



Advocates and Detractors of Iqbal: A Study Across Cultures

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Abstract— *Criticism on Iqbal is as vast as ocean. A huge corpse of material has been published both in the East and West. Yet, no critic has passed a final verdict on him to cover all dimensions of his poetic thought and philosophy. Therefore, his works still need further interpretations in order to do justice with him. There is a need to take nothing on trust and a critic should break the fanciful myth that has been allowed to grow round Iqbal over the decades, and to expose the bogus and misleading premises that support a calculated misrepresentation of him. His critical canvas is so broad that it is not easy to write on him without knowing his indepth poetic thought, philosophy and sources of knowledge. The present paper tries to analyse the arguments and criticism, thesis and antithesis of both advocates and detractors of Iqbal. The emphasis is put on to project the real literary personality of Allama Iqbal on solid grounds. The findings of this paper are that Iqbal has been misrepresented by the detractors in the wide literary circles of the World due to misunderstandings of his poetic basis and philosophical thought. The crux of the Iqbalian philosophy is unbiased to any religious faith and sentiments whatever he has said and written in his prose and poetry have a solid background like theological, scientific, historical and logical evidences. The reason of their misunderstandings is their partial knowledge about the multidimensional personality of Iqbal. In contrary to that the advocates have analysed the whole personality of the poet and have minutely studied the basic sources of his knowledge. Therefore, the present paper is projecting Iqbal as the flawless revolutionary reformer and rational philosopher.*

Keywords— *Advocates, Detractors, thesis, antithesis, misconstructions, Confirmations and Testimonies of Iqbalian Literary Criticism.*

There is a need of original critical aptitude to assess and comprehend Iqbal, minutely. A lot has been written on his different dimensions till present but all writers have not been successful in representing him correctly. They have merely added confusions in their writings. Against those writers and critics Syed Abdul Wahid in *Glimpses of Iqbal* has vehemently raised his voice, he writes:

To illustrate this we have only to mention that Iqbal was a great poet, a philosopher, a leading politician and a religious reformer. Now a critic trying to discuss his politics consciously or

unconsciously refers to his poetry also. Those who do not like the stand Iqbal took in politics, start discussing his sublime poetry also from the same angle. Such writers add nothing to our knowledge, but add considerably to our confusion (Vahid 118).

Abdul Wahid suggests that a critic should analyse only that facet of Iqbal with which he or she can do justice. It, therefore, becomes mandatory for a researcher who works on any critic of Iqbal or other thinker to first know critic's competency, his strong and weak zones of knowledge

besides having a thorough knowledge of his other streaks of life like religious, political and social background.

The question that arises here is why a writer fails to do justice with Iqbal? The answer of the question is that for understanding Iqbal's poetry and philosophy a critic must have an essential knowledge of following three primary requirements:

- (a) Western literary and Philosophical background;
- (b) Knowledge of Islam, access to the Quran and Sunna (The primary sources of Islam);
- (c) Knowledge of Eastern Mystical schools of poetry and a good command on Persian language and literature.

The critics who wrote on Iqbal without keeping the above significant fields into consideration have merely filled their pages with misinterpretations and misconceptions about his works. However, there exist both advocates and detractors of Iqbal in a huge number and the present study introduces few of them as under:

The advocates of Iqbal exist both in the East and the West. Among the advocates of Iqbal one name is of Dr. Fermaan Fathepuri who in the preface of his book "*Iqbal Sub Keleya*" (Kitab se Pehlay) acquaints its readers to the problem that no justice has been done to Iqbal's works by all his critics. No doubt thousands of research papers and books have been written on him but little part of it is of sublime kind, worth of recognizing as original and justifiable criticism on Iqbal (Fathepuri1).

The other name among the advocates of Iqbal is of S. Aalam Khundmiri. He in his *Some Aspects of Iqbal's Poetic Philosophy*- a volume of his four lectures has stressed, "One who is, or aspires to be a serious student of Iqbal, cannot separate Iqbal the poet from Iqbal the philosopher, particularly when one is discussing his mature poetry. If his philosophic thought has certain strong poetic elements, his poetry contains equally strong philosophic concerns. Of course the synthesis is uneasy but it is there as a living fact" (Khundmiri vii). What makes Iqbal stand unique in Persian or Indo-Persian tradition is the introduction of a new spirit and a new poetic ethos. It is on this point that he represents a meeting point of the resurgent East and the dynamic West. He gives tradition a new dimension.

Professor Ale Ahmad Surooran eminent critic and advocate of Iqbal has spent maximum period of his life in extending the philosophy and thought of Iqbal to the common masses. Being the former Professor and Director of Iqbal Institute at Kashmir University, he had organized number of seminars and had invited eminent scholars from the different prestigious universities of India for presenting papers on Iqbal. These papers have been published under

several headings such as, *Iqbal Aur Maghrib*, *Iqbal and Modernity* and *The Islamic Resurgence*. Suroor took it as injustice to Iqbal's art and thought, to brand him a fundamentalist or conservative. He can be properly understood in the context of the Reform movement started by Sir Syed, this Ale Ahmad Suroor has remarked in response of Iqbal Singh's book '*The Ardent Pilgrim*' (Suroor, *Modernity and Iqbal*: Preface).

Prof. Ale Ahmad Suroor's views are refutation to those orthodox Sufis and fanatics who often have raised their eye brows against Iqbal, because Iqbal laments stagnation in the Islamic world and hence demanded Islamic resurgence. He attacked *Mullahs* and *Pirs* for their lack of dynamism. Prof. Suroor further admitted that:

Any innovation, even it is a sin, is a blessing in the eyes of the Iqbal.....he wants man to rise above the consideration of colour and race or region (Suroor, *Modernity and Iqbal*).

Mustansir Mir, a renowned critic of Iqbal has represented him to the English speaking world with the purpose of acquainting Western people to the heart and substance of Iqbal's writings. About this Mir in the preface of *Iqbal, Poet and Thinker* writes that this book aims to introduce Muhammad Iqbal to general readers of the English-speaking world. There is a respectable number of works on Iqbal in the English language, but very few of them set out systematically to acquaint the reader with the heart or substance of Iqbal's own writings. Within its limits, this volume tries to fill this gap. Mustansir Mir has translated some selected poems of Allama Iqbal under the title of *Tulips in the Desert: A Selection of the Poetry of Muhammad Iqbal* (2000). In his translation of Iqbal's poetry, Mustansir Mir seeks to convey every level of meaning and mood in the poems, while making the text as readable and idiomatic as possible.

Another notable critic among the advocates of Iqbal is Asloob Ahmad Ansari. He defended Iqbal from those detractors who attacked his poetic language. He in '*Iqbal Essays and Studies*' (1978) has pointed out that Iqbal has been criticized by the traditional Ghazal writers for his verbal idiom, fineness, decorum and correctness but did not highlight the freshness and originality of vision. His poetry has been examined from the linguistic point of view also but what his critics ignore is the larger aspect of stylistics and the processes involved in the intricate pattering of the literary verbal structures. Ansari is of the view that:

They (Iqbal critics) showed little or no awareness of the functioning of image-clusters, of the system of symbology, of myth as the exteriorisation of the collective consciousness,

and of style and value as cohering into a pattern and thus raising the question of meaning. They could at best perceive a particular poem sprinkled over with similes and metaphors but had no notion of contextualism or of the correspondence between the thematic and formal components of a work of art (Ansari, 1978: xvi).

Ansari is further of the view that the framework of Ghazal bears a striking resemblance with French Symbolist poetry and it is Iqbal who conferred upon this genre the maturity, the comprehension and the width of range which opened a new direction in which Ghazal can move and readily absorb the ambivalent drives and impulses of our humanistic culture. Iqbal has made the age-old symbols of Ghazal vibrate with new potencies of meaning in accordance with the changing of life.

Asloob Ahmad Ansari has made an important point that literary criticism is distinct from lucid and coherent exposition of concepts like as some critics usually bound their criticism mere to deducing philosophy of life from Iqbal's poetry or rather regard his poetry as substitute for it without following the real assumptions or laws of literary criticism. Talking about Iqbal's philosophical system is important but literary criticism as per Ansari is basically a matter of explication and involving the endeavour to discover and reveal the enactment with events of reality, which is mediated through the in woven fabric of the literary artifact. It, therefore, requires on the part of the critic, the exercise of discrimination, aesthetic distancing and sensitivity to verbal nuances and texture as much as to the relevant co-ordinates of meaning (Ansari, 1978: xvii-xviii).

The other renowned critic among the advocate of Iqbal is Prof. G.R. Malik who considers Iqbal as an Islamic thinker and artist. He has pointed out that there are certain places in his writings which can be contradicted with heated arguments when put in relation to the holy Quran and Sunna, like some places in *The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam* and in his early poetry but at heart he was a Muslim thinker and an artist. Malik justifies his stand by saying that an Islamic artist takes life as an organic unity where different elements are linked together. These elements with their essence and functions put equal influence to each other. As against art for art's sake, Iqbal uses art for the sake of life. Malik here considers those people as rebels against human nature and nature of the universe who treat artists as free from the responsibilities of life and human culture. No doubt unlike orator, politician, philosopher and scientist an artist impacts life. Artistic impact albeit is for the satisfaction of aesthetic sense, for awakening of soul, for feelings, emotions and

their right usage and for creating revolution from each and every basic quarters of life. If art fails to awaken soul, fails to ooze love in a human for life and merely emerge animal instincts then as per form, style and diction it could be an art but not the great art. Malik on the basis of said characteristics projects Iqbal as the great artist (Malik, *Surood-e-SahrAafrin*:7-8).

Iqbal was committed to Islam and for this reason some detractors attacked him as they considered commitment as a drawback which makes an artist narrow sensed and delimits his vision from seeing things indifferent perspectives. Malik disagrees with the view of such detractors and asserts that commitment develops emotional intensity in an artist, this emotional intensity as per Iqbal instill feelings even into stone and gives birth to the great art. As per Malik neither commitment nor non-commitment are evaluative measures but they are descriptive terms. There was the existence of both committal and non-committal artists among the great artists of the world, among the non-committal artists were Shakespeare, Hafiz, Ghalib, James Joyce and from committal artists were Dante, Milton, Wordsworth, Sadi, Tolstoy, Yeats, Tagore and Iqbal. According to Malik Eastern critics accept blindly whatever art and views are imported from the West. They accept Shakespeare's Negative Capability and T.S. Eliot's theory of impersonality without giving little thought to it. Shakespeare has written sonnets as well which projects other great dimension of his personality. They do not either recognise the differentiation between the later Eliot and early Eliot. Malik, in order to justify his point of view refutes the critical remarks of Tolstoy that he has hurled on Shakespeare. Tolstoy did not regard Shakespeare even as an average artist. As per him it is perpetual propaganda that has made him attraction of the readers although he was not an artist because an artist needs to have a conscious commitment with his life. Malik does not agree with Tolstoy and by keeping commitment and non-commitment aside he asserts that Shakespeare was a great artist, he would have been either in both the cases whether in the presence of commitment or in its absence (Malik, *Surood-e-SahrAafrin*:9-11).

Malik rebuts such detractors of Iqbal, whose purpose was to lower down his stature by passing baseless remarks on him without going through his works. They tried to make Iqbal's commitment to Islam as means to prove him narrow sensed and unrealistic. Malik asserts that Iqbal was such a dynamic artist and broadminded personality who produced the character of Devil in '*Jabreel-o-Iblees*' and '*Nalaiibles*' with sympathy and objectivity. It is Iqbal who wrote about the experience and mature consciousness of Prophet Khizar, he wrote '*Abu Jahal ka Nawha*' and

about the personalities like VishwaMitra, Byron, Nietzsche, Lenin, Bergson, Goethe, Einstein and others with impartial attitude that nobody can claim that his thinking was narrow and subjective (Malik, *Surood-e-SahrAafrin* 11).

Malik also refutes those detractors of Iqbal who consider his poetry merely as a statement and not poetry in true sense. Among these detractors the most prominent is Kaleem-ud-din Ahmad who has written a whole book to prove that Iqbal's poetry is not poetry but merely a message, oration and statement. Malik agrees with his view that Iqbal's poetry is poetry of statement, a message but he also believes it is poetry as well. Malik justifies his view that Iqbal's poetry is not merely a statement but poetry also he writes that the poetry of Dante, Milton, Eliot, Faiz is also a message.

The element of oration (*Khitabat*) is essential part of world poetry. Eliot has called this oration (*Khitabat*) the second voice of poetry. It becomes a flaw when its purpose remains merely to influence and attract others and it takes the form of skill if used within the context. The use of oration is made in the dramas of Shakespeare, Milton's *Paradise Lost* and in the poetry of Iqbal at such places where it was inevitable due to material and subject like the oration of Shakespeare's Othello before he dies, the language which Milton's Satan uses in his speech and the oration used in Iqbal's *Shikwa*, *Jawab-e-Shikwa*, *Khazir-e-Rah* etc., all as per their context were liable to such language. Malik challenges Kaleem-ud-din Ahmad and such critics for composing better poetry or even a couplet than Iqbal's couplet, Shakespeare's couplet, Milton's poetry, Eliot's, Wordsworth's or Shelley's poetry. Malik therefore states that the poetry of statement lies in the poetry of great poets of the world and it cannot be always rejected. It is sometimes a way of stating which creates such enthrall, power and mesmerizing effects that a statement turns into a poetry. No doubt the poetic devices like simile, metaphors etc., instill soul into a verse but if the same poetry is composed without poetic devices then who can deny the miraculous genius of such verses. To illustrate this Malik in one of his books has given the example of certain couplets from above mentioned poets (Malik, *Surood-e-SahrAafrin*:12-13).

Malik in his paper *Iqbal and Rhetoric* writes that Iqbal has been constantly accused of being fond of rhetoric by a section of the so called progressive critics. Iqbal's theoretical pronouncements about language and style prove him, almost indisputably, to be nearer to the Romantic and Crocean aesthetic than to the mechanical aesthetic of the rhetoricians. In Iqbal's view 'feeling', 'idea' and 'word' are organically related to one another

(Malik, 2009:63-65). However, Malik refutes such remarks about Iqbal's poetry as that of Faiz who once called Iqbal's poetry the poetry of *Mochi Darwazah*. But the author in *Iqbal and Rhetoric* has concentrated on the Western idea of rhetoric and made no mention of the Eastern view of rhetoric. However from his citation from *Tulu-i-Islam* and *Az Khab-i-Giran Khaiz* one has the feeling of what Iqbal's detractors imply and the author's reply to their charge is effective and forceful (Malik, 2009:6). One agrees with his conclusion that Iqbal's rhetoric is no rhetoric at all. It is the masterful use of language by a great artist. Language as per Iqbal is a purposeful and inevitable means of expression. He in a letter wrote that:

I do not consider language as an idol to be adored but regard it as purposeful means of expression (Schimmel, 1963: 61).

Some detractors believe Iqbal's language as rhetorical but there are his advocates as well who do not believe so. Muhammad Suheyl Umar another advocate of Iqbal makes it clear that Iqbal is neither the poet of sublimation, nor of the lexical/ linguistic techniques and resources nor of the literary embellishments and rhetorical devices though he uses all these elements in a consummate manner. He is a poet of intellectual-conception and intuition-expression wherein the *ma'na* (inner meaning) dominates totally over the *surah* (Umar 76). Iqbal rejects the slogan of art for art's sake and advocated art for the sake of life.

In addition to the above mentioned critics of Iqbal the eminent scholars in the East who did objective and impartial assessment of his works are; NumanBukhari, Khurram Ali Shafique, Suheyl Umar, Dr. Israr, Javid Iqbal and others.

Subsequently, in the West the advocates of Iqbal exist in a huge number, few of them are introduced as under:

Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, an English orientalist one of the eminent scholars of mysticism and advocates of Iqbal. After taking consent from Iqbal he translated *Asrar-i-Khudi* into English under the rubric of *The Secrets of the Self* in 1920, with proper introduction and notes. The source of this translation is the original Persian text of *Asrar-i-Khudi*. In its introduction Nicholson writes:

...I read it soon afterwards and thought so highly of it that I wrote to Iqbal, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at Cambridge some fifteen years ago, asking leave to prepare an English translation...My proposal was cordially accepted, but in the meantime I found other work to do, which caused the translation to be laid aside until last year (Nicholson vii).

The Secrets of the Self introduced the genius of Iqbal to the literary circles of Western world. But it was often misinterpreted by many European readers like C.A. Nallino, the Italian Orientalist, who interpreted it as a call to the Eastern nations to rise against European Imperialism (Vahid, *Glimpses* 122). Nicholson treats Iqbal as an apostle to the future generations if not to his own age.

In Nicholson's translation of Iqbal's *Asrar-i-Khud* may come across astonishing howlers as located by Malik in his book *The Western Horizon*. Because Nicholson clearly tells his Western readers that the *Asrar-i-Khudi* does present certain obscurities which cannot be removed by any translation. Therefore, his translation does carry certain loopholes that he honestly confesses that:

I am not sure that I have always grasped the meaning or rendered it correctly; but I hope that such errors are few, thanks to the assistance so kindly give me by my friend Muhammad Shafi, now Professor of Arabic at Lahore, with whom I read the poem and discussed many points of difficulty. (Nicholson 3).

It is pertinent to mention that Nicholson ratifies whatever he has learned from Iqbal and accordingly he advocates the introduction of Iqbal to the world of audience.

Arthur John Arberrya prolific scholar of Arabic, Persian and Islamic studies has translated famous works of Muhammad Iqbal such as *Javid Namah*, *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* (*The Mysteries of Selflessness*) edited by Badiozzaman Forouzanfar, some portions of *Zabur-i-Ajam* and *Rubais of Payam-i-Mashriq* (Message of the East, 1923) under the title of *Tulips of Sinai*.

The Mysteries of Selflessness, a translation by Arberrya is the projection of Iqbal's concept that if selfhood is developed in isolation from society its end will be then an unmitigated egoism and anarchy. Because Iqbal was not interested merely in the individual and his self-realization, he was equally concerned with the evolution of an ideal society or community as he preferred to call it. It is only as a member of this community that the individual, by the twin principles of conflict and concord, is able to express himself fully and ideally. It is only as an association of self-affirming individuals that the community can come into being and perfect itself. Iqbal thus escapes from Libertarianism by limiting the community's authority, making it a challenge and not an insurmountable obstacle to the individual's self-realization.

Arberrya in the preface of *The Mysteries of Selflessness* has pointed out that the ideas in *Asrar-i-Khudi* and *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* are not particularly new. Not particularly new either is the proposition that Islam is the ideal society. What is new, and what justifies Iqbal's pretension to be a

leader of thought is the application of this philosophical theory of individuality and community to the religious-political dogma that Islam is superior to all other creeds and systems. The propaganda for Islamic unity in modern times has been continuous from the days of Jamal-ud-Din Afghani. Iqbal was one of the latest albeit one of the ablest and most influential of its publicists. He supplied a more or less respectable intellectual basis for a movement which is in reality more emotional than rational.

About *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* Arberrya views that Iqbal in it states the case for international Islam and to support his view Arberrya quotes *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*:

...every Muslim nation must sink in her own deeper self, temporarily focus her vision on herself alone, until all are strong and powerful to form a living family of republics. A true and living unity, according to the nationalist thinkers, is not so easy as to be achieved by a merely symbolical overlordship. It is truly manifested in a multiplicity of free independent units whose racial rivalries are adjusted and harmonized by the unifying bond of a common spiritual aspiring. It seems to me that God is slowly bringing home to us the truth that Islam is neither Nationalism nor Imperialism but a league of Nations which recognizes artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizon of its members (Iqbal, *Reconstruction* 159).

Dr. Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003) is among the great advocates of Iqbal. Her interest in Iqbal dates back to her student days at the University of Berlin. She writes:

I myself have to admit that my long lasting love of Iqbal has led me to publish a number of works which are more or less relevant for a study of his contribution to Muslim thought... In many articles I have tried to show Iqbal in the context of Islamic modernism, or deal with his imagery (Schimmel xv).

Between cultures and religions of the East and West Schimmel worked as a bridge. She was a devoted scholar of the poetry and philosophy of Iqbal and considered him throughout her life as one of the greatest poets of the East. Her translation of Rumi's poetry enhanced her interest in Iqbal. On the insistence of her Turkish friends she translated '*Javid Namah*' into Turkish and her first article on Iqbal came in 1954 and since, she consistently wrote in various languages on his different aspects of poetic thought and philosophy. *Gabriel's Wing – A Study into the*

Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal considered her masterpiece book on Iqbal.

In response to Iqbal's detractors regarding the difficulty in his expressions, Dr. Schimmel tells the story that after her publication of the Turkish-prose translation of the *Javid Namah*, she received a letter, in very bad Turkish orthography, revealing that the letter writer was an unlearned man; but he expressed his admiration for Iqbal's work, and asked her for more books of his in Turkish translation. Dr. Schimmel writes that the person wrote that:

He was a bearer (he wrote "Karson") in a restaurant in a small town of Eastern Anatolia – that seems to be sufficient proof for Iqbal's unquestionable appeal to simple minds too, who do not grasp properly the philosophical implications of his poems but are moved just by the energy they feel, even through the medium of a translation (Schimmel 380).

Philosophy of Iqbal has been considered by some critics merely as poetical and not as a closed-up fixed system, or, even worse, as a simple outburst of Islamic resentment against Western thought, as apology rather than true philosophy. Dr. Schimmel diametrically counters such detractors by commenting on the background of Iqbal's philosophy, she writes:

No doubt, Iqbal cannot be understood without the religious background of his homeland. He's firmly rooted in the prophetic tradition of Islam, and in the mystical thought of India. He has struggled against whatever he thought wrong in this mysticism and has rediscovered the personal, dynamic God of Prophetic revelation who is described best not in the abstract philosophy of the lectures but in the poet's deep and pathetic prayers (Schimmel 381).

Dr. Schimmel observes that one should not forget that a difference exists between a scientific philosopher and a prophetic philosopher. Iqbal was certainly of the second type, endowed with an extraordinary capacity for assimilation, and for synthesizing seemingly divergent facts into a new unity that may look, at the first glance, surprising enough, but has, in any case, proved as stimulating formative of the *Weltanschauung* of Pakistan.

Sometimes one gets the impression that Iqbal's study of European philosophy leads him, in the course of his life, more and more to the conviction that all the good and appropriate ideas launched by Western philosophers had been expressed centuries ago in a somewhat more ideal form by Islamic thinkers. Dr. Schimmel writes that his way of interpretation provided him with new possibilities of combining harmoniously Islamic tradition with the most

recent scientific research. Only thus, he thinks, Muslims can become interested in Western science and discover that Europe is indebted to Islam, and that therefore the adopting of recent scientific results from the West does not do any harm to primacy of Islamic thought. As Iqbal has said, "If Muslim scholars were aware that Einstein's most thrilling ideas are already existent in Islam, they would like to take more interest in them and study them carefully" (Schimmel 321).

Einstein granted Iqbal the proof for his view concerning the relation of God and universe that the universe is limitless but finite, and his theory of relativity has impressed Iqbal's theories of time and space. Thus, the European philosophy and scholarship becomes, in Iqbal's reading, a medium for leading back the Muslims to the sources of their own culture, and giving them the feeling that these conceptions are nothing but their own heritage. Interpreted in this way, European civilization is no longer a danger for the Muslims but a stimulant for their awakening. Dr. Schimmel states that Iqbal has tried to answer in poems the claims of different philosophers and political leaders during the different periods of his life, and the *nasqsh-i-firang* (the picture of Europe) in the fourth part of *Payam-i-Mashriq* (Message of the East) contains short poetical sketches, skillfully characterizing thinkers and poets of the West. The philosophers whose names have occurred most in Iqbal's prose and poetry are Hegel, Bergson, and Nietzsche. In totality Dr. Schimmel's view about Iqbal is that:

Nobody will assert that he was a prophet, but we may admit that he has been touched by Gabriel's wing (Schimmel 387).

Hence, the Western advocates of Iqbal are in huge number such as Alessandro Bausani who has translated Iqbal's *Javid Namah* and other poems in the Italian. He has written on his poetry copiously. His translations are very good but his criticism is not always well-informed. He has introduced Iqbal in his Italian motherland and has made some fine critical remarks on his poetical and philosophical technique. Another name is of a French Scholar Madam Meyerovitch. She has translated several books of Iqbal in French like *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* and is a great admirer of him. John Marek of Prague University has translated some of Iqbal's poems in the *Czech* language and his criticism of Iqbal is generally based on political grounds.

The last but not the least is the name of Massignon albeit there is not so much contribution of him in Iqbal studies but he has paid the highest tributes to Iqbal in his masterly introduction to the French translation of *The*

Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, translated by Madam Meyerovitch.

There are plenty of detractors who have blindly attacked both poetical and philosophical works of Iqbal. To begin with Wilfred Cantwell Smith, has made baseless comments on Iqbal in his book *Modern Islam in India* and a reader can judge his ignorance when he says, "During the first World War he was strongly pro-Islamic and pro-Turkish, and wrote some bitter verses against the enemy, i.e., Britain. Later he was an ardent *Khilafatist*; some of his most passionate utterances belong to this period"(Smith 125). Smith in *Islam in Modern History*, his later work, remarked about his earlier book *Modern Islam in India* that it was written when he was young and immature. He further confesses, "This youthful work has many defects; among them, those of which the writer is most conscious—chiefly the inadequate understanding of Islam and also of the crucial role played in history by ideological and moral factors are corrected as far as possible in the present study"(Smith 210). His ignorance and misconstrues about Iqbal even in his second work goes nowhere and is crystal clear when he says, "Yet Iqbal is so contradictory and unsystematic that it is difficult to assess him. He is the Sufi that attacked Sufism, and perhaps the liberal who attacked liberalism. The historical consequence of his impact seems on the whole to have served to weaken liberalism among Indian Muslims and to help replace it with an illiberal nationalistic and apologist dogmatism"(Smith 210).

Smith's assessment of Iqbal's impact has great weight in it although it cannot be accepted in its totality because Iqbal's influence has not strengthened illiberalism only but encouraged radically liberal thinking among the Muslim intelligentsia also. His observation that Iqbal is unsystematic and contradictory is, however, untenable. Could Smith comprehend the system of Iqbal's thought most of the contradictions would have been resolved. Iqbal was committed to a liberalism which has very little in common with the materialistic and unbridled liberalism known to Smith and his (Iqbal's) Sufism (spiritual purification) was not anti-life and escapism. Iqbal's standpoint of socialism was quite explicit but the fact remains that a mere materialist like Smith cannot appreciate it. A belly-centred world view for which the material alone is real and the mental develops out of it cannot understand the mystique of the spirit. Iqbal saw both the capitalist economy and its socialist version as springing from the womb of materialism.

Another detractor of Iqbal Sir Hamilton Gibb is a Christian writer who criticizes Iqbal on the basis of religion. He, in his book *Modern trends in Islam* says, "In these days, when we are enveloped in an atmosphere charged with

propaganda, it is the duty of every investigator to define precisely to himself and to his audience the principle which determines his point of view. Speaking in the first person, therefore, I make bold claim to say that the metaphor, in which Christian doctrine is traditionally enshined, satisfied me intellectually as expressing the highest rage of spiritual truth which I can conceive"(Gibb xi). Gibb remarks while pointing out that Muslim writers are apologetic, he says, "The outstanding exception is the Indian scholar and poet, Sir Mohammad Iqbal, who in his six lectures on *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* faces outright the question of reformulating the basic ideas of Muslim theology"(Gibb x). Later on in the same book Sir Hamilton Gibb says: "He (Iqbal) aimed to reconstruct the established theology of Islam; but the theology which he attempts to restate is not, in fact, the Sufi theology...Iqbal has tried to refashion thought in terms of Western humanism"(Gibb x) The main charge that Gibb has brought against Iqbal is that he has mistranslated some of the Quranic verses. He says:

Throughout the lectures he constantly appeals to *Quranic* verses in support of his argument. But we cannot help asking ourselves two questions 'Do they mean what Iqbal says they mean'? In one or two instances I suspect actual philological misinterpretations(Gibb 83).

It is not enough to make blindly wild charges even one would expect a scholar like Gibb to quote the verses of the holy Qur'an which he thinks Iqbal has misinterpreted.

Another critic from Oxford, Alfred Guillaume also wrote on Allama Iqbal in his book on *Islam*. Describing Iqbal's ideas that Heaven and Hell are states and not localities, Guillaume remarks that it hardly needs saying that all this comes perilously near heresy in Islam (Vahid127).The superficial and little knowledge of Alfred Guillaume may be obvious when he asserts that the reader can see Iqbal has left the Muslim with some principles based partly on texts which for generations have been interpreted in quite a different way, and partly on Christian thought in modern time (Vahid 127).

It seems Guillaume has read little portion of Iqbal's poetry. However, the western critics have often misinterpreted Iqbal, like the other from American soil J.S. Badean, professor at the University of Cairo. In his book *The Lords Between* he has written that according to Iqbal the Quran was given as a guide only for the period when modern science was unknown, which is not actually the case, God has sent the holy Quran upon Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W) as guidance for the whole universe till its end.

It was from Iqbal's student days he started to write poetry that received criticism from two schools of thought Delhi

school and Lucknow school but these schools were also in contradiction with each other on the usage of 'Diction'. The reason of Iqbal's criticism at that point says Syed Abdul Wahid was Dagh Dehlvi's correction of poetry that Iqbal had sent to him because Dagh was from the Delhi school of thought. Unfortunately both schools were unacquainted with the modern principles of Literary Criticism (Vahid119). This flood of criticism and literary squabbles were so great that they would have dismayed an ordinary poet. But in *Kulyat-i-Iqbal* (Urdu) Iqbal answers that criticism with the following verse:

Iqbal Lucknow se na Delhi se hi Garz
Hum to aseer hi khamezulf kamal ke.

When *Asrar-i-Khudi* (The Secrets of the self) deals with Iqbal's philosophy of 'Ego' appeared in 1915, it became starting point of criticism to Iqbal's thought. Primarily it was criticized on the usage of '*Khudi*' which detractors misunderstood as 'conceit' and 'pride' totally against the Iqbal's contextual point of view. Critics generally took it literally in respect to Urdu language; therefore, in the beginning they decimated its title by attaching wrong interpretations to it. Indian writer K.P.S. Menon, a member of the Indian service also wrote against *Asrar-i-khudi* from the same angle. C.A. Nallino, the Italian orientalist in clear terms warned European nations against the writings of Iqbal, thus started a criticism of Iqbal for political reasons. He remarked about *Asrar-i- Khudi* as "un grido di riscossa Musulmana contro l' Europa, una manifestazione delle piu ardent aspirazioni dell' irredentismo Pan-Islamica" (Vahid 122). (A cry for Muslim awakening against Europe, a manifestation of the most ardent aspirations of Pan-Islamic irredentism.) Dr. S. Sinha in his book *Iqbal: The poet and his Message* and Iqbal Singh, a communist too in his book *Ardent Pilgrim* have blindly criticized Iqbal. They both have misunderstood the Iqbalian philosophy.

Sinha disliked Iqbal for political reasons and as a poet regarded him of a very mean order and when it comes to Iqbal's philosophy, he took that as borrowed from others. Iqbal Singh on the other side attacked Iqbal for his political views but paid a rich tribute to his poetry. Recording the reasons which led him to write the book Iqbal Singh says:

And that is to record a personal enthusiasm for Iqbal's poetry- an enthusiasm which increases every time I return to it (Vahid 123).

Besides in totality being among the main advocates of Iqbal Schimmel at certain places has made certain serious charges against him. She writes:

Iqbal did not know Turkish, has studied his (ZiyaGokalp's) work through the German translation of August Fisher, and it is of interest to see how he (Iqbal) sometimes changes or omits some words of the translation when reproducing the verses in the Lecture (Schimmel 242).

Schimmel again writes:

...Iqbal's interpretation of the Holy Writ (The Holy Quran) is sometimes very personal and influenced by the wish of combining Quranic revelation with the experiences of modern science (Schimmel 385).

Annemarie Schimmel further writes:

The Christian reader will be shocked by the devaluation of nearly everything Christian, and European, in Iqbal's work, and by the lack of understanding of the ethical ideals of Christianity (the dogmatic differences are of no interest to Iqbal and not discussed in his work.) He should, then, realize that Iqbal in this respect does not talk with the calmness required of a historian of religions...(Schimmel 382).

It is thus noticed that this Christian writer by means of mis-statements, wrong information and faulty translations has tried to create a wrong image of Iqbal amongst the Western readers. The object is obvious. In this regard Syed AbdulVahid says:

We can see that the Christian writers on Iqbal display wonderful homogeneity in their attacks on him. Their aim is to discredit him in the eyes of the Muslims as well as the Christians. To the Muslims they say that Iqbal has mistranslated Quran and misrepresented Islam; to the Christians they say that Iqbal is a fanatic Muslim (Vahid 128).

It does not mean that there are no Christian writers who have paid real tribute to Iqbal, actually there are. It is well known that Browne, the illustrious author of *The Literary History of Persia*, did not have a high opinion about those poets of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent who wrote in Persian language, but he always treated Iqbal as one of the exceptions.

R. A. Nicholson's translation of *Asrar-i-Khudi* under the title of '*The Secrets of the Self*' attracted the attention of number of detractors which resulted in the publication of several reviews through the British press. The two reviews which merited the attention were by E. M. Forster and Dr. Dickinson, the former had published it in *Athenaeum* and the later in the *WeeklyNation*. E. M. Forster alleged that Iqbal was influenced by Nietzsche's concept of Super-man

which stood for absolute strength and hardness, it was strange, the critic added, how Iqbal could make it Islamic, for Nietzsche's infatuation for Aristocracy and his denial of God could not be acceptable to Iqbal. Therefore, Nietzsche's Perfect Man, in Iqbal's hands, becomes God's vicegerent on earth. On the other side Dr. Dickinson attacks in his review that Iqbal's thought seems to be the blend of Nietzsche and Bergson and a bit of his teacher Mc Taggart. Subjects like '*Khudi*', Will to power, struggle against odds show that Nietzsche's influence was stronger, Iqbal does not believe in the usefulness of Sufism and has criticized Plato for his otherworldliness. Dickinson further adds that Iqbal's Philosophy is based on the teachings of the ancient book, the Quran and hence teaches loyalty to Islam. Though in principle this philosophy is universal, yet in actual practice, it is wedded to the cause of a particular group, as he holds that Muslims alone deserve to be successors to real power. It means that this teaching of strengthening '*Khudi*' amounts to a cry for revival of Muslim people. He invites Muslim people in clear words to declare *Jihad*, holy war. It is true that he forbids war for worldly ambitions; but whatever the motive, war is after all war which brings about destruction. It seems Islam has once again become ready to take up sword to free and then to unite Islam (Ishrat 195).

Iqbal strongly refutes and resents the reviews of both E. M. Forster and Dr. Dickinson in a letter to Dr. Nicholson on 24th of January, 1921. Iqbal asserted that these English reviewers have been misled by the superficial resemblance of some of his ideas to those of Nietzsche. The view of E. M. Forster in the *Athenaeum* is largely affected by some mistakes of fact for which, however, the writer does not seem to be responsible. But Iqbal was sure if Forster had known some of the dates of the publication of his Urdu poems referred to in his review, he would have certainly taken a totally different view of the growth of his literary activity. Nor does Forster rightly understand his idea of the Perfect Man which he confounds with the Nietzsche's Superman.

Iqbal in refutation to Dr. Dickinson's charges has clearly asserted that he does not believe in brutal force as Dickinson has thought instead he believes in the power of spirit. In response to his another charge Iqbal writes when a people are called to a religious war and it is their duty to obey that call as per his belief but he condemns all wars of conquest. He agreed with the view of Dickinson that wars are destructive whether waged in the interest of truth and Justice or conquest and exploitation; these must be put to an end in any case. On Dickinson's reference to his 'Be Hard' Iqbal provides convincing answer by explaining the significance of maintaining the state of tension or conflict for the cause of evolution in an individual especially his

evolution of personal immortality. Nietzsche did not believe in personal immortality, Iqbal on the other side looked upon immortality as the highest aspiration of man on which he should focus all his energies. Iqbal has condemned speculative mysticism and inactive quietism.

Iqbal has agreed with the view of Dickinson that his philosophy is universal but in application he has made it particular and exclusive. In its response Iqbal asserted that for making a humanitarian ideal there was a need of society and he found Islam as the suitable society for this purpose. Iqbal had the greatest love for Islam because of its practical and not patriotic considerations, as Dickinson had thought of that he was compelled to start with a specific society (e.g., Islam) which actually among the societies of the world happens to be the only suitable for his purpose. The spirit of Islam is not exclusive as Dickinson has thought of but in the interest of the unification of mankind the Quran ignores their differences and invites all humanity for unification on what is common to them all.

The Mystic or *Sufi* detractors of Iqbal are also in huge number. When in *Asrar-i-Khudi* Sufis saw the critical verses on Persian poet Hafiz they flared-up in rage. Though Iqbal has criticized him on advocating a life of ascetic inaction, which is purely the criticism of literary ideals. Hafiz the greatest lyric poet rightly or wrongly is also esteemed as a great Sufi, whether he was or not is a moot question. The issue was many Sufis took Iqbal's lines on Hafiz as an attack on Sufism and reacted with virulent and vulgar attacks on his poetry and prose. Few of these attackers are Khawaja Hasan Nizami of Dargah Nizamuddi, Delhi and Khan Bahadur Muzaffar Ahmad Fazli, a retired Canal Deputy Collector of the Punjab. They did not understand the theme of *Asrar-i-Khudi* as neither of them was a great scholar (Vahid 120). There are also critics who appreciated *Asrar-i-Khudi*, like Dr. Abdul Rehman Bijori and Hafiz Aslam Jairajpuri. Later in the second edition of *Asrar-i-Khudi* Iqbal omits the lines he had written on Hafiz and replaced them with new lines in which he explains the rules according to which the literature of a nation must be judged.

However, Iqbal's admiration of Mussolini or his verses about Napoleon have often been misconstrued as a manifestation of a Fascist attitude. In fact, it is his admiration for one particular aspect in the personality of these men- their vitalism and strength of character- and not a blanket adoration of these men. Like the German poet Heine, Iqbal praised even a despot if he expressed the fierce vigor of an untrammelled life-force.

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