in admitting 'the superiority' of Indian philosophy with its great thinkers, such as Kapila (B.C.E. 600 circa) and Shankaracharya (A.D. 788-820), he still thinks that this admission should not lead us to ignore the originality and 'independence of Muslim thinkers'.[138] Since he thinks that this 'comparatively indifferent attitude towards Arabic philosophy' is not fair, he takes it upon himself to show the originality of Islamic philosophy, and he attempts to do this by focusing on a part of Islamic philosophy which he thinks "had generally been condemned under the contemptuous name of mysticism."[139] Hence, he thinks that the originality of Islamic philosophy is found in its mystical/Sufi school.[140]

To do this, Iqbal first discusses how mysticism/Sufism is a superior approach to theology and philosophy. He emphasizes the difference of al-Jili's approach which is based on 'mysticism' as opposed to reason/intellect. Iqbal points out that mysticism/Sufism is neither some kind of an irrational, or subjective way of acquiring knowledge, which is the approach of theologians, nor a purely theoretical and intellectual way of acquiring knowledge, i.e. the approach of philosophers.[141] Similar to philosophy, and in contrast to theology, mysticism/Sufism provides objective and generalizable knowledge, but

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[135] Ibid., 61-62.
[136] Although scholars who write on Sufism discourage using the terms 'Sufism' and 'mysticism' interchangeably as if they are the same thing, – and I believe that they rightly do so – in this dissertation I will use both terms interchangeably because Iqbal uses them this way.
[137] Iqbal, Muhammad, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani," 237.
[138] Ibid., 237.
[139] Ibid., 237.
[140] Ibid., 237.
[141] Ibid., 237.

differently from philosophy it does not content itself only with a purely theoretical elaboration of and solution to the problem it deals with. That is, it is also concerned with the practical dimension of the solution. This shows that although it is different from both theology and philosophy, between the two, it is closer to philosophy than theology. So, Iqbal thinks that in its rationality and objectiveness mysticism is not so different from philosophy. Like philosophy, mysticism is also based upon metaphysics. In fact, Iqbal argues that mysticism is just metaphysics with a 'religious phraseology,' and that mysticism becomes possible only with 'a system of metaphysics serving as its foundation.'[142]

For Iqbal mysticism is 'essentially a system of verification', that is, a way or a method of approaching and acquiring knowledge, and in this respect, it is just the same as philosophy.[143] It has its own methods for acquiring knowledge, and then it presents or explains its findings in its own metaphysical system and language. The difference between mysticism and philosophy is that while the former utilizes a different faculty which is known as 'heart', or 'qalb' in achieving knowledge, the latter uses the faculty of 'intellect' or 'reason' in that process. In mysticism, Iqbal argues that the ego realizes the knowledge through a spiritual experience, and he realizes this as a 'fact', while in philosophy the intellect understands it as 'theory.'[144] So, on one hand, there is knowledge that is lived as a real experience, on the other hand, there is knowledge that is understood only intellectually, or as an idea. This, Iqbal thinks, creates another difference regarding the power of the knowledge that is acquired: the knowledge that is achieved by intellect can become dubious if 'some logical flaw' is detected in the argument, and thus this knowledge can be abandoned.[145] However, if the ego has acquired the knowledge as a real experience, then such logical flaws or arguments would not be sufficient to shake the foundations of the knowledge. Hence, this shows, according to Iqbal, that "mysticism appeals to a standard higher than intellect itself."[146]

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[142] Ibid., 237.
[143] Ibid., 237.
[144] Ibid., 237.
[145] Ibid., 237.
[146] Ibid., 237.

Nevertheless, Iqbal does not think that al-Jili's mystical approach is free from any flaws either. While Iqbal thinks that mysticism in general is an objective and rational approach to knowledge, he thinks that al-Jili's use of it has certain problems. One problem is that although al-Jili perceives the truth, he lacks 'a sound philosophical method' and therefore sometimes just posits things instead of explaining them clearly, openly and in a systematic way.[147] The other problem is that although he is aware of "the necessity of philosophical precision, yet his mysticism constantly leads him to drop vague, obscure remarks savouring of Platonic poetry rather than philosophy."[148] To illustrate these, Iqbal gives an example from al-Jili's analysis of 'the perfect man.' He writes: "How the perfect man reaches this height of spiritual development, the author [al-Jili] does not tell us, but he says that every stage he [the perfect man] has a peculiar spiritual experience in which there is not even a trace of doubt or agitation."[149] Such methodological problems, Iqbal thinks, make al-Jili's teaching 'appear rather dogmatic.'[150] Understanding Iqbal's methodological criticisms toward al-Jili's mysticism is important because as it will be seen in the fourth chapter, Nihilism and Iqbal: Second Overcoming (1928 – 1938), where I will analyze Iqbal's final views on this subject as they are discussed by Iqbal in the *Reconstruction*[151], that improving the precision and method of mysticism/Sufism and to put forward a more systematic, objective, clear and open form of Sufism will be one of the central aims of Iqbal in this period.

While analyzing al-Jili's metaphysical system as a plausible solution to the problem of nihilism, Iqbal also analyzes G. W. F. Hegel's (1770 – 1831) metaphysical system in conjunction with al-Jili's to show that they are similar in their solutions. At this point, it could be questioned whether Iqbal merely analyzes al-Jili's metaphysical system as a plausible solution to 'the human enigma' for a scholarly interest, or whether he agrees with him as well. In response, I argue that Iqbal did not write this article merely for a scholarly interest to show that al-Jili's metaphysical system is a plausible solution to 'the human enigma', like Hegel's, but he also agrees with al-Jili's solution. This is so because Iqbal

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[147] Ibid., 244.
[148] Ibid., 246.
[149] Ibid., 244.
[150] Ibid., 238.
[151] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 2012.

believes that the solution is found in mysticism/Sufism, and that he analyzes the metaphysical system of al-Jili – in parallel with Hegel's – only as a successful representation or example of the mystical/Sufi school of thought. It is for this reason that Iqbal considers al-Jili's and Hegel's metaphysical systems to be two comparable plausible solutions that were developed in two different philosophical traditions – Islamic and European/Christian. Accordingly, Iqbal thinks that al-Jili's metaphysical system is an anticipation of Hegelianism, and a reproduction of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity "except his [al-Jili's] god-man is Muhammad instead of Christ."[152] This is not a problem, Iqbal adds, because al-Jili "looks upon the doctrine as something common between the two forms of religion and accuses Christians of a blasphemous interpretation of the doctrine – of regarding the Personality of God as split up into three distinct personalities."[153] To this Iqbal adds his own views and argues:

> "Our own belief, however, is that this splendid doctrine has not been well-understood by the majority of Islamic and even Christian thinkers. The doctrine is but another way of stating the truth that the Absolute Unity must have in itself a principle of difference in order to evolve diversity out of itself. Almost all the attacks of Muhammadan theologians are directed against vulgar beliefs while the truth of real Christianity has not sufficiently been recognized. I believe no Islamic thinker will object to the deep meaning of Trinity as explained by this author [al-Jili], or will hesitate in approving Kant's interpretation of the Doctrine of Redemption. Shaikh Muhyu-d Din ibn 'Arabi says that the error of Christianity does not lie in making Christ God but that it lies in making God Christ."[154]

Until now I have discussed the philosophical sources from which Iqbal learned about the problem of nihilism, and demonstrated how Iqbal thinks that Sufism/mysticism is a better approach than philosophy and theology in dealing with 'the human enigma.' Now, in line with aims I set at the beginning of the chapter, I will do two things in the remainder of this chapter. Firstly, I will analyze how Iqbal presents 'the doctrine of absolute unity' as expounded by al-Jili as a plausible answer to 'the human enigma.' I will do this by providing a summary of al-Jili's metaphysical system in which he explains 'the doctrine of absolute unity.' Secondly, I will show how Iqbal demonstrates that al-Jili's conception of

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[152] Iqbal, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani," 245.
[153] Ibid., 245.
[154] Ibid., 245.

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'the doctrine of absolute unity' does not lead to pantheism, or to pantheistic conclusions. I will do this through a detailed analysis of the issues where Iqbal thinks that pantheism accusations can be made against 'the doctrine of absolute unity' – in total, I will discuss nine issues – and explain how Iqbal shows that al-Jili's metaphysical system escapes such accusations.

2.4.   Al-Jili and a Sufi Solution to the Problem of Nihilism

Iqbal begins introducing al-Jili's metaphysical system with al-Jili's distinction between 'essence' and 'existence.' He writes that essence, according to al-Jili, is "the thing to which names and attributes are given, whether it is existent or non-existent."[155] The existent, on the other hand, are two things: Pure Being (God), and Nature (the Creation). Pure Being, (God), is the existent in Absoluteness, while Nature (the Creation) is the existence joined with non-existence. With the distinction between 'essence' and 'existent', Iqbal thinks that al-Jili claims that a thing can have an 'essence', but be non-existent, or a thing can have both an 'essence', and also be 'existent.'[156] To illustrate these Iqbal refers to al-Jili's example of the mythological bird Phoenix, or 'Anqa as it is known in Islamic philosophy and states that 'Anqa exists only in name, and not in reality.[157] This means that 'Anqa has an 'essence', but it is 'non-existent' – in other words, it is a non-existent essence. On the other hand, a name can both exist as a name and also as a reality, and for this Iqbal refers to al-Jili's example about God. God has an 'essence', and He is also 'existent' – in other words, He is an existent essence.[158] According to Iqbal, al-Jili adds that while it is possible to explain God's 'existence', His Essence cannot easily be understood or explained in words. Nevertheless, al-Jili makes an attempt and describes God's essence as 'an existence which is non-existence – a sum of contradictions', which, according to Iqbal, resembles Hegel's idea of 'unity of opposites', or 'identity of opposites.'[159]

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[155] Ibid., 238.
[156] Ibid., 238.
[157] Ibid., 238.
[158] Ibid., 238.
[159] Ibid., 238.

After this, Iqbal goes on to discuss how al-Jili explains the attributes of 'the Pure Being.' According to al-Jili, 'the Pure Being' has two accidents ('eternal life in all past time' and 'eternal life in all future time'), two qualities ('God and Creation'), two definitions ('uncreatableness and creatableness'), two names ('God and Man'), two faces ('manifested and the unmanifested'), two effects ('necessity and possibility').[160] Finally, it also has 'two points of view' which means that "from the first it is non-existent for itself but existent for what it is not itself; from the second it is existent for itself, and non-existent for what is not itself."[161] Here too Iqbal thinks that al-Jili's speculations sound like Hegel's speculations. He writes: "With these bits of Hegelianism the author [al-Jili] closes the difficult speculation, and begins his second chapter on the name."[162]

Iqbal thinks that in al-Jili's metaphysics, similar to that of Hegel's metaphysics, 'the Pure Being' (God) leaves its absoluteness and undergoes three stages to realize itself in the universe. These stages are 'Oneness', 'He-ness', and 'I-ness'. In the first stage, there are no attributes or relations; however, since it is called 'one,' this shows that the Pure Being has left its absoluteness. In Iqbal's words, "oneness marks one step away from the absoluteness."[163] While in the second stage, the Pure Being is still free from all manifestation, with the third stage, it reaches 'an external manifestation.' With this, the Pure Being leaves its 'He-ness' behind, and 'I-ness' emerges which means the emergence of man as 'an I', as an individual. Iqbal thinks that this process, which explains the self-realization of the Spirit, would be known in Hegelian philosophy as the doctrine of 'the self-diremption of God.'[164]

Until the emergence of man, it was only God that was related to the created universe (i.e. nature), and it was God who was realizing itself in that universe. With that, God was also maintaining the continuity of the nature because He was always connected to it, or in a relation to it. With the emergence of man, 'the I', and the separation of God and man, however, a gap appears between the two, and this, al-Jili argues, creates a problem for the

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[160] Ibid., 238.
[161] Ibid., 238.
[162] Ibid., 238.
[163] Ibid., 239.
[164] Ibid., 239.

continuation of the Nature.[165] So, al-Jili thinks that a 'joining link' becomes necessary to fill this gap and maintain the continuation of the Nature. This, al-Jili thinks, cannot be provided by just any man, but the man who goes through a spiritual development, and reaches a different level of 'man-ness', that is, 'god-man' or 'the perfect man.'[166]

Accordingly, al-Jili considers that similar to the three stages of 'the Pure Being' realizing Himself in existence, man also goes through a three stages of 'spiritual training' during which man receives illumination from God. In the process of illumination, man learns about 'the divine names.' Iqbal writes: "In the first stage of his spiritual progress he meditates on the name, studies nature on which it is scaled; in the second stage he steps into the sphere of the Attributes and in the third stage he enters the sphere of the Essence."[167] As a result of this process, 'the divine attributes' of the Pure Being, such as independent life or existence, knowledge, will, power, and so on, reappear in man, and at the end of this process, man becomes a 'god-man', or 'the perfect man', and becomes capable of participating in 'the general life of Nature' and 'seeing into the life of things.' With the emergence of 'the god-man' the link between God and the man and universe is established again, and with this Iqbal says that "the Absolute Being, which has left its Absoluteness, returns unto itself."[168]

Thus, 'the perfect man' is a 'joining link' between different levels of beings, such as the level of Absolute Being (God), and the level of man and the universe. Accordingly, Iqbal adds that this process of returning back to itself does not take place for 'the god-man' as well. The Absolute Being returns to itself, but god-man stays in the universe. If 'the god-man' had also returned to the Absolute Being, then there would not be anything left to maintain the continuation of the Nature. Hence, without the link god-man provides with the Nature, then "there would have been no nature, and consequently no light through which God could have seen Himself."[169] So, when 'the spiritual training' of man is finished, and

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[165] Ibid., 244.
[166] Ibid., 244.
[167] Ibid., 239.
[168] Ibid., 244.
[169] Ibid., 244.

"when that particular spiritual realization is over, man is man and God is God."[170] Here, Iqbal is referring to the claim that Sufism is pantheistic, or leads to pantheism because it promotes the idea of man's unification with God as a goal to be achieved at the end of this spiritual training process. According to this interpretation, the goal of man is to unite with the Absolute Being (God), and be dissolved in God or lose oneself in God. This is called 'the doctrine of fana.' In his analysis of al-Jili's metaphysics, Iqbal shows that in fact the goal of man is not fana, but rather individualization. That is to say, the goal of man is not to return to God and be dissolved in the existence of God, but to remain as a man – a spiritually evolved and a better man, but still a man.

This is the summary of al-Jili's metaphysical system and his doctrine of 'the perfect man.' I stated before that throughout the analysis, Iqbal shows that while al-Jili's metaphysics provide us plausible answers with the human enigma, it also does not lead to pantheistic conclusions. I will now demonstrate that at least in nine different points, Iqbal provides evidence as to how al-Jili's conclusions are different from pantheism, atheism, fatalism, thus nihilism. Furthermore, I will also point out how Iqbal pursues a double track while doing this, that is, while he shows how al-Jili's conclusions are different from pantheism, in parallel with this, he also discusses how pantheism issue was debated in modern German philosophy through Kant, Fichte, Schleiermacher and Hegel. This makes it clear that Iqbal was aware of 'the pantheism controversy' in modern German philosophy, and how different thinkers discussed it. In that process, according to Iqbal, while Kant's, Fichte's, Schleiermacher's solutions have still certain problems in them, he considers Hegel's philosophy as a conclusive and successful solution to 'the human enigma' which also does not lead to pantheistic conclusions.

2.5. How al-Jili's Sufi Solution does not lead to Pantheism, Atheism, Fatalism, thus Nihilism

Contrary to the claim of 'the established narrative' that Iqbal was a pantheist before 1905, this part of my analysis makes it clear that Iqbal does not have a pantheistic conception

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[170] Ibid., 244.

God before 1905. In pantheism, it is believed that God is immanent in the world, inside the world, or a part of the world, while in theism, it is believed that God is transcendent – that is, it is outside the world, and not part of the world.[171] The analysis here shows that Iqbal, following al-Jili's views, has a panentheistic conception of God in which God is understood to be both immanent and transcendent. In other words, God is both inside and also outside the existence (man and universe). Al-Jili maintains this by distinguishing between the 'essence' and 'existence' of God, and argues that while God's essence is outside the world, his existence is in the world. In addition to this, al-Jili adds various distinctions to clarify the differences between God, man and the world which I analyze in details in the following pages.

Distinguishing between the Essence and Existence of God: Recall that while analyzing al-Jili's metaphysics, the first thing Iqbal pointed to was al-Jili's distinction between 'essence' and 'existence.' This is important with respect to pantheism problem because if there was no distinction, the critics could argue that – and in fact they argued – in al-Jili's metaphysics – and indirectly in Ibn Arabi's metaphysics and in his 'doctrine of the unity of Being', or 'the unity of Existence' (wahdat-al-wujud) – there is no distinction between God and man or the universe. Such a distinction between 'essence' and 'existence,' however, makes it possible to differentiate between the existent beings, God, man, and the universe, thus provides a way out from pantheism accusations. As it will be remembered from 'the pantheism controversy,' where Kant provided his new proof of the existence of God, Jacobi argued that this can only be acceptable for a pantheistic conception of God because in Kant's proof there was no distinction between the existence and essence of God. Consequently, Jacobi argued that whatever existed was actually equal to God's existence – hence a Spinozist, or pantheistic conception of God.[172] By emphasizing al-Jili's distinction between the 'essence' and 'existence' of God, Iqbal shows how al-Jili was able to escape from pantheistic conclusions on that point.

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[171] "At its most general, pantheism may be understood positively as the view that God is identical with the cosmos, the view that there exists nothing which is outside of God, or else negatively as the rejection of any view that considers God as distinct from the universe." Mander, William, "Pantheism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/pantheism/>. 03.07.2016.
[172] Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 55.

Establishing the Objective Reality of the Phenomenal World: Distinguishing God's essence and God's existence was one thing to do; however, it was still not so clear whether God's existence was separate from the existence of non-god, such as nature. This point was discussed through the issue of the belief in the objective reality of 'the phenomenal world.' Here, Iqbal discusses this issue in comparison with Hindu and modern German sources. Iqbal thinks that the nature of 'the Attribute' in al-Jili's metaphysics distinguishes al-Jili's ideas from 'Hindu Idealism' and 'the doctrine of Maya' as well as Berkeleyan and Fichtean idealisms which consider the material world as well as God to be a rather imagination of 'the I', the mind, or the subject. As opposed to these views, Iqbal thinks that for al-Jili 'the material world has real existence,' and it is not a realm of illusion or dream. Hence he writes: "That which appears is not unreal, it is the Absolute Being itself."[173]

Establishing the Objective Reality of the Noumenal World: The universe, or 'the phenomenal world,' has an objective existence, but then what about 'the noumenal world'? Here, Iqbal discusses the issue of the objective reality of 'the-thing-in-itself,' and whether the knowledge of it is possible or not. According to Beiser, Kant attempts to solve this problem by making a distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal realms, and argues that while it is possible to acquire the knowledge of the phenomenal world, it is impossible to acquire the knowledge of the noumenal world, hence the-thing-in-itself.[174] He maintains this by separating 'reason' from 'knowledge.' That is, Kant defines reason not as a faculty of knowledge, but as a faculty of practical faith.[175] However, as Beiser shows, this does not really solve the problem on hand since it creates a dualism and a gap between the noumenal and phenomenal worlds, and makes it impossible to acquire the knowledge of the noumenal world and the things that are supposed to exist there, such as God, immortality, and freedom.[176] In other words, while real and objective existence would be associated with the phenomenal world, the knowledge of the noumenal world, along with the knowledge of the-thing-in-itself, God, or Pure Being would become dubious or uncertain. For this reason, Iqbal thinks that al-Jili's ideas are different from those of Kant as well. Iqbal thinks that al-Jili would disagree with Kant because while Kant's 'Ding an sich', or 'the-thing-in-itself,'

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[173] Iqbal, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani," 246.
[174] Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 116.
[175] Ibid., 116.
[176] Ibid., 116.

would be like a non-entity in Kant's metaphysics, while for al-Jili it would itself be the essence of the universe because for al-Jili "there is nothing behind this collection of attributes, [and] the attributes are but the real things."[177] Although al-Jili thinks that Nature, or the universe, and God are two different things, and that they have objective existence of their own like it is discussed above, they are nevertheless not detached or disconnected from each other either.

In addressing this problem, Iqbal thinks that al-Jili's ideas are similar to the ideas of Hegel. That is, while Hegel calls this 'the identity of thought and being', al-Jili, according to Iqbal, calls it 'the identity of attribute and reality.'[178] Al-Jili's and Hegel's conceptions solve the problem of the dualism of the two separate realms and the problem of the impossibility of attaining the knowledge of the noumenal realm by considering a kind of unity between the subject (the knower, human reason, mind) and the object (the known, the nature, universe). Such unity is not merely epistemic but also ontological since for al-Jili Nature is the idea of God. In other words, the Nature, or the phenomenal world, is the objectification of 'the Absolute Being.' Al-Jili asserts that the "idea is the stuff of which this universe is made: Thought, idea, notion is the material of the structure of nature."[179]

Establishing that God is both Immanent and Transcendent: The fourth issue is about Pure Being's immanence and transcendence, and its relation to nature and man. While explaining al-Jili's metaphysical system, Iqbal refers to one of al-Jili analogies that is used to explain the relation between nature and God. In that analogy, al-Jili describes nature as frozen water and God is described as water.[180] Since they are of the same substance in this analogy, this could lead to pantheistic interpretations. However, Iqbal says that al-Jili was careful about such wrong interpretations and tried to prevent such wrong interpretations by guarding "against the error of looking upon God as immanent in nature or living through the sphere of material existence."[181] In order to escape such misinterpretations, al-Jili adds that while "immanence implies disparity of being; God is not immanent because He is

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[177] Iqbal, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani," 240.
[178] Ibid., 240.
[179] Ibid., 239.
[180] Iqbal writes: "He [al-Jili] says that nature is frozen water and God is water." Ibid., 241.
[181] Ibid., 242.

Himself the existence. Eternal existence is the other self of God, it is the light through which He sees Himself. As the originator of an idea is existent in that idea, so God is present in nature."[182] Hence, Iqbal argues that for al-Jili, God cannot be immanent because God Himself is the existence. In a way, there are no immanence or transcendence issues for al-Jili's God and universe because God is both inside and outside the universe. They are united to each other through 'the identity of attribute and reality,' or through 'the identity of thought and being.' God is outside the nature because it was God who caused the emergence of the universe and man; however, God is also inside the nature just like the originator of an idea exists in that idea. So, God is in the nature since He was the originator of the idea of nature. After this, Iqbal adds: "It will be remembered here that Hegel would use the same line of argument in freeing himself from the accusations of Pantheism."[183]

Clarifying God's Relation to Man: After clarifying al-Jili's ideas about the relations between universe (nature) and God, Iqbal also mentions how al-Jili explains the difference between God and man, and man and the universe. Regarding the relation between man, the universe and God, Iqbal says that while al-Jili makes it clear that they are separate from each other, and that they both have objective reality and existence of their own, they are nevertheless not completely isolated or detached from each other.[184] In a way, it seems that in al-Jili's conception, they are all interdependent on each other. While describing man, Al-Jili writes: "All that is, owes its existence to you, and you owe your existence to all that is."[185] After this, Iqbal refers to the expression of another Sufi who explained the same thing, but more boldly. There the Sufi says: "I owe to God as much as God owes to me."[186] God, man, and the universe are all different parts of the existence. They all have their objective and real existence, but they are also not completely detached or disconnected from each other. They are united to each other through 'the identity of attribute and reality' – or through 'the identity of thought and being' to use Hegel's words.

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[182] Ibid., 242.
[183] Ibid., 242.
[184] Ibid., 242.
[185] Ibid., 242.
[186] Ibid., 242.

<u>Clarifying God's Relation to Time:</u> The sixth point Iqbal discusses in al-Jili's thought in relation to pantheism problem is the issue of 'the priority of God' and 'the posteriority of creation' – the universe. Iqbal writes that al-Jili again makes an important warning for possible pantheistic interpretations while discussing this issue. According to Iqbal, al-Jili says that "when we speak of the priority of God and posteriority of creation, our words must not be understood as implying time, for there can be no duration of time or separateness between God and His creation."[187] Iqbal adds that in al-Jili's metaphysics, time, contiguity in space and time, are themselves creations, and therefore he argues that it is not possible for 'one piece of creation' to intervene between God and His creation. He adds: "Hence our words before, after, where, whence, etc., in this sphere of thought, should not be construed to imply time or space."[188]

<u>Establishing that the Goal of Man is not to Get Dissolved in God:</u> Another issue Iqbal discusses in al-Jili's thought with respect to pantheism problem is the issue of 'fana' or 'the destruction of the will,' – if we identify 'will' with the 'self' as in the philosophy of Schopenhauer – that takes place in the process of becoming 'the perfect man.' This may lead to pantheistic conclusions because the doctrine of fana, or the destruction of the will, or self, gives the idea that in the process of spiritual development, man aims to be united with God, and get dissolved in the existence of God. This leads to pantheistic conclusions because man loses his objective existence and becomes one with God. I have already explained that in al-Jili's metaphysics, the spiritual experience man goes through in becoming 'the perfect man' was temporary, not permanent. This means that although there seems to be a moment of unity between God and man, remaining in that moment of unity is not in the nature of that process. What is in the nature of the process is that the spiritual experience ends, and with that, man and God separates from each other, and God returns to itself. After this temporary spiritual experience is over, God is God and man is man.[189]

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[187] Ibid., 242.
[188] Ibid., 242.
[189] "The god-man is he who has known the mystery of his own being; who has realised himself as god-man; but when that particular spiritual realisation is over, man is man and God is God." Iqbal, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani," 244. Even in 1900, it is clear that Iqbal does not have pantheistic ideas and does not support the unionist interpretations of the doctrine of fana. So, here the source of Iqbal's conception of fana can be seen. Nevertheless, Iqbal's understanding of the doctrine of fana will go through some changes as well. Later in *Reconstruction*, Iqbal will not consider this spiritual experience as unification of two separate beings, or their becoming one. On the contrary, he will consider this process as their becoming even more individual than their previous states of being.

Clarifying God's Creation of the Universe: While discussing the attributes of 'the perfect man' along with the Pure Being (God), al-Jili talks about their power as it shows itself in the self-diremption, that is, creation. The self-realization, or self-diremption of God, Iqbal thinks, would cause a problem with respect to the issue of *creatio ex nihilo*, and would bring the question whether or not God created the universe out of nothing. Here, Iqbal thinks that in his interpretation of the doctrine of absolute unity, al-Jili differs from Ibn Arabi because al-Jili thinks that Ibn Arabi's version may lead to pantheistic conclusions. While Ibn Arabi holds that the universe existed in the knowledge of God before its creation, al-Jili argues that "this would imply that God did not create it out of nothing."[190] This would mean that before God created the world, the world existed as an idea, and the existence of an idea would mean the existence of a thing. In response to this, al-Jili "holds that the universe, before its existence as an idea, existed in the self of God." [191] Consequently, here al-Jili thinks that existing in the self of God would mean that God created it out of nothing because this way there is not yet a distinction between God and even the idea of the world.

Clarifying the Issues of Man's Freedom and Will: Discussing the issue of will and freedom of God and man, Iqbal states that al-Jili first makes a distinction between man's will and freedom which al-Jili calls as 'the individual act of will' and God's will and freedom which he calls as 'the universal will.' After that, al-Jili argues that it is only 'the universal will' that is uncaused, and 'the individual will' is caused by the uncaused will of God. Iqbal does not see any problem in this conception of freedom and will for man because Iqbal thinks that it resembles the Hegelian doctrine of freedom where the acts of man are both free and determined.[192] It is important to keep this point in mind as well because as David Storey argues "at root, nihilism is a problem about humanity's relation to nature, about a crisis in human freedom and willing after the collapse of the cosmos, the erosion of a hierarchically ordered nature in which humans have a proper place."[193] I argue that this conception of freedom and will of man, in which man is not really free, will become dissatisfactory for

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[190] Ibid., 242.
[191] Ibid., 242.
[192] Ibid., 245.
[193] Storey, "Nihilism, Nature, and the Collapse of the Cosmos," 6.

Iqbal after he starts reading Nietzsche around 1909, and this will be one of the main reasons for Iqbal's nihilistic crisis.

To conclude, in this chapter I have demonstrated that Iqbal did not have a pantheistic conception of God in this period contrary to what is argued in 'the established literature.' In addition to this, I also demonstrated how Iqbal believed that he has found a plausible solution to 'the human enigma' through the metaphysical system of al-Jili – and also Hegel – and thus overcame the problem of nihilism through Sufism. For Iqbal, this solution was plausible because it did not lead to pantheism, atheism, fatalism and thus nihilism. It was plausible because it provided a plausible orientation of man, God and the universe with an acceptable conception of man's freedom and will. Accordingly, it is for this reason Iqbal did not feel disoriented, and did not fall into a nihilistic crisis in this period. However, this situation changes after 1909 when Iqbal starts reading Nietzsche. It is this period I will analyze in the next (third) chapter where I will describe the process which led to Iqbal's nihilistic crisis.

3. Nihilism and Iqbal: The Crisis (1909 – 1927)

In this chapter, I first analyze the change of mood and the sudden appearance of intense despair, cynicism, distress and pessimism, which I consider as the signs of Iqbal's 'nihilistic crisis,' that can be seen in Iqbal's writings beginning in 1909 and continuing up until 1913. This period (1909 – 1913) coincides with the first appearance of references to Nietzsche's name and ideas in Iqbal's writings, and therefore I draw a correlation between Iqbal's starting reading Nietzsche and the change of mood in his writings. Crucial to note here is that such a pessimist mood cannot be seen in any other period of Iqbal's life; therefore, I believe that it is legitimate to make this correlation. However, I should add that not all of Nietzsche's ideas caused a problem for Iqbal's thinking. For instance, it seems that Nietzsche's ideas and criticisms on knowledge issues does not seem to have influenced Iqbal, consequently Iqbal does not become skeptical about his belief that Sufism/mysticism is the most successful approach in acquiring the knowledge of Reality. Rather than on knowledge issues, reading Nietzsche seems to have made Iqbal become critical on the issues of morality, moral values of his intellectual tradition, the place and value of freedom of man, will and power in the cosmos vis-à-vis God and nature. Accordingly, I also describe Iqbal's process of falling into a 'nihilistic crisis' in this period like David Storey does, that is, "nihilism is a problem about humanity's relation to nature, about a crisis in human freedom and willing after the collapse of the cosmos, the erosion of a hierarchically ordered nature in which humans have a proper place."[194]

By this I mean that the previous metaphysical orientation Iqbal believed that he has found in the philosophies of al-Jili and Hegel which provided him with a satisfying conception of his freedom and willing and his proper place in the cosmos vis-à-vis God and nature collapses, and consequently Iqbal falls into a nihilistic crisis. The problem with al-Jili's and Hegel's metaphysical systems is that in their system the process is rather a closed one, a fatalistic and predetermined one. It is a particular version of teleology where the end is not open, but predetermined. Moreover, as a result of not having real freedom and will, the human individual seems more like a puppet, slave or a mere means to end. This in turn

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[194] Ibid., 6.

makes man just an insignificant tool that is only necessary for the self-realization of God. These aspects of al-Jili's and Hegel's philosophy start to become problematic for Iqbal because after reading Nietzsche, Iqbal becomes more concerned about the value and centrality of freedom and willing as well as the importance of strength and power for human individuals. Accordingly, the two themes that are found in all of Iqbal's writings in this period (1909 – 1913) are the emergence of his questioning and daring attitude against God which questions his position vis-à-vis God in the cosmos and his concern regarding the value, meaning and power of his freedom and willing. I take the first theme as a sign of Iqbal's feeling of 'the erosion of a hierarchically ordered nature in which humans have a proper place,' while the second theme shows his experience of the 'crisis in human freedom and willing after the collapse of the cosmos.' I agree with Subhash C. Kashyap that Iqbal's bold attitude and language against God is probably an influence of Nietzsche[195]; however, on this point, there is also a tradition in Sufism where Sufis, considered as 'friends of God' or 'foolish lovers of God', are permitted to speak in a bold and quarreling manner against God.[196] According to Hellmut Ritter, the intimacy between God and these 'friends' or 'foolish lovers' "is so well-founded and secure that it cannot be disturbed by occasional audacities, such as reproaches and lovers' disputes, which sometimes occur between lovers but do not disturb their friendly relations."[197]

As Kashyap rightly states, "both Iqbal and Nietzsche fought against the pessimistic religious trends of their times. While Nietzsche had to face the Buddhistic, Christian and Schopenhauerian negations of life and idealizations of self-annihilation, Iqbal had to fight

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[195] Subhash C. Kashyap, *The Unknown Nietzsche: His Socio-Political Thought and Legacy* (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1970), 204-205.

[196] Hellmut Ritter, "Muslim Mystics Strife with God," *Oriens* 5, no. 1, (1952): 1-15.

[197] Ritter, "Muslim Mystics Strife with God," 7-8. According to Ritter "this privilege of freedom and, on the other hand, their intimate re- lation to God permit these foolish saints to say things which would be shocking if spoken by other people. The criticism of these foolish saints aims, as we have already seen, at God's creative activity, at the manner in which He cares for their needs and inflicts heavy sufferings on them. The manner and tone in which this criticism is uttered shows a rich gradation. Sometimes it is a sullen melancholy, the expression of a pessimistic state of mind; at another time, it is hopelessness effected by many sad experiences, but endured with resignation. Sometimes, however, the eyes of these wretched people are raised towards Heaven in complaint and accusation, and sometimes they even utter heavy reproaches, yes, and what is more, they direct menaces at God Himself. And strange enough, in spite of all that, a peculiar and most vivid inner relation continues to exist between them and the Lord with whom they are quarrelling. Whatever happens to them is, in their eyes, always a direct action of God on their behalf. Always they have to deal with God directly. And this direct and intimate relation to God characterizes them as genuine mystics, as mystical fools, and distinguishes them from heretics and philosophers, who have become alienated from God altogether, like Ibn ar-Rawendi and Abu l-'Ala al-Ma'arri. And that is one of the reasons why these people are treated with a certain respect in the East. They are foolish lovers of God. Some of them already appear in Arabic literature.", Ritter, "Muslim Mystics Strife with God," 8-9.

the Neo-Platonic mysticism with its philosophy of asceticism, inactivity, and nay-saying that had penetrated into Islam."[198] Accordingly, it is in this period Iqbal starts to think that a particular type of Sufism with its life-negating and self-denying moral ideals is the reason for the existence of conception of a man with a weak will and freedom as well an omnipotent God which leaves no room for man and nature to exist objectively and act freely. In that process, Iqbal becomes critical of this type of Sufism which promotes an ascetic life and a spirit of radical otherworldliness. This type of Sufism values contemplation and calls people to seek refuge in self-denying and self-renouncing acts, such as renouncing their richness, power, will, freedom and ego and the world here in this life for the sake of a better life in the world to come.[199] It also promotes the idea of total annihilation of the self (doctrine of fana) with the goal of being assimilated into the self of God.[200]

However, I consider this period (1909 – 1927) not only as a period of falling into crisis, but also a period of the first steps of overcoming the crisis; therefore, after the analysis of the signs of the crisis, I shortly discuss these first steps by analyzing Iqbal's writings from 1913 to 1927. These can be considered as the first steps of Iqbal's attempt at developing a new metaphysical orientation, a new image of cosmos, where God, man and nature are described a new with new attributes. Iqbal does this by developing a reinterpretation of the type of Sufism mentioned above. Since especially the relatively weak and insignificant role and power this type of Sufism gives to man and his freedom and will is the main cause of Iqbal's nihilistic crisis, Iqbal develops a new conception of man and new moral values. Accordingly, the new Sufism promotes moral values, such as taking active part in life and a spirit of embracing the concrete reality in front of man, and calls man to affirm his freedom, will, power, selfhood, and ego and take responsibility to make this world a better place.

For the first period (1909 – 1913) where I argue that Iqbal experiences a nihilistic crisis, I analyze the following writings of Iqbal: 1) Iqbal's articles, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – I", (July 1909), "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – II" (August 1909), "The

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[198] Kashyap, *The Unknown Nietzsche*, 194.
[199] Mazheruddin Siddiqi, "A Historical Study of Iqbal's Views on Sufism," *Islamic Studies* 5, no. 4, (1966): 412-413.
[200] Siddiqi, "A Historical Study of Iqbal's Views on Sufism," 414-415.

Muslim Community – A Sociological Study" (Winter 1910), and "Political Thought in Islam" (1911). 2) Iqbal's private notebook, which he kept between 1910 and 1917, and on which he wrote short entries about different thinkers and subjects. Iqbal called his entries as 'stray reflections,' and therefore these were later published with the same title in a book format.[201] 3) Iqbal's correspondences with Atiya Begum (1877 – 1967) which also provide an insight into Iqbal's mood between the years of 1907 and 1911.[202] 4) Iqbal's poetry in this period: *Shikwa*, (The Complaint), published in 1909. For the second period (1913 – 1927) where I argue that the first steps of Iqbal's attempt at overcoming this crisis can be seen, I analyze the following writings: 1) His poetry: *Jawab-i-Shikwa*, (Response to the Complaint) published in 1913, and *Asrar-i-Khudi*, (Secrets of the Self), published in 1915. 2) His articles, "Islam and Mysticism" (July 1917), "Nietzsche and Jalal-ud-Din Rumi" (August 1917), and "The Inner Synthesis of Life" (January 1926).

3.1.   First Traces of Iqbal's Reading Nietzsche

Iqbal's article on al-Jili (1900) can be considered as a product of his master's studies in philosophy which ended in 1899, and in that respect it gives us an idea about the extent of Iqbal's knowledge of modern German philosophy up until that moment. Looking at the names of the philosophers and problems he discusses in the article, it can be inferred that in year 1900, the extent of Iqbal's knowledge in modern German philosophy starts with 18th century, such as 'the pantheism controversy' and Jacobi, and then continues with Kant and German Idealists, such as Fichte and Hegel, and ends with Schopenhauer. The reason for this was probably, like Muhammad Maruf claims, that in those days in India courses in history of philosophy went only up to Hegel and post-Hegelian thinkers were not taken

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[201] Iqbal's entries in *Stray Reflections*, which are sometimes aphorismatic short sentences and sometimes a paragraph long texts, are important in various ways. Through these entries one can see what kind of thoughts, issues, ideas and problems Iqbal was concerned with and perhaps which thinkers he was interested in or perhaps even reading between 1910 and 1917. In addition, one can also trace if there is any new thinker Iqbal mentions in his writings whom he has not mentioned in his previous publications (his 1900 article on al-Jili and his dissertation which was published in 1908). Last but not least, one can also see if Iqbal has changed his ideas on any thinker, or a topic, or problem during these years in comparison to his previous writings.

[202] Atiya Begum was born in Istanbul in 1877 and came to India when her family moved there. After receiving a scholarship to study in England, Atiya went to England in 1906, and it is there she met Iqbal on April 1, 1907. As a result of their common interests in philosophy and literature, they quickly became friends and remained that way throughout their lives. Iqbal died in 1938, while Atiya migrated to Pakistan after Pakistan was founded and died there in Karachi on January 4, 1967. Rauf Parekh, Preface to *Iqbal* by Atiya Begum, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), vii.

seriously.[203] Although Subhash C. Kashyap argues that "during his sojourn (1905 – 8) in Europe, Iqbal was much impressed by the philosophy of Nietzsche"[204] there is no sign in Iqbal's writings to demonstrate that Iqbal has read Nietzsche in this period. For instance, looking at the names of German philosophers and issues mentioned and discussed in Iqbal's doctoral dissertation which was published in 1908, Kashyap's claim does not seem to be supported. Indeed Kashyap does not refer to any of Iqbal's writings to support his claim, and just seems to think that Iqbal must have read Nietzsche in this period because "the intellectual atmosphere of Europe was then surcharged with Nietzsche's thoughts. Nietzsche-cult was at its zenith."[205]

Obviously, Iqbal's advanced studies in England have deepened and expanded his knowledge about these German thinkers and various issues of modern German philosophy, but it seems that challenge-wise Iqbal did not face any intellectual challenge. By this, I mean that the main al-Jilian/Hegelian metaphysical framework which provided Iqbal with a plausible solution to his most fundamental metaphysical questions, i.e. 'the human enigma,' seems to have remained intact, and whatever Iqbal has learned and studied in Europe mainly contributed and added to his already existing knowledge and level of philosophical development that he had attained during his previous studies in philosophy. This stability can also be seen in the mood of his writings from 1900 to 1908. Thus with the assurance of the belief that he has found a satisfying answer to his most fundamental metaphysical questions, no signs of stress, anxiety, unrest or crisis can be seen in his writings in this period. However, this situation changes dramatically with the year 1909.

The first signs of Iqbal's reading of Nietzsche can be seen in the articles he wrote in 1909 – about one year after he returned to India.[206] Although Iqbal does not make any reference to Nietzsche, one term he uses indicates to us that he has read Nietzsche before writing these articles. He writes: "It is, therefore, evident that Islam, so to speak, *transmutes* the moral

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[203] Muhammad Maruf, "Iqbal's Criticism of Nietzsche," *Iqbal Review*, http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct82/3.htm, accessed 4 July, 2016.

[204] Kashyap, *The Unknown Nietzsche*, 192.

[205] Ibid., 192.

[206] Muhammad Iqbal, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – I," *Hindustan Review*, 20, no. 119, (1909): 29-38; Muhammad Iqbal, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – II," *Hindustan Review*, 20, no. 120, (1909): 166-171. The articles can also be found in Muhammad Iqbal, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal," in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 97-117.

values of the ancient world, and declares preservation, intensification of the sense of human personality, to be the ultimate ground of all ethical activity."[207] Here, the expression 'transmuting the moral values of the ancient world' is clearly taken from Nietzsche's expression of 'transvaluation of all values.'[208] In *Will to Power*, for instance, Nietzsche discusses how Plato destroyed the existing moral order of paganism by transvaluing its values. In this regard, Nietzsche considers what was destroyed (pagan moral values) as higher than what emerged in its place (Platonism) because Platonism created a new moral order which was "gloomy, moralised, acidified throughout with feelings of guilt, and grown old and sick."[209] According to Nietzsche, Christianity furthered this moral order with its lowly moral values because it "grew on the soil of [this] psychological corruption, and could only take root in rotten ground."[210] According to Iqbal, however, Islam transvalued the lowly moral values of the ancient world, Platonism and Christianity, and created a new moral order with higher values which valued power, strength and importance of will and ego.

In addition to this indirect reference to Nietzsche, throughout the article one can see that Iqbal incorporates various Nietzschean themes and ideas to his writing and thinking. For instance, the emphasis on freedom, will, power, the strength of the personality, the importance and value of fighting against the forces of the environment and putting one's own strong will on the nature seem to be more clear inspirations from Nietzsche. It is in this article Iqbal writes that "man is a free responsible being; he is the maker of his own destiny, his salvation is his own business"[211] and claims that the essential nature of man

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[207] Iqbal, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – I," 34.

[208] Kashyap claims that "Iqbal was conversant with the German language and could read Nietzsche's works in the German original." In that case, it is possible that 'transmute' is Iqbal's own translation of Nietzsche's 'transvaluate' from its German original. Nevertheless, Kashyap also adds that the translation of Nietzsche's "complete works into English, during the first years of the twentieth century, greatly facilitated his [Iqbal's] grasp and assimilation of Nietzschean doctrines." Kashyap, *The Unknown Nietzsche*, 192.

[209] Nietzsche's writings are translated into English in a collected way by W. A. Haussmann and edited by Oscar Levy. They were published in 18 volumes between the years of 1909 and 1914. This collected was entitled: 'The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche.' *The Will to Power* (Der Wille zur Macht) was translated into English by Anthony M. Ludovici and was published in 1910 as the 14th volume of this collection. It is possible that Iqbal has read this version of Nietzsche's *Will to Power* in English. *Will to Power* is important because it contains contains Nietzsche's ideas about transvaluation of all values as well as most of his ideas on nihilism. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power: An Attempted Transvaluation of All Values*, in Oscar Levy, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, vol. 14. (Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1910), 362.

[210] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power: An Attempted Transvaluation of All Values*, in Oscar Levy, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, vol. 14, (Edinburgh and London: T.N. Foulis, 1910), 362.

[211] Iqbal, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – I," 34.

consists in will, not in intellect or understanding.[212] Accordingly, he argues that 'a strong will in a strong body is the ethical ideal of Islam.'[213]

Relatedly, and perhaps as a result of these ideas, Iqbal becomes more critical of the society he is living in and the cultural and moral values of it. For instance, after emphasizing the importance of will and strength for man, and after arguing that 'a strong will in a strong body is the ethical ideal of Islam,' Iqbal asks whether the Muslims in India have this power, individuality and strong will to live, and he answers it in the negative.[214] He states that "the life-force of the Indian Muhammadan, however, has become woefully enfeebled. The decay of the religious spirit, combined with other causes of a political nature over which he had no control, has developed in him a habit of self-dwarfing, a sense of dependence and, above all, that laziness of spirit which an enervated people call by the dignified name of 'contentment' in order to conceal their own enfeeblement."[215] Iqbal is so disappointed and bothered by the lack of strong will and freedom among his fellow countrymen, he goes on to show his appreciation of devil because he has a strong will and a strong individuality. On that issue, he writes: "I hope I shall not be offending the reader when I say that I have a certain amount of admiration for the devil. By refusing to prostrate himself before Adam whom he honestly believed to be his inferior, he revealed a high sense of self-respect, a trait of character which in my opinion ought to redeem him from his spiritual deformity."[216] It can also be said that the way Iqbal describes the Indian society in this article, particularly the Indian Muslims, is a very illustrative sign of Iqbal's unhappiness in those times.

The first direct reference to Nietzsche in Iqbal's writings is found in his article entitled "The Muslim Community – A Sociological Study" which was published in 1910. Here, Iqbal discusses what kind of actions a community should do in order to maintain its continuity. He thinks that the existing values of the community should contribute to this ultimate purpose, that is, maintaining a continuous life for the community. If this is not the case, then Iqbal argues that "we must criticise ourselves, perhaps transvaluate them

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[212] Ibid., 32.
[213] Ibid., 36.
[214] Ibid., 36.
[215] Ibid., 36.
[216] Ibid., 36-37.

[existing values of the community]; and, if necessary, create new worths; since the immortality of a people, as Nietzsche has so happily put, depends upon the incessant creation of worths."[217] Here, Iqbal explicitly employs Nietzsche's term 'transvaluation' for which he previously used a different term – transmutation.

Another direct reference to Nietzsche in Iqbal's writings can be found in his *Stray Reflections*, and it also dates back to 1910. Here, Iqbal talks about the ethical ideas of Nietzsche. He argues that that Nietzsche has developed a kind of a theoretical justification for the ethical stance of Europe in those times – probably through his emphasis on power, strength and will as higher moral values. Iqbal thinks that although Europe was acting in accordance with such moral ideals in practice, they were not admitting this, and was criticizing the person when they were told by someone that they have been acting in this way. This, according to Iqbal, means that they (Europeans) criticize the theory when they in fact are doing it in practice. In Iqbal's view, this situation points to an interesting contradiction or strange inconsistency in human nature – that is, to act in a certain way, but at the same time condemn or criticize moral principles that would justify such actions. Hence, Iqbal thinks that this was a kind of maddening inconsistency in human nature for Nietzsche to realize and to become aware of. In the end, when he pointed to that inconsistency, people did not understand him, and they criticized him. As Iqbal claims, "only a few have realised the meaning of his [Nietzsche's] madness."[218]

In addition to these, there are various parts in *Stray Reflections* where one can see the traces of Nietzsche's influence on Iqbal's thinking – for instance, Iqbal's emphasis on the importance of power and strength, on continuous struggle for life, and his criticism of certain moral values, such as self-negating values. For instance, in an entry in which Iqbal writes about personal immortality, one can clearly see the influence of Nietzsche on Iqbal with respect to the moral values one should uphold.[219] Here, Iqbal must be referring to 'the slave morality' and 'master morality' of Christianity and Romans in Nietzsche's writings when he writes: "You must give up all those modes of activity which have a tendency to

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[217] Muhammad Iqbal, "The Muslim Community – A Sociological Study," in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 121.

[218] Iqbal, *Stray Reflections*, 46.

[219] Ibid., 29-30.

dissolve *personality*, e.g. humility, contentment, slavish obedience, modes of human action which have been erroneously dignified by the name of virtue."[220] As Kashyap also states "both for Nietzsche and for Iqbal self-denial is the morality of the slaves."[221] Again, in the entry called 'On Loving One's Enemy,' Iqbal criticizes the ethical idealism of Christ and Buddha by saying that they ignore the facts of life and reality more generally. Although, he admits that there is some truth in their conception of love, he also thinks that such principles collapse when they are extended to the whole of a nation in the form of national morality or ethics for the nation. He then gives the example of the Russo-Japanese war (1904 – 1905) implying that if the Japanese had acted on the principles of morality associated with their religion – Buddhism which promotes a non-violence interaction with all beings – then they would probably lose the war, or probably not have had fought at all.[222]

With respect to Iqbal's emphasis on strength and power, in an entry, Iqbal asks: 'what is the law of things?' And, his answer is that, 'continual struggle' is the law of things. That is, all aspects and dimensions of life should take this law into consideration. Applying this law to education, Iqbal claims that the goal of education should be the following: to prepare children for the struggle. If a people take another principle as their goal in education, for instance to prepare children for mere intellectual superiority, Iqbal thinks that this reveals their feebleness.[223] Again echoing Nietzsche's ideas, in another entry entitled 'The Powerful Man', he writes that "the powerful man creates environment; the feeble have to adjust themselves to it."[224] Similarly, in another entry entitled 'The Thought of the Powerful Man,' he writes: "Civilization is a thought of the powerful man."[225] In these entries, Iqbal always praises the strong, being powerful and despises weakness.

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[220] Ibid., 29-30. Also see Nietzsche: "On a stroll through the many finer and coarser moralities that have ruled on earth or still rule, I found certain traits regularly recurring together and closely linked: until I concluded that there were two basic types and a basic difference. There is a *master morality* and a *slave morality*; – I add at once, that in all higher and more mixed cultures attempts to mediate between the two moralities also appear, even more often a confusion of the same and mutual misunderstanding, even, on occasion, their harsh juxtaposition – indeed, in the same person, within one soul." Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Peason, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 154.
[221] Kashyap, *The Unknown Nietzsche*, 195.
[222] Iqbal, *Stray Reflections*, 63.
[223] Ibid., 80.
[224] Ibid., 82.
[225] Ibid., 84.

Echoing Nietzsche's 'overman,' in another entry, Iqbal writes: "Give up waiting for the *Mehdi* – the personification of *Power*. Go and *create* him."[226] In a way, this sounds like Nietzsche's idea that man must be overcome. Similarly, 'Mehdi' must not be waited idly and in a lazy way. Mehdi, 'the personification of power', must be created. Similar thoughts appear in the reader's mind when one reads Iqbal's entry entitled 'To Revitalise the Dying Organism.' In this entry, Iqbal writes: "A diseased social organism sometimes sets up within itself forces which have a tendency to preserve the health of the organism – e.g. the birth of a great Personality which may revitalise the dying organism by the revelation of a new ideal."[227] These bring to mind similar thoughts because here one can see the influences of Nietzschean ideas of 'overman', overcoming the cultural decline and cultural decadence, creating a new world with new values and the importance of a great personality in doing these things. After referring to sudden appearance of indirect and direct references to Nietzsche and his ideas and concepts in Iqbal's writings, I will now analyze the pessimist, sad and cynical mood that is found in Iqbal's writings in the same period.

3.2.   Signs of Nihilistic Crisis

The first signs of Iqbal's emerging nihilistic crisis can be seen in 1909 – more specifically in his letters to Atiya Begum. These letters are important because they provide us with more private information about Iqbal's personal feelings between 1909 and 1911. In these letters, Iqbal often talks about his "misfortune," and points to this misfortune as the reason for his sadness. Although he does not explain what causes this misfortune, Iqbal writes: "The reason is that I have been very much upset during these days – my misfortune has been following me like a faithful dog."[228] In order to cheer Iqbal up, Atiya tries to steer Iqbal into things he likes doing, such as writing poetry. To motivate him to do that, Atiya wants him to send her his poems. Although Iqbal agrees to do so, the question he asks again shows his continuing pessimist and cynical mood. He asks: "But what will you do with these poems – these wailings of a bleeding heart? There is nothing of cheerfulness in

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[226] Ibid., 85.
[227] Ibid., 88.
[228] Begum, *Iqbal*, 35.

them."[229] It seems that Iqbal does not like his poems in this period because they are not cheerful, life-giving, lively and joyful, and instead, they are sad and melancholic.

Clearer and bolder expressions of Iqbal's personal crisis can be seen in another letter Iqbal sends to Atiya Begum on April 9, 1909, approximately eight months after he returned to India in 1908. In this letter, Iqbal writes that he rejected a job offer from the Lahore Government College as chair of History department because he does not wish to enter any service and wants to run away from India as soon as possible. In addition to this, there are also other problems he experiences. He writes:[230]

> "My life is extremely miserable. They force my wife upon me. I have written to my father that he had no right to arrange my marriage especially when I had refused to enter into any alliance of that sort. I am quite willing to support her, but I am not prepared to make my life miserable by keeping her with me. As a human being I have a right to happiness – if society or nature deny that to me, I defy both. The only cure is that I should leave this wretched country for ever, or take refuge in liquor which makes suicide easier. Those dead barren leaves of books cannot yield happiness; I have got sufficient fire in my soul to burn them up and social conventions as well. A good God created all this, you say. Maybe. The facts of this life, however, tend to a different conclusion. It is intellectually easier to believe in an eternal omnipotent Devil rather than a good God. Please excuse me for these utterances. I do not want sympathy. I wanted only to disburden my soul."[231]

Although these statements can be related to the emotional distress triggered as a result of the physical, social and psychological displacement Iqbal experienced following his return to India from Europe, I think that when a closer attention is paid to the reasons behind these statements, one can see the bigger problems and issues that exercised Iqbal's mind and soul. For instance, it is clear that he is deeply troubled by an authoritarian father who does not listen to Iqbal's wishes and choices. In such a situation, Iqbal feels that his freedom, will and his egohood are being ignored by an authoritarian father who just gives commands and expects absolute obedience – like an unquestionable God and his relationship to a

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[229] Ibid., 35-36.

[230] The total number of letters Iqbal sent to Atiya is not known for sure, but in her book on Iqbal, Atiya Begum published eleven letters from Iqbal which were sent to her between between April 1907 and December 1911. Rauf Parekh to *Iqbal* by Atiya Begum, Preface, vii-viii.

[231] Begum, *Iqbal*, 23-24.

slave-like human individual who does not have any freedom of choice or free will. Signs of his questioning and daring attitude against God can be seen here where Iqbal thinks that he has a right to happiness because he is a human being, and he shows his readiness to revolt against any rule, norm or value that is imposed by society, nature, or even religion and God, that stands in front of him and prevents him from getting what he wants or what is his by right. He says that he does not accept an explanation that is built upon the idea that a good God created all these things. Looking at life in darker tones and in a rather pessimist mood, Iqbal sees misery, poverty, pain, suffering and evil rather than hope, joy, glory and goodness. Hence, Iqbal thinks that these confirm that the world is not run by a good God, but rather by an omnipotent Devil. Accordingly, Iqbal does not accept the idea that this good God is doing these things to humans because he has some plans about them, or he is testing them, and that humans should just be patient and accept all troubles, difficulties and problems of life as they come from this good God with the belief that the good God knows things better than humans do, and perhaps things will turn out to have some unexpected good results in the end.

He thinks that the only way to get out of this problem is to go out of India, not because he just wants to go back to Europe, but because India reminds him of all these problems, authoritarianism, lack of self-confidence, lack of freedom and independence with its social conventions, customs, culture and religions. As a result of these feelings and ideas, he does not find any hope or interest in intellectual activities anymore. Books and the realm of ideas do not soothe him, and he longs for action, dynamism and movement which he sees not so really praised and valued by the prevalent cultures and religions in India. It seems that he is filled with so much energy and valor that he feels ready to explode and contribute to the changing of his country, culture, religion and even the world. This way, all those dead ideas and thoughts that are found in books and all these dead social conventions would be dispersed with the explosion of his energy.

By the same token, Iqbal does not accept a passive, slave-like position vis-à-vis God. Accordingly, he demands an explanation from God, "and even challenges the Creator

blaming Him for those mysteries of Creation which remain hidden from him."[232] In another letter which is dated on 17th July 1909, he writes:

> "Of course, everybody is waiting patiently for the place of rest. I am anxious to go to that place because I shall like to meet the Creator and call upon Him to give me a rational explanation of my mind which I think is not an easy task for Him to do. I am incomprehensible to myself – you should not complain."[233]

Iqbal acts on what he says. He writes a poem in the same year (1909) in which he hypothetically meets God and calls upon him to give him a rational explanation for why things in the world are as they are. Expectedly, the similar questioning and daring mood can be seen in this poem. The poem is entitled *Shikwa* (Complaint), and Iqbal recites it to a wide audience at a gathering of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam in Lahore.[234] The theme of the poem is that Iqbal presents his complaints and protests against Allah for having been unfair to the Muslim community.[235] At the beginning of the poem, Iqbal writes:

> "Why must I forever lose, forever forgo profit that is my due,
> Sunk in the gloom of evenings past, no plans for the morrow pursue.
> Why must I all attentive be to the nightingale's lament,
> Friend, am I as dumb as a flower? Must I remain silent?
> My theme makes me bold, makes my tongue more eloquent.
> Dust fills my mouth, against Allah I make complaint."[236]

According to Naveeda Khan the poem created a sensation among Muslims in India – especially among the conservative religious scholars and leaders – and shocked many since "in it Iqbal addresses God directly, daring to blame him for bringing Muslims to their current pitiable condition."[237] Apart from Iqbal's direct confrontation with God, Khan adds

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[232] Ibid., 45-46.

[233] Ibid., 27.

[234] Muhammad Iqbal, *Shikwa and Jawab-i-Shikwa* (Complaint and Answer: Iqbal's Dialogue with Allah), Translated from Urdu, with an introduction by Khushwant Singh and a foreword by Rafiq Zakaria, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 25.

[235] Iqbal, 25. According to Schimmel, Ziya Paşa in Turkey had also written a poem that was similar to Shikwa. See, Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 39-40.

[236] Iqbal, *Shikwa and Jawab-i-Shikwa*, 28.

[237] Naveeda Khan, *Muslim Becoming: Aspiration and Skepticism in Pakistan*, (London: Duke University Press, 2012), 64.

that, Iqbal's choice of words was also criticized – for instance, his use of the word 'harjaee' (unfaithful) for God.[238]

Until now, I analyzed Iqbal's correspondences with Atiya Begum, his poetry and his entries in *Stray Reflections*, and demonstrated the dramatic change in Iqbal's mood into pessimism, sadness and cynicism between the years of 1909 and 1913. In addition to this, I analyzed two main themes – his questioning and daring attitude against God and his concern regarding his freedom and willing – that are found in Iqbal's writings in this period as a sign of his nihilistic crisis. In the next part, I consider the first steps of Iqbal's overcoming of this crisis.

3.3.   First Steps of Overcoming the Crisis

An initial step in that process can be seen in a poem Iqbal wrote in 1913 which indicates that Iqbal starts to develop a feeling of reconciliation with God. Four years after the recitation of *Shikwa*, Iqbal composes a new poem in 1913, entitled *Jawab-i-Shikwa* (Answer to the Complaint), which is supposedly a reply by Allah to Iqbal's complaint.[239] In a way, the poem is an illustration of Allah giving Iqbal a rational explanation for why the things are as they are. At the beginning of the poem, Allah says to Iqbal:

> "'Your tale is indeed full of sorrow;
> Your tears tremble at the brim and are ready to flow.
> Your cry of lament the sky has rung;
> What cunning your impassioned heart has lent your tongue!
> So eloquently did you word your plaint, you made it sound like praise.
> To talk on equal terms with Us, man to celestial heights did rise."[240]

Throughout the poem, Allah explains to Iqbal why the Muslims are in such a backward situation with respect to other peoples in the world. The main crux of Allah's response is that man should take the initiative and do things, and that God will also take action and help man in his efforts in achieving his goals. This means that the reconciliation between

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[238] Ibid., 64.
[239] Iqbal, *Shikwa and Jawab-i-Shikwa*, 25.
[240] Ibid., 65.

man and God is established by both parts accepting their responsibility and role in the doing things in the world. Allah accepts Iqbal's criticisms and complaints and takes responsibility for half of the problem, and he calls Iqbal to accept his responsibility for the other half. Accordingly, if man does his own share, this will be complemented and supported by God, and in this way, man and God become co-workers.

Yet, reconciliation between man and God is no longer sufficient for Iqbal to replace the collapsed cosmos with a new one since cosmos no longer consist only of God. Indeed, one of the major reasons why for Iqbal the image of cosmos, or metaphysical orientation provided by al-Jili and Hegel, collapsed was a crisis in human freedom; hence Iqbal now feels the need to develop a new conception of man whose freedom and will are empowered and given a more central role vis-à-vis God and nature. In other words, discovering God is not enough for Iqbal, and man should be discovered as well. The poem Iqbal published in 1915, *Asrar-i-Khudi* (The Secrets of the Self), can be considered as one of the building blocks of Iqbal's attempts at the discovery of man through a reconstruction of Sufism. By developing a reinterpretation of Sufism, Iqbal puts forward a new theory of the self. Schimmel considers Iqbal's ideas in this poem as "a shock therapy for almost all of Iqbal's friends and admirers"[241] because Iqbal takes the Persian word *khudi*, self, which has highly negative connotations and meanings, such as selfishness and egotism, and gives it a new meaning and turns it into a positive word.[242] As Schimmel explains, Iqbal harshly criticizes against the accustomed ideals of pantheistic form of Sufism, such as self-surrender, of quietism, of languishing nostalgia, which was influenced by Persian strands of thoughts, and in their place, develops a new doctrine of the 'self.' In this new conception of the self, man is understood as the vicegerent of God, who has to strengthen his personality, and cooperate with his Creator.[243] In doing this, Iqbal criticizes the influence of Persian pantheistic ideas on Sufism, and aims to show what 'real Sufism' is. As Iqbal writes, this view of man and the universe is obviously "opposed to that of the English Neo-Hegelians as well as to all forms of pantheistic Sufism which regard absorption in a universal life or

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[241] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 42.
[242] Ibid., 42.
[243] Ibid., 42.

soul as the final aim and salvation of man."[244] In contrast to pantheistic Sufism, Iqbal argues that "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."[245] As opposed to the doctrine of fana, Iqbal now argues that the goal is not to finally be absorbed in God; on the contrary, the goal is to absorb God into one's own self.[246] According to Atiya Begum, Iqbal's *Asrar-i-Khudi* shows that Iqbal went through such a period where he "fully realized the greatness of the complete freedom given to man on Earth, by virtue of which he tried to snatch the power the Creator wields over His Creation, which he considers his own and falls short in his achievement."[247]

However, the first and the only time Iqbal ever uses the term 'nihilism' in his writings is in his short article entitled "Islam and Mysticism" which was published in July 1917.[248] In this article, Iqbal refers to nihilism as one of the ways of escaping 'Reality.' In other words, Iqbal describes nihilism in this article as a state of mind of being unable to grapple with 'Reality' in its complete totality – in its both good and bad sides, happy and sad moments and with its pleasure and pain. Nihilism, according to Iqbal, emerges in periods of decadence and cultural decline, and offers a way out from, or a solution to, this decadence – a solution Iqbal strongly condemns. Iqbal condemns this solution because instead of facing the problem directly, it promotes escaping from the problem, from the Reality. In this regard, Iqbal refers to the emergence of other-worldly Sufism in the Muslim world as 'a false Mysticism born of the heart and brain of Persia' and which was influenced by 'Hellenic-Persian Mysticism.' Iqbal calls the representatives of the 'Hellenic-Persian Mysticism' as the 'prophets of decay,' 'obscurantists,' and 'the old Mystic.' According to Iqbal, these 'prophets of decay' are dangerous because they show a false ideal to people and lure them to accept this false ideal and live with it.

According to Iqbal, creating this false ideal and luring people into accepting it is put into practice by 'the old Mystic' in a process. Looking at the process from the perspective of the

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[244] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1920), xviii.
[245] Ibid., xviii-xix.
[246] Ibid., xix.
[247] Begum, *Iqbal*, 45-46.
[248] Iqbal, "Islam and Mysticism," 154-156.

people who are being lured into this false ideal, Iqbal also refers to this process as 'self-mystification': This is a self-mystification on behalf of the people who are lured by 'the old Mystic.' Discussing how this self-mystification took place in the Muslim World, Iqbal analyzes the process of God sending a law as a concrete thing to everyone – as a clear, rational and understandable thing. Since the law was clear, open and rationally intelligible, everybody could read it, understand it, know its meaning and apply it to their lives. 'The old Mystic,' however, said to the people that the law was just the 'appearance' (merely phenomenal), and that behind the appearance there was something more 'real' which was to be attained by means other than the law of God – through 'gnosticism' and through 'illuminations.' By doing that, the Old Mystic was separating the law from reason, intellect, rationality, and was making it a matter of a secret knowledge that can only be attained through 'gnosticism,' or through some kind of occult processes.

By luring people into these false ideals, Iqbal argues, they gradually lead to spiritual impoverishment and physical degeneration of the people and the society. They lead people to nihilism by telling them to shut their eyes to 'the hard Reality' around them and instead focus their gaze on 'illuminations'. If one accepts this view and ignores the hard reality around himself, Iqbal calls this process as 'self-mystification.' In this process, one voluntarily accepts ignoring the outside world, denies his own will, the real world, shows weakness of will and personality in dealing with the reality, tries not to accept the reality and consequently tries to find a way to escape from the reality. These, for Iqbal, are the signs of 'nihilism,' and such signs can always be seen in history because the decadent (the weak) always tries to find shelter behind self-mystification and nihilism.[249]

Further implications of this process could be experienced in the social and political levels. According to Iqbal, these false mystics, 'the old Mystics,' or the gnostics, make a misleading separation between intellect and intuition (mystical experience) and ignore or even reject reason, intellect and rationality, and in its place they place a kind of mysticism, gnosticism, a way of knowing things, which is totally subjective, mystified, impossible to understand, make sense of, or live with. By doing this, they create a situation where the

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[249] Ibid., 154.

'truth', 'reality' cannot be known or understood by everyone, by the ordinary people, and that it is only those select few, 'the old Mystics,' who can understand the reality, access the truth and then convey it to others, to the less fortunate, to the masses, and to the ordinary people. In that process, Iqbal believes that 'the Moslem Democracy' also disappeared and a kind of 'spiritual Aristocracy' took its place. By this Iqbal means that Muslims were living in a society where everybody was equal and had access to the law. In this society, there was no privileged class, or priest class who could claim to have access to the real message or the aim of the law. According to Iqbal, this equality of the people and equal access to the law were the factors that made the political structure in Muslim countries a democracy. Yet, when the false mysticism emerged and distorted the previous simple picture of Islam, it started to turn into a 'spiritual aristocracy' because a privileged spiritual, priest class started to emerge with their claim to have access to the real meaning and aim of the law, and who, indirectly claimed, that they know better than the ordinary people the real meaning and aim of God's will and commands. In a way, they were presenting themselves to be better rulers than the ordinary people. By this, Iqbal refers to the process of religious scholars and some mystics establishing a kind of a rule of clerical system in the Muslim world and taking over the control of the government and state since it is they who claim that knowledge and power are not open to the average Moslem. Iqbal sees a great danger in this process and calls it 'Persianisation of Islam'.

As opposed to the threat of clericalism or what he calls the 'Persianisation of Islam,' Iqbal reminds Muslims that "Islam was born in the broad day-light of history. The great democratic Prophet lived and worked among intelligent men who have transmitted to posterity every word that dropped from his sacred lips. There is absolutely nothing esoteric in his teachings."[250] In Muslim society, "every word of the Quran is brimful of light and joy of existence. Far from justifying any gloomy, pessimistic Mysticism, it is an open assault on those religious teachings which have for centuries mystified mankind."[251] What should be done, according to Iqbal, is to accept "the reality of the world cheerfully and grapple with it for the glorification of God and His Prophet."[252] The Muslims should not "listen to

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[250] Ibid., 156.
[251] Ibid., 156.
[252] Ibid., 156.

him who says there is a secret doctrine in Islam which cannot be revealed to the uninitiated [because] herein lies the power of this pretender and your thraldom."[253] Iqbal argues that these people, that is, 'the prophets of decay' or 'false mystics' enslave man by exploiting his ignorance of the history of Islam. These false mystics try to dispel the mist of their teachings from ordinary people's intellectual atmosphere, and they try to teach these Muslims to regard sense perception as 'the greatest veil.' In this way, Iqbal thinks, that "this enemy of sense reality blunts your sense for fact, and undermines the very foundations of the science and history."[254]

As opposed to these false mystics, Iqbal thinks that there are also other type of Sufis to learn from, such as Bayezid Bistami (804 – 874), Mansur Hallaj (c. 858 – 922) and Jalal-ud-Din Rumi (1207 – 1273). Writing an article in 1917 which is entitled "Nietzsche and Jalal-ud-Din Rumi", Iqbal presents Rumi and Nietzsche as representatives of true mysticism and their ideas as examples of proper solution to the problem of nihilism. Iqbal states that despite "the enormous intellectual distance that lies between them [Rumi and Nietzsche] these two great poet-philosophers seem to be in perfect agreement with regard to the practical bearing of their thought on life."[255] In other words, they were not merely interested in philosophizing, theorizing, or contemplation, but also interested in the practical impacts of their thinking, or the practical links between theory and life. Moreover, Iqbal thinks that the conditions and the social-political-cultural context into which Iqbal and Nietzsche were born were comparable. Both thinkers were born into a culture and time where their culture and society were declining and the individuals were weakening. According to Iqbal, how Rumi and Nietzsche situated themselves vis-à-vis this cultural decline, weakening of the self and increasing of life-negating tendencies and attitudes in the society, how they dealt with these problems and what kind of solutions they offer to these problems were also comparable. In Iqbal's view, Nietzsche saw the decadence of the human type around him and attempted to explain how this decadence could be overcome through the overcoming of this type of man. Thus Iqbal states that "'not how many is preserved, but how man is surpassed,' was the keynote of Nietzsche's thought." Rumi too

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[253] Ibid., 156.
[254] Ibid., 156.
[255] Muhammad Iqbal, "Nietzsche and Jalal-ud-Din Rumi" in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 161.

thought that the solution to the problem of decadence, cultural decline and the weakening of the individual could be overcome through the cultivation of a new ideal type of Moslem manhood.[256]

Consequently, it is clear that from 1909 to 1917, and even perhaps up to 1920s, Nietzsche is one of the biggest, or perhaps the biggest, source of influence and challenge for Iqbal which leads to fundamental and significant changes and transformations in Iqbal's thinking and philosophy. However, this does not mean that Iqbal agrees with Nietzsche completely. The problem with Nietzsche, Iqbal thinks, is that Nietzsche stops at destruction or 'negation', that is, he destroys the old, but he does not build something new in the place of the old.[257] This does not mean that Iqbal fails to consider the life-affirming dimensions of Nietzsche's solutions, of overcoming metaphysics, overcoming man, creation of a new society, new culture, new type of man and a new life. These are definitely constructive and affirmative dimensions of Nietzsche's thinking and philosophy for Iqbal as well. What Iqbal means when he argues that Nietzsche remains at 'the station of no' or 'negation' is that Nietzsche remains in a kind of materialism, and fails to appreciate or understand other half of reality which is spirit, mind, or idea. Accordingly, Iqbal thinks that the 'real' solution to the problem of nihilism cannot come from Nietzsche either. In fact, he thinks that the 'real' solution can neither come through only materialism, nor only idealism. Real solution, according to Iqbal, can come through a healthy combination of materialism and

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[256] Ibid., 161-162.

[257] About Nietzsche, Iqbal wrote the following words in Javidnama.
"What he was seeking was the station of Omnipotence,
which station transcends reason and philosophy.
Life is a commentary on the hints of the self,
"no" and "but" are of the stations of the self;
he remained fast in "no" and did not reach "but"
being a stranger to the station of "His servant".
Revelation embraced him, yet he knew it not,
being like fruit all the farther from the roots of the tree.
His eyes desired no other vision but man;
fearlessly he shouted, "Where is man? "
and else he had despaired of earth's creatures
and like Moses he was seeking the vision.
Would that he had lived in Ahmad's time,
so that he might have attained eternal joy.
His reason is in dialogue with itself;
take your own way, for one's own way is good.
Stride onwards, for now that station has come
wherein speech sprouts without spoken words." Muhammad Iqbal, *Javidnama*, Versified English Translation, Translated from the Persian with introduction and notes Arthur J. Arberry, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1966), 329.

idealism, through a new approach which recognizes that matter and spirit are organically united and connected to each other, and that life and reality is both spirit and matter, both body and soul.

Iqbal refers to this combination as 'the inner unity of life', or 'the inner synthesis of life,' and discusses it briefly in a short article he wrote in 1926 entitled "The Inner Synthesis of Life."[258] According to Iqbal, life is a unity means that life and reality is a unity of matter and spirit, body and soul, good and evil and material and ideal. Life is a unity means life/reality is not a one-dimensional, or one-sided phenomenon, but rather a complete thing; it is both matter and spirit, both ideal and material. Elaborating on the situation of the current education system in India, Iqbal argues that it fails to understand 'the inner synthesis of life' because it only touches the body of the man, but leaves the soul of man untouched. This causes a problem because without understanding this principle, the unity of life, life and reality cannot be understood. And without understanding this principle, man, which is a unity of matter and spirit, body and soul, cannot be understood. In the end, without understanding this principle, nothing in existence, which is again a unity of matter and spirit, can be understood.[259]

At the beginning of the chapter, I argued that a crisis in human freedom and willing and the consequent collapse of the cosmos and the erosion of a hierarchically ordered nature, where humans have a proper place, were the initial triggering factors for Iqbal's nihilistic crisis in this period. Consequently, I have shown how Iqbal made various attempts in dealing with this crisis, such as, reconciling with God, developing a reinterpretation of Sufism and the ethical ideals of a particular type of Sufism, developing new conception of man with strengthened powers, will and freedom vis-à-vis nature and God thus creating a new conception of cosmos, or a new metaphysical orientation. In general, these were some of the key elements to understanding Iqbal's solution to the problem of nihilism, his overcoming of nihilism. I suggested that the crisis period ends towards the end of 1920s, and by that time Iqbal already has in his mind a new metaphysical orientation and a new

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[258] Muhammad Iqbal, "The Inner Synthesis of Life" in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 162.
[259] Ibid., 162.

solution to 'the human enigma.' In the next chapter, I will analyze Iqbal's latest philosophical project, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, to demonstrate how Iqbal brings together these scattered ideas and writings from 1909 to the end of 1920s, and creates a systematic and comprehensive response to the problem of nihilism in its different dimensions, such as epistemological, metaphysical, moral and political.

4. Nihilism and Iqbal: Second Overcoming (1928 – 1938)

4.1. Epistemological Nihilism and Iqbal – I

Following the main argument of the dissertation that Iqbal's philosophy is best analyzed and understood within the context of the problem of nihilism, until now I analyzed how Iqbal offered a solution to the problem of nihilism through Sufism, particularly in the metaphysical system of the Sufi thinker al-Jili. After that, I demonstrated how Iqbal later considered this solution to be dissatisfying and consequently fell into a nihilistic crisis. Now, I will analyze how he overcame this crisis by developing a new solution to the problem of nihilism. As I stated in the Introduction chapter, the product of Iqbal's efforts of overcoming nihilism for the second time is *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* which was published for the first time in 1934 and is usually regarded as Iqbal's magnum opus and also the most systematic and latest expression of his philosophy. In this chapter, I mainly focus on this book and analyze Iqbal's solution to the problem of nihilism in its epistemological, metaphysical, moral and political dimensions. I first begin with the epistemological dimension.

Compared to how Iqbal understood and discussed the epistemological aspect of the problem of nihilism in 'First Overcoming,' there are both certain similarities and also certain differences in Iqbal's 'Second Overcoming.' One similarity is that, like the article on al-Jili, in *Reconstruction* too Iqbal is concerned with the same question, that is, 'the human enigma.' At the beginning of the book, he puts forward this question in the following way: "What is the character and general structure of the universe in which we live? Is there a permanent element in the constitution of this universe? How are we related to it? What place do we occupy in it, and what is the kind of conduct that befits the place we occupy?"[260] Again, like the article on al-Jili, Iqbal thinks that "these questions are common to religion [mysticism/Sufism], philosophy, and higher poetry,"[261] and that mystical approach is superior to others in dealing with 'the human enigma.' In order to show the superiority of mystical approach, Iqbal first makes some comparisons between

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[260] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 1.
[261] Ibid., 1.

these three approaches and then explains this superiority by analyzing through what Iqbal calls 'the intellectual test' how philosophy and mystical approach explain 'the human enigma.' Iqbal leaves 'higher poetry' aside because he thinks that "the kind of knowledge that poetic inspiration brings is essentially individual in its character; it is figurative, vague, and indefinite."[262] Philosophy and mystical approach, however, are comparable in their approach to knowledge because they both have a cognitive content and provide objective and generalizable knowledge which is clear and definite. Regarding the differences between Iqbal's First Overcoming and Second Overcoming of the epistemological aspect of the problem, I argue that there are mainly two differences.

The first difference is a contribution to the previous solution Iqbal believed that he has found in the metaphysical system of al-Jili – and Hegel. As I demonstrated in the second chapter, First Overcoming, Iqbal was concerned with the Kantian dualism of the two separate realms, noumenal and phenomenal, and the problem of the impossibility of attaining the knowledge of the noumenal realm, such as God, freedom, immortality and souls. Iqbal believed that al-Jili's doctrine of 'the identity of attribute and reality' and Hegel's doctrine of 'the identity of thought and being' provided a solution to this problem by considering a deeper unity between the phenomenal realm and the noumenal realm, and between the subject (the knower, human reason, mind) and the object (the known, the nature, universe).[263] In *Reconstruction*, Iqbal discusses this issue again, and therefore I will also briefly touch upon it as well since I should show in what ways Iqbal's new solution is similar to and differs from the previous solution. However, Iqbal is interested in another Kantian idea which limits knowledge to the phenomenal realm, and makes it impossible to acquire the knowledge of the noumenal realm. According to Kant, space and time are the necessary conditions for all experience, and the knowledge of things that stay outside the boundaries of space and time, such as 'the thing in itself', God and souls, cannot be known because they cannot be experienced.[264] In Iqbal's view, this means that Kant speaks of only

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[262] Ibid., 1.

[263] Chapter 2, Section 2.5. How al-Jili's Sufi Solution does not lead to Pantheism, Atheism, Fatalism, thus Nihilism

[264] Kant writes: "It is therefore indubitably certain, and not merely possible or even probable, that space and time, as the necessary conditions of all (outer and inner) experience, are merely subjective conditions of all our intuition, in relation to which therefore all objects are mere appearances and not things given for themselves in this way; about these appearances, further, much may be said a priori that concerns their form, but nothing whatsoever about the things in themselves that may ground them.", Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 171.

one level of space and time, and accordingly one level of experience which Iqbal refers to as 'normal level of experience.' Since there is one level of space and time, and one level of experience, there is also one kind of knowledge, that is, the knowledge of the phenomenal realm. In *Reconstruction*, Iqbal attempts to go beyond this view by showing the possibility of more than one level of space and time and experience, and thus knowledge. To do this, Iqbal discusses the ideas of a Sufi thinker and poet, Iraqi[265], from the history of Islamic thought and the ideas of Henri Bergson (1859 – 1941) and various Quantum physicists, for instance Arthur Eddington (1882 – 1944), from contemporary scientific and philosophical developments. This is how Iqbal shows another way of going beyond Kantian dualism between the phenomenal and noumenal realms and to show that the knowledge of the noumenal realm is possible.

The second difference is about Iqbal's life long concern with the method of Sufi/mystical approach to improve the objectivity, systematicity and clarity of it. While discussing Iqbal's analysis of al-Jili's mysticism/Sufism in the second chapter, I showed how Iqbal thought that al-Jili's approach lacked 'a sound philosophical method' and therefore al-Jili sometimes just posited things instead of explaining them clearly, openly and in a systematic way.[266] Furthermore, Iqbal thought that al-Jili's mysticism led "him to drop vague, obscure remarks savouring of Platonic poetry rather than philosophy"[267] which in turn made al-Jili's teaching 'appear rather dogmatic.' [268] Accordingly, I wrote in the second chapter that "understanding Iqbal's methodological criticisms toward al-Jili's mysticism is important because as it will be seen in the fourth chapter, Nihilism and Iqbal: Second Overcoming (1928 – 1938), where I will analyze Iqbal's final views on this subject as they are discussed by Iqbal in the *Reconstruction*, that improving the precision and method of mysticism/Sufism and to put forward a more systematic, objective, clear and open form of Sufism will be one of the central aims of Iqbal in this period." This is what I will do in this chapter. Before analyzing how Iqbal attempts at going beyond Kant's conception of space

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[265] According to the editor of the *Reconstruction*, M. Saeed Sheikh, Iraqi refers to 'Ain al-Qudāt Abū 'l-Ma'ālī 'Abdullāh b. Muhammad b. 'Alī b. al-Hasan b. 'Alī al-Miyānjī al-Hamadānī (492-525/1098-1131*)* who wrote a tractate on space and time – *Ghāyat al-Imkān fi Dirāyat al-Makān* (54 pp.). See Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 171-172.
[266] Iqbal, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani," 244.
[267] Ibid., 246.
[268] Ibid., 238.

and time and also develop a more systematic and objective form of Sufism, however, I want to explain a general trend or process Iqbal sees in various philosophical traditions – particularly Islamic and modern European/German ones. This will help us understand how Iqbal understands the development of different approaches (philosophical, theological, Sufi) to knowledge in these traditions, and consequently how Iqbal situates himself vis-à-vis these developments.

4.1.1. Learning from the History of Islamic Philosophy and Modern German Philosophy

Looking at the intellectual history of different cultures, such as Islam and modern Europe, Iqbal sees three different processes or attitudes toward knowledge. At first, an approach to knowledge that relies exclusively on reason emerges. Philosophers/scientists usually utilize this approach and they develop an explanation of the universe, man and the whole existence, i.e. 'the human enigma', by using reason. This usually creates a materialist conception of the universe, that is, the universe and the whole existence is made up of matter, and whatever exists is a matter or body. At a second stage, this approach creates a reaction. The critics of the previous approach, usually the theologians, argue that reason cannot provide certain and indubitable knowledge about the ultimate nature of Reality, and thus only faith can do this. Hence, they develop an approach to knowledge that exclusively relies on faith. This usually creates an idealist conception of the universe, that is, the universe and the whole existence is made up of mind, and whatever exists is a mind or soul/spirit. This is followed by a third stage where the previous two approaches are criticized, and a new approach to knowledge is developed. Iqbal thinks that this process was experienced both in the history of Islamic thought and also in the history of modern European/German philosophy.

In the history of Islamic philosophy, according to Iqbal, this process began with philosophers (falasifa) – also known as 'rationalists', such as Mutazila – who emerged through an interaction with ancient Greek philosophy. According to Iqbal, the Greek influence, although a great cultural force in the history of Islamic thought which broadened

the outlook of Muslim thinkers, also obscured their visions in approaching the knowledge of Reality.[269] Iqbal criticizes the Muslim philosophers (falasifa) for looking at Reality in a piecemeal way, that is, for ignoring some parts or aspects of Reality, and also relying only on reason/intellect as means to knowledge. To support his view, Iqbal gives two brief examples. He first talks about the influence of Socrates who concentrated on the human world alone and ignored the natural world, the plants, insects, and stars, etc. This, according to Iqbal, was in contradiction with the idea that the Reality is a whole. It did not consist of only the human world but also the natural world and the universe. The second example Iqbal talks about is Plato who despised sense-perception as means to knowledge because according to Plato it does not give real knowledge, but mere opinion. Iqbal, on the other hand, thinks that sense-perception is also a valid means to knowledge, and thus should not simply be ignored with the idea that it gives mere opinion, but not real knowledge.[270]

According to Iqbal this Greek influence on Muslim thinkers lasted about two hundred years, and after that there emerged a reaction against the philosophers from the theological school (kalam), the Asharite. In fact, Iqbal considers this as a revolt against ancient Greek philosophy and claims that it is with this revolt Muslim thinkers realized that the spirit of the Qur'an is essentially 'anti-classical.'[271] According to Iqbal, the Asharite school criticized the Mutazila thinkers for developing a materialist conception of the universe. This was a result of their approach which was based solely on reason/philosophy. As Iqbal says, the Mu'tazilah "took no notice of non-conceptual modes of approaching Reality and reduced religion to a mere system of logical concepts ending in a purely negative attitude. They failed to see that in the domain of knowledge – scientific or religious – complete independence of thought from concrete experience is not possible."[272] According to Iqbal, the Asharite view was not totally acceptable either. First of all, in the place of the materialist conception of universe, they put an idealist conception of universe, which was kind of going from one extreme to another. Furthermore, their approach too was

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[269] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 3.
[270] Ibid., 3.
[271] Ibid., 3.
[272] Ibid., 4.

problematic because their object, according to Iqbal, was "was simply to defend orthodox opinion with the weapons of Greek dialectic."[273]

After the philosophical and theological approaches, Iqbal analyzes the mystical/Sufi approach through the ideas of Ghazali. Ghazali criticizes the philosophical and theological approaches to show their inadequacies as means to knowledge. More specifically, Ghazali uses the methods of philosophy to criticize philosophy, and shows the limits of reason in acquiring knowledge of Reality. He shows that philosophy/reason cannot provide indubitable knowledge, and furthermore, it undermines its own authority, and leads us to skepticism. Not having any hope left to acquire the knowledge of Reality through theology and philosophy, Iqbal argues that Ghazali resorts to some kind of a subjective, irrational, and emotional mysticism and finds the knowledge of Reality there. What Iqbal finds as problematic with Ghazali's approach is that after showing the inadequacies of both approaches, Ghazali cannot put an objective knowledge of Reality, and claims to have found Reality through an irrational mysticism. Although Iqbal thinks that Ghazali opens up a space for the possibility of religion, he does not find this satisfactory because this possibility is kind of established upon skepticism.[274] Iqbal, on the other hand, thinks that this possibility should be provided by a more objective and a rational approach to knowledge.

Iqbal thinks that this process, that is, realizing that reason/philosophy is incapable of bringing us the knowledge of Reality, is not peculiar or limited to Islamic tradition. He thinks that the same experience took place in European philosophical tradition as well. The process that began in Islamic tradition with rationalists continued with theologians and ended with the admission of philosophy/reason its incapacity in providing us the knowledge of Reality took place in modern German philosophy as well, and ended with the same result: admission of philosophy of its incapacity to provide us the knowledge of Reality, or skepticism. Iqbal thinks that whereas this process ended with Ghazali in Islamic tradition, it came to this end with Kant in modern German philosophy. He writes:

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[273] Ibid., 4.
[274] Ibid., 3-4.

"It cannot, however, be denied that Ghazali's mission was almost apostolic like that of Kant in Germany of the eighteenth century. In Germany rationalism appeared as an ally of religion, but she soon realized that the dogmatic side of religion was incapable of demonstration. The only course open to her was to eliminate dogma from the sacred record. With the elimination of dogma came the utilitarian view of morality, and thus rationalism completed the reign of unbelief. Such was the state of theological thought in Germany when Kant appeared. His *Critique of Pure Reason* revealed the limitations of human reason and reduced the whole work of rationalists to a heap of ruins. And justly has he been described as God's greatest gift to his country. Ghazali's philosophical scepticism which, however, went a little too far, virtually did the same kind of work in the world of Islam in breaking the back of that proud but shallow rationalism which moved in the same direction as pre-Kantian rationalism in Germany. There is, however, one important difference between Ghazali and Kant. Kant, consistently with his principles, could not affirm the possibility of a knowledge of God. Ghazali, finding no hope in analytic thought, moved to mystic experience, and there found an independent content for religion. In this way he succeeded securing for religion the right to exist independently of science and metaphysics."[275]

By rationalism that appeared as an ally of religion, and then consequent debates about the relations between rationalism and religion, Iqbal in fact refers to 'the pantheism controversy.' And by 'pre-Kantian rationalism', he refers to the philosophies of the Enlightenment thinkers, such as Lessing and Mendelssohn. The Enlightenment philosophy was at first understood as an ally of religion because it was believed that reason could provide a better support than faith or revelation for the fundamental moral, religious and political beliefs and truths. It was the philosophies of these two thinkers, Lessing and Mendelssohn, which were taken as the most perfect examples of the Enlightenment philosophy by Jacobi, and thus put to a severe criticism by him later. As I have already discussed in the second chapter, First Overcoming, while analyzing 'the pantheism controversy'[276], through Lessing's philosophy, Jacobi challenged the most fundamental element of philosophy in general and the Enlightenment philosophy in particular, that is, the belief in the authority of reason. When Iqbal states that later it became difficult to reconcile the dogmatic side of religion with philosophy, he actually refers to the criticisms of Jacobi against the Enlightenment philosophy and its basic claim about reason being able

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[275] Ibid., 4.
[276] See chapter 2.1 Sources of Iqbal's Knowledge of Nihilism I: 'The Pantheism Controversy'

to support those beliefs and truths. What Jacobi does is to show that philosophy is not able to support religion, moral values, or social and political truths, and more importantly than this, his criticisms shows that philosophy (reason) is not even able to support itself because it is not a self-sufficient thing. After Jacobi's criticisms, it becomes difficult to reconcile the dogmatic side of religion with philosophy, and the result is that philosophy is understood to be leading to materialism, atheism, fatalism thus nihilism if it is pursued 'honestly' and consistently, as in the case of Lessing. Thus, it is to these results Iqbal refers to when he writes that this was the victory of unbelief and the emergence of a mere utilitarian perception of morality. That is, when it is understood that philosophy cannot support or provide legitimacy for morality anymore through reason, morality came to be justified merely on utilitarian grounds. Similarly, when it is realized that philosophy cannot provide legitimacy for religious beliefs and truths, it was admitted that the knowledge of such beliefs cannot be provided by reason. The result was either to admit the 'unbelief', 'atheism', thus 'nihilism,' or to find shelter in revelation and faith as Jacobi suggested through his idea of 'salto mortale', 'leap of faith.' Hence, it is at this point Kant appears with his *Critique of Reason*, and according to Iqbal, demonstrates the limits of reason. Interestingly, Iqbal considers Kant's ideas as a critique of the previous rationalists, such as Lessing and Mendelssohn, and as a kind of aid to religion rather than seeing it as a critique of religion and religious knowledge. Hence it is for this reason Iqbal refers to the view of Kant where he was described as 'God's greatest gift' to Germany.[277]

To conclude, these two different philosophical traditions, Islamic and European, gave Iqbal the same idea about philosophical approach to knowledge, that is, although it is useful in certain ways, it finally admits its incapacity to bring us knowledge of ultimate Reality. Similarly, Iqbal thinks that this process shows the inadequacies of the theological approach and also a certain form of Sufism as well – the one Iqbal considers as less systematic and objective. For Iqbal, Ghazali is the example of the third stage of the same process that can be seen in the history of Islamic thought while Kant is the example of this in the history of

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[277] George Matheson's book, *Aids to the Study of German Theology* is one of the sources of Iqbal while writing his article on al-Jili in 1900. It is possible that Iqbal took this description about Kant from Matheson where Matheson writes: "But conceding all this, it still remains a fact indisputable, that the philosophy of Kant, or rather his destruction of all absolute philosophy, was God's greatest gift to the Germany of the eighteenth century." George Matheson, *Aids to the Study of German Theology* (T. & T. Clark, 1876), 11.

modern German philosophy. Since Iqbal finds both Ghazali's and Kant's solutions to be incomplete and problematic in certain ways, he situates himself among the post-Kantian and post-Ghazalian thinkers who attempt to provide a solution to the problems Kant and Ghazali was dealing with. In this regard, Iqbal benefits from al-Jili's philosophy in finding a way to go beyond Ghazali's solution and Hegel's philosophy to go beyond Kant's solution. Below, I will first explain how he attempts to go beyond the Kantian and Ghazalian solutions, and then open up a space for a new approach to knowledge, that is, a reconstructed form of Sufism which is more scientific and objective.

4.1.2. Going beyond Kant and Ghazali – I: Connecting the Phenomenal and Noumenal Realms

Iqbal finds both Ghazali's and Kant's solutions to be unsuccessful or unsatisfying and wants to develop remedies for that. Kant's solution is based on the separations between 'pure reason' and 'practical reason,' and 'phenomenal realm' and 'noumenal realm.' While pure reason can bring us the knowledge of the phenomenal realm, it is the practical reason that has the ability to bring us the 'knowledge' of the noumenal realm. As Beiser states, however, this solution is problematic because Kant maintains this separation by separating 'reason' from 'knowledge.' That is, Kant defines practical reason not as a faculty of knowledge, but as a faculty of practical faith.[278] As Beiser shows, this does not really solve the problem since it creates a dualism and a gap between the noumenal and phenomenal realms, and makes it impossible to acquire the knowledge of the noumenal realm and the things that are supposed to exist there, such as God, immortality, and freedom.[279] In other words, by doing that, Kant admits the incapability or the limit of reason in bringing us the knowledge of Reality, of 'the-thing-in-itself,' the knowledge of the noumenal realm. While real and objective existence would be associated with the phenomenal realm, the knowledge of the noumenal realm, along with the knowledge of the-thing-in-itself, God, or Pure Being would become dubious or uncertain.

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[278] Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 116.
[279] Ibid., 116.

Ghazali's solution is problematic as well because the content or the method of his mysticism is rather subjective and individualistic. It seems like Ghazali has found a way to acquire the knowledge of the noumenal realm as well; however, since Ghazali achieved this through an irrational, non-systematic and subjective approach the solution he found has meaning and value only for himself. According to Iqbal, Ghazali experienced 'the total Infinite,' that is, 'the-thing-in-itself', or God, by a mystic experience, through intuition, and since he could not achieve this through thought/intellect/reason, he believed that there is distinction between thought/reason and intuition. He drew a sharp and exclusionary cleavage between thought and intuition, and accordingly believed that while 'intuition' is able to access the Infinite, God, and could give conclusive, solid, certain results, 'thought' is only able to access the finite and is inconclusive, doubtful, and uncertain.

Iqbal, on the other hand, wants to show that the knowledge of God, 'the-thing-in-itself', the Reality is possible, and in doing that he aims to go beyond Ghazali and Kant. Iqbal thinks that Kant and Ghazali fail because "they look upon 'thought' as an agency working on things from without."[280] Instead, Iqbal states that it is "possible to take thought not as a principle which organizes and integrates its material from the outside, but as a potency which is formative of the very being of its material."[281] In this respect, it becomes clear that thought is not alien, separate, or detached from the being, from the nature of things. Instead, "it is their ultimate ground and constitutes the very essence of their being, infusing in them from the very beginning of their career and inspiring their onward march to a self-determined end."[282] In other words, Iqbal thinks that Ghazali and Kant fail in their endeavors because they could not understand and see the 'deeper unity' between 'thought' and 'being,' between 'the subject' and 'the object' (knower and known), between reason/philosophy and mystical experience/intuition, between thought and intuition, and that they are in fact organically related to each other.[283]

As I have discussed in details in the second chapter, First Overcoming, Iqbal overcomes this problem through the al-Jilian doctrine of 'the identity of attribute and reality' and

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[280] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 25.
[281] Ibid., 25.
[282] Ibid., 25.
[283] Ibid., 4.

Hegelian doctrine of 'the identity of thought and being.'[284] According to these doctrines, there is not an exclusive separation between the ideal and the real, between the thought and being, between the noumenal realm and phenomenal realm. They argue that there is a deeper unity between thought and being, and between the subject (the knower, human reason, mind) and the object (the known, the nature, universe). As it will be remembered[285], according to these two doctrines, the Absolute/God/thought, i.e. 'the ultimate nature of Reality,' leaves its absoluteness and goes into a process of realizing itself or manifesting itself in existence, in being. Hence, Iqbal argues that for al-Jili Nature is the idea of God. In other words, the Nature, or the phenomenal world, is the objectification of 'the Absolute Being.' Al-Jili asserts that the "idea is the stuff of which this universe is made: Thought, idea, notion is the material of the structure of nature."[286] In this respect, since 'thought' and 'being' are related to each other, it is possible to understand 'thought' by analyzing 'being'. This means that it is possible to acquire the knowledge of 'thought' (the Absolute, God, the ultimate nature of Reality) by analyzing its manifestations in being, i.e. existence. In other words, to know the manifestations of the-thing-in-itself, or God, is to know God. God manifests itself in existence in universe/nature and in man; therefore, to acquire the knowledge of universe/nature and yourself is to acquire the knowledge of God. In agreement with al-Jili and Hegel, by being/existence Iqbal also refers to man and universe. So, in short, this approach defends the idea that one can acquire the knowledge of 'the ultimate nature of Reality', the thought, the Absolute/God by studying, observing, examining and analyzing man and universe because it is through these, thought manifests or realizes itself. It is important to understand this point because it is upon this 'deeper unity' Iqbal attempts to develop his alternative view and approach to the knowledge of Reality, of 'the-thing-in-itself.'

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[284] Iqbal, "The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jilani," 240.
[285] Please see chapter 2.5 How al-Jili's Sufi Solution does not lead to Pantheism, Atheism, Fatalism, thus Nihilism.
[286] Ibid., 239.

4.1.3. Going beyond Kant and Ghazali – II: Opening Up a Space for Mystical Experience as a 'Normal Level of Experience'

When beginning his discussion of the problem, Iqbal first reminds the reader Kant's question of whether metaphysics is possible. Kant answers this question in the negative, and Iqbal thinks that this argument applies to the realities in which religion is especially interested as well.[287] Metaphysics, i.e. the knowledge of the noumenal realm, such as the knowledge of God, souls, freedom, immortality, or 'the-thing-in-itself', is not possible because according to Kant, experience must fulfill certain formal conditions in order to constitute knowledge. Space-time is one of these conditions. According to Iqbal, in Kant's view, there is only one level of space and time, and thus one level of experience that is called 'normal level of experience,'[288] and hence one kind of knowledge that is conditioned by this one level of space and time and one level of experience. 'The-thing-in-itself' is inaccessible to pure reason according to Kant because it falls beyond the boundaries of normal level of experience, because it falls beyond the space and time we are conditioned in.[289]

In response to this, Iqbal states that Kant's verdict regarding the impossibility of metaphysics can be accepted only if we too accept starting with the assumption that all experience other than 'the normal level of experience' is impossible. Accepting this also means accepting that there is only one level of space and time. Accordingly, this means that if there are other levels of space and time, then there can be other levels of experience as well, such as intuition, insight and mystical experience. If these other levels of experience are knowledge-yielding experiences too, then Kant's verdict, that is metaphysics is impossible, would lose its force. Thus, Iqbal thinks that the real question is whether the normal level of experience is the only level of knowledge-yielding experience or not. Referring to the ideas of the Sufi thinker and poet, Iraqi, who insists on the plurality of space-orders and time-orders and speaks of a Divine Time and a Divine Space, Iqbal states that "it may be that what we call the external world is only an intellectual construction, and

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[287] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 144.
[288] By 'normal level of experience', Iqbal refers to sense-perception, material level of experience and rational level of experience. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 144.
[289] Ibid., 144.

that there are other levels of human experience capable of being systematized by other orders of space and time – levels in which concept and analysis do not play the same role as they do in the case of our normal experience."[290] Iqbal thinks that the recent developments in science, such as the idea that matter is 'bottled-up light waves' (relativity physics, Einstein), the idea of universe as an act of thought (Whitehead), finiteness of space and time (Einstein, Whitehead), and Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy in nature, also seem to support the idea of more than one level of space and time, and point to the possibility of more than one level of experience, thus knowledge.[291]

According to Iqbal, the Sufi poet Iraqi distinguishes between different levels of time and space and attributes them to different levels of being, and beings that exist in these different levels of space and time shift between materiality and pure spirituality. Iraqi discusses three levels of time which are 'time of gross bodies', 'time of immaterial beings', and 'Divine Time.' 'Time of gross bodies' has a serial character, and thus is divisible into past, present and future. As Iqbal states, "its nature is such that as long as one day does not pass away the succeeding day does not come."[292] 'The time of immaterial beings' is also serial in character, but as Iqbal states, "its passage is such that a whole year in the time of gross bodies is not more than a day in the time of an immaterial being."[293] Rising higher and higher in the scale of immaterial beings Iraqi reaches 'Divine time', "which is absolutely free from the quality of passage, and consequently does not admit of divisibility, sequence, and change."[294] 'Divine time' is above eternity, and for this reason, it has neither beginning nor end. In this respect, 'Divine time' is freed from the causal sequence and serial character, and "is gathered up in a single super-eternal "now"."[295]

Similar to the levels of time, Iraqi argues that there are also three kinds of space: 'the space of material bodies', 'the space of immaterial bodies' and 'the space of God.' Moreover, he states that the space of material bodies is further divided into three kinds: 'the space of gross bodies', 'the space of subtle bodies', and 'the space of light.' According to Iraqi, in

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[290] Ibid., 144-145.
[291] Ibid.", 144.
[292] Ibid., 60.
[293] Ibid., 60.
[294] Ibid.," 60.
[295] Ibid., 61.

'the space of gross bodies,' bodies occupy their respective places and resist displacement, and movement takes time.[296] Similarly in 'the space of subtle bodies', i.e. air and sound, too "bodies resist each other, and their movement is measurable in terms of time which, however, appears to be different to the time of gross bodies."[297] This means that "the air in a tube must be displaced before other air can enter into it; and the time of sound-waves is practically nothing compared to the time of gross bodies."[298] 'The space of light' is the space "where the light of the sun instantly reaches the remotest limits of the earth. Thus in the velocity of light and sound time is reduced almost to zero. It is, therefore, clear that the space of light is different to the space of air and sound."[299] In addition to 'the space of material bodies,' Iqbal also discusses Iraqi's ideas about 'the space of immaterial bodies' and 'the space of God.' According to Iraqi, 'the space of immaterial bodies' is occupied by various types of immaterial beings, such as angels. Furthermore, "the element of distance is not entirely absent from these spaces; for immaterial beings, while they can easily pass through stone walls, cannot altogether dispense with motion which, according to 'Irāqī, is evidence of imperfection in spirituality."[300] Iqbal adds that according to Iraqi, "the highest point in the scale of spatial freedom is reached by the human soul which, in its unique essence, is neither at rest nor in motion."[301] And finally, "passing through the infinite varieties of space we reach the Divine space which is absolutely free from all dimensions and constitutes the meeting point of all infinities."[302]

Although he sees various problems with this account, Iqbal still appreciates the ideas of Iraqi for its complexity and depth. Iqbal considers Iraqi's interest as an evidence of the spirit of Muslim culture which pushes people to attempt to understand the nature of space and time – especially time. This is importance because, according to Iqbal, these issues become a focus of interest only in modern times through the theories and concepts of the modern mathematics and physics. The problem Iqbal sees in Iraqi's analysis is that instead of philosophically reaching certain positions through a criticism of the spatial and temporal

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[296] Ibid., 108.
[297] Ibid., 108.
[298] Ibid., 108.
[299] Ibid., 108.
[300] Ibid., 109.
[301] Ibid., 109.
[302] Ibid., 109.

aspects of experience, Iraqi simply postulates them on the basis of his spiritual experience. The reason for this, Iqbal thinks, is that Iraqi was not a mathematician, and therefore he lacked the necessary scientific methods and tools for his analysis. Yet, Iqbal does not think that the spiritual experience is unworthy and has no cognitive dimension. On the contrary, he thinks the spiritual experience is a very important source of human knowledge. However, he thinks that this should also be shown through a philosophical/intellectual analysis.[303] For a more systematic, objective and intellectual analysis of time, Iqbal refers to the ideas of Bergson because he thinks that "among the representatives of contemporary thought, Bergson is the only thinker who has made a keen study of the phenomenon of duration in time."[304] I will explain how Iqbal discusses Bergson's ideas on serial time and duration while presenting the details of Iqbal's analysis of 'the intellectual test' in the chapter entitled '4.2. Epistemological Nihilism and Iqbal – II'.

4.1.4. A More Systematic and Objective form of Sufi Approach to Knowledge – I: Comparing Philosophy, Religion (Mystical Approach) and 'Higher Poetry'

To put forward a more systematic, objective and clear form of Sufism, Iqbal first makes certain comparisons between philosophy, mystical approach and 'higher poetry.' He first compares mystical experience with 'higher poetry.' He thinks that mystical approach is different from and thus superior to 'higher poetry' because while "the kind of knowledge that poetic inspiration brings is essentially individual in its character; it is figurative, vague, and indefinite," [305] mystical experience "rises higher than poetry" by moving from individual to society.[306] In other words, unlike higher poetry, mystical experience provides objective and generalizable knowledge which is clear and definite.

Secondly, Iqbal compares mystical approach to philosophy. He first talks about the similarities between mystical approach and philosophy. He states that whereas "the spirit of philosophy is one of free inquiry," "the essence of religion […] is faith."[307] However, this

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[303] Ibid., 109-110.
[304] Ibid., 37.
[305] Ibid., 1.
[306] Ibid., 1.
[307] Ibid., 1.

does not mean that they are different from each other with respect to their cognitive content or knowledge-yielding capacities. After stating that the essence of religion is faith, Iqbal adds that "yet it cannot be denied that faith is more than mere feeling. It has something like a cognitive content, and the existence of rival parties – scholastics and mystics – in the history of religion shows that idea is a vital element in religion."[308] So, Iqbal thinks that faith, or mystical experience, is not simply feeling that is subjective and vague like 'higher poetry,' but rather it is feeling that has cognitive character and which can bring us knowledge of things like philosophy (reason) does. He thinks that it is as a result of this cognitive aspect of the mystical experience that it became possible for the rival parties in the history of religion to argue and debate with each other with respect to their claims to having real access to 'truth', or to knowledge of Reality. It is important to note here that Iqbal does not refer to history of Islam or any particular religion, but history of religion as such, which means that he considers the scholastic approach (or theology, or kalam) and mystical approach (mysticism, Sufism, intuition) as commonly existing in all religions as rival approaches to knowledge, or 'truth.'

After explaining that mystical approach has no weakness as being a proper means to knowledge compared to philosophy, that is, it also has cognitive character with knowledge-yielding capacity, Iqbal then goes on to discuss the differences between mystical approach and philosophy. Since Iqbal provides a nice summary of these differences between mystical approach and philosophy, I quote him in full:

> "Nor is there any reason to suppose that thought [philosophy/reason] and intuition [religion] are essentially opposed to each other. They spring up from the same root and complement each other. The one [philosophy] grasps Reality piecemeal, the other [religion] grasps it in its wholeness. The one [religion] fixes its gaze on the eternal, the other [philosophy] on the temporal aspect of Reality. The one [religion] is present enjoyment of the whole of Reality; the other [philosophy] 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 reveals itself to them in accordance with

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[308] Ibid., 1.

their function in life. In fact, intuition [religion], as Bergson rightly says, is only a higher kind of intellect [philosophy]."[309]

So, here it becomes clear that Iqbal does not consider philosophy and mystical approach to be in conflict with each other. As he asserts, they both seek the knowledge of the same Reality and in doing so they complement each other. Nevertheless, they are different from each other with respect to their approach to the knowledge of Reality, or how they acquire the knowledge of Reality. While one (philosophy) approaches Reality in a piecemeal fashion, the other (religion) grasps it in its wholeness. Again, while one (philosophy) gradually acquires the knowledge of Reality, the other (religion) is capable of perceiving it immediately in the present. In other words, whereas religion gives us direct and complete vision (knowledge) of Reality, philosophy gives us an indirect and partial vision (knowledge) of Reality. Yet Iqbal thinks, in agreement with Bergson, that the mystical approach, intuition, is superior to philosophy; how is this possible?

It is in fact possible as a result of this division of labor, or separation of powers. As I mentioned at the beginning, it is these difference of powers that gives mystical approach its theoretical superiority to philosophy/reason. Firstly, providing a complete vision or knowledge of Reality gives mystical approach its theoretical superiority because this means that when mystical approach grasps Reality, it brings us the knowledge of Reality as a whole. This holistic grasp of Reality gives mystical approach the ability to understand the inter-relatedness of different parts with each other. That is to say, mystical approach can establish links, connections and relations between different parts of Reality since it is able to see and understand the whole of it. Philosophy, on the other hand, is focused on the parts of Reality. It divides Reality into smaller parts, such as animals, humans, things, and so on, and analyzes them to reach to their knowledge. Since philosophy/science focuses only on the parts, it cannot understand the relations between the parts without the comprehensive view of the whole. Iqbal states that philosophy/science "is not a single systematic view of Reality. It is a mass of sectional views of Reality – fragments of a total experience which do not seem to fit together."[310] So, science/philosophy may deal with various parts of

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[309] Ibid., 2.
[310] Ibid., 33.

Reality, such as matter, life, and mind in separate ways, and can provide trustable knowledge about these parts, "but the moment you ask the question how matter, life, and mind are mutually related, you begin to see the sectional character of the various sciences that deal with them and the inability of these sciences, taken singly, to furnish a complete answer to your question."[311]

Secondly, providing 'a direct vision of Reality' gives mystical approach its theoretical superiority because this means that "in its attitude towards the ultimate reality it [mystical approach] is opposed to the limitations of man; it enlarges his claims and holds out the prospect of nothing less than a direct vision of Reality."[312] In other words, mystical approach provides the knowledge of Reality in a direct and immediate way; it provides it now, in the present. In a way, this gives the person who acquired this knowledge a sense of certainty because there is in fact nothing more to know about Reality. Iqbal states that "the immediacy of mystic experience simply means that we know God just as we know other objects. God is not a mathematical entity or a system of concepts mutually related to one another and having no reference to experience."[313] This means that God is something that is experienced concretely, not as a concept, or idea without any reference to experience. God, Iqbal thinks, is something experienced, not a metaphysical concept, such as 'prima causa,' or 'prime mover' of Aristotle. Philosophy, on the other hand, provides an indirect vision of Reality, or in a serial way. That is to say, philosophy, as a result of its method of induction, achieves the knowledge of Reality in a step by step process, and this takes time. This means that it is highly probable that the knowledge that is acquired by philosophy is not conclusive or ultimate. In other words, it is not indubitable or certain knowledge because it is prone to change, improvement and correction. In the end, these two different ways of acquiring the knowledge of Reality – direct and complete as opposed to indirect and partial – gives mystical approach its theoretical superiority to philosophy, and this, in turn, gives mystical approach the power to be a guide for reason. Accordingly, mystical approach can guide reason to the correct path on its way to the knowledge of Reality.

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[311] Ibid., 33-34.
[312] Ibid., 1.
[313] Ibid., 14.

In addition to the theoretical superiority, Iqbal thinks that mystical approach has also a practical superiority to philosophy/reason. This means that mystical approach is better than philosophy in providing legitimacy and support for our most fundamental social, moral, religious and political beliefs and truths. Without such a support, it would be difficult to have stable and harmonious social, moral and political orders. Referring to Whitehead, Iqbal states that religion "is a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended."[314] Hence Iqbal argues that since "the transformation and guidance of man's inner and outer life is the essential aim of religion, it is obvious that the general truths which it embodies must not remain unsettled. No one would hazard action on the basis of a doubtful principle of conduct." [315] Accordingly, religion, or mystical approach, can achieve this because it provides indubitable knowledge about Reality.

Philosophy/science, on the other hand, may not necessarily have an interest in the practical dimension. It may only be interested in providing a theoretical/intellectual explanation of universe, man and functioning of things – of Reality in general – without being concerned with telling people how to live, or what to do. Moreover, philosophy cannot really be successful even if it aims at doing this because as I discussed above, it cannot bring us indubitable knowledge of Reality. As Iqbal states philosophy "suspects all authority."[316] Accordingly, its function "is to trace the uncritical assumptions of human thought to their hiding places, and in this pursuit it may finally end in denial or a frank admission of the incapacity of pure reason to reach the ultimate reality."[317] However, what creates the real problem is not actually suspecting all authority if by this it is meant suspecting the authority of other means or approaches to knowledge, such as theology, mysticism, or arts (higher poetry). What creates the problem is that when this principle is applied to itself, that is, when suspicion is directed towards philosophy. Accordingly, when philosophy traces the uncritical assumptions of itself, it finds out that it too is not a self-sufficient thing, or that it cannot provide indubitable knowledge. In the end, it undermines its own authority, and leads us to skepticism, thus nihilism. In other words, since skepticism is the inevitable

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[314] Ibid., 1.
[315] Ibid., 1-2.
[316] Ibid., 1.
[317] Ibid., 1.

conclusion of philosophical approach it cannot provide certain and indubitable knowledge, and therefore it cannot provide a strong affirmation of life. That is to say, since social, moral, and political orders cannot be based on such suspicious or doubtful knowledge, philosophy leaves these orders weak and unstable.

As discussed above, Iqbal first leaves 'higher poetry' aside because the knowledge it brings us is essentially individual, figurative, vague and indefinite in its character. Iqbal considers philosophy and mysticism to be same with each other because they both have a cognitive character and the knowledge they bring is objective, clear and generalizable. He argues that all the regions of human experience yields "knowledge of the Ultimate Reality which reveals its symbols both within and without." [318] Accordingly, there are mainly two approaches to knowledge of Reality which are 'indirect association' (reason/philosophy) and 'direct association' (mystical approach/intuition) with Reality. 'Indirect association' with reality is achieved through reflective observation provided by sense-perception, such as observation of the nature – in other words, through 'without.' 'Direct association' is achieved through 'within,' inner intuition. Iqbal thinks that for a healthy and balanced access to knowledge, the 'without' should be supplemented by the 'within.' [319] That is, sense-perception should be supported or guided by 'heart,' which according to Iqbal, is a kind of 'inner intuition,' or 'insight.' Referring to Rumi, Iqbal states that 'heart' "feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense-perception." [320] Iqbal insists that 'heart', or intuition, should not simply be understood as a 'mysterious special faculty,' but rather another way of approaching Reality, and he argues that the experience that is provided by 'heart' is "as real and concrete as any other experience. To describe it as psychic, mystical, or supernatural does not detract from its value as experience." [321] He argues that there is more than one way that the total-Reality to enter into our consciousness and 'intuition' is just another way for this. He thinks that religious experience cannot just be ignored as a mere illusion considering the long history of mystic/Sufi literature. In a way, Iqbal thinks that since it has long been discussed in the

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[318] Ibid., 12.
[319] Ibid., 12.
[320] Ibid., 13.
[321] Ibid., 13.

human history, it must have some reality.[322] Accordingly, he believes that there is no reason to accept the so-called 'normal' level of experience as 'fact' and reject other levels of experiences as mystical or emotional. After defending 'intuition' as a normal type of experience and a valid, and even superior, approach to knowledge, Iqbal goes on to talk briefly about some of the main attributes of mystic/Sufi experience, and in total he discusses five attributes. Accordingly, mystical experience is an immediate experience; it is the experience of the whole; it is experiencing 'the other', or another 'self' through calling and response; not the experience itself, but the content of the mystical experience can be communicated to others; and finally, it is a temporary experience, not a permanent one.

4.1.5. A More Systematic and Objective form of Sufi Approach to Knowledge – II: Attributes of Mystical Experience/Approach

First thing to know about mystical experience is that it is an immediate experience, like all kinds of experience. Yet, whereas the so-called 'normal' level of experience provides the knowledge of the material world, mystical experience provides the knowledge of the noumenal world, the-thing-in-itself, or God. Iqbal states that "the immediacy of mystic experience simply means that we know God just as we know other objects. God is not a mathematical entity or a system of concepts mutually related to one another and having no reference to experience."[323] This means that God is something that is experienced concretely, not as a concept, or idea without any reference to experience. God, Iqbal thinks, is something experienced, not a metaphysical concept, such as 'prima causa,' or 'prime mover' of Aristotle.

Secondly, mystical experience is a whole that is not analyzable. The ordinary rational consciousness understands Reality in a piecemeal way. The mystical consciousness understands it as a whole. To illustrate this, Iqbal gives an example: "When I experience the table before me, innumerable data of experience merge into the single experience of the

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[322] Ibid., 13.
[323] Ibid., 14.

table. Out of this wealth of data I select those that fall into a certain order of space and time and round them off in reference to the table."[324]

The third attribute of mystical experience is about how mystical experience works. Iqbal states that the mystic state is a moment of association with a 'unique other self,' i.e. God. He argues that the content of the mystic state is objective "and cannot be regarded as a mere retirement into the mists of pure subjectivity;"[325] however, he adds: "But you will ask me how immediate experience of God, as an Independent Other Self, is at all possible."[326] In other words, how can the mystic verify the existence of another self, such as God? Here, Iqbal deals with the Cartesian idea of knowledge in which the mind is rather a passive receptor of data that comes from the outside through the senses. Iqbal is aware that if this was the only way of acquiring knowledge, then the existence of other minds, selves, including God, would be impossible to prove because in this case, the existence of God or other minds could just be the ideas we ourselves have created in our minds. They would not have external and objective existence outside our minds to give data to our minds. So, how does Iqbal deal with this problem? In response to this, Iqbal suggests the analogy of our daily social life in which we come to know the existence of other minds, other than ours, through an interaction with them. We call to them, and they respond to us, and for Iqbal, this is the objective and real existence of both our own minds/selves and other minds/selves. He states that "the only ground of my knowledge of a conscious being before me is the physical movements similar to my own from which I infer the presence of another conscious being. […] Response is no doubt, the test of presence of a conscious-self."[327] So, this is the basis of Iqbal's understanding of God who responds to the calls/prayers of the believers. It is through these 'physical' or 'non-physical' responses that we, conscious beings, come to understand and realize the existence of another conscious being that is separate and independent from us. So, Iqbal asserts that just as in the normal experience we call and get a respond, in the mystic experience too, we call and get a response. Finally, Iqbal also makes a warning about the kind of reasoning he makes here since it may sound

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[324] Ibid., 15.
[325] Ibid., 15.
[326] Ibid., 15.
[327] Iqbal quotes certain verses from the Qur'an to explain what he means: "*And your Lord saith, call me and I respond to your call* (40: 60). *And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, then I am nigh unto them and answer the cry of him that crieth unto Me* (2: 186).", Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 15-16.

like an idealist type of reasoning which claims that all existence is minds. Iqbal, however, does not think like that, and he warns that his explanations should not lead to such a misunderstanding.[328]

The fourth point is that "since the quality of mystic experience is to be directly experienced, it is obvious that it cannot be communicated."[329] William James (1842 – 1910) refers to this as 'ineffability' of mystical experience. According to James, mystical experience can be directly experienced, and its contents cannot be imparted or transferred to others.[330] Iqbal agrees with James; however, he also adds that although the experience itself cannot be communicated, the message or the content of the experience can be communicated, or conveyed to others in the form of propositions.[331] Hence, feeling and idea need each other and they usually go together. So, when a mystic feels those things, he/she explains them through ideas. That is how the feeling gets communicated and becomes understandable by others as well. He writes that "in fact, it is the nature of feeling to seek expression in thought. It would seem that the two – feeling and idea – are the non-temporal and temporal aspects of the same unit of inner experience."[332] Accordingly, this is the reason mystics write poetry or metaphysical treatises, that is, to explain in rational terms what they have felt through intuition and mystical experience. Iqbal states that one can see this essential feature in the birth of religions as well. That is, although religions are born as a matter of feeling alone, they need to explain themselves rationally, intellectually as well, and it is for this reason, Iqbal states, that they strive after metaphysics.[333]

Finally, "the mystic's intimate association with the eternal which gives him a sense of the unreality of serial time does not mean a complete break with serial time."[334] William James refers to this as the 'transiency' of mystical experience. According to James, "mystical states cannot be sustained for long, [and] except in rare instances, half an hour, or at most an hour or two, seems to be the limit beyond which they fade into the light of common

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[328] Ibid., 16.
[329] Ibid., 16.
[330] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature; Being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion Delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1922), 380-381.
[331] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 16.
[332] Ibid., 17.
[333] Ibid., 17-18.
[334] Ibid., 18.

day."[335] So, with the end of the mystical experience the mystic state ends, and the mystic returns to the normal state. However, there are differences between the prophetic and mystic experiences with respect to their post-experience processes, and Iqbal will discuss this later.[336]

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[335] James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 381.
[336] "Both the mystic and the prophet return to the normal levels of experience, but with this difference that the return of the prophet, as I will show later, may be fraught with infinite meaning for mankind.", Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 18.

4.2.   Epistemological Nihilism and Iqbal – II

Iqbal thinks that merely presenting and introducing mystical approach as a valid approach to knowledge is not enough. He thinks that this needs to be demonstrated as well. For instance, he talks about a hypothetical example where one acquires knowledge through mystical approach and then communicates it to you to ask you to accept it. Iqbal thinks that you are entitled to ask: "What is the guarantee of its truth?"[337] So, there needs to be a test to understand the validity of this knowledge. It cannot only be a personal test because then it could only provide validity for the person in question. Hence, it needs to be an objective test the results of which can be generalized. Iqbal calls these 'the intellectual test' and 'the pragmatic test.' The pragmatic test judges the knowledge that is acquired by religious experience/mystical approach by its fruits, and it is applied by the prophet. [338] 'The intellectual test', on the other hand, is applied by the philosopher and refers to "critical interpretation, without any presuppositions of human experience, generally with a view to discover whether our interpretation leads us ultimately to a reality of the same character as is revealed by religious experience." [339] In other words, 'the intellectual test' means analyzing Reality, 'ultimate nature of Reality', or 'the human enigma' through these two different approaches, that is, philosophy/science on the one hand, and mystical approach/intuition on the other hand, and comparing their results with each other. If their results conform to each other, then this means that both routes are valid approaches to knowledge, hence mystical approach passes the test. While conducting 'the intellectual test', Iqbal also demonstrates how philosophy/science/reason understands its own mistakes and corrects its conception of Reality.

4.2.1. 'The Intellectual Test': Philosophical/Scientific Approach to the Ultimate Reality

Iqbal pursues 'the intellectual test' with the awareness of the deeper unity between 'thought' and 'being', between the Absolute/God/the ultimate nature of Reality and

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[337] Ibid., 21.
[338] Ibid., 21-22.
[339] Ibid., 21.

existence, i.e. man and universe. I discussed this idea of 'deeper unity' in the previous chapter (4.1.2. Going beyond Kant and Ghazali – I: Connecting the Phenomenal and Noumenal Realms). 'Deeper unity' between 'thought' and 'being' defends the idea that one can acquire the knowledge of 'the ultimate nature of Reality', the thought, the Absolute/God by studying, observing, examining and analyzing man and universe because it is through these, thought manifests or realizes itself. Iqbal first analyzes how philosophy/science acquires the knowledge of the ultimate nature of Reality through its own methods. In accordance with its own methods and attributes, philosophy/science approaches Reality in a piecemeal and serial way. That is to say, it does not analyze Reality as a whole, but deals with different and smaller parts of it. For instance, physics deals with the level of matter, biology deals with the level of life, and psychology deals with the level of mind and consciousness.[340] In other words, through physics, biology and psychology one can acquire the knowledge of thought/the Absolute/God as it manifests itself in existence in matter, in life and in mind/consciousness.

The other attribute of philosophy/science is that as a result of its method of induction it does not acquire the knowledge of Reality directly, immediately and in the present, but rather in a serial way, in a step by step process. This has two implications. One is that, it takes time for philosophy/science to acquire the knowledge of Reality, and secondly, philosophy/science arrives at this knowledge through mistakes, through errors, and by criticizing and correcting itself. In fact, at the beginning of the book, Iqbal refers to the recent developments in the field of physics with the emergence of relativity physics and states that "classical physics has learned to criticize its own foundations. As a result of this criticism the kind of materialism, which it originally necessitated, is rapidly disappearing." [341] As a result of this kind of a process, Iqbal thinks, that hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies between science and religion, or between the knowledge philosophy/science brings and the knowledge religious experience/mystical experience/intuition brings will be realized. [342] That is, science/philosophy/reason

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[340] Ibid., 26.
[341] Ibid., xlv-xlvi.
[342] Ibid., xlvi.

understands its mistakes in time, corrects itself, and with the guidance of intuition arrives at new and more correct findings regarding the ultimate nature of Reality.

In the field of physics, these changes take place on the level of matter since physics deals with matter. Iqbal talks about three changes in physics' understanding of matter, and these changes can generally be understood as products of the evolution from classical physics (Newtonian physics) to relativity physics (Einstein, Whitehead). Firstly, physics changes its conception of matter as 'pure materiality' to include the mental aspect (mind) as well. In other words, matter is not understood simply as a physical thing anymore, but as a unity of both physical (material) and non-physical (mind) parts. The previous theory of matter, pure materialism, stated that a thing needs to have the qualities of shape, size, solidity and resistance to be considered as matter. [343] Accordingly, it understood Reality only as a physical thing and assigned real existence to physical things. In this respect, it ignored, or actually rejected, the mental processes or 'things' as parts of the same Reality. This was the essence of materialism as it was put forward by Newton and classical physics. This theory explained the working of things, or movement of things, through cause-effect mechanism. That is, matter (physical things) was causing another matter and creating an effect, that is movement, and it is through this way, things were understood to be moving in nature/universe. However, this explanation became problematic when it was found that certain other non-material or non-physical things were also causing things to happen, or move, such as 'inaudible air waves,' or 'invisible ether waves.' [344] In this case, the theory of matter needed to be revised and expanded. Or, what is understood by matter needed to be expanded to include the previously ignored or rejected/denied non-material/physical things as well. So, in this new view, matter started to be understood as both matter and mind, as something both material and mental. If the previous dualism was kept or maintained, then we would have to accept half of Reality to be a dream, and the other half to be a conjecture, as Whitehead says. [345] Through this new understanding of matter, it also became possible to go beyond the dualism of matter and mind.

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[343] Ibid., 26-27.

[344] Ibid., 27.

[345] Whitehead states: "What I am essentially protesting against is the bifurcation of nature into two systems of reality, which, in so far as they are real, are real in different senses. One reality would be the entities such as electrons which are the study of speculative physics. This would be the reality which is there for knowledge; although on this theory it is

Secondly, previously matter was understood as a stable, static and persistent thing which only changes its state. That is, matter can change from being solid to liquid to gas, but the substance of it remains the same. So, it was understood that matter is a thing with varying states only. Iqbal thinks that this traditional theory of matter "has received the greatest blow from the hand of Einstein."[346] While previously matter was understood as "something which persists in time and moves in space,"[347] this view became untenable with the emergence of modern relativity-physics. With the ideas of Einstein, matter started to be understood more of an unstable thing which is both physical and non-physical at the same time, and accordingly "a piece of matter has become not a persistent thing with varying states, but a system of inter-related events. The old solidity is gone."[348] In fact, Iqbal adds, matter is even stopped being called as 'a thing' anymore, and as in the case of Whitehead, it is started to be called as 'an event.' Iqbal reports that according to Whitehead, "nature is not a static fact situated in an a-dynamic void, but a structure of events possessing the character of a continuous creative flow."[349] So now, matter is understood as a dynamic, moving, changing thing. This also changes the conception of matter from 'being' to 'becoming.' So, now the matter is stopped being understood as a kind of a dead-thing which is immutable, unchanging and lying still in the void and doing nothing, and started to be understood as an event, as a becoming that is in the process of happening which moves, expands, changes and evolves into something different and new. This also shows that matter has some kind of 'creativity' as well.

Thirdly, physics changes its conception of the character of matter's existence. Previously, it was understood that matter exists objectively and independently. According to Iqbal, Einstein, however, rejected the Newtonian concept of an absolute space, and conceived the space as real, but relative to the observer. As Iqbal says, "the object observed is variable; it

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never known. For what is known is the other sort of reality, which is the byplay of the mind. Thus there would be two natures, one is the conjecture and the other is the dream." Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature*,(London: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 30.

[346] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 27.

[347] Ibid., 28.

[348] Ibid., 28.

[349] Ibid., 28. See Whitehead, Alfred North, "Nature is known to us in our experience as a complex of passing events. In this complex we discern definite mutual relations between component events, which we may call their relative positions, and these positions we express partly in terms of space and partly in terms of time. Also in addition to its mere relative position to other events, each particular event has its own peculiar character. In other words, nature is a structure of events and each event has its position in this structure and its own peculiar character of quality." *The Concept of Nature*, 166.

is relative to the observer; its mass, shape, and size change as the observer's position and speed change. Movement add rest, too, are relative to the observer. There is, therefore, no such thing as a self-subsistent materiality of classical physics."[350] The objective, thus real, existence of matter/space has not changed. As Iqbal states, Einstein's theory destroys "not the objectivity of Nature, but the view of substance as simple location in space – a view which led to materialism in Classical Physics."[351] So, the question was whether space is an independent void regardless of things on it, or is there a relation or inter-dependence between space and things on it? Changing the conception of matter/space from an independent thing to an interdependent and relative thing is important because either way, how space is understood has further important implications on various issues. For instance, when space/matter is understood as existing on its own without any links, connections and relations with the things on it, this creates problems regarding the issues of reality of movement, reality of change, reality of time, and even the reality of space itself. It makes all these seem unreal. If matter is understood independently, then it becomes impossible to relate action and movement to the matter/space. Hence, it becomes difficult, or even impossible to argue that movement is really real, or movement is really taking place. When the reality of movement becomes problematic or doubtful, then the reality of change becomes doubtful and problematic as well because if there is no movement, then there cannot be any real change. Moreover, if there is no movement, no change, then time understood as "the distance separating events in order of succession" [352] becomes meaningless as well because now there is no movement, or no separate events taking place in succession. In a way, it seems like time "does not pass. Events do not happen; we simply meet them."[353] Finally, if things are not really moving, then this creates a problem even for the reality of space upon which things are supposedly moving. If things are not really moving, then it seems like there is no space according to which to measure their movements either. With the change from classical physics to modern relativity physics, matter (the Nature/universe) starts to be understood not as a thing on its own, isolated from the rest of the things that exist, but as an event, a process, a becoming that is in relation with other things. It still has an objective existence, that is, it has a real existence, but it is

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[350] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 30.
[351] Ibid., 31.
[352] Ibid., 32.
[353] Ibid., 31.

not detached, disconnected, or isolated from the other things that exist. It is now understood as existing objectively, but relationally. This relationality is important because it has further implications on the conception of matter because with the change of the conception of matter, now it becomes possible to claim the real existence or reality of movement, change, time and even the reality of space itself. So, looking at the recent developments in physics, Iqbal sees that the ultimate nature of Reality as it manifests itself in universe is both matter and mind; it is moving and changing. It is becoming something new; hence it has creativity. It is real, that is, it has an objective existence. Since it is moving and changing, change and movement is real, and hence time is real.

After analyzing how physics acquired the knowledge of ultimate nature of Reality in the level of matter, Iqbal then goes on to purse 'the intellectual test' in the levels of life and mind/consciousness, and here, it is biology and psychology that examine how the ultimate nature of Reality manifests itself in life and consciousness (mind). Here too Iqbal discusses how science/philosophy acquires the knowledge of ultimate nature of Reality through a serial process. That is, he shows how life and consciousness/mind were previously understood differently, and then how these previous conceptions are being replaced now with new views about life and consciousness/mind. Here, he shows how the mechanistic conception of life and consciousness/mind which was inspired and influenced by the ideas of Newton and Darwin has been challenged later by the ideas of vitalist thinkers and biologists. For instance, Iqbal states that previously consciousness was merely understood "as an epiphenomenon of the processes of matter."[354] That is, it was understood as a kind of matter, as a physical thing, and it was believed to be functioning and working as other physical things as well – in a mechanistic way and through cause and effect processes. This view of consciousness was supported or made possible with "the discoveries of Newton in the sphere of matter and those of Darwin in the sphere of Natural History"[355] since they argue that there is a kind of mechanism in both universe and nature as well. In other words, both universe and nature work through cause-effect processes, hence like a machine. According to this mechanistic view of universe and nature, Iqbal writes, "all problems, it was believed, were really the problems of Physics. Energy and atoms, with the properties of

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[354] Ibid., 33.
[355] Ibid., 33.

self-existing in them, could explain everything including life, thought, will, and feeling. The concept of mechanism – a purely physical concept – claimed to be the all-embracing explanation of Nature."[356]

Iqbal, however, thinks that attempting to understand and explain the whole of Reality through cause-effect mechanism, that is, extending the cause-effect mechanism to explain the functioning of the whole Reality, is a violation of the partial and piecemeal approach of science/philosophy. He states that "natural science is by nature sectional; it cannot, if it is true to its own nature and function, set up its theory as a complete view of Reality. The concepts we use in the organization of knowledge are, therefore sectional in character, and their application is relative to the level of experience to which they are applied."[357] Accordingly, he argues that "the concept of 'cause,' for instance, the essential feature of which is priority to the effect, is relative to the subject-matter of physical science which studies one special kind of activity to the exclusion of other forms of activity observed by others."[358] He argues that "when we rise to the level of life and mind, the concept of cause fails us, and we stand in need of concepts of a different order of thought."[359] The concept of cause fails us in explaining how life and mind/consciousness work or function because the action of living organisms is not determined through cause and effect processes. A living organism has a life, will, thought and feelings. Accordingly, while acting the living organisms thinks, it shows a will to act. Furthermore, its actions may also be influenced by thoughts and feelings. So, a living organism acts by making plans and by aiming to achieve certain ends or goals. Thus, it is a rational thing. Accordingly, instead of the concepts of cause and effect, the actions of a living organism can more properly be understood and explained through the concepts of 'purpose' and 'end.' [360] In showing how science/philosophy reaches to this conclusion, Iqbal refers to the writings of the vitalist biologists, like J. S. Haldane and Driesch, who compare a living organism and a machine, and show that life and consciousness cannot be understood like a machine. As Iqbal states, "in all the purposive processes of growth and adaptation to its environment, whether this

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[356] Ibid., 33.
[357] Ibid., 34.
[358] Ibid., 34.
[359] Ibid., 34.
[360] Ibid., 34.

adaptation is secured by the formation of fresh or the modification of old habits, it [the living organism] possesses a career which is unthinkable in the case of a machine."[361]

Until this point, I have demonstrated how in its approach to the knowledge of Reality, philosophy/science arrived at the following results: In the level of matter, Reality is a unity of matter and mind (unity of material and mental/spiritual things). It has real and objective existence, but is not independent from other things that are also real and objective; it is related to them. Finally, Reality is a dynamic, moving, and changing thing – or more accurately, it is an event. In this respect, it has a certain level of creativity as well. In the levels of life and consciousness, Reality is a living organism, not a mechanism or a machine. It acts in life by following its purposes, goals, will, thought and feelings. In this regard, Reality is will that is rational, directed and creative. After acquiring the knowledge of ultimate nature of Reality through philosophy/science, Iqbal then goes on to approach Reality through mystical approach/intuition, and see if it also achieves same results. To do this, he needs to analyze the manifestations of Reality in man, and in doing this, he analyzes his own self.

4.2.2. 'The Intellectual Test': Mystical/Sufi Approach to the Ultimate Reality

Iqbal states that the perception of one's own self is internal, intimate and profound to himself, and therefore it provides a "privileged case of existence in which we are in absolute contact with Reality."[362] So, what does one find when he fixes his gaze on his own conscious experience? Here, Iqbal first refers to Bergson who performs a similar introspective analysis through intuition. Bergson states: "I find, first of all, that I pass from state to state. I am warm or cold, I am merry or sad, I work or I do nothing, I look at what is around me or I think of something else. Sensations, feelings, volitions, ideas such are the changes into which my existence is divided and which color it in turns. I change, then, without ceasing."[363] For the most part, Iqbal agrees with Bergson. By looking at his own conscious experience, Iqbal also achieves at similar results. He writes that "there is nothing

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[361] Ibid., 35.
[362] Ibid., 37.
[363] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911), 3.

static in my inner life; all is a constant mobility, an unceasing flux of states, a perpetual flow in which there is no halt or resting place."[364] So, he finds that constant movement and change are the fundamental and essential things or realities of life. However, after understanding that movement and change is fundamental to life, then Iqbal needs to understand how this movement takes place, or works/functions, or what are the characteristics of this movement? Does it work in a kind of mechanistic and fatalistic way, or in a free and creative way? Moreover, if movement/change is essential and fundamental, then this also brings the question of time because as Iqbal asserts, "constant change […] is unthinkable without time."[365] Accordingly, "on the analogy of our inner experience, then, conscious existence means life in time."[366] So, in order to movement/change to be real, time needs to be real, that is, time should really pass and things should really happen. And also for these things to be real, change and movement need to be free and creative, not predetermined (fatalistic) or repetitive (mechanistic).

When Iqbal looks at his own experience, he realizes that he experiences time differently, or he experiences two different kinds of times. To explain these two different experiences of time, Iqbal goes on to make an analytical division between two kinds of selves. He argues that there is on one hand the self that is called 'the appreciative self' and on the other hand 'the efficient self.' 'The efficient self' is the outer version of the self which deals with external things, and thus it perceives time as different moments following each other, in a serial way, in a series of nows.[367] "The time in which the efficient self lives is therefore the time of which we predicate long and short. […] We can conceive it only as a straight line composed of spatial points which are external to one another like so many stages in a journey."[368] 'The appreciative self', on the other hand, is the inner self which experiences time differently, like a single now. It does not experience time as a plurality of different number of states, but as a unity of them. Although here too there are different states, their importance comes from their quality not quantity. Accordingly, "there is change and movement, but this change and movement are indivisible; their elements inter-penetrate ad

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[364] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 38.
[365] Ibid., 38.
[366] Ibid., 38.
[367] Ibid., 39.
[368] Ibid., 38.

are wholly non-serial in character."[369] According to Iqbal, this is also what Bergson means by 'pure duration.'[370] To illustrate the different experiences of time by 'the efficient self' and 'the appreciative self,' Iqbal uses an example from science to make analogy:

> "According to physical science the cause of your sensation of red is the rapidity of wave motion, the frequency of which is 400 billions per second. If you could observe this tremendous frequency from the outside, and count it at the rate of 2,000 per second, which is supposed to the limit of the perceptibility of light, it will take you more than 6,000 years to finish the enumeration. Yet in the single momentary mental act of perception you hold together a frequency of wave motion which is practically incalculable."[371]

This illustration can also be used to explain the difference between the piecemeal method and perspective of science and the holistic method and perspective of religion (Sufism). It also helps us understand how scientific knowledge would accumulate and take long years to reach to certain conclusions, and how religion is an immediate and direct grasp of the knowledge of Reality. Hence, Iqbal thinks that this is how 'the appreciative self' transforms succession, or serial time, into duration, into a single now. In this regard, Iqbal considers 'the appreciative self,' (inner self, duration) as a more or less corrective of 'the efficient self,' (outer self, serial time) since "it synthesizes all the 'heres' and 'nows' – the small change of space and time, indispensable to the efficient self – into the coherent wholeness of personality."[372] Thus, he finds that duration "is not a string of separate, reversible instants; it is an organic whole in which the past is not left behind, but is moving along with, and operating in, the present. And the future is given to it not as lying before, yet to

[369] Ibid., 39.
[370] Bergson does not give a very clear definition of duration, but the following can be taken from *Creative Evolution* to demonstrate what Bergson means by the term. He writes: "Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances. And as the past grows without ceasing, so also there is no limit to its preservation. Memory, as we have tried to prove, is not a faculty of putting away recollections in a drawer, or of inscribing them in a register. There is no register, no drawer; there is not even, properly speaking, a faculty, for a faculty works intermittently, when it will or when it can, whilst the piling up of the past upon the past goes on without relaxation. In reality, the past is preserved by itself, automatically. In its entirety, probably, it follows us at every instant; all that we have felt, thought and willed from our earliest infancy is there, leaning over the present which is about to join it, pressing against the portals of consciousness that would fain leave it outside." Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 6-7. Also see, "But duration is something very different from this for our consciousness, that is to say, for that which is most indisputable in our experience. We perceive duration as a stream against which we cannot go. It is the foundation of our being, and, as we feel, the very substance of the world in which we live. It is of no use to hold up before our eyes the dazzling prospect of a universal mathematic; we cannot sacrifice experience to the requirements of a system. That is why we reject radical mechanism." Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 43-45.
[371] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 39.
[372] Ibid., 39.

be traversed; it is given only in the sense that it is present in its nature as an open possibility."[373]

In discussing the reality of time, Iqbal has also in mind the previous solution he has found before in the metaphysical systems of al-Jili and Hegel. It will be remembered that in both thinkers' systems, the Absolute by leaving its absoluteness was going into a process of realizing itself in existence, and this process of self-realization, Iqbal later realized this, was rather a kind of predetermined process. That is, the end or the goal that the Absolute was going to arrive at was already known and determined before even things happened. As in the case of Hegel, for instance, the Absolute/Spirit was going to realize itself in history, and in the social-political level the Prussian State was the ultimate end of history while in the religious level it was Christianity as the 'consummate religion.' Iqbal considers this view of Spirit unfolding itself in time as if "full-fledged events are lying in the womb of Reality, and drop one by one like the grains of sand from the hour-glass."[374] Iqbal opposes this view because it makes time, movement and change unreal. Instead, Iqbal argues that time is real, and accordingly, every moment in life is original, novel and unforeseeable. To exist in real time, for Iqbal, means not to be chained, or controlled or determined by serial time, but rather "to create it from moment to moment and to be absolutely free and original in creation."[375] In fact, Iqbal adds, that "all creative activity is free activity"[376], and therefore "creation is opposed to repetition which is a characteristic of mechanical action."[377] That is why it is impossible to explain the creative activity of life in terms of mechanism.

As a result of these analyses of one's own conscious experience, Iqbal argues that Bergson arrives at the conclusion that "Reality is a free unpredictable, creative, vital impetus of the nature of volition which thought spatializes and views as a plurality of 'things'."[378] Accordingly, Iqbal thinks that according to Bergson "the forward rush of the vital impulse in its creative freedom is unilluminated by the light of an immediate or remote purpose. It is not aiming at a result; it is wholly arbitrary, undirected, chaotic and unforeseeable in its

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[373] Ibid., 40.
[374] Ibid., 40.
[375] Ibid., 40.
[376] Ibid., 40.
[377] Ibid., 40.
[378] Ibid., 41.

behavior."[379] I wrote above that Iqbal agrees with Bergson for the most part, so it is here Iqbal disagrees with Bergson. Differently from Bergson, Iqbal writes that: "On the analogy of our conscious experience, therefore, Reality is not a blind vital impulse wholly unilluminated by idea. Its nature is through and through teleological."[380] So, Iqbal disagrees with Bergson on the teleological character of Reality. Iqbal states that Bergson denies teleology because he understands teleology as something that makes time unreal. Thus, according to Bergson, "the portals of the future must remain wide open to Reality,"[381] because Iqbal thinks that "otherwise, it will not be free and creative."[382] In fact, Iqbal agrees with Bergson that teleology makes time unreal if by teleology it is meant "the working out of a plan in view of a predetermined end or goal."[383] Yet Iqbal thinks that teleology does not have to be understood in this way. He thinks that teleology exists in the sense that life is pursued by thinking about ends, purposes and goals. He writes that "mental life is teleological in the sense that, while there is no far-off distant goals towards which we are moving, there is a progressive formation of fresh ends, purposes, and ideal scales of value as the process of life grows and expands."[384] Bergson's understanding of the vital impulse as creative, unilluminated, thus ignoring its purposive character, according to Iqbal, is due to Bergson's view of "conscious experience as the past moving along with and operating in the present."[385] Hence, in Iqbal's view, Bergson ignores that there is a forward aspect as well. Iqbal, however, argues that the forward aspect should not be ignored, and since the concept of 'purpose' can only be understood in reference to the future. As Iqbal writes, "the element of purpose discloses a kind of forward look in consciousness. Purposes color not only our present states of consciousness, but also reveal its future direction. In fact, they constitute the forward push of our life."[386] In other words, life "is purposive only in [the] sense that it is selective in character, and brings itself to some sort of a present fulfillment by actively preserving and supplementing the past."[387] Hence, if as Iqbal states,

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[379] Ibid., 42.
[380] Ibid., 43.
[381] Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 105.
[382] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 43.
[383] Ibid., 43.
[384] Ibid., 43.
[385] Ibid., 42.
[386] Ibid., 43.
[387] Ibid., 44.

'ends' and 'purposes' are very essential to conscious experience, then it means that the vital impulse cannot totally be arbitrary, undirected, chaotic and unforeseeable.

Thus in conclusion, Iqbal thinks that "a comprehensive philosophical criticism of all the facts of experience on its efficient as well as appreciative side brings us to the conclusion that the ultimate Reality is a rationally directed creative life."[388] And a further critical examination of Reality in time, Iqbal says, shows us that the ultimate Reality exists in time "in which thought, life, and purpose interpenetrate to form an organic unity."[389] Iqbal argues that "we cannot conceive this unity except as the unity of a self – an all-embracing concrete self – the ultimate source of all individual life and thought."[390] In other words, he finds that the ultimate nature of Reality is 'ego.' And, it is the life, functioning and attributes of this ego I will discuss in the next chapter while analyzing Iqbal's response to the metaphysical aspect of nihilism by developing a new conception of God, man and the universe and their relations to each other.

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[388] Ibid., 48.
[389] Ibid., 44.
[390] Ibid., 44.

4.3. Metaphysical Nihilism and Iqbal

In the previous chapter, I analyzed Iqbal's solution to the epistemological dimension of nihilism where he demonstrated how mystical experience/intuition provides certain and indubitable knowledge about the ultimate nature of Reality. As a result of his analysis, Iqbal has arrived at the conclusion that the ultimate nature of Reality is neither merely matter (materialism) as Baruch Spinoza (1632 – 1677) would argue, nor merely mind (idealism) as George Berkeley (1685 – 1753) would argue. Instead, Iqbal thought that he demonstrated that both the recent developments in science/philosophy and also the analysis of one's own conscious experience prove that the ultimate nature of Reality is an organic unity of matter and mind. Iqbal stated that this unity can only be understood as a 'self', as 'a rationally directed creative will,' or 'ego.' Furthermore, he argued that the self should not be seen as a thing or a being, but as an act, an event, a process, or a becoming. In the third chapter, 'Nihilism and Iqbal: The Crisis (1909 – 1927)', I analyzed how Iqbal fell into a nihilistic crisis following the collapse of the previous metaphysical orientation that was provided to him by the philosophies of al-Jili and Hegel. Encountering with the ideas of Nietzsche made Iqbal think that the metaphysical systems of al-Jili and Hegel were closed-ended (predetermined), fatalistic (mechanistic) and God-centered where man did not really have real freedom and will as well as a real/objective existence.

In overcoming these problems, Iqbal develops a new conception of God along with man and universe/nature. To overcome the God-centeredness of al-Jili's and Hegel's metaphysical systems, Iqbal conceives his system as a relational one. This means that neither God, nor man nor the nature/universe is at the center of existence. Man and universe are not simply dependent on God anymore, and instead all are related to each other in various ways. They share the existence together, and in the process of realizing themselves in existence, they all interact with each other. Sometimes this interaction takes the form of cooperation, and sometimes it takes the form of limitation of each other. Changing the God-centered aspect of the al-Jili's and Hegel systems makes important impacts on two other aspects of the system as well, and with these, Iqbal's new metaphysical system/orientation becomes open-ended and free. The second change is an outcome of the

first change. Changing the system from being a God-centered one to a relational one also changes the absoluteness of God in the system. When the absoluteness of God disappears, God becomes limited in certain ways – such as power, knowledge and freedom. For instance, whereas previously it was only God who had absolute freedom, now none of the elements in the metaphysical system has absolute freedom. Now, God shares all these attributes with other egos, that is, man and universe/nature. This in turn strengthens man's freedom and will. What happens now is that man's freedom is not simply caused by the uncaused will and freedom of God, but rather it becomes a freedom and will in and of itself.

Finally, the relational and relativist character of the system, also changes the closed-ended and predetermined character of it. Now, in Iqbal's new system existence becomes an open-ended process where all the elements – God, man and universe/nature – contribute to with their own powers, freedom, will, rationality and creativity. Accordingly, it is not only God that tries to realize itself in existence, but other egos as well. This means that the end of the process is not known because none of the elements has absolute control over the working and movement of the process. Since none of the actors have absolute power or control over the process, neither God, nor man, nor universe alone can absolutely and completely control, manipulate or determine the end of the process, the course or the outcome of the process. All the egos try to realize themselves in existence, and in doing that they all interact with each other. In the end, the process becomes not a result of one of the elements' decisions, choices and actions, but a result of the cumulative decisions, choices and actions of all the elements in it – God, man and universe/nature altogether. In the following part, I will now analyze Iqbal's conception of God, man and the universe/nature and their relations to each other. I will first briefly discuss what Iqbal understands by ego, and then move from there to his conception of God, man and universe/nature as different egos. The analysis of these elements will show that Iqbal's metaphysical system and his new metaphysical orientation is a relational one with an open-ended future, and it also secures the real freedom and will of man. In doing these, the system also maintains that time, movement, change, life and existence are also real and meaningful, and provides a way to overcome the metaphysical dimension of nihilism.

4.3.1. What is Ego?

It will be remembered from the previous chapter (Epistemological Nihilism and Iqbal I-II) that Iqbal arrived at the conclusion that the ultimate nature of reality is ego. So, what is an ego? Iqbal defines ego as 'a rationally directed creative will.'[391] The ultimate nature of reality is ego means that whatever exists is an ego. Iqbal states that "every atom of Divine energy, however low in the scale of existence, is an ego."[392] Accordingly, man, God and the universe are egos. This means that whatever exists in the universe are essentially the same because they are all an organic unity of body and soul, matter and mind. They are also similar to each other because they have the same characteristics or attributes, that is, they have power, freedom, rationality, directedness, creativity, knowledge, life, objective existence, goals/purposes and will. 'Rationally directed' means that ego has the power to shape and direct the forces around itself in a conscious way and towards a certain end. In other words, ego is a purposive thing. It does not act or live blindly, but with making certain goals and then attempting to arrive at these goals. Ego is surrounded by an environment which provides data regarding the temporal, spatial, and causal relation of things, and ego is supposed to understand and master this environment and its principles to be able to shape and direct it for its own goals.[393] This means that egos aim at self-realization, that is, they strive for realizing themselves in life, in history, in existence. 'Creative' means that ego has capacity to create things. Ego, by nature of being a self, has individuality, that is, it is a unique being. In addition to these, egos also have knowledge, power, and freedom. These attributes belong both to all egos, although in different degrees. By being egos, all of them have lives; have objective existence, and the goal/purpose of realizing themselves in existence. Whereas in al-Jili's and Hegel's systems, it was only God who was realizing Himself in existence, now it is all egos that have this aim. However, all these similarities do not mean that egos are identical to each other. There are definitely various differences between God, man and universe. To distinguish between different egos, Iqbal uses the terms 'Ultimate Ego,' 'Ultimate Self,' or 'Absolute Ego,' with capital letters when referring to God, and the term 'ego' in small letters when referring to man and other

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[391] Ibid., 50.
[392] Ibid., 57.
[393] Ibid., 86.

beings, such as the universe, animals, matter and nature. The difference is that although they are all egos, they are different from each other with respect to their level of individuality. To distinguish between different egos, Iqbal utilized the Bergsonian term 'individuality' to refer to different degrees of egohood.

Referring to Bergson, Iqbal argues that "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."[394] Similarly, Iqbal states that "individuality is a matter of degrees and is not fully realized even in the case of the apparently closed off unity of the human being."[395] In other words, the difference between different egos is not a matter of essence, but of degree. For instance, the lower levels of existence, such as the matter, atom, which have the lowest levels of personality and individuality, have the lowest degree of egohood and consciousness. Again, similarly with respect to the rationality, there are differences between the rationality of nature and the rationality of man. Although by nature of being ego they all have rationality, the level of rationality of nature is lower than man's rationality, and man's rationality is lower than God's. Accordingly, egos have different levels of freedom, will, creativity, rationality and will. Similarly, they all have freedom and wills, but they have different levels of will and freedom. In all these instances, it is usually the nature that has the lowest level of individuality, and thus has the lowest degree of rationality, will, creativity and freedom. Man has a higher level of individuality compared to nature, and a lower one compared to the Ultimate Ego/God. As the level of existence rises higher from the simple atom to matter to animals to humans, to 'the perfect man', and then finally to God as the most perfect individual, the level of personality and individuality increases as well – hence egohood and consciousness.

This means that man has another attribute which is that he has the capacity to improve his selfhood/egohood and thus increase his level of individuality. With this, man can rise in the level of beings and become a perfect man, and consequently his attributes become more powerful as well. 'The perfect man' is the closest level of being to the Ultimate Ego in terms of the level of individuality. Iqbal states that "man, therefore, in whom egohood has

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[394] Ibid., 57.
[395] Ibid., 50.

reached its relative perfection, occupies a genuine place in the heart of Divine creative energy and thus possesses a much higher degree of reality than things around him."[396] Accordingly, "of all the participants of God he alone is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of his Maker. Endowed with the power to imagine a better world, and to mould what is into what ought to be, the ego in him aspires, in the interests of an increasingly unique and comprehensive individuality, to exploit all the various environments on which he may be called upon to operate during the course of an endless career."[397] Defining the Ultimate Ego with the highest level of individuality does not mean that the Ultimate Ego can have an absolute control over things. All egos strive for things, aim for things and try to realize themselves in existence. None of them has the absolute control, so they are all in an interaction, sometimes in a cooperation, and sometimes in a struggle with each other in the process of increasing and realizing their power, freedom, will and creativity – hence in the process of realizing themselves in existence. Just like God, the Ultimate Ego, has the aim of realizing its own self in existence, man and the universe, also being egos ad sharing the same attributes with the Ultimate Ego, have same purposes and goals. They too want to realize themselves.

4.3.2. Iqbal's Conception of God – 'The Ultimate Ego'

After defining the ultimate nature of Reality as ego, Iqbal then goes on to describe different egos, that is, 'the Ultimate Ego', i.e. God, and other egos – man and universe/nature. Since Iqbal states that other egos, man and universe/nature, proceed from 'the Ultimate Ego,' God, I will first explain what 'the Ultimate Ego' is according to Iqbal, and then continue with the emergence of other egos in existence, or to use Iqbal's terminology, in 'the spatio-temporal order.' Consistent with his aim of reconstructing "Muslim religious philosophy with due regard to the philosophical tradition of Islam and the more recent developments in the various domains of human knowledge"[398], Iqbal develops a reinterpretation of the Qur'anic conception of God and thinks that God as explained in the Qur'an is compatible with the recent developments in science/philosophy which demonstrate that the ultimate

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[396] Ibid., 58.
[397] Ibid., 58.
[398] Ibid., xlv.

nature of Reality is an ego. Moreover, he thinks that the Qur'anic conception of God also provides us with a view that is not pantheistic, closed-ended (predetermined), fatalistic and absolutist.

To begin with, ego is an individual; it has individuality, and God is also an individual. This prevents from pantheism because being an individual means that it has an objective/real and separate reality or existence. But what is individuality, or an individual? Iqbal explains individuality with reference to Bergson. According to Bergson, individuality means to be different and separate from other things. Individuality is a tendency in the universe. That is, there is a tendency in the universe for beings to become more and more unique, distinct and separate from each other. In this process, beings become more individual. This tendency, Bergson says, is opposed by another tendency, that is, reproduction.[399] This means that individuality exists with its opposite, or it contains its own opposite force in it. Accordingly, for there to be a perfect individual, this individual should be able to live separately from all other individuals and not be dependent on them. Yet Bergson adds that "individuality admits of any number of degrees, and that it is not fully realized anywhere, even in man."[400]

Iqbal thinks that the individuality of God is clearly put forward in the Qur'an, and to emphasize this, the Qur'an gives God the name of Allah, and defines him as one that has not beget and not begotten, and there is none like him.[401] Not only that, Iqbal thinks that the Qur'anic conception of God is also an example of 'the perfect individual.' Since God is unique, peerless and can sustain itself as a closed off ego, it does not contain its opposite force in it, that is, reproduction. According to Iqbal, "this characteristic of the perfect ego is one of the most essential elements in the Qur'anic conception of God; and the Qur'an mentions it over and over again, not so much with a view to attack the current Christian conception as to accentuate its own view of a perfect individual."[402] Accordingly, Iqbal argues that it is only God, 'the Ultimate Ego,' that has the perfect individuality, and the rest of the egos, including man, have lower levels of individualities in different degrees.

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[399] Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 16.
[400] Ibid., 16.
[401] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 50.
[402] Ibid., 51.

In describing God as an individual, Iqbal also attempts to show that the Qur'anic conception of God is not pantheistic. In doing that he in fact responds to Lewis Richard Farnell, who in his book, *The Attributes of God*, discusses the conceptions of personal and anthropomorphic God, and argues that the anthropomorphic visions of God tend to lead to pantheism, and that such conceptions of God cannot last long, while personal God is non-pantheistic and can last long. After discussing various examples of anthropomorphism in different religions, such as, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Zoroastrianism, Farnell comes to this conclusion that the influence of anthropomorphism has been so strong on the human mind that is it is almost impossible to imagine a vital religion that can completely escape from it.[403] According to Farnell, although certain religions, such as Zoroastrianism and Islam, attempt to escape anthropomorphic conceptions of God by identifying God with some 'vast and pervasive cosmic element', such as ether or light, he thinks that these too lead to pantheistic results because this way they conceive God to be present in the whole of existence, that is, omnipresent. Such a conception of God can be found in the Qur'an as well, says Farnell, where God is described as 'the light of the Heavens and earth.'[404] Iqbal, on the other hand, thinks that the conception of God as light should now be interpreted differently considering that the recent developments in modern physics show us that light is the nearest thing to the absolute. So, if the metaphor of light is going to be applied to God, then Iqbal thinks that in view of modern knowledge, it should "be taken to suggest the Absoluteness of God and not His Omnipresence which easily lends to a pantheistic interpretation."[405]

However, the conception of God as an individual, as an ego/self, may raise an objection on the basis that it implies finitude of God and hence is not in accordance with the conception of God that is explained in the Qur'an. Iqbal argues that this objection is a result of a misconception of the issue of finitude. Accordingly, Iqbal distinguishes between spatial infinity and non-spatial infinity, and argues that "God cannot be conceived as infinite in the

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[403] Lewis Richard Farnell, *Attributes of God*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 63.
[404] Ibid., 56. The full text of the verse which Farnell refers to is given by Iqbal as follows: "God is the light of the Heavens and of the earth. His light is like a niche in which is a lamp – the lamp encased in a glass – the glass, as it were, as a star." (24:35). Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 51.
[405] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 51.

sense of spatial-infinity."[406] Spatial infinity applies to man, and accordingly space and time are the interpretations reason/thought constructs to make sense of the universe/nature and the existence. Hence, for God "there is neither time nor space to close Him off in reference to other egos. The Ultimate Ego is, therefore, neither infinite in the sense of spatial infinity nor finite in the sense of the space-bound human ego whose body closes him off in reference to other egos."[407] Iqbal adds that "the infinity of the Ultimate Ego consists in the infinite inner possibilities of His creative activity of which the universe, as known to us, is only a partial expression. In other words, God's infinity is intensive, not extensive."[408] After dealing with the individuality and infinitude of God, Iqbal goes on to discuss other aspects of the Qur'anic God, including creativeness, knowledge, omnipotence, goodness, and eternity.[409]

Regarding Divine omniscience, Iqbal examines three views. He rejects the first two views, which he calls 'discursive omniscience' and 'passive omniscience,' and then puts forward his third alternative view which can be called 'living creative activity.' The perspective Iqbal calls 'discursive omniscience,' is one that considers knowledge as an outcome of the finite human ego's interactions with its 'other,' such as the universe and Nature. Here, Iqbal makes a distinction between the finite ego's (man's) knowledge and infinite ego's (God's) knowledge. He argues that "finite minds regard Nature as a confronting 'other' existing *per se*, which the mind knows but does not make."[410] Accordingly, he thinks that "the word 'knowledge', as applied to the finite ego, always means discursive knowledge – a temporal process which moves round a veritable 'other', supposed to exist *per se* and confront the knowing ego."[411] In this sense, knowledge is always temporal and exists independently of the knowing ego, and ego needs to interact with this 'other' – for instance through observation – in order to acquire knowledge.

However, Iqbal thinks that this notion of knowledge becomes problematic when it is applied to the infinite ego, to God, because according to Iqbal, "from the standpoint of the

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[406] Ibid., 52.
[407] Ibid., 62.
[408] Ibid., 62.
[409] Ibid., 62.
[410] Ibid.,62.
[411] Ibid., 62.

all-inclusive Ego there is no 'other'."[412] He asks, "Does the universe confront God as His 'other', with space intervening between Him and it?"[413] And the answer he gives is no: "from the Divine point of view, there is no creation in the sense of a specific event having a 'before' and an 'after'. The universe cannot be regarded as an independent reality standing in opposition to Him."[414] This means that if there is nothing outside the Ultimate Ego, or if there is no confronting other, then it is impossible to develop the Ultimate Ego's relations vis-à-vis knowledge, as well as the act of knowing. On the other hand, if there is an independent existence outside the Ultimate Ego, then it would contradict with the Ultimate Ego's nature. Since, according to Iqbal, the universe is not an 'other' existing *per se* in opposition to the Ultimate Ego, to God, "knowledge, in the sense of discursive knowledge, however infinite, cannot […] be predicated of an ego who knows, and, at the same time, forms the ground of the object known." [415] Asserting that there is no solution to this problem, Iqbal states that: "Unfortunately, language does not help us here. We possess no word to express the kind of knowledge which is also creative of its object."[416]

Iqbal goes on to discuss the second conception of omniscience. According this view, which Iqbal calls as 'passive omniscience', omniscience is perceived as a single indivisible act of perception which makes God immediately aware of the entire sweep of history in an eternal 'now'. Although Iqbal believes that there is an element of truth in this view, he disagrees with it because "it suggests a closed universe, a fixed futurity, a predetermined, unalterable order of specific events which, like a superior fate, has once for all determined the directions of god's creative activity."[417] Instead, Iqbal considers creation to be a novel act which has a meaning and value only in view of one's capacity for original action. He argues that "if history is regarded merely as a gradually revealed photo of a predetermined order of events, then there is no room in it for novelty and initiation."[418] In this reasoning, if the universe is closed with a predetermined and fixed future, then God has no power to create anything original. Moreover, in this way, God and His acts are reduced to something

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[412] Ibid., 62.
[413] Ibid., 52.
[414] Ibid., 52-53.
[415] Ibid., 62.
[416] Ibid., 62.
[417] Ibid., 63.
[418] Ibid., 63.

passively responding to the coming of the future events, and in this way, God's freedom is also removed. By conceiving God's knowledge as a kind of reflecting mirror, Iqbal argues that "we no doubt save His fore-knowledge of future events; but it is obvious that we do so at the expense of His freedom."[419]

After discussing these two views, finally Iqbal puts forth his own alternative view on divine omniscience, arguing that "Divine knowledge must be conceived as a living creative activity to which the objects that appear to exist in their own right are organically related."[420] Through the idea of organic unity, Iqbal finds a way to express the kind of knowledge which is also creative of its object. He argues that in the Ultimate Ego "thought and deed, the act of knowing and the act of creating, are identical."[421] With this view, "the future certainly pre-exists in the organic whole of God's creative life, but it pre-exists as an open possibility, not as a fixed order of events with definite outlines."[422] The existence of the future as an open possibility means that God also does not have complete knowledge of future events, and that He acquires knowledge of them as He creates them. Furthermore, God does not have complete knowledge of future events because He is not the only one that determines the course of these events; there is no fixed order of events with definite outlines. Other egos, such as man and universe/nature, also affect the development of events in different degrees respective to their level of individuality, thereby putting limitations on God's freedom. Whereas humans, with their rationally directed creative wills, lay a relatively greater limitation on God's freedom, the universe/nature puts limitations as well. This way, Iqbal changes the direction of the dilemma created by Divine knowledge as 'passive omniscience.' Now, Iqbal saves God's freedom, but at the expense of granting God limited foreknowledge of future events, that is, at the expense of omniscience. Iqbal does not see this as a problem because he considers this limitation to be self-imposed by God:

> "No doubt, the emergence of egos endowed with the power of spontaneous and hence unforeseeable action is, in a sense, a limitation on the freedom of the

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[419] Ibid., 63.
[420] Ibid., 63.
[421] Ibid., 62.
[422] Ibid., 63.

all-inclusive Ego. But this limitation is not externally imposed. It is born out of His own creative freedom whereby He has chosen finite egos to be participators of His life, power, and freedom."[423]

However, although Iqbal emphasizes the freedom of God and humans, and even, as seen above, he sacrifices the omniscience of God to save His freedom, Iqbal does not think that God's freedom was unlimited either. When he discusses the freedom of God, he argues that by creating a finite ego, the Ultimate Ego has limited His own freedom because now God shares it with another rationally directed will, the human ego. Iqbal writes: "Thus the element of guidance and directive control in the ego's activity clearly shows that the ego is a free personal causality. He shares in the life and freedom of the Ultimate Ego who, by permitting the emergence of a finite ego, capable of private initiative, has limited this freedom of His own free will."[424] However, stating that this was the decision of the Ultimate Ego does not mean that if Ultimate Ego wants, He can just withdraw His decision, and diminish man's freedom into nothing. Iqbal does not think that such a thing is possible because once the ego emerges, it emerges with power, rationality, freedom and will, and it automatically seeks to maintain its existence, its power, freedom and life. As Iqbal makes it clear, "it is the nature of the self to maintain itself as a self. For this purpose it seeks knowledge, self-multiplication, and power, or, in the words of the Qur'an, "*the kingdom that never faileth*."[425] In this regard, Iqbal does not think that the ego's life is just simply dependent on the Ultimate Ego.

After developing a conception of God with such limitations, Iqbal thinks that the obvious question is the following: "But how, it may be asked, is it possible to reconcile limitation with Omnipotence?"[426] So, with regard to omnipotence, Iqbal first makes a distinction between two kinds of omnipotence, and this also helps him to resolve the question of limitations on God. The first kind of omnipotence, he says, "abstractly conceived, is merely a blind, capricious power without limits."[427] Iqbal, however, does not think that this conception of God which uses his power blindly and capriciously is in accordance with the

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[423] Ibid., 63-64.
[424] Ibid., 86-87.
[425] Ibid., 68.
[426] Ibid., 64.
[427] Ibid., 64.

God described in the Qur'an. The word 'limitation' may also seem problematic, but then Iqbal suggests that the word itself need not frighten us because "the Qur'an has no liking for abstract universals."[428] Iqbal also does not like the term 'omnipotence' because it is an abstract and an unnecessary term which with its universal meaning has nothing to do with the complicated reality of things. In the end, for Iqbal, "all activity, creational or otherwise, is a kind of limitation without which it is impossible to conceive God as a concrete operative Ego."[429] From that, he moves to the second kind of omnipotence which considers God to be related to nature, the cosmos and other forces in a way that they are subject to certain rational laws and principles. He states that "the Qur'an has a clear and definite conception of Nature as a cosmos of mutually related forces. It, therefore, views Divine omnipotence as intimately related to Divine wisdom, and finds the infinite power of God revealed, not in the arbitrary and the capricious, but in the recurrent, the regular, and the orderly."[430]

Another important attribute of the Qur'anic conception of God is its moral goodness, and this was much more challenging for Iqbal than the other attributes in terms of finding an explanation or justification for it. Iqbal presented the difficulty as follows:

> "The Qur'an conceives God as '*holding all goodness in His hands*.' If, then, the rationally directed Divine will is good, a very serious problem arises. The course of evolution, as revealed by modern science, involves almost universal suffering and wrongdoing. No doubt, wrongdoing is confined to man only. But the fact of pain is almost universal, though it is equally true that men can suffer and have suffered the most excruciating pain for the sake of what they have believed to be good. Thus the two facts of moral and physical evil stand out prominent in the life of Nature. Nor can the relativity of evil and the presence of forces that tend to transmute it be a source of consolation to us; for, in spite of all this relativity and transmutation, there is something terribly positive about it."[431]

Following this depiction of the problem, Iqbal then asks: "How is it, then, possible to reconcile the goodness and omnipotence of God with the immense volume of evil in His

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[428] Ibid., 64.
[429] Ibid., 64.
[430] Ibid., 64.
[431] Ibid., 64.

creation? This painful problem is really the crux of Theism."[432] After putting the question so clearly and bluntly, Iqbal discusses two alternative solutions which he refers to as 'pessimism' and 'optimism.' Iqbal associates the optimist solution with Robert Browning, the English poet and playwright, (1812 – 1899), and argued that to Browning all was well with the world. Iqbal makes a reference to Browning's poem, "Pippa Passes", a verse drama published in 1841, in which Browning wrote: "The year's at the spring, And day's at the morn; Morning's at seven; The hillside's dew-pearled: The lark's on the wing; The snail's on the thorn; God is in his heaven, All is right with the world!"[433] Iqbal interprets this as a sign of optimism because it seems that for Browning everything is in their proper places, and that there is nothing to worry about in the world. Iqbal associates the pessimist solution with Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 – 1860) because in Iqbal's view, Schopenhauer was a thinker for whom "the world is one perpetual winter wherein a blind will expresses itself in an infinite variety of living things which bemoan their emergence for a moment and then disappear forever."[434] After pointing to these two alternative solutions, Iqbal admits that he is in no position to finally decide this issue due to the impossibility of having a final knowledge of the universe. He writes that "the issue thus raised between optimism and pessimism cannot be finally decided at the present stage of our knowledge of the universe. Our intellectual constitution is such that we can take only a piecemeal view of things. We cannot understand the full import of the great cosmic forces which work havoc, and at the same time sustain and amplify life."[435]

Having said that Iqbal was not able to achieve a final decision regarding the difficulty of reconciling God's goodness and the existence of evil in the creation, he does not leave the question without any answer at all. In trying to reach a conclusion, he refers to the teachings of the Qur'an as a source of a possible answer. He argues that "the teaching of the Qur'an, which believes in the possibility of improvement in the behaviour of man and his control over natural forces, is neither optimism nor pessimism. It is meliorism, which recognizes a growing universe and is animated by the hope of man's eventual victory over

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[432] Ibid., 64.
[433] Robert Browning, *Pippa Passes: A Drama*, (Boston: Dana Estes & Company Publishers, 1941), 43-44.
[434] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 65.
[435] Ibid., 65.

evil."[436] Following this, Iqbal argues that we might find a clue for a better understanding of this difficulty in the legend that is called the Fall of Man. Although he says that the legend of the Fall was found in a variety of forms in the literatures of the ancient world, due to certain difficulties, he starts his discussion and confines himself to the Semitic form of the myth alone.[437] In doing this, he analyzes the Biblical and Qur'anic narratives of the story, and then provides his own interpretation of them.

The legend of the fall of man as it was told in the Qur'an, according to Iqbal, has nothing to do with the first appearance of man on this planet. It rather refers to man's rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and disobedience. Moreover, according to Iqbal 'fall' does not mean any moral depravity. Rather, it is man's transition from simple consciousness to self-consciousness – a kind of waking from a dream. The earth is not a torture hall for an act of 'original sin.' On the contrary, Iqbal thinks that man's first act of disobedience was actually his first act of free choice. Iqbal relates goodness to freedom and states: "Now goodness is not a matter of compulsion; it is the self's free surrender to the moral ideal and arises out of a wiling cooperation of free egos. A being whose movements are wholly determined like a machine cannot produce goodness. Freedom is thus a condition of goodness."[438] Iqbal criticizes the idea of machine and the concept of mechanism because he values freedom, goodness and having a purpose and end, and thinks that a living being cannot be understood with these terms. He gives a description of good and evil to be interrelated, and he says that good and evil exists on earth as well as freedom, and all these makes things, life, existence, freedom, etc. real instead of illusion, dream and unreal. In the end, it can be said that Iqbal explains the world as it is without recourse to either optimism or pessimism. It is an open-ended process which includes a risk, and this is a risk God has taken due to His faith in man. After analyzing Iqbal's conception of God, I will now continue with other egos, man and nature/universe. I will first explain how they emerge in existence, or to use Iqbal's terminology, in 'the spatio-temporal order.'

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[436] Ibid., 65.
[437] Ibid., 65-66.
[438] Ibid., 87-88.

4.3.3. Iqbal's Conception of Man and Nature

How does the first ego emerge in 'the spatio-temporal order'? As stated before, egos proceed from 'the Ultimate Ego.' In this process, first matter emerges in 'the spatio-temporal order.' The simple atom and matter receives their egohood from the Ultimate Ego, and their existence and life begins. I should add here that although Iqbal does not explicitly say it, he implies that he still thinks that there is a distinction between the essence of God and the existence of God. I say 'he implies' because since he cannot provide sufficient support for it, he puts this view as his personal opinion, not as an objective knowledge. He writes that: "Personally, I believe that the ultimate character of Reality is spiritual: but in order to avoid a widespread misunderstanding it is necessary to point out that Einstein's theory, which, as a scientific theory, deals only with the structure of things, throws no light on the ultimate nature of things which possess that structure."[439] In stating that the ultimate nature of Reality is spiritual, Iqbal does not contradict himself. Instead, he makes a distinction between the essence and existence of God, and while he considers the essence of God to be spiritual, the existence of God is both material and spiritual, that is, ego. And then similar to the process in al-Jili's and Hegel's theories, God goes into a process of realizing itself in existence, and with this, man and universe/nature come into existence as well, that is, they emerge in the spatio-temporal order. With the emergence of the spatio-temporal order, time begins as well. As Iqbal says, it is from the Ultimate Ego that the other egos proceed.

Thus, it is through the evolution of the ego from the lower levels of existence and individuality, such as the simple matter, plant life and animal life, the life of the human ego comes into being with the emergence of his consciousness.[440] But then, what is matter? Matter is "a colony of egos of a low order out of which emerges the ego of a higher order,

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[439] Ibid., 31.

[440] In general, Iqbal agrees with the theory of evolution in explaining the origin of man and life on earth; however, his view of evolution is not influenced by Darwinian evolution theory. Instead, Iqbal adopts the views of the Emergent Evolution school and also the vitalist philosophy. Also, Iqbal suggested that proto-evolutionary ideas had already existed among Muslim philosophers in the past. For instance, he argued that "it was Jahiz (d. 255 A.H.) who first hinted at the changes in animal life caused by migrations and environment generally. The association known as 'Brethren of Purity' further amplified the views of Jahiz. Ibn Maskawaih (d. 421 A.H.), however, was the first Muslim thinker to give a clear and in many respects a thoroughly modern theory of the origin of man." See, Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 96.

when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of coordination."[441] So, in the process of its evolution, matter becomes united with mind/soul, and gives way to higher order of egos. It is in this process man also emerges in 'the spatio-temporal order.' In other words, the human ego develops through the intensification of the sub-egos, such as matter, and gains consciousness when the mind is united with the matter – when a systematic unity is gained. But then what are the elements of this systematic unity?

Iqbal discusses two different theories that explain this systematic unity, or the interaction between matter and mind, body and soul. These theories are 'parallelism' and 'interaction.' He thinks that they are not satisfactory in explaining this unity, and then he goes on to explain his alternative view to explain how matter and mind become united. According to the paralellism theory, body and mind are mutually independent and do not affect each other. This means that the changes that happen to them "run on parallel lines to each other, owing to some kind of pre-established harmony as Leibniz thought."[442] Iqbal does not find this view very convincing because it reduces the soul to a passive spectator of the things that happen to the body. As for the interaction theory Iqbal discusses two examples – Descartes and Lange. In Descartes' version, body and soul are considered to be separate things independent of each other, but somehow also related to each other. So, there is interaction between the two, but it takes place in a rather mysterious way; therefore, Iqbal thinks that it does not really explain how the interactions happen between matter and mind and in what ways. In Lange's theory, the interaction takes place in a process where the body takes the initiative in the act of interaction. This does not seem very convincing to Iqbal either because Iqbal thinks that there are also facts that suggest the opposite. In other words, he asserts that it is also possible that both body and soul might be the one taking the initiative in the act of interaction.

Thus Iqbal concludes that both parallelism and interaction theories are unsatisfactory; however, since the issue remains unexplained, Iqbal offers an alternative theory to explain the relations or interactions between the mind and body. He explains them through the theory or concept of action. Accordingly, he argues that mind and body become one in

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[441] Ibid., 84.
[442] Ibid., 84.

action, and illustrates this through an example. He states that "when I take up a book from my table, my act is single and indivisible. It is impossible to draw a line of cleavage between the share of the body and that of the mind in this act. Somehow they must belong to the same system."[443] But, how is this possible, Iqbal asks, and answers it by saying that it is possible because ego is not a thing situated in an absolute void, but an event or act. It is in action body and soul come together and make what Iqbal calls self/ego possible. So, the body is 'a system of acts', and the soul is 'a system of acts', and this brings them closer to each other, and helps us understand their interactions with, and relation to, each other.[444]

If human ego emerges out of the lower level of egos, that is, matter, this brings two questions into mind. One is that, if the higher emerges out of the lower, then this may create suspicion about the value, worth and dignity of the higher. In other words, how can the mental element have superiority to the material element if the former has evolved out of the latter? In responding to this, Iqbal refers to the views of 'the Emergent Evolution' which argue that the emergent "is an unforseeable and novel fact on its own plane of being, and cannot be explained mechanistically."[445] Indeed Iqbal adds that "the evolution of life shows that though in the beginning the mental is dominated by the physical, the mental, as it grows in power, tends to dominate the physical and may eventually rise to a position of complete independence."[446] Accordingly, Iqbal argues that "it is not the origin of a thing that matters, it is the capacity, the significance, and the final reach of the emergent that matters."[447]

The second question is that if the mental emerges out of the material, and if the functioning of the material is deterministic, that is, it works like a machine through cause-effect mechanism, then what can be said about the working of the mental? Does the mental also work in a deterministic way since it emerged out of the material, or does it follow a different type of working? In other words, although these explanations about the matter and spirit sound reasonable, they still create a kind of problematic situation. If the higher order

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[443] Ibid., 84.
[444] Ibid., 84.
[445] Ibid., 85.
[446] Ibid., 85.
[447] Ibid., 85.

of egos has emerged out of the lower ones, that is, if human ego has emerged out of matter, then it sounds like the material, the matter, the Nature, has some kind of control over the human ego. It is like the matter, the nature, causes the human ego. If nature causes the human ego, this creates a deterministic kind of situation. This, in turn, creates a big problem because this view makes human ego's freedom problematic. So, does the human ego determine its own activity? In other words, is human ego a self-determined being? Or are the actions of the human ego determined by the Nature, the matter, the material world? Is there such a thing called 'personal causality' as a special kind of causality different from the mechanism of Nature – two kinds of determinism: 'personal causality' of the human ego and of living beings and 'mechanical causality' of the Nature and the universe? Or, is the notion of 'personal causality' just a disguised form of the mechanism of Nature? In other words, are self-determinism of the ego and the determinism of the spatio-temporal order, the universe, the Nature, compatible with each other? Can they exist together? If so, how are these two forms of determinisms related to each other?

Here, the debate takes place mainly between two groups which Iqbal calls 'the advocates of freedom' and 'the advocates of mechanism.' 'The advocates of mechanism' claim that these two forms of determinisms, personal causality of man and causality of nature, are not exclusive of each other. In other words, they think that the scientific method is equally applicable to human action, and hence they try to understand human action through determinism of the Nature as well. According to that view, "the human act of deliberation is undestood to be a conflict of motives which are conceived […] as so many external forces fighting one another, gladiator-like, on the arena of the mind. Yet the final choice is regarded as a fact determined by the strongest force, […] like a purely physical effect."[448] In this regard, the human act of deliberation is understood like a physical process. This deterministic approach undermines the freedom of man by turning him into a machine-like being who does not live and behave as he wills by his free will and power. In this view, man becomes a being that does not do anything original, but merely acts through the cause and effect mechanism. Accordingly, his life and actions are already determined and organized by certain laws of physics and deterministic structures, and that he is only lives

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[448] Ibid., 85.

his life to play his already determined and given role within a given time. By developing a conception of the human on the analogy of the universe and nature, 'the advocates of mechanism' turns man into a machine without freedom and will.

Iqbal, however, disagrees with this view, and thinks that the notion of 'personal causality' is in fact just a disguised form of the mechanism of Nature, a disguised form of determinism. In the debate between the 'the advocates of freedom' and 'the advocates of mechanism,' Iqbal clearly supports the former group, yet he also Iqbal thinks that this controversy arises from a wrong view of intelligent action, human action. According to Iqbal, the misunderstanding, or the wrong view of intelligence action, is in fact related to modern psychology's mistake regarding its own position for being a science like other physical sciences. Whereas in Iqbal's view modern psychology is actually an independent science with its own set of facts to observe and data to analyze, in its methods, modern psychology mistakenly still tries to imitate the physical sciences. It is from this mistake the wrong view of intelligent action emerges. That is, modern psychology forgets the fact that it is an independent science with its own methods and data, and slavishly imitates the methods and perspectives of physical sciences. By doing that, it goes on to explain the intelligent action as a purely physical process as physical sciences would explain their objects of analysis. Clearly, Iqbal is against the mechanistic interpretations of consciousness which he thinks are related to materialist view on which modern science is built, and he thinks that the newer German psychology, which he says is also called 'Configuration Psychology', in other words, 'Gestalt Psychology', can make psychology an independent science. It is through the ideas of this German psychology Iqbal goes on to explain the character of human action, intelligent action, or intelligent behavior. This German psychology brings the concept of 'insight' to explain the purposive character of human action, or intelligent action, and with that it becomes possible to distinguish human action from the actions of Nature which are determined by a cause and effect process, or mechanism. "This 'insight' is the ego's appreciation of temporal, spatial, and causal relation of things – the choice, that is to say of data, in a complex whole, in view of the goal or purpose which the ego has set before itself for the time being."[449] Accordingly Iqbal

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[449] Ibid., 86.

states that "it is this sense of striving in the experience of purposive action and the success which I actually achieve in reaching my 'ends' that convince me of my efficiency as a personal cause. The essential feature of a purposive act is its vision of a future situation which does not appear to admit any explanation in terms of Physiology."[450]

Hence, Iqbal emphasizes the importance of freedom as making the difference between a living organism that has a life and a non-living entity, or machine, mechanism that does not. A living organism has freedom to choose from an open pool of actions regarding how to live life whereas a machine does not have freedom and only follows the course of actions that are already determined by certain causal laws. Accordingly, he argues that in the levels of life and consciousness, an explanation that is based on freedom needed to be developed. Iqbal believes that the action of living organisms are initiated and planned in view of an end, and in that aspect, they are different from causal actions. He writes that, life, "in all the purposive processes of growth and adaptation to its environment, […] it possesses a career which is unthinkable in the case of a machine."[451] That is to say, the functioning of the spheres of life and consciousness cannot be predetermined, or known in advance through some fixed principles or laws, such as causality. Instead, the spheres of life and consciousness are governed by the principle of freedom, and this makes life as an open possibility, the course of which is only determined by free actions of humans. Accordingly, the subject-matter of any inquiry that examines life and mind demanded different concepts such as "end" or "purpose".[452] Iqbal concludes that "life is, then, a unique phenomenon and the concept of mechanism is inadequate for its analysis."[453]

In the end, Iqbal defines human ego as a free personal causality, but this does not mean that the human ego is independent from other egos in utilizing his freedom. He performs his freedom in relation to other egos, that is, universe/nature and God, the Ultimate Ego. It is also correct the other way around, that is, other egos have freedom as well, but they are also related to man in performing their freedom. Iqbal states that "thus the element of guidance and directive control in the ego's activity clearly shows that the ego is a free personal

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[450] Ibid., 86.
[451] Ibid., 35.
[452] Ibid., 34.
[453] Ibid., 35.

causality. He shares in the life and freedom of the Ultimate Ego who, by permitting the emergence of a finite ego, capable of private initiative, has limited this freedom of His own free will."[454] So, God, as the infinite ego, has limited freedom. He has created a finite ego, the human, and by doing that God has limited His own freedom. Assigning the human absolute freedom is also not possible for Iqbal since in his view, all egos – the universe, God, and the human – are related to one another. By being related to each other, they put different kinds of limitations on each other, such as they limit each other's freedom and power. Hence, he constructs an understanding of human freedom which is not absolute, and which is limited in his relation to other egos. This means that human ego's freedom is limited by other the universe and God.[455] Regarding the limitations put by the universe, Iqbal considers them to be necessary because they provide the human ego a sense of regularity to pursue his life. He argues that:

> "The ego is called upon to live in a complex environment, and he cannot maintain his life in it without reducing it to a system which would give him some kind of assurance as to the behaviour of things around him. The view of his environment as a system of cause and effect is thus an indispensable instrument of the ego, and not a final expression of the nature of Reality. Indeed in interpreting Nature in this way the ego understands and masters its environment, and thereby acquires and amplifies its freedom."[456]

Iqbal argues that Islam is sensitive and careful about maintaining the freedom of human ego, and it attempts to maintain this through the instrument of 'prayer'. However, although Iqbal claims that Islam is so sensitive and careful about maintaining the freedom of the human ego, he also admits that it cannot be denied that the idea of destiny runs throughout the Qur'an. Since these two positions seem to create an inconsistency, Iqbal goes on to discuss this. This becomes more crucial and necessary since Iqbal thinks that Oswald Spengler (1880 – 1936) in his *The Decline of the West* discusses the issue of fatalism (destiny) as an essential part of Islamic culture, and hence argues that Islam amounts to a complete negation of the ego. According to Iqbal, Spengler thinks that in Islam man is not conceived or understood as a being that has freedom. Complete negation of the ego means

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[454] Ibid., 86-87.
[455] Ibid., 85-86.
[456] Ibid., 86.

a denial of the freedom of ego, his independence, strength and way of living life. In Iqbal's view, Spengler thinks that the ego in Islam does not have freedom; he is a weak being, a weak will, which does not direct and lead his own life, and instead leaves himself and his life to the control of God. This claim is based on a distinction Spengler makes between two ways of dealing with the world, and making the world our own. The one is the intellectual way, and the other is the vital way. In the intellectual way, the human ego understands the world as a rigid system of cause and effect; hence does not think of himself having any power or freedom to do anything against those already existing mechanical structures and predetermined processes. It is in this perspective Iqbal claims that Spengler situates Islam and its understanding of the world and human ego. The vital way, on the other hand, is the absolute acceptance of the necessity of life in its wholeness, richness, problems, difficulties, and so on. Iqbal thinks that such an attitude toward life is not actually negation of the ego, but on the contrary the acceptance of ego as a strong, free, and independent reality. It is in fact like Nietzsche's affirmation of life in its wholeness. Iqbal argues that the Qur'an approves and supports the vital way of making the world our own. So, a man's seemingly uncaring attitude toward life does not indicate that he is not interested in life, in controlling, effecting, or directing life, but shows that he is a strong personality. It shows that man embraces life with a boundless power and thinks that certain external obstructions are not strong enough to distract him from his purposes, goals, from what he wants to do and achieve. Hence, instead of negating the ego and aiming, for instance, in the absorption of the ego in God, Islam, according to Iqbal, aims the opposite of this.[457]

Iqbal also argues for the uniqueness and distinctness of egohood of human from the Ultimate Ego.[458] This is an interesting interpretation of human and God relations because Iqbal makes it so clear that humans have their own uniqueness and privacy into which even God cannot penetrate. In doing this, Iqbal creates a space for humans for the free exercise of freedom and free will. He says: "Another important characteristic of the unity of the ego is its essential privacy which reveals the uniqueness of every ego."[459] He writes: "My pleasures, pains, and desires are exclusively mine, forming a part and parcel of my private

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[457] Ibid., 87-88; 114-115.
[458] Ibid., 76.
[459] Ibid., 79.

ego alone. My feelings, hates and loves, judgements and resolutions, are exclusively mine. God Himself cannot feel, judge, and choose for me when more than one course of action are open to me."[460] Every ego is unique in the sense that it has privacy for its own. Not even the God, the Ultimate Ego, can interfere with that.

4.3.4. How God, Man and the Nature are Related to Each Other

In Iqbal's system, God, man and universe/nature are all related to each other. They all form what is called existence, they share a life, and in this process, they contribute to the evolution, change and becoming of the existence with their own levels of power, freedom, creativity, rationality and will. In this regard, nature/universe is not a dead-thing, or pure materiality, occupying a void, but rather "a structure of events, a systematic mode of behaviour, and as such organic to the Ultimate Self. Nature is to the Divine Self as character is to the human self."[461] It is not a finished product that is immobile or incapable of change, but is a growing universe, and thus capable of extension. As Iqbal states, it is "not an already completed product which left the hand of its maker ages ago, and is now lying stretched in space as a dead mass of matter to which time does nothing, and consequently is nothing."[462] With respect to man's relation to the universe/nature, Iqbal describes nature as a reality to be reckoned with. In this respect, the universe both obstructs man from seeing Reality, and also enriches his life and sharpens his insight.[463] In the process of enriching man's life and sharpening his insight, universe/nature fulfills its promise to man according to which nature serves as a place that provides signs of God for humans to observe and reflect upon.[464] As Iqbal says: "And this immensity of time and space carries in it the promise of a complete subjugation by man whose duty is to reflect on the signs of God, and thus discover the means of realizing his conquest of Nature as an actual fact."[465] However, this process should not take place in a way that man dominates or exploits nature. According to Iqbal, "man is related to nature, and this relation, in view of

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[460] Ibid., 80.
[461] Ibid., 45.
[462] Ibid., 44.
[463] Ibid., 12.
[464] Ibid., 8-9.
[465] Ibid., 8-9.

its possibility as a means of controlling her forces, must be exploited not in the interest of unrighteous desire for domination, but in the nobler interest of a free upward movement of spiritual life."[466] Thus, universe needs to be observed, reflected upon, understood, and then mastered. But this mastering should not be done for mere unrighteous domination, but for a free upward movement of spiritual life. In this regard, sense-perception needs to be supplemented by the perception of the heart.[467]

God and man are also related to each other in various ways. For instance, Iqbal considers them as co-workers. They have both creative powers (khalq and amr), so they contribute to the evolution, change and becoming of the existence by creating new things.[468] According to Iqbal there are different ways that this cooperation takes place. In this regard, one can refer to the poems, such as, "Whose World Is This – Yours or Mine?", and "A Dialogue Between God and Man". On one hand, it can be argued that human's creation or work functions as a corrector of God's creation. That is to say, God creates something, but man makes it better. Secondly, it can be said that God does something, man completes it. Thirdly, it can be said that God gives humans the raw material, and humans do things with them. Another type of relationship is based on human being the vicegerent of God.

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[466] Ibid., 12.
[467] Ibid., 12.
[468] See, Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p.82, "In order to understand the meaning of the word *Amr,* we must remember the distinction which the Qur'an draws between *Amr* and *Khalq.* Pringle-Pattison deplores that the English language possesses only one word– "creation"– to express the relation of God and the universe of extension on the one hand, and the relation of God and the human ego on the other. The Arabic language is, however, more fortunate in this respect. It has two words, *Khalq* and *Amr,* to express the two ways in which the creative activity of God reveals itself to us. *Khalq is* creation; *Amr* is direction."

4.4.   Moral and Political Nihilism and Iqbal

What is the problem about moral and political nihilism? As Beiser states, the problem is this: "What are the limits of reason? Does it have the power to justify our basic moral, religious, political, and commonsense beliefs? Or does it end in complete skepticism or nihilism?"[469] The problem is about whether we should follow the authority of reason in organizing, supporting, legitimizing and justifying our most fundamental moral and political beliefs and truths upon which the moral and political order is established, or whether we should follow faith/revelation to achieve the same goal.

The Enlightenment was a solution that provided a harmony between reason and faith/revelation, or between philosophy and religion – a harmony that is similar to that which was established in the medieval period in Europe between religion (Christianity) and philosophy (ancient Greek philosophy) which was called the scholastic philosophy/theology. The Enlightenment philosophy provided this harmony based on the fundamental principle that every belief, that is, our most fundamental moral and political beliefs and truths, should be put to trial by reason, and that when this is done, reason can support them. Hence, the Enlightenment's solution was that reason should be the guide in providing support and legitimacy for our most fundamental moral and political beliefs and truths. This, Beiser states, was considered as 'a more effective sanction' than that provided by the authority of tradition, revelation and scripture.[470]

However, this harmony was challenged by two developments – one intellectual and one actual. The intellectual development was the outbreak of the 'pantheismusstreit,' 'the pantheism controversy,' which according to Beiser, brought the eventual downfall of the *Aufklarung,* the Enlightenment. This happened through Jacobi's "success in casting doubt upon the central dogma of the *Aufklarung:* its faith in reason."[471] By applying the same principle of the Enlightenment to reason itself, that is, by putting reason to a critique by reason, Jacobi showed that reason was not a self-sufficient thing, and that it needed the

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[469] Frederick, C. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought* (1790-1800) (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), 2.
[470] Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 2.
[471] Ibid., 45-46.

support of another force. This, according to Jacobi, showed that reason was not only not able to deliver what it had promised, that is, 'a more effective sanction for all moral, religious and commonsense beliefs,' but also more dangerously it was in fact undermining all these fundamental truths and beliefs as well as the moral and political order.

The actual development was widely experienced throughout Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. Describing this process as 'the end of ancient Europe,' Karl Löwith argues that the destruction of Europe's political tradition begins "with the French Revolution. It continues with the Russian Revolution, inasmuch as Bolshevism is alive in Western Europe in the Jacobins, and inasmuch as the events of 1789, 1848, and 1917 are part of one movement."[472] Thus, the French Revolution was perhaps the most important event that demonstrated the unsettling effects of a sole reliance on reason in providing legitimacy and support for the moral and political order, beliefs and truths. For instance, the French revolutionaries executed the King and ended the monarchy. With that, they also brought an end to the idea of the Divine Right to Rule, or Divine Right of Kings, according to which the monarch had the right to rule over the country because he was given this right by God. In place of the idea of the Divine Right to Rule and monarchy, the revolutionaries established the idea of popular sovereignty and republic in which the right to rule, the sovereignty, was believed to have come from the people, and had to be used by the people. In a way, the problem was this: who should rule – God, or the people? The French revolutionaries justified their ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity in the name of reason. Since the existing traditions as well as the social and political institutions of France were obstacles preventing these principles from being realized, the revolutionaries not only saw it as necessary, but also felt obliged to destroy these institutions, and carry out the necessary measures to achieve their goals. Accordingly, even 'the Terror' seemed to receive the backing of reason to achieve their goals.[473]

In addition to the French Revolution, similar ideas found support in Russia, and therefore Russian revolutionary movements are also seen as an example of political nihilism. During

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[472] Karl Löwith, *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism*, ed. Richard Wolin, tr. Gary Steiner, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 181.
[473] Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*, 2-3.

the 19th century there were various radical political movements in Russia in which anarchists, socialists and revolutionaries aimed to overthrow the existing social and political order. Associating political nihilism with Russian revolutionary movements, Donald A. Crosby states that the term nihilism became popular in Russia following Ivan Turgenev's (1818 – 1883) novel *Fathers and Sons*, (1862) in which a nihilist is defined as "a man who does not bow down before any authority, who does not take any principle on faith, whatever reverence that principle may be enshrined in."[474] According to Crosby, a characteristic of Russian nihilism is that it is first and foremost interested in destroying the old political order without necessarily being concerned with what to establish in the place of the old order. As Crosby states, this nihilist outlook, "which became widely known because of the influence of Turgenev's novel, came to be associated with programs of political revolution and terrorism in which negation or destruction for its own sake seemed to be the dominant aim."[475] Similar to Crosby, Michael Gillespie considers Russian nihilism to be mainly concerned with the destruction of the old order. He refers to one of the most popular of these revolutionary nihilists, Mikhail Bakunin (1814 – 1876), who was a Left Hegelian, anarchist and atheist, who called to his supporters to destroy and annihilate the existing political order. What Bakunin thought was that with the overthrow of the autocratic Czarist regime, freedom, or 'a liberated humanity,' would arrive. However, apart from this vague hope for the coming of freedom, he did not have a more concrete plan about the new political order.[476]

4.4.1. Modern German Philosophy and Moral and Political Nihilism

Both the pantheism controversy and social and political developments in Europe brought significant challenges for the existing moral and political order in Europe which needed to be met or responded to. Following the authority of reason in guiding their conduct in the moral and political realms, the French and Russian revolutionaries made significant

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[474] Donald A. Crosby, *The Specter of the Absurd: Sources and Criticisms of Modern Nihilism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 10.
[475] Ibid., 10.
[476] Michael Allen Gillespie, "Nihilism in the 19th Century: From Absolute Subjectivity to Superhumanity," in *The Edinburgh Critical History of Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, Ed. Allison Stone, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 287-288.

impacts on the existing moral and political order, undermined their stability, and created a chaotic situation. Accordingly, the post-revolutionary period in modern German philosophy was characterized by various attempts at dealing with this chaotic situation.

As Beiser states, although the problem of the authority of reason was not new to German philosophy in the 1790s, following the French Revolution, it became transformed and assumed a more political shape.[477] Before the Revolution, German thinkers were concerned with the problem of the authority of reason with respect to the limits of *theoretical reason*. In this regard, they were discussing whether reason can bring us the knowledge of supernatural entities, such as God, the soul, or the universe as a whole. After the Revolution, however, the problem of the authority of reason became related to the limits of *practical reason*, that is, whether reason can guide our conduct or not – more specifically in the realm of politics.[478] According to Beiser, the French Revolution was the starting point of political discussions among contemporary German philosophers. Hence, while these philosophers had previously written little or nothing on politics, after the Revolution, they "became virtually obsessed with the questions raised by the Revolution. Almost all the writings of Kant, Fichte, Schiller, Humboldt, Forster, Jacobi, Herder, Schlegel, Novalis, and Wieland in the early 1790s were inspired, either directly or indirectly, by the Revolution."[479] Kant, for instance, did not consider the liberty to do whatever one wants as the highest form of freedom. As Andrew Bowie states, Kant claimed that we become free when we give the law to ourselves because we accept that this is what we ought to do.[480]

In the aftermath of the French Revolution, the Enlightenment thinkers' previous attitude of appealing to the authority of reason to justify their ideas about moral and political reform became questionable since they assumed that reason can justify their moral and political principles.[481] The fundamental principle of the Enlightenment states that individuals should think for themselves, and they should not accept any belief if it does not conform to their critical reason. As Beiser states, however, the Enlightenment's sole reliance on reason and

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[477] Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*, p. 3.
[478] Ibid., 3.
[479] Ibid., 1.
[480] Andrew Bowie, *Introduction to German Philosophy: From Kant to Habermas* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), 34.
[481] Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*, 4-5.

its attitude of critique leads to a loss of people's ability to live in society. He adds that "by bringing all forms of social and political life under criticism and making them satisfy the tribunal of reason, individuals more often than not come to regard all forms of social life as an irrational submission to authority."[482] This, in turn, creates a situation in which people demand to know the reasons why before following an order or undertaking a task, and "if the answer does not meet the exacting demands of their reason, they are obliged to reject it. Thus radical criticism seems to lead not only to skepticism but to anarchism, by destroying all social obligation and communal feeling."[483] The critics of the Enlightenment argued that relying solely on reason in deciding on these issues undermines the moral and political order. They argued that making every individual the sovereign authority in matters of politics had apparently anarchistic consequences. The conservatives, for instance, argued that reason alone cannot be a sufficient criterion for our moral and political obligation.[484] Accordingly, it was argued that "if all people were to judge for themselves whether an order or policy is right or wrong, there would be as many authorities as there were individuals. Society would become like the French revolutionary army, where every foot soldier was allowed to question and debate the orders of his officers."[485] An example of this view, according to Yolanda D. Estes, was the ideas of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762 – 1814). According to Estes, as a supporter of the French Revolution, Fichte put the social and political order to a test, and by vesting ultimate moral authority in the individual, he took it from the church and state. This, in turn, the critics argued, brought social anarchy and moral despair.[486]

Both intellectual debates and actual events contributed to the idea that reason alone is not capable of supporting our moral values. It leads us to moral despair, and social and political anarchy. In the end, what was at stake was the Enlightenment itself. The difficulty, as Bowie rightly states, is that a criticism of events like 'the Terror' "presumably has to take place in the name of reason, but the source of the problem could be seen to be reason

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[482] Ibid., 231.
[483] Ibid., 231.
[484] Ibid., 4-5.
[485] Ibid., 4.
[486] Yolanda D. Estes, "Johann Gottlieb Fichte," in *Nineteenth-Century Philosophy of Religion: The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*. Vol. 4. ed. Oppy, Graham, and N. N. Trakakis (London: Routledge, 2014), 25.

itself." [487] Accordingly, these modern German philosophers needed to develop new responses to this situation. They could either provide a new support for the authority of reason, or try to reestablish the authority of revelation/faith, or attempt at a new reconciliation of reason and revelation. While the conservatives tried to reestablish the authority of traditional religion, Kant, the Idealists and the early Romantics sought to provide a fuller understanding of reason. The aim, according to Bowie, "was to give a central role to moral and affective dimensions of individual human life which are inaccessible to abstract rationality."[488] In this regard, Kant for instance thought that it was possible to reconcile moral obligation with freedom. This could be possible because Kant believed that by obeying our own true will, we would be obeying the moral law.[489]

This idea that moral obligation can be reconciled with freedom by obeying the moral law as obeying our own true will is also found in Iqbal's writings. In the same way as Kant, Iqbal also bases ethics on an imperative that is universally valid for all rational beings. Iqbal considers Islam to be based on true human nature, and that therefore by obeying the rules of Islam, one is obeying his own true nature. Although with respect to the goal of reconciling authority/moral law with freedom/reason Iqbal shares the same concerns and aims with Kant, the content of Iqbal's understanding of morality, or how this reconciliation can be achieved, is different from Kant's view of morality. For instance, it seems that Iqbal received some of his ideas on morality from Kant, especially in the sense that one should obey the laws, or that freedom is not blindly following one's own passion because being a slave to passions is not good either. Also, Kant's categorical imperative as the principle of morality is definitely not Iqbal's principle. It is not the categorical imperative that determines how one should act according to Iqbal. Instead, it is the drive for further individualization that makes an action good or bad. He follows more of a Fichtean and Nietzschean kind of morality in which strength, power and will is more appreciated than following the rules.

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[487] Bowie, *Introduction to German Philosophy*, 102.
[488] Ibid., 102-103.
[489] Frederick C. Beiser, *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 212.

Hence, I argue that Iqbal's ideas on morality and politics, how the moral and political order should be maintained, and which political and moral ideals should be upheld can only be made sense if he is situated within this historical, political and intellectual context. The Enlightenment solution that provided a harmony between reason and faith/revelation on the superiority, or authority, of reason over faith/revelation failed, or collapsed, as a result of the above mentioned political developments and intellectual debates, such as 'the pantheism controversy,' in Europe, and thus a new harmony was needed to provide a support, justification and legitimacy for our most fundamental moral and political beliefs. The Enlightenment philosophy provided this harmony on the fundamental principle that every belief should be put to trial by reason, and that when this is done, reason can support our most fundamental moral, moral and political beliefs and truths. Iqbal, on the other hand, believed that this harmony needed to be based on the principle that 'the heart' – the mystical faculty of knowledge – should guide reason. It is through this harmony that he thought that a better response can be developed to the moral and political nihilism that emerged as a result of the decline of reason from the position of authority to provide support and legitimacy for our fundamental moral and political beliefs and truths.

4.4.2. Moral Nihilism

Iqbal argues that "every great religious system starts with certain propositions concerning the nature of man and the universe."[490] Buddhism, for instance, for Iqbal, is built upon the idea of pain as a central element in the constitution of the universe. Iqbal states that man is conceived as a personality/individuality that is helpless against the forces of pain. Since man is not understood as a personality to struggle against the forces of pain, the goal of man in Buddhism is to become free from individuality. Hence, according to Iqbal, in Buddhism, "freedom from pain means freedom from individuality."[491] Since it starts from the fact of pain, Iqbal thinks that "Buddhism is quite consistent in placing before man the ideal of self-destruction."[492] Accordingly, salvation, according to Buddhism, is achieved

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[490] Iqbal, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – I," 30.
[491] Ibid., 31.
[492] Ibid., 31.

through "inaction, renunciation of self and unworldliness." [493] Similar to Buddhism, Christianity is also based on the fact of sin, in Iqbal's view. However, the difference is that while in Buddhism man is completely helpless against the forces of pain, and finds salvation, or freedom from pain, by renouncing his individuality, in Christianity man is not totally helpless in this respect. Although man as an individual is not conceived as a strong personality to deal with the fact of sin, man can still achieve salvation and freedom from sin through 'a redeeming personality' who intervenes between him and his Creator.[494]

To conceive of pain, sin, sorrow and struggle as real constituents of the universe is important for a religious system or a worldview because, Iqbal thinks, this provides the system with a realistic view about life. However, how a particular religious system conceives of man dealing with these realities is also important. For instance, while Christianity and Buddhism consider sin, pain and sorrow as real constituents of the universe, they do not consider man to be capable of dealing with them. Whereas Buddhism endorses an escapist solution, that is, escaping from struggling with evil by renouncing one's own personality, Christianity is not a better alternative because there it is thought that man cannot deal with evil by himself, and that he can only be saved by a redeemer. In this respect, both Christianity and Buddhism seem to have a pessimistic conception of life and man.[495]

However, it should not be thought that Iqbal only sees non-Islamic worldviews to have a pessimistic view of man and the universe. He also considers pantheistic forms of Sufism as examples of pessimistic worldviews. Referring to pantheistic forms of Sufism which consider absorption in God as the final goal and the salvation of man through renouncing one's own personality/individuality, Iqbal states that, "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."[496] In addition to the pantheistic forms of Sufism, Iqbal also refers to Arthur Schopenhauer's worldview as another example of a pessimistic worldview. For Iqbal, Schopenhauer sees the world as "one perpetual winter wherein a

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[493] Ibid., 31.
[494] Ibid., 31.
[495] Ibid., 31.
[496] Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, xviii.

blind will expresses itself in an infinite variety of living things which bemoan their emergence for a moment and then disappear forever."[497] Pessimism is also associated with Schopenhauer's name in the history of philosophy. Frederick C. Beiser even goes on to claim that "if anyone deserves the title 'philosopher of pessimism,' it is Arthur Schopenhauer."[498] According to Beiser, it is impossible to have a gloomier outlook on life than Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer's is the darkest outlook since it likens the world to hell.[499] Similarly, Christopher Janaway argues that "Schopenhauer's world is neither rational nor good, but rather is an absurd, polymorphous, hungry thing that lacerates itself without end and suffers in each of its parts."[500] In that world, none of us is in control even of our own nature; instead, we are at the mercy of the blind urge to exist and propagate that stupefies us into accepting the illusion that to be a human individual is worthwhile. In truth it would have been better had nothing existed."[501]

The problem with pessimistic worldviews for Iqbal is that they lead to pernicious religious and political consequences. Since in these views man is understood as naturally sinful, or weak, he must not be permitted to have his own way; hence his entire life must be controlled by external authority. According to Iqbal, this means priesthood in religion and autocracy in politics.[502] However, as opposed to pessimism, a simplistic or naïve optimism would also not be a suitable worldview to deal with the realities of life, that is, pain, sorrow, sin and evil. The optimistic view of the Victorian era English poet and playwright Robert Browning (1812-1889) is an example of this. Referring to Browning's poem, "Pippa Passes", in which Browning says: "God is in the heaven, All is right with the world."[503], Iqbal seems to claim that Browning is a thinker who considers everything in the universe to

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[497] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 65.
[498] Frederick C. Beiser, *After Hegel: German Philosophy, 1840-1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 161.
[499] Ibid., 161.
[500] Christopher Janaway, *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.
[501] Ibid., 1.
[502] Iqbal, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – I," 33.
[503] "The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled:
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven —
All's right with the world!"[503], Browning, *Pippa Passes*, 43-44.

be good and in their rightful places, and thus that there is no need to worry about the pain, evil, sin or sorrow that exists in the universe. Writing on the life of Robert Browning, William Sharp refers to another author's description of Browning's optimism as an 'insanity of optimism' which "required no personal acquaintanceship to discern the dyspeptic well-spring of this utterance."[504]

Consequently, Iqbal thinks that a worldview which is neither optimistic nor pessimistic can be the most proper solution, and the Sufi view seems to fit this definition which Iqbal refers to as 'melioristic.' According to Iqbal, although evil, pain, sin and sorrow are admitted as reality in the Islamic view, there is still the belief that the universe can be reformed by man, who is capable of understanding and controlling the realities of life, and thus eliminating them to make the world a better place.[505] Hence, Iqbal adds, "the possibility of the elimination of sin and pain from the evolutionary process and faith in the natural goodness of man are the basic propositions of Islam."[506]

Nevertheless, Iqbal does not think that there is no obstacle in front of man's ethical progress. He states that "the principal fact which stands in the way of man's ethical progress is, according to Islam, neither pain, nor sin, nor struggle. It is fear to which man is a victim owing to his ignorance of the nature of his environment and want of absolute faith in God."[507] Accordingly, Iqbal argues that "the highest stage of man's ethical progress is reached when he becomes absolutely free from fear and grief."[508] Then, the question is how man can achieve this stage at which he is free from fear and grief and gains the ability to control the realities of life to bring ethical progress to the universe. Accordingly, Iqbal thinks that "the ethical ideal of Islam is to disenthrall man from fear, and thus to give him a sense of his personality, to make him conscious of himself as a source of power. This idea of man as an individuality of infinite power determines, according to the teachings of Islam, the worth of all human action."[509] This idea of man as an individuality of infinite power, according to Iqbal, determines the worth of all human actions, and gives us a

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[504] William Sharp, *The Life of Robert Browning*, (London: Walter Scott Limited, 1897), 23-24.
[505] Iqbal, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – I," 33.
[506] Ibid., 33.
[507] Ibid., 32.
[508] Ibid., 32.
[509] Ibid., 33.

measure to settle the problem of good and evil.[510] Accordingly, Iqbal thinks that "that which intensifies the sense of individuality in man is good, that which enfeebles it is bad. Virtue is power, force, strength; evil is weakness."[511] In this process, Iqbal considers man as a free responsible being who is the maker of his own destiny and whose salvation is his own business. Hence, the strengthening of human personality is the ultimate ground of all ethical activity.[512]

After setting the moral principle stating that man should refrain from doing actions which weaken the personality and should do those actions which strengthen the personality, Iqbal needs to explain which actions weaken and strengthen the personality. He states that "the ego is fortified by love (ishq)."[513] He uses this word in a wide sense to refer to the desire to assimilate and absorb other things into one's personality. The highest form of love, according to Iqbal, "is the creation of values and ideals and the endeavour to realize them."[514] As love fortifies the ego, asking weakens it. Iqbal argues that "all that is achieved without personal effort comes under *asking*."[515] Thus, Iqbal adds that, "in order to fortify the ego we should cultivate love, *i.e.* the power of assimilative action, and avoid all forms of 'asking, *i.e.* inaction."[516] Iqbal seems to give so much importance to strength, self-respect and personality that therefore he criticizes all actions that weaken one's personality as morally wrong. In this regard, he even goes on to express his admiration for Satan who refused to kneel down in front of man because Satan really thought that Adam was his inferior. By doing so, Iqbal thinks that Satan "revealed a high sense of self-respect, a trait of character which in my opinion ought to redeem him from his spiritual deformity."[517] And, accordingly Iqbal believes that "God punished him [Satan] not because he refused to make himself low before the progenitor of an enfeebled humanity, but because he declined to give absolute obedience to the will of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe."[518]

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[510] Ibid., 33.
[511] Ibid., 33.
[512] Ibid., 33.
[513] Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, xxv.
[514] Ibid., xxvi.
[515] Ibid., xxvi.
[516] Ibid., xxvi.
[517] Iqbal, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – I,", 36-37.
[518] Ibid., 37.

The goal of ethical progress through strengthening one's own personality, according to Iqbal, is to achieve the level of 'divine vicegerency,' – in other words, the level of 'the Perfect Man,' (al-Insanul Kamil). In this process, Iqbal argues that the ego has to pass three stages which are 'obedience to the law,' 'self-control' and 'divine vicegerency.'[519] The 'divine vicegerency' is the highest and the last stage of human development on earth both individually and collectively. The vicegerent is God's vicegerent on earth, and in this regard he is the goal of humanity. In this respect, the Perfect Man is the real ruler of mankind, and according to Iqbal, his kingdom is the kingdom of God on earth.[520] Humanity aims at the emergence of the Perfect Man; however, Iqbal does not think that this is an exclusive level of ethical progress. On the contrary, Iqbal believes that all individuals have the ability to rise in the levels of ethical progress and become perfect man. The society in which these perfect men live will be a democracy of them. Hence, Iqbal thinks that "Nietzsche had a glimpse of this ideal race, but his atheism and aristocratic prejudices marred his whole conception."[521] Thus, the Kingdom of God on earth does not mean an infallible human being ruling the rest of the people, but rather it means "the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth." [522] Thus, Iqbal differentiates his theory of democracy of an ideal race by claiming that the plebian material, the ordinary individuals can also become this ideal race; that they are capable of that; that they have the potential of developing their personality through these three stages and become unique individuals on earth, and then be the members of that democratic society. These individuals achieve this stage not by being better Muslims, but by developing and strengthening their personalities. In this regard, religion is not an essential component of that ideal democracy, and thus religion is not an essential difference between his version of ideal democracy and that of Nietzsche.

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[519] Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, xxvii.
[520] Ibid., xxviii.
[521] Ibid., xxviii-xxix.
[522] Ibid., xxviii.

4.4.3. To Whom Does the Sovereignty Belong – God, Man, or Both?

In a nihilistic context where one loses his/her Archimedean point to legitimize things, say morality and political order, the sovereignty problem cannot escape either. That is to say, it becomes of crucial necessity to justify the legitimacy of political authority and order as well. The question is whether sovereignty belongs to God, or man. In the solutions that were offered for this problem, there was always a dualistic situation. For instance, sovereignty belonged either to God or man. Accordingly, either the theory of Divine Right of Kings or the theory of popular sovereignty was the answer to the problem of where the legitimate political authority comes from. Hence, either monarchy or democracy was the solution to this question. In overcoming the dualism of whether the sovereignty belongs to God or man, Iqbal discusses the theory of the Divine Right to Rule (Divine Right of Kings) and the idea of 'the finality of prophethood' to offer a solution to the sovereignty issue. Thus, Iqbal's answer to this problem is that sovereignty belongs both to God and man which means that man and God, being co-workers, work towards the realization of certain principles, such as liberty, equality and fraternity in the world. In this democracy, state is the means by which these principles are realized in life and in history. Consequently, the political regime Iqbal develops as a solution is neither simply monarchy nor simply democracy, but it is 'spiritual democracy' which Iqbal also calls 'elective monarchy.' In the following analysis, I will first discuss Iqbal's interpretation of the Divine Right to Rule, and then the idea of 'finality of prophethood.' Then I will move on to analyze Iqbal's conception of 'spiritual democracy.'

4.4.4. Divine Right to Rule

Iqbal considers the theory of the Divine Right of Kings, or Divine Right to Rule, as old as the institution of kingship itself, which provides a justification for the origin of legitimate political authority. He thinks that while the theory seems to be originated in the East, it is also imported to the West with the advent of Christianity. According to this theory, both in the East and in the West, the king has been regarded as deriving his authority directly from

God and ruling his people by Divine Right.[523] Iqbal provides an interesting interpretation of the Divine Right to Rule, and claims that throughout history, there was only one person who legitimately had this right, and ruled his people by Divine Right. According to Iqbal, this ruler was the prophet of Islam, Muhammad. Accepting Muhammad's ruling as the exemplification of Divine Right to Rule means that Iqbal accepts God as a source of sovereignty. However, Iqbal also adds that this right does not extend to other kings after Muhammad died, which means for Iqbal, the claim of all the other kings to be ruling by Divine Right in the aftermath of the death of Muhammad are invalid, or unjustified.

Analyzing the claim of kings to be ruling by Divine Right in the aftermath of the death of Muhammad, Iqbal pursues an interesting analysis. By demonstrating various material sources and psychological methods kings utilize for their ruling, Iqbal claims that there is in fact nothing divine in these kings' ruling, and that everything about their rule is simply based on artificial human methods. For instance, he argues that these kings "had military force with which to keep the people in subjection. They had their police and their jails to gag the voice of freedom. They had their fabulous riches with which to purchase friends and supporters."[524] So, he asks: "Where does divinity come in?"[525] Accordingly, Iqbal thinks that "any man without the least vestige of divinity in him, with just a bit of common sense can make as good as a king as any that was ever encircled by credulity with a halo of sanctity, provided he has an army, a treasury and the rest of the regal paraphernalia."[526] In the end, Iqbal concludes that "it was, in fact, not by right divine but by the right of might that they [these kings] ruled over their fellowmen."[527]

In Iqbal's view, Divine Right to Rule must be above all such material sources and psychological methods. He believes that for a right to rule to be divine, it must come from a divine source. The evidence of divinity of a ruler, according to Iqbal, is that it does not rely on any material source of power or psychological tricks. Based on these ideas, Iqbal argues that it was only the prophet of Islam who was undoubtedly such a ruler to fit to this theory,

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[523] Muhammad Iqbal, "Divine Right to Rule," in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 163.
[524] Ibid., 163-164.
[525] Ibid., 164.
[526] Ibid., 164.
[527] Ibid., 164.

and he was the only ruler who could rightfully make such a claim. According to Iqbal, he was a ruler who ruled by a divine right, that is, without any material power, such as an army, treasury, jail or police, and without any psychological tricks. Since Muhammad did not rule through these, Iqbal believes that he must have had another source of power to rule. This means that he was ruling by divine right. The important point is, according to Iqbal, that it is only the prophet of Islam who was the one and only ruler in history worthy of the title, or claim, to have ruled by a divine right. This means that according to Iqbal, all the post-Muhammad rulers, caliphs, kings, monarchs, who claimed to have ruled by divine right, were unjustified in their claims. Hence, they were rather mere earthly kings who ruled through certain material and psychological means and instruments, not by divine right. By reinterpreting the Divine Right to Rule in this way, Iqbal claims that all the existing political authorities that base their right to rule in a divine or supernatural origin are unjustified. In fact, there is no political authority that rules by divine right since the death of Muhammad, and no ruler can claim to be ruling by divine right or to be infallible. Hence, Iqbal's interpretation of Divine Right to Rule does two things: First, it shows that Iqbal accepts that one legitimate source of sovereignty is God, and that there has really been a ruler in history who ruled by divine right. Secondly, by limiting this right to Muhammad only, Iqbal makes it clear that in the post-Muhammad period, sovereignty belongs to man and can be used by man. In addition to the Divine Right to Rule, the idea of the 'finality of prophethood' is a part of Iqbal's argument, as I will discuss in the following.

4.4.5. Finality of the Prophethood

The idea of 'finality of prophethood' is another means for Iqbal to make way for the transition from the personal authority claiming a supernatural origin to the authority that is based on the people. In other words, in this idea Iqbal finds support for the transition from the Divine Right to Rule to popular sovereignty, from monarchy to democracy, from the sovereignty of God to the sovereignty of man. In this respect, the prophet of Islam once again plays a crucial role for Iqbal. By situating the prophet of Islam between the ancient world and the modern world, Iqbal again creates a distinction between the time of Muhammad and the time following the death of Muhammad. During his own life time, the

prophet of Islam teaches his followers in particular and the mankind in general how to live together, and conveys general principles about what to do and what not to do in life; but when he dies, the prophethood ends with him. This end, according to Iqbal, means that the prophecy reaches its perfection and aims at its own abolition. In other words, it means that the prophethood is over, and that there will be no new prophets after Muhammad. Following the death of Muhammad, Iqbal thinks that a new period starts for mankind where man becomes responsible for his own actions. This means that in this new period, man is left to his own devices to find his own way and his own solutions to the problems of social and political life. As Iqbal states, "life cannot for ever be kept in leading strings; that, in order to achieve full self-consciousness, man must finally be thrown back on his own resources."[528]

Since the idea of 'finality of prophethood' brings an end to the claims for personal authority assuming a supernatural origin, this also means the abolition of priesthood and the abolition of hereditary kingship.[529] The existence of priesthood and hereditary kingship, in Iqbal's view, allow for such claims as well as control and guidance of man in moral and political life. The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship, on the other hand, enables Iqbal to envision a different kind of man, as well as a different kind of social and political life in which man is not guided, controlled and ruled by priests, the clergy or the kings, but instead he rules himself with his own tools and methods. This paves the way for a democratic management of life in general, and the moral and political life in particular. Thus, Iqbal's interesting reinterpretation of the Divine Right to Rule, which considers only Muhammad to have had the Divine Right to Rule, combined with his emphasis on the idea of 'finality of prophethood,' makes it clear that after the prophet of Islam died, all personal authority claiming a supernatural origin was left behind.

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[528] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 130-131.
[529] Ibid., 130-131.

4.4.6. Monarchy, Democracy and Spiritual Democracy

As it is stated above, the main principle behind the theory of Divine Right to Rule, according to Iqbal, is that the king derives his authority directly from God, and from this, two other principles follow: "Firstly, the king, being a representative of God on earth, is free from all responsibility to his people. His word is law and he may do whatever his sweet will may dictate without being called to account for it. […] Secondly, kingship must descent into the same family which is considered sacred."[530] However, Iqbal thinks that with its idea of 'finality of prophethood,' Islam arrives at the world to bring an end to hereditary kingships, monarchies, and the culture of throne by replacing the loyalty to throne with the loyalty to God. Yet, loyalty to God does not mean obeying an external authority for man, because, since man is also ego and sprung out of the Ultimate Ego, according to Iqbal, loyalty to God means actually loyalty of man to his own self.[531] In the end, by arguing that sovereignty comes from two sources, God and man, or that it belongs both to God and man, Iqbal brings these two theories, Divine Right to Rule and popular sovereignty, together. Iqbal reinterprets Divine Right to Rule to argue that although once being a valid and legitimate source of political authority, it came to an end following the death of the prophet of Islam. Consequently, a new period has begun in which man is left to his own devices, thus expected to rule himself as well – hence democracy.

Iqbal claims that democracy is the best form of government suited for such a community, because firstly, democracy allows the free development of the individual. In Iqbal's view, the ideal of democracy is "to let man develop all the possibilities of his nature by allowing him as much freedom as practicable." [532] Secondly, democracy is suitable for this community because the caliph/the ruler in Islam is not an infallible ruler, but an elected one. In this respect, Iqbal thinks that Islam does not allow any space to aristocracy. Understanding Iqbal's position about the role of aristocracy in a society is important because it helps us understand how Iqbal thinks about democracy. Iqbal seems to understand democracy with respect to its opposite. That is, for Iqbal, the absence of

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[530] Iqbal, "Divine Right to Rule," 163.
[531] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 152-153.
[532] Iqbal, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – II," 169.

aristocracy is one of the things that make a political regime democracy. Yet, it is not all about that. In addition to the absence of aristocracy, Iqbal also thinks that there is rule of law in Islam. He argues that that there is equality before the law, and even the Caliph/Sultan/Ruler is subject to law and is equal to an ordinary citizen before the law. Finally, the Caliph of Islam is elected by the people and can be disposed by the people if he conflicts with the law while he is ruling. He states "that the Muslim Commonwealth is based on the absolute equality of all Muslims in the eye of the law. There is no privileged class, no priesthood, no caste system."[533] These, for Iqbal, are actually the attributes that show that Islam is a democratic system because for Iqbal democracy means the lack of aristocracy and the equality of all. This is the meaning of no privileged class, no priesthood, and no caste system. Thus, Iqbal claims that democracy is the most important aspect of Islam regarded as a political ideal.[534]

However, it should be added that Iqbal's conception of democracy is not the modern democracy which Nietzsche criticizes as 'the rule of the herd.' Iqbal defines this new form of democracy as 'spiritual democracy.' So, what is 'spiritual democracy'? Before explaining what 'spiritual democracy' is according to Iqbal, I will first discuss Iqbal's views on modern democracy in Europe. This is necessary because it is through a criticism of the form of democracy in Europe in his times, Iqbal goes on to develop his conception of 'spiritual democracy.' Thus, writing about the origins of democracy in modern Europe, Iqbal arrives at the conclusion that democracy as it emerged in Europe was not a development that grew out of moral progress or as a result of a higher level of political or moral development of man, or the culture of Europe, but rather a result of a mere economic development of Europe. That is, in its origins, democracy in modern Europe was motivated and brought about by economic considerations, interests and concerns. As modern Europe became wealthier and richer, the lower classes demanded more share of the wealth, or wanted to have a rather equal share of the economic development and wealth, and democracy emerged as a result of this process.

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[533] Iqbal, Muhammad, "Political Thought in Islam", Sociological Review, (1908), 251.
[534] Iqbal, "Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal – II," 169.

This aspect of democracy of Europe made it seem less valuable for Iqbal because like Nietzsche, Iqbal also sees political development as a matter of a higher culture. He thinks that modern democracy as it emerged in Europe was more about the equality of numbers. And in this respect, Iqbal also agrees with Nietzsche on seeing modern democracy as 'the rule of the herd.' Iqbal, on the other hand, believes that democracy is a political regime of higher and morally developed individuals, not only of equal numbers, or equal stomachs. In a way, he believes in a more qualified form of democracy where individuals are free and equal to work on their inner potentials, become better individuals morally and politically.

However, Iqbal disagrees with Nietzsche on the issue of how modern democracy will be superseded through morally developed or superior individuals. Iqbal thinks that, losing his faith in democracy and his hopes on the plebian, the ordinary people, Nietzsche envisions an aristocratic form of political order to replace modern democracy. In Iqbal's view, Nietzsche is hopeless about the plebeian as a type of man and consequently he bases his hopes for the emergence of a new higher culture through a different process. In this regard, Nietzsche believes that man must be overcome, and that overman should replace man. With the cultivation of overman, a new culture can arise and therefore a higher level of political development can be achieved. Thus, it is in this respect, Iqbal thinks that Nietzsche 'bases all higher culture on the cultivation and growth of an Aristocracy of Supermen.'[535] In the end, Iqbal interprets Nietzsche's ideas on politics as a form of aristocracy, and thinks that Nietzsche promotes a kind of aristocracy based on the rule of the supermen, the overman.

Iqbal, on the other hand, asks: 'Is the plebeian so absolutely hopeless?', and he answers it in the negative. He thinks that Nietzsche is wrong to think that the plebian, the ordinary people, is so hopeless and that democracy is always 'the rule of the herd.' Instead, Iqbal defends the value and importance of the plebeian and thinks that the democratic ideal of the equality of all can become a reality. He claims that Islam as a political structure achieved this goal before in the early periods of its development, and there is no reason to think that this achievement cannot be repeated again. In this respect, Iqbal even thinks that the democracy of early Islam was actually an empirical refutation of Nietzsche's ideas about

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[535] Muhammad Iqbal, "Muslim Democracy," in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 157.

the value of the plebeian and democracy as 'the rule of the herd.' Accordingly, Iqbal claims that democracy did not grow out of economic considerations in the Muslim world. Instead, democracy in the Muslim world emerged as a result of a spiritual principle which is based on the assumption that "every human being is a center of latent power, the possibilities of which can be developed by cultivating a certain type of character."[536] This new culture sees and accepts every human being as equal to others, and also accepts that every human being can be developed into the noblest of the men. This in turn brings the rise of a new and higher type of culture with its higher level of principles, such as equality and liberty of all.

Thus, the main difference between Nietzsche and Iqbal is that – leaving aside the discussion whether Islam in its emergence was really a kind of democracy or not, or whether what Iqbal understands by democracy is a valid definition of democracy or not – whereas Nietzsche is already disappointed and hopeless about the ordinary people, whom he calls 'the last man', with respect to their possible progress in cultural, moral, and political aspects, Iqbal is still hopeful about such potentials of the ordinary people. This attitude is reflected in their solutions as well. Nietzsche desires the radical emergence of a new type of personality, a new type of man, almost out of nowhere and through a radical cut between past and present/future as a detachment from the previous type of man, the last man. Iqbal, on the other hand, believes that this ordinary man, this plebeian, or this 'last man' can in fact be transformed from his current character to the man of noblest character. In fact, Iqbal thinks that this is what Islam did in history. He argues that "out of the plebeian material Islam has formed men of the noblest type of life and power."[537]

As it will be remembered from the discussion in moral nihilism part, according to Iqbal, the goal of ethical progress of man was to achieve the level of 'divine vicegerency' which Iqbal also called the level of 'the perfect man' – 'al-Insanul Kamil.' 'The perfect man' is the highest level of moral development of humanity, and in this regard, he is also the real ruler of mankind. It will be remembered that Iqbal called the kingdom that is created by the perfect men as the kingdom of God on earth.[538] So, as opposed to Nietzsche who has lost

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[536] Ibid., 157.
[537] Ibid., 157.
[538] Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, xxviii.

his hopes for the plebeian, Iqbal thinks that to become 'the perfect man' is not an exclusive process for the select few. On the contrary, Iqbal believes that all individuals can rise in the levels of ethical progress and become the perfect man. It is the society of these perfect men Iqbal calls 'spiritual democracy.' Hence, Iqbal thinks that "Nietzsche had a glimpse of this ideal race, but his atheism and aristocratic prejudices marred his whole conception."[539] Thus, the Kingdom of God on earth does not mean an infallible human being ruling the rest of the people, but rather it means "the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth."[540] Thus, Iqbal differentiates his theory of democracy of an ideal race by claiming that the plebian material, the ordinary individuals can also become this ideal race; that they are capable of that; that they have the potential of developing their personality through these three stages and become unique individuals on earth, and then be members of that democratic society. These individuals achieve this stage not by being better Muslims, but by developing and strengthening their personality. In this regard, religion is not an essential of the ideal democracy, and thus religion is not an essential difference between his version of ideal democracy and that of Nietzsche.

4.4.7. The Problem of Dualism and Political Nihilism

In Iqbal's view, the problem of sovereignty was a result of another deeper problem about Christianity. The problem about Christianity was that it had a bifurcated conception of man, life and society. Iqbal thinks that Christianity had "uncritically accepted the duality of spirit and matter probably from Manichaean thought."[541] This, in turn, creates a problematic situation for the institutional structure of the society and politics. It is this dualist view of man, life and Reality that leads to the separation of political life and order into dual realms, such as, private and public, sacred and secular, Church and state, and theological and political.

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[539] Ibid., xxviii-xxix.
[540] Ibid., xxviii.
[541] Muhammad Iqbal, "Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League," in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 5.

This dualistic political structure was problematic because it was creating problems for the stability of the political order in Europe. Hence, in his understanding of general political history of Europe from the birth of Christianity to the medieval times and then to modern Europe, Iqbal considers the evolution of Europe to be a result of certain political processes and factors. He argues that the 'European political thinking' has evolved out of certain facts in Europe, and Christianity was such a fact. Christianity, according to Iqbal, was born as a 'purely monastic order,' and in time evolved into a vast church organization. Accordingly, it was responding better to the ethical aspects and dimensions of life, but it was not so successful in dealing with the political aspects of life. While it focused on the spiritual dimension of life and Reality, it ignored the material dimension. For Iqbal, this meant that Christianity was rather a life-negating force because it was "renouncing the world of matter and fixing its gaze entirely on the world of the spirit."[542] While it functioned well as a monastic order and thus was successful in creating a universal ethical order, it failed at the political level. Thus, on the one hand, there was a big church organization which spoke to the ethical/moral dimension of man through 'the universal ethics of Jesus' and by which it propagated a strong otherworldliness. On the other hand, there were separate states which were left to deal with the political, material, and earthly dimensions of man, life and society.[543] Since it was merely concentrated on the ethical dimension, it failed to understand the role of power and force in life, and thus could not create a successful political order. In the end, Iqbal thought that "if one begins with the conception of religion as complete otherworldliness, then what has happened to Christianity in Europe is perfectly natural. The universal ethics of Jesus is displaced by national systems of ethics and polity. The conclusion to which Europe is consequently driven is that religion is a private affair of the individual and has nothing to do with what is called man's temporal life."[544] Hence, when Luther started his protest, it was actually directed against this church organization, and not against a political system. This was so, Iqbal adds, because there was no such polity associated with Christianity, that is, Christianity was merely a monastic order and church organization, not a political order.[545]

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[542] Ibid., 7.
[543] Ibid., 4.
[544] Ibid., 5.
[545] Ibid., 4.

Hence, in Iqbal's view, Christianity in Europe was a relatively successful solution to the problem of moral and political nihilism. It was relatively successful because while it could provide a better support for the ethical order, it was not very suitable for the political order. Accordingly, the problem was that there was always the possibility of political struggle between the two sides of these dualisms: Church and State, King/God and man. Does the sovereignty belong to God, and hence it should be used by Kings in God's name as it is put forward in the idea of Divine Right to Rule? Or, does it belong to the people, and thus it should be exercised by the people as it is stated in the idea of popular sovereignty? In this respect, Iqbal mentions the example of the bloodshed and the subsequent political disorder that took place during the civil war in the 17th century England between the parliamentarians and the royalists. It was a struggle about the source of legitimate political authority. While "the royalists held that all Christian kings, princes and governors derived their authority from God, the parliamentarians contended that ultimate power lay in the people." [546] Iqbal thinks that the execution of Charles I was the victory of the parliamentarians and the idea that sovereignty belongs to the people, and he adds that "the sentiment of the divine right of kings was finally smashed by the French Revolution."[547] In the following section, I will discuss Iqbal's analysis of the question of to whom does sovereignty belong, and his solution to it.

4.4.8. 'Islam as an Ethical Ideal Plus a Certain Kind of Polity'

As a solution to the problem of dualism, Iqbal argues that Islam had the view of man as a unity, not as a duality of matter and spirit. This point will also be remembered from Iqbal's discussion of man as a unity of matter and mind – in other words, as an ego. In this way, Iqbal thinks that the dualisms that were created by Christianity can be overcome. As a solution to the problem of Christianity being rather a monastic order, an ethical system, and not a political system, Iqbal refers to Islam as 'an ethical ideal plus a certain kind of polity.'[548] By this Iqbal means that Islam is both an ethical/moral structure and a political society. Accordingly, Islam, in Iqbal's view, is a social structure regulated by a legal

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[546] Iqbal, "Divine Right to Rule," 163.
[547] Ibid., 163.
[548] Iqbal, "Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League," 4.

system and animated by a specific ethical ideal. In this regard, Iqbal thinks that Islam includes the whole of life. It is interested in political life as well as the social life. It is a legal system and an ethical ideal. In this regard, Islam, for Iqbal, is not merely a private matter, an ethics of some sort, but rather a more complete system, which covers the social, legal, ethical, political aspects of life, and brings them together under a specific ideal. Hence, he states that "politics have their roots in the spiritual life of man. It is my belief that Islam is not a matter of private opinion. It is a society, or, if you like, a civic church."[549]

This affects the political structure as well, because since man is a unity, the political structure in Islam, according to Iqbal, is also unified. Hence, he states that "in Islam God and the universe, spirit and matter, Church and State, are organic to each other. Man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interest of a world spirit situated elsewhere. To Islam matter is spirit realising itself in space and time."[550] Accordingly, he thinks that a unified conception of Reality, that is, Reality as both matter and mind, provides a unified conception of religion and state, sacred and secular, and overcomes the dualistic political structures created by Christianity. Presenting Islam's conception of man as a unity of both matter and mind solves one part of the dualism problem. The other part is related to the question of to whom the sovereignty belongs.

Iqbal states that it is wrong to say that the Church and the State are united or separated in Islam. Instead, they form an organic unity. He writes that "according to the law of Islam there is not distinction between the Church and the State. The State with us is not a combination of religious and secular authority, but it is a unity in which no such distinction exists."[551] There is no priest-class to rule the people, or an individual who is above the law. Accordingly, "the Caliph is not necessarily the high priest of Islam; he is not the representative of God on earth. He is fallible like other men, and is subject, like every Muslim, to the impersonal authority of the same law."[552] There is no personal authority;

[549] Muhammad Iqbal, "Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim Conference," in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 31.
[550] Iqbal, "Presidential Address Delivered at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League," 5.
[551] Iqbal, "Political Thought in Islam," 252.
[552] Ibid., 252.

everybody obeys the law, and the law is above everyone, a kind of rule of law – including the prophet himself.

In discussing these issues, Iqbal analyzes the contemporary developments in the Muslim World, particularly in Ottoman Empire/Turkey, to provide an answer to the question as to how the relations between religion and politics/state should be and what should be the position of the Caliphate in the modern world. According to Iqbal, the main lines of the debate in the field of political thought in the Ottoman Empire were represented by two political parties, 'The Nationalist Party' and the 'Party of Religious Reform', and therefore Iqbal bases his analyses on the ideas of these two groups. In Iqbal's view, the Nationalist Party considers the state to be of supreme importance, and religion to be of secondary importance. Accordingly, they reject the old ideas about the religion and state where there was a unity between them, and they support the separation of religion and the state. Although Iqbal thinks that such a view is acceptable according to Islam, which is 'a religio-political system,' he still thinks "that it is a mistake to suppose that the idea of state is more dominant and rules all other ideas in the system of Islam."[553] Accordingly, Iqbal argues that in Islam, the spiritual and the temporal are not two distinct domains. Whether an act is secular or religious can only be understood with respect to the attitude of mind with which the agent does it. In this respect, Islam can look like a Church when looked from a certain point of view and like a state when looked from another point of view. For Iqbal, it is not even correct to say that the Church and the State in Islam are the two sides of the same coin because Iqbal thinks that Islam is a single unanalyzable reality.[554] He claims that the ideas of Turkish Nationalists regarding the separation of Church and State come from the history of European political ideas where Christianity in its early form was only a monastic order, not a political unit. So, there was a dualistic structure of spiritual and political realms at place which was working well with the dualist understanding of the old Magian world – body and soul. However, when the State became Christian, it was like there were two power centers – the State and the Church. This could have never happened in Islam, Iqbal

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[553] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 122.
[554] Ibid., 122.

thinks, because from the very beginning Islam was not only a religion, but also a social and political entity.[555]

Talking about the separation of the State and the Church (religion), Iqbal argues that the origin of this problem lies in a mistake about the unity of man. Man, mistakenly, was thought to be made up of two parts: body and soul – just like the reality was thought to be made up of two elements which are the matter and the mind. It is on these separations, of body and soul, and matter and mind, that the separation between the state and the church is built, and it is from these separations it receives its intellectual/metaphysical legitimacy or background. In other words, Iqbal considers this as a mistake that arouse out of the bifurcation of the unity of man into two separate realities which are body and mind. Iqbal, however, believes that matter is spirit in space-time reference. It seems that here Iqbal uses 'energy' and 'spirit' interchangeably. So, matter is spirit means matter is energy. In this respect, man is body when you look at it when he is acting in regard to the external world, and it is a soul/mind when he is acting in regard to the ultimate aim of reality.[556]

Iqbal explains this unity in Islam with the concept of 'tawhid' which according to Iqbal means the unity of the ideas and principles of equality, solidarity and freedom. Accordingly, Iqbal argues that from an Islamic point of view state "is an endeavour to transform these ideal principles into space-time forces, an aspiration to realize them in a definite human organization." [557] In other words, state is just the social-political form through which these ideals and principles are realized in life, in the world and in history. Iqbal adds that it is only in this sense that "the state in Islam is a theocracy, not in the sense that it is headed by a representative of God on earth who can always screen his despotic will behind his supposed infallibility."[558]

Although the ultimate reality is spiritual, its life takes in temporal realm, and that the spirit finds its opportunities in the natural, material and secular. Therefore, all that is secular is actually sacred in the roots of its being. This means that there is no such thing as a profane

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[555] Ibid., 123.
[556] Ibid., 122.
[557] Ibid., 122-123.
[558] Ibid., 123.

world because the whole universe constitutes a scope for the self-realization of spirit. All is holy ground. [559] These definitely sound Hegelian, but we know that Iqbal takes his framework or structure from Hegel, but the functioning of the framework is totally different from, or even opposite to, the Hegelian system. In Iqbal, there is no dialectical movement; there is a relational movement. And in Iqbal's system, there is no teleology in the sense that the self-realization of the spirit ends at a certain point. Instead, the self-realization of the spirit is an open-ended process. The state in Islam is only an effort to realize the spiritual in human organization, and if understood in this sense then Iqbal argues that all states are in fact theocratic. So, Iqbal thinks that he solves the problem of state-religion separation through the reinterpretation of the ultimate nature of Reality as a unity of both matter and mind. To understand them as separate entities is a mistake, and it is from this mistake that the idea of separation of the church and state emerges, and he believes that this mistake should be corrected. In a way Iqbal tries to do that as well, to overcome the dualism of the sacred and secular through a reinterpretation of mind and body dualism, and bringing them together in action, in the action of man in its attempts to make the world a better place both separately from God and also in collaboration with God. Thus, what Iqbal does is to develop a theory of them having this sovereignty in a collective and shared way which means that if ego is the ultimate reality, and if man and God are both egos, then they both have a right to rule. It can be said that this creates a more democratic political system because God is not a being who solely commands to be followed blindly by the people. Instead, there is a mutual responsibility and shared power between God and man in terms of deciding what should be done and how they should be done. There are no fixed, predetermined and eternal set of rules to bind people, their wills, their freedom, their choices, their decisions and their actions beforehand. People also act on their own wills and freedom and contribute to the development of the making of the things on earth. They try to make things better on earth.

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[559] Ibid., 123.

5. Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have been interested in how Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy has been interpreted, understood and analyzed in the literature. In the Introduction chapter, I gathered these studies in roughly three groups and called them 'comparative studies', 'piecemeal studies' and 'the established narrative.' I argued that these studies were problematic for mainly two reasons. One reason is that these studies lacked a philosophical perspective. By this I meant that Iqbal's thought was not analyzed within the context of a philosophical problem. Second reason is that these studies were suffering from certain ideological and political interpretations, or even 'misinterpretations.' To that affect, I showed how Iqbal was anachronistically described as 'the poet-philosopher of Pakistan'[560] or 'the National Poet of Pakistan'[561] despite the fact that Iqbal died almost a decade before the partition of India, and how his ideas were appropriated with political and ideological motivations to provide support and legitimacy for the newly founded independent Muslim state, Pakistan. After discussing the details of the problems of these studies on Iqbal, I offered my alternative interpretation and approach to understand and analyze Iqbal's philosophy. In this respect, I argued that Iqbal's philosophy is best understood and analyzed within the context of, and as a response to, the problem of nihilism as a philosophical problem as it was debated during the famous 'the pantheism controversy' in Germany from the end of the eighteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century. In connection with this, I argued that Iqbal's solution was based on Sufism. I aimed at contributing to the existing literature on Iqbal by developing this alternative interpretation and narrative which has a philosophical, systematic and global approach to Iqbal's philosophy.

I devoted the main three chapters of the dissertation, Chapter II, Chapter III, and Chapter IV, to the analysis of demonstrating how Iqbal dealt with the problem of nihilism all through his life and in different stages of his intellectual development. During the period of 1900 and 1908, which I called 'First Overcoming', I analyzed how Iqbal was concerned with the problem of nihilism at the beginning of his intellectual development, and how he became familiar with it through the history of Islamic philosophy and modern German

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[560] Malik, "The Life of the Poet-Philosopher," 3.
[561] Bausani, "The Concept of Time in the Religious Philosophy of Muḥammad Iqbal," 159.

philosophy, particularly 'the pantheism controversy.' In this period, Iqbal believed that he has found a solution to the problem of nihilism in the metaphysical system of the Sufi poet and thinker Abdulkarim al-Jili. However, he also thought that Hegel's metaphysical system were just as successful as al-Jili's in being a solution to the problem of nihilism. These two metaphysical systems provided Iqbal with an answer to his most fundamental metaphysical questions, i.e. 'the human enigma.' They did this by providing Iqbal with an orientation of man, God and the universe, by providing man a place in the cosmos with freedom and will. During the period of 1909 and 1927, which I called 'The Crisis', I analyzed how Iqbal fell into a nihilistic crisis. Since this was a period when Iqbal started reading Nietzsche, I drew a correlation between Iqbal's starting of reading Nietzsche and his slide into nihilism. Analyzing Iqbal's entries in his private notebook, *Stray Reflections*, his poetry written in this period and his private letters which he wrote to Atiya Begum, I demonstrated the crisis Iqbal experienced in this period. In this period, Iqbal experienced the collapse of the power of the the al-Jilian and Hegelian solutions. This mainly occurred as a result of Iqbal's coming into awareness of the problematic situation of the freedom and will of man in these solutions.

During the period of 1928 and 1938, which I called 'Second Overcoming', I analyzed how Iqbal overcame the nihilistic crisis, and developed a new solution to the problem of nihilism. In doing this, I analyzed Iqbal's *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* which is regarded as his magnum opus and the expression of his latest views. In this period, Iqbal first attempted to show that reason, philosophy, or modern science is just a particular understanding of understanding the reality, and therefore it is not universal. In this respect, Iqbal tried to demonstrate that modern science is based on a particular conception of reality, that is, reality is matter. Hence, it is a materialist conception of reality. In response to this, he attempted to open up a space for mystical/religious experience and knowledge. He wanted to expand the realm of reality, what is real and hence the realm of knowledge/science beyond matter and thus materialism. After defining the ultimate nature of reality as neither simply material nor spiritual, but rather an organic unity of them, that is, self/ego, Iqbal developed an explanation of 'the human enigma' through the concept of the ego. Based on this, he developed a new orientation between man, nature and God as

egos. In this new orientation, he strengthened the freedom and will of man as well as the objective existence of man vis-à-vis nature and God. By drawing a balance between man's freedom and natural laws, he aims to save man from being a machine and gives him a power and motivation to live life, to act and do something in life. Without freedom, man becomes like a machine, and without freedom, without the feeling that one chooses his own actions, life is meaningless, stupid, and unnecessary. He gives man the idea that he can control the nature, his destiny and the environment around him, and that he can build a life on earth through an interaction with nature. He gives man a moral principle by which to live his life. According to this principle, man should seek to strengthen his individuality/personality, and should refrain from actions that weaken his personality. Additionally, Iqbal explains how man can establish a 'spiritual democracy' to help realizing the establishment of justice, freedom and solidarity in the world. These principles are important for man both individually and also as a member of the social and political community. In other words, man should know that he can establish an orderly life on earth, just like the nature is in an order, but he should also know that he has freedom to choose his own destiny, make his own destiny, and make his own life.

In general, Iqbal understood the problem of nihilism firstly as the crisis of reason and secondly as the rising distrust for, or disappointment about, the capabilities of reason to solve our problems in political, epistemological, moral and existential matters. More specifically, Iqbal considered nihilism as a disappointment about reason's capabilities to respond assuredly to our questions, to provide certainty to our uncertainties on how we should live, how we should organize our society, our politics, our lives, what ethical values we should embrace and pursue, and what goals we should have. In this respect, nihilism is multi-faceted. It is moral, existential, political, epistemological, and so on. Thus, it is not solely a crisis on epistemology. Reason loses its power and authority to dictate how one should live individually, socially and politically (existential, social/moral, and political nihilism), what one knows, or what one can be certain of the things he knows (epistemological nihilism). When reason goes into a crisis, that is, when the capabilities of reason face criticism and that reason becomes unable to respond to these criticisms, the door for nihilism opens. Nihilism emerges when people lose their trust on reason to solve

our problems because it is then man feels helpless and hopeless. This in turn leads man to lose control over his powers, freedom and will and life and consequently leads to pessimism about life, about one's own capabilities in solving anything, any problem – intellectual, political, social, moral and existential.

Annemarie Schimmel observes that although hundreds of books and articles are being written on Iqbal, this "great output of studies into Iqbal's work is not on the same line with the scholarly contents of these articles and books which, for a great part, dwell again and again upon the same main features of Iqbal's thought."[562] Consequently, in Iqbal literature one can often come across very exaggerated and unsubstantiated depictions of Iqbal, such as, 'a great genius'[563], 'the most versatile genius that the modern Muslim world has produced'[564], 'the only serious student of philosophy'[565] in the Muslim world in the modern period, 'the greatest of all Islamic modernists.'[566] As Alessandro Bausani rightly states, while these 'Eastern' scholars approach Iqbal in an 'indiscriminately laudatory' way as if he is the greatest thinker in the world, the European/Western scholars still look at him, either consciously or not, with a colonialist mind and bias, and not accept him on a par with similar thinkers or schools of thought in Europe.[567] In this regard, Iqbal, according to Bausani, is studied "with a certain ill-concealed awe but with no real living participation, just as an aspect of the revival of Muslim peoples – a phenomenon to be scientifically analyzed, even in a sympathetic spirit, but never to be felt and accepted on a par with similar schools of thought in Europe."[568] Both approaches prevent critical, objective and more down-to-earth analyses being made on Iqbal and consequently arrive at accurate understanding of the value and place of Iqbal's thought in the 20th century modern Islamic philosophy as well as in modern European philosophy. Where was Iqbal situated in the

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[562] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, vii. Schimmel also hints to the same problem in the article she wrote in 1954 on the fifteenth anniversary of Iqbal's death (April 21, 1938). See, Annemarie Schimmel, "Muhammad Iqbal 1873-1938: The Ascension of the Poet," *Die Welt des Islams*, 3, no. 3/4, (1954): 145.

[563] Dr. M. Razi-ud-din Siddiqi, "Iqbal's Conception of Time and Space," in *Essays by Eminent Scholars*: *Iqbal as a Thinker*, (Lahore: Lion Press, 1944), 1.

[564] N Hanif, *Islam and Modernity* (Sarup & Sons, 1997), 244.

[565] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 73.

[566] Hasan Azad, "Reconstructing the Muslim Self: Muhammad Iqbal, Khudi, and the Modern Self," *Islamophobia Studies Journal,* 2, no. 2, (2014): 15.

[567] Bausani states that "this defect is particularly apparent in papers like that by A. Jeffery, Il modernismo musulmano dell'indiano "Sir" Mohammad Iqbal in Or.Mod., XIV, 1934, pp. 505-5I3." Bausani, "The Concept of Time in the Religious Philosophy of Muḥammad Iqbal," 159.

[568] Ibid., 158-159.

history of modern philosophy – Islamic and European – and how did he participate in this history? In this dissertation, I attempted to go against these two opposite trends mentioned above by situating Iqbal and his ideas in the context of a philosophical problem, the problem of nihilism, as it was intensively debated during the 18th and 19th century modern German philosophy, and I analyzed how Iqbal dealt with it.

As Beiser argues, "it is a commonplace of intellectual history that any philosophical movement must be understood in its historical context." [569] According to Beiser, "this dictum is especially true of German Idealism, whose aims and problems become intelligible only in the context of the culture of late eighteenth-century Germany. This culture was essentially that of the Enlightenment or *Aufklärung*, which had dominated intellectual life in Germany since the middle of the eighteenth century." [570] I argue that Iqbal should also be understood in the correct historical and philosophical context, but then what were the philosophical traditions that make up of Iqbal's historical and philosophical context. Firstly, the history of Islamic thought (Mutazila, Asharite, Ghazali, etc. – in other words, philosophers, theologians, and Sufis) was an important source which influenced Iqbal's thinking. Secondly, modern German philosophy, which begins in the late 18th century (Jacobi, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, etc.) and ends with Nietzsche, was an important historical and philosophical context which influenced Iqbal's thinking. In addition to this, the process philosophy and the ideas of Henri Bergson and William James can be considered as the third main source which influenced Iqbal's thinking. I suggest that it is for this reason, that is, due to the difference of the historical and philosophical context which influenced Iqbal, that Iqbal is different from the rest of the modern Muslim thinkers. As Bausani also states, Iqbal is one of the few Muslim thinkers in the modern period who received a scholarly philosophical training first in India and then in England and Germany. In this respect, Bausani describes Iqbal as a thinker who "exerted a remarkable influence not only on the shaping of modern Muslim thought in the sub-continent of India and Pakistan, but also on various circles of the Muslim world at large." [571]

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[569] Beiser, *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, 18.

[570] Ibid., 18.

[571] Alessandro Bausani, "Classical Muslim Philosophy in the work of a Muslim Modernist: Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938)," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 42, no. 3 (1960): 272. Similarly, Majid Fakhry argues that "the most serious Indian–Pakistani interpretation of Islam in modern philosophical terms is that of Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938),

When approached from a philosophical perspective and when situated within the context of a philosophical problem, I believe that it becomes possible to understand the value and place of Iqbal and his ideas in modern Islamic philosophy as well as modern European/German philosophy. I believe that Iqbal is important for modern Muslim philosophy as well as the history of Islamic philosophy because he is probably the first and the only modern Muslim thinker who dealt with the problem of nihilism. In this process Iqbal understood the problem as a universal one, that is, common to all cultures and intellectual traditions, and also brought it to the very core and heart of Islamic philosophy by developing an interpretation, a narrative of the history of Islamic philosophy through the problem of nihilism, from the perspective of the problem of nihilism, and within the framework of the problem of nihilism. In doing that, Iqbal reinterpreted the whole history of Islamic philosophy with its three main strands – philosophy, theology and Sufism - through the problem of nihilism. In his analysis, he shows that the problem of nihilism has in fact been a major and fundamental concern for many of the Muslim philosophers.

Situating himself at the crossroads of these two philosophical traditions, throughout his intellectual development Iqbal dealt with a philosophical problem which he saw as common to both traditions, and believed that he has found a way to overcome this problem through Sufism. I believe that understanding that Iqbal is a Sufi thinker and his solution is a solution that is based on Sufism is crucial because once we understand this, then Iqbal's ideas which does not seem so meaningful at first start to make sense. For instance, we get to understand his criticisms of theologians and sometimes philosophers as well because Iqbal categorizes human thinking through the categories of theology, philosophy and mysticism. Accordingly, it becomes possible to understand how for Iqbal, Bergson, James, Nietzsche, Rumi, Iraqi, Hegel, al-Jili and Ghazali all belong to the mystical (Sufi) school of thought, or how Kant, Spinoza and Mutazila belong to the philosophical (falasifa) school of thought, and how Asharite, Jacobi and Schleiermacher belong to the theological (kalam) school of thought. This way, it becomes possible to understand Iqbal's comparisons between Ghazali and Kant, or Rumi and Nietzsche. Iqbal compared Ghazali to Kant because he thought that they both pointed to the limits of reason. As for Nietzsche and

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whose impact on Islamic thought in Pakistan has been considerable." Majid Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000), 125.

Rumi, Iqbal compared them to each other because Iqbal actually saw Nietzsche as a mystic as well. For Iqbal, both Rumi and Nietzsche were mystics, and therefore poet-philosophers, and therefore critical of reason or sole reliance on reason.

After understanding Iqbal's Sufism, it also becomes possible to understand how for Iqbal, there are three approaches in dealing with 'the human enigma.' Two of these approaches are the sole reliance on reason of philosophy/science and the sole reliance on faith/revelation of theology. Philosophers' response is based on reason and leads us to materialism, atheism, pantheism, fatalism, thus nihilism. Theologians' solution is based on a subjective faith or a kind of irrationalism and leads to idealism, spiritualism, or inverted materialism, egoism, to the idea that only I exists, and the rest becomes imagination of 'the I'. In these ways, the objective and real existence of the world, the universe, other minds as well as God become problematic and even unreal. Accordingly, it is Sufism, according to Iqbal, which is reason supported or guided by intuition/heart, that has the ability to go beyond these approaches and lead us to the awareness that the ultimate nature of reality is neither simply material nor spiritual, but rather an organic unity of them, that is, self/ego.

Iqbal was also different from the philosophers, such as Kant, Hegel, etc., who developed unified and comprehensive philosophical systems because building such comprehensive philosophical systems was not Iqbal's ultimate aim. Although he valued doing this, he also believed that a merely intellectual or theoretical account and explanation of things was not satisfactory. Life was much more complicated and dynamic in its nature, and thus could not be put into such theoretical/intellectual constructions. He believed that the answers to our questions do not only come as a result of an intellectual endeavor. In addition to this, there needs to be a practical aspect to our questions. This aspect should be related to life itself, and we should not simply try to understand and explain life, but instead live life, make life and build life. This was also a result of Iqbal's Sufism. Hence, although he was interested in developing intellectual answers to 'the human enigma', he was also not satisfied with such intellectual answers only. He always thought that a concrete answer to such questions should be developed.

Yet, being a Sufi and belonging to the Sufi school of thought does not mean being hostile to philosophy, reason, or philosophers/scientists. Iqbal thinks that reason is definitely a useful approach in leading us to the knowledge of the reality; however, it has also certain disadvantages (its serial and piecemeal character) which can or should be supported by the mystical faculty of knowledge, that is, heart/qalb. Accordingly, although Iqbal benefits from the ideas of philosophers to certain extents, eventually his solutions come from the Sufi thinkers, such as al-Jili and Iraqi. It is these thinkers that help Iqbal overcome the different dimensions of the problem of nihilism, such as Iraqi's (as well as Bergson's) ideas of different levels of space and time help Iqbal overcome the space-time problem of Kant, and then accordingly argue for the existence of other levels of space-time. As a result of this, Iqbal argues for the existence of other types of normal level of experiences, and accordingly argues for the existence of other types of knowledge. In this respect, intuition, for Iqbal, is just the modern and more objective, clear and systematic form of mystical approach to knowledge.

Although Iqbal's understanding of the problem of nihilism and his solution to it were inspired by various thinkers, and in this respect, it shared certain similarities with these thinkers, such as Kant, Ghazali, Jacobi, al-Jili, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Bergson, Iqbal's solution was also different from theirs in certain ways. For instance, it was different from Ghazali's and Jacobi's solutions because for those thinkers, reason was limited, and the solution was found in subjective, irrational reliance on faith/revelation which Jacobi called 'salto mortale' – leap of faith. Iqbal's solution was different from Kant's because according to Iqbal, Kant stopped at showing the limits of reason, admitted the incapability of reason in bringing us the knowledge of the noumenal realm, 'the-thing-in-itself.' Iqbal, however, was interested in showing the possibility of the knowledge of the noumenal realm and the things that are believed to have existed in that realm, such as souls, God, the knowledge of freedom, free will, and immortality and so on. Iqbal's latest solution was also different from al-Jili's and Hegel's. Whereas the objective existence and reality of man as well as his freedom and will of man was problematic, if not outright unreal, in al-Jili's and Hegel's systems, the objective existence and reality of man and his freedom and will was strengthened by Iqbal by defining the ultimate nature of Reality as ego, and describing

God, man and nature as egos. By doing this, Iqbal provided a metaphysical orientation in which no ego, not even God (the Ultimate Ego), has absolute control or power in existence. This way, existence became an open-ended process to which all egos contributed in their attributes (freedom, power, will, creativity). Iqbal's solution was different from Nietzsche's as well. Whereas according to Iqbal, Nietzsche was a thinker who only destroyed the old, who remained in the station of negation only, without putting something new in its place, Iqbal believed that negating, criticizing and destroying the old was not sufficient, and that something new needed to be put in the place of the old. In this respect, Iqbal believed the new moral values and new goals for humanity needed to be found. The idea that Nietzsche was a thinker who remained in the station of negation is related to the idea that reality is both matter and spirit. Accordingly, when Iqbal talks about embracing the whole of reality and life, he means embracing both the material and spiritual dimensions of life and reality, that is, reality/life as a whole. For Iqbal, Nietzsche embraces only the material dimension of reality/life and ignores the spiritual dimension. Thus, in fact he embraces only half of the reality, of life, and ignores the other half.

Moreover, it can also be said that Iqbal differs from many of the Sufi ways of dealing with the problem of nihilism as well. For instance, Iqbal discusses various European and Islamic examples of Sufis and mysticism oriented ways of dealing with nihilism, such as Jacobi, Schleiermacher, Ghazali, Hallaj, Bistami, Rumi, Ibn Arabi, etc. For instance, in Iqbal's narrative, Ghazali also dealt with the problem of nihilism, and he provided a way to overcome the problem of nihilism. However, Iqbal finds Ghazali's approach and solution insufficient and unsuccessful. When looked among all the different attempts of overcoming nihilism in the history of metaphysics, Ghazali's attempt is definitely one of them, and in fact it is an important one which stands together with the attempts of Plato, Augustine, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, etc. However, Iqbal's attempt is definitely one such attempt, and an important one as well. It is different from Ghazali's and the attempts of others. Within the tradition of history of Islamic metaphysics, it can be said that there were mainly three ways of dealing with the problem of nihilism which are: philosophy (with its Western and Eastern schools), theology (kalam, Ash'arite, Ghazali, Mu'tazila, etc.), and Sufism. In a way, Iqbal's way of overcoming nihilism is based on a unique and very

interesting reinterpretation and reconstruction of the Sufi strand among the various attempts of the history of Islamic metaphysics.

This dissertation was limited in certain respects. Firstly, my analysis of Iqbal's writings was limited to his prose writings only. As a Sufi, Iqbal also wrote considerable amount of poetry; however, I did not analyze those to demonstrate Iqbal's solution to a philosophical problem. The reason for this is that I consider Iqbal as a Sufi thinker who follows the example of other various Sufis, such as al-Jili, who uses poetry as a vehicle to explain their philosophical ideas. Hence, whatever issues, concepts, problems Iqbal discusses in his prose, he discusses them in poetry as well. He uses poetry only as a more suitable medium of explanation for a different group of audience, such as ordinary people. Secondly, in this dissertation, I was rather interested in the philosophical dimensions of Iqbal's life and intellectual development; therefore I did not discuss Iqbal's role and participation in the political and social history of India, such as his involvement in the discussions of the 'communal problem', in the beginning of the 20th century until his death in 1938. In this respect, for instance, I did not concern myself with showing whether Iqbal can really be understood as the spiritual founder of Pakistan or not. For this issue, I relied on the analyses of others, such as Iqbal Sevea Singh. Thirdly, while analyzing Iqbal's philosophy and presenting his solution to the problem of nihilism, I was more interested in demonstrating how Iqbal's philosophy is motivated by the problem of nihilism, and how it is an attempt to deal with it. Therefore, I did not make a critical analysis of Iqbal's solution to discuss whether it is a valid, successful, logically coherent and consistent solution or not. Similarly, I did not enter into another debate in Iqbal literature which discusses whether Iqbal's conceptions of God, man, knowledge, universe, etc. are compatible with those of Islam and the Qur'an. Although some[572] argue that, for instance, Iqbal's conception of God is not compatible with the Qur'anic conception of God, in this respect, I agree with Javed Majeed that "not all aspects of the concept of God in the Qur'an are self-evident, as the history of theological disquisition in Islam shows."[573] Throughout history, there have been many interpretations of God in the Qur'an; therefore, the claims of Salman Raschid and Abdul

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[572] M.S. Raschid, *Iqbal's Concept of God*, (London: Kegan Paul International Publication, 1981); Abdul Hafeez Făzli, "Iqbal's View of Omniscience and Human Freedom," *The Muslim World* 95, no. 1 (2005): 125-145.

[573] Javid Majeed, Introduction to *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* by Muhammad Iqbal, ed. M. Saeed Sheikh, (California: Stanford University Press, 2012), xxii.

Hafeez Făzli regarding Iqbal's conception of God to be incompatible with that of the Qur'an should be taken cautiously since their interpretations are also among other countless interpretations. Finally, I also limited my analysis to understanding Iqbal's philosophy and his solution to the problem of nihilism in its own historical and intellectual context. In this respect, I did not discuss how Iqbal's solution and ideas could be relevant for contemporary debates in philosophy and political philosophy/theology. Nevertheless, I believe that some future studies could be done on Iqbal's relevance on contemporary debates in political theory.

One such debate is about the return of political theology. Some scholars, like Mark Lilla, consider the return of political theology as a destabilizing factor for political philosophy as well as for contemporary liberal democracies. Lilla praises the separation of politics and religion which he claims to have taken place in the West during the 17th century by an intellectual revolution when political theology was separated from its theological roots by Thomas Hobbes in a process which Lilla names as *The Great Separation*. For Lilla, Hobbes was able to change the subject "by demonstrating that it was possible to establish the legitimacy of a state's authority over its citizens without making any appeal to a divinely revealed nexus of God, man, and world."[574] By doing this, Hobbes, according to Lilla, "showed how to replace political theology with a humanistic political anthropology."[575] Also Lilla believes that the principles of contemporary liberal democracies in the West depend crucially on this Great Separation, and therefore the separation between theology and politics needs to be maintained if a return to an apocalyptic politics, such as that of Nazism, or the wars of religion is not desired. Others, like Michael Allen Gillespie, argues that as opposed to what Lilla says, political theology may not necessarily lead to apocalyptic politics, and that there can be certain political theologies which can sustain a peaceful coexistence among different religious, political, metaphysical truth claims.[576] Furthermore, Gillespie argues that liberalism is also a kind of political theology, and suggests that liberalism is much better served if it recognizes its roots in theology. Finally, he claims that politics and religion have been so strongly and fundamentally interwoven in

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[574] Mark Lilla, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 313.
[575] Ibid., 313.
[576] Michael Allen Gillespie and Lucas Perkins, "Political Anti-Theology," *Critical Review: A Journal of Politics and Society*, 22, no. 1. (2010): 65-84.

the West, and therefore he says, if we were "to achieve the Great Separation that Lilla longs for, we might find ourselves standing bewildered among countless loose strings on the cutting-room floor."[577]

Following Gillespie's idea that political theology may not necessarily lead to apocalyptic politics, Paulina Ochoa Espejo suggests that we can supersede political theology that leads, or has the potential to lead, to apocalyptic or undemocratic, such as decisionistic, types of political regimes. And how can this be achieved? Espejo accepts that there is a relation between theological arguments and juridical/political arguments; however, she adds that this relation "depends on an idea of order among others, and not on essential features of politics, [and therefore] we can expect that it will change if the dominant idea of order in the state changes."[578] While "currently, the dominant idea of order in the state relies on the concept of sovereignty, so we can expect changes in the structural relation between theology and the theory of the state if the influence of the concept of sovereignty wanes or changes." [579] Associating the current dominant idea of order in the state with the undemocratic, decisionistic, apocalyptic type of political theology of Carl Schmitt's (1888 – 1985)[580] ideas, Espejo argues that this kind of political theology can be superseded.[581] According to Espejo, Schmittian political theology is based on the idea that the decisionistic, undemocratic sovereign ruler in politics is like the secularized form of an omnipotent, sovereign, lawgiving God in theology. Hence, Espejo thinks that if the conception of God changes, then there could be a change in the type of sovereign as well because "different images of authority and command emerge from different images of God and divinity."[582]

In a different article, Espejo pursues a similar approach and argues that, contrary to what Carl Schmitt and some of his contemporary followers hold, political theology does not necessarily entail decisionism, that is, a sovereign and uncontrolled political ruler in a

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[577] Ibid., 82.
[578] Paulina Ochoa Espejo, "On Political Theology and the Possibility of Superseding It," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 13, no. 4, (2010): 490.
[579] Ibid., 490.
[580] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, George D. Schwab, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).
[581] Espejo, "On Political Theology and the Possibility of Superseding It," 476.
[582] Ibid., 486.

similar way to omnipotent, changeless and all-foreknowing God. She argues that the argument that "links political theology to decisionism is invalid because it rests on a bad analogy between a particular conception of God, and the source of authority in the modern secular state. Political theory may require a metaphysical assumption to justify the state, but this assumption is not necessarily an omnipotent, changeless and all-foreknowing God."[583] That is to say, omnipotent deciding sovereign is only one of many possible metaphysical assumptions in theology, and if there can be a different perception of God, then there could also be different kinds of sovereigns. According to Espejo, a panentheistic conception of God could be a suitable alternative to go beyond decisionistic political orders. She states that the God of panentheism is not an alien God who commands, and that while this God is in the world, He is also not equal to the world. Commenting on the implications of the analogy with such a conception of God, Espejo writes: "Instead of a sovereign decision-maker who is outside the state, the analogy would yield a source of political authority that is both identical to the polity, and beyond the polity."[584] She likens this to classical democratic theory where "citizens are held to be both citizens and subjects at the same time. Citizens are decision-makers beyond the polity as part of the popular sovereign, but as subjects they are the polity. Like the panentheistic God the popular sovereign is both equal to the polity and beyond the polity."[585] In sum, she believes that "a functionalist analogy that uses a panentheistic God as reference yields democratic politics, rather than decisionistic sovereignty."[586] Although these debates mainly take place within a rather European/Western context, Lilla and Gillespie also discuss further dimensions of the return of political theology in a globalizing world, particularly with respect to rising fundamentalism both in Europe, the US, and in the Muslim World. Considering that Iqbal also had a panentheistic conception of God, perhaps further studies can be made on this subject to show the possibility of a more democratic type of political theology.

Further studies on Iqbal and the relevance of his ideas for contemporary problems can also be done from a CPT perspective. Reminding readers of Samuel P. Huntington's idea of 'the

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[583] Paulina Ochoa Espejo, "Does Political Theology Entail Decisionism?," *Philosophy Social Criticism*, 38, no. 7, (2012): 727.
[584] Ibid., 733.
[585] Ibid., 734.
[586] Ibid., 734.

clash of civilizations,' Fred Dallmayr states that many of the political theorists who were motivated with the pursuit of CPT, particularly himself, were motivated to prove Huntington wrong. Accordingly Dallmayr writes that "in lieu of the Huntingtonian scenario we wanted to put the emphasis on cross-cultural encounters, on mutual learning, on 'dialogue among civilizations.'"[587] Writing a 'preface' to a recent book on Iqbal[588], Charles Taylor states that Iqbal must be reread today in a world where dialogues between 'others' are troubled by a deep and mutual distrust.[589] He describes Iqbal as a thinker who "manages to establish a mutual and fruitful exchange between thinkers and texts that are quiet distant from each other: Nietzsche and Bergson, Hallaj and Rûmi, and between those and still others, taken up in the context of rereading the Quran."[590] Further, he states that "in this atmosphere of suspicion and anger, it is a joy to hear the voice of Iqbal, both passionate and serene."[591] In Taylor's view, it is particularly important and valuable that while Iqbal's voice is deeply anchored in the Quranic Revelation – 'and precisely for that reason, open to all the other voices' – it is also a voice, according to Taylor, "of a man who has left behind all identitarian rigidity, who has 'broken all the idols of tribe and caste' to address himself to all human beings." [592] Finally, he believes that those "who are looking for an understanding of lived time, of historicity, beyond the objective, spatialized fixation of cosmic time, would find it worthwhile to reconsider all of that in the light of Iqbal's reinterpretation of the Quranic conception of 'destiny'."[593] And similarly, he adds, "we readers of Nietzsche would benefit from the Iqbalian understanding of the overman, coming on the heels of the 'perfect man' of the Sufi tradition."[594]

Commenting on the condition of the world following the First World War, Iqbal argues that "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

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[587] Fred Dallmayr, "Foreword: Special Issue on Comparative Political Theory," *The Review of Politics*, no. 70, (2008): 3.
[588] Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *Islam and Open Society: Fidelity and Movement in the Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal* (Oxford: African Books Collective, 2010).
[589] Charles Taylor, Preface to *Islam and Open Society: Fidelity and Movement in the Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal* by Souleymane Bachir Diagne, (Oxford: African Books Collective, 2010), xi.
[590] Ibid., xi.
[591] Ibid., xii.
[592] Ibid., xii.
[593] Ibid., xi.
[594] Ibid., xi.

evolution of human society on a spiritual basis."[595] Although modern Europe has built various "idealistic systems on these lines, Iqbal thinks that "experience shows that truth revealed through pure reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring."[596] Accordingly, "this is the reason why pure thought has so little influenced men, while religion has always elevated individuals, and transformed whole societies."[597] Arguing that "Europe today is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement", Iqbal thinks that a solution can be developed from Islam, or the Islamic culture. He thinks that Nietzsche has taught us that Christianity has failed as a life-giving or people-building force as well as an ethical and political ideal. Accordingly, Iqbal believes that in the place of Christianity, nationalism, Islam can be a successful alternative solution to work/function/serve as a life-giving, people-building force and also as an ethical and political ideal. He considers Islam as a candidate/alternative solution the potentialities of which shows huge promise, and which have not yet been exhausted by a test. He considers Islam as a not-yet tested alternative solution in the modern period. Judging at its history and past, Iqbal thinks that Islam shows a great potential to solve the social, political, and moral problems of the modern world because it was significantly successful in those respects in the past, and it can be successful again. To achieve this, the Muslims of today must appreciate their position, "reconstruct [their] social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam."[598]

Finally, about four months before his death, Iqbal publishes a 'new year' message on the 1st of January in 1938. Commenting on the condition of the modern age, he writes that the pride of modern age is justified considering the immense progress in knowledge and matchless scientific developments. Yet, he adds that, the world is experiencing a 'tyranny of imperialism' under the masks of democracy, socialism, nationalism, communism and fascism, which Iqbal describes as 'the darkest period of human history' where 'the spirit of

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[595] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 142.
[596] Ibid., 142.
[597] Ibid., 142.
[598] Ibid., 142.

freedom' and 'the dignity of man' are being trampled.[599] Looking at the year that has passed by, Iqbal sees nothing but misery all around the world, such as Abyssinia or Palestine, Spain or China.[600] In solving the problems of the world, Iqbal thinks that a huge responsibility falls to the world leaders. Judging from the Great War and other conflicts taking place all around the world, Iqbal comes to the conclusion that national unity that is based on blood, race, country, ethnicity or language is not durable. Contrary to this, he argues that "only one unity is dependable, and that unity is the brotherhood of man, which is above race, nationality, colour or language."[601] Accordingly, he believes that this 'so-called democracy', and 'this accursed nationalism' along with 'this degraded imperialism' should be shattered, and distinctions of race and color should be wiped out completely and mankind should demonstrate "by their actions that they believe that the whole world is the family of God."[602] Only then, Iqbal believes that they will "be able to lead a happy and contended life and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will [...] materialise."[603]

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[599] Muhammad Iqbal, "New Year Message," in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmed Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 298.
[600] Ibid., pp. 298-299.
[601] Ibid., 299.
[602] Ibid., 299.
[603] Ibid., 300.

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