KIERKEGAARD AND IQBAL ON SUBJECTIVITY: A CRITICAL STUDY

Abstract

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DR. LATIF HUSSAIN S. KAZMI

(Associate Professor)

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRACT

The present thesis is comprised of seven chapters in the following order:

Chapter I  Introduction
Chapter II  Kierkegaard's Background
Chapter III  Iqbal's Background
Chapter IV  Kierkegaard on Subjectivity
Chapter V  Iqbal on Subjectivity
Chapter VI  Comparison
Chapter VII  Critical Evaluation

The chapter I 'Intro. 'action' starts with the distinction between 'Men of Faith' and 'Men of Reason'; the former stressing on action, commitment and values and latter stressing on method, argument, truth and understanding. It is pointed out that by espousing and advocating the approach of 'Men of Faith', Kierkegaard and Iqbal provide a radical challenge to the assumptions of modern European philosophy and culture.

The second chapter 'Kierkegaard's Background' provides a historical overview of Western philosophy. It starts with a brief account of pre-Socratic philosophers. It gives an outline of the epistemological and ethical views of Sophists, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Thereafter, it outlines the epistemological, ethical and religious views of such Judeau-
Christian thinkers as Philo, Justin, Martyr, Clement, Origen, Augustine, St. Anselm, Peter Abelard, Maimonides, Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scouts and William of Ockham. This chapter also provides a summary of epistemological views of such modern philosophers as Descartes, Pascal and David Hume. It also gives a summary of the epistemological point of view advanced by Kant.


The fourth chapter ‘Kierkegaard on Subjectivity’ provides a detailed account of Kierkegaards’ views on subjectivity. The first section ‘Subjectivity’ brings out the distinction between science and philosophy as well as the distinction between religious faith and objective method.
This section also brings out Kierkegaards' basic insights and suggestions with regard to his commitment to the approach of 'Subjectivity'. The second section 'Attack on Hegel' attacks the Hegelian system for its failure to capture individual existence in the logical development of concepts. Kierkegaard brings out that religious faith is appropriated subjectively and it operates on a different plane which is in radical opposition to logic and methodology of Hegelian rationalist philosophy. Hegel is utterly unacceptable to Kierkegaard for he avoids the subjective viewpoint of the existing individual. Hegel’s so-called system is devoid of practical wisdom and ethical guidance. Such a philosophy can be only used as a ruse to excuse ourselves from making ethical and practical decisions. The third section of this chapter bring's out Kierkegaards' views on Christianity as a way of life. In this section Kierkegaards critique of conventional Christianity is outlined as well. Kierkegaard’s rejection of rational appropriation to Christianity also figures in this section. Christianity, according to Kierkegaard is not a set of reasonable doctrines. It is rather anchored on the most essentially paradoxical and irrational doctrine, viz. historical incarnation of God into Christ. Therefore, a rational appropriation of Christianity is impossible. The fourth section of this chapter 'Three Modes of Existence' provides a summary of Kierkegaards’ existential dialectic. It gives an outline of
three modes of existence such as aesthetic mode, ethical mode and religious mode as advanced by Kierkegaard himself. While in aesthetical mode of existence man is pleasure-centric and in ethical mode of existence man is value-centric, it is in religious mode of existence that one becomes God-centric. At this stage man's sense of alienation and meaningfulness is overcome.

The fifth chapter 'Iqbal on Subjectivity', firstly brings out Iqbal's basic philosophical orientation, indicating his commitment to the basic vision and mission of Islam and his training in Western philosophy. Secondly, this chapter outlines Iqbal's critique of reason. This section brings out Iqbal's integrated epistemological position. Apart from summarizing Iqbal's critique of reason, this section also brings out the characterizing features of religious experience as given by Iqbal in his 'Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam'. In the next section, we give an outline of Iqbal's philosophy of Ego. This section provides a brief account of Iqbal's philosophy wherein the universe, man and God are deemed to be different gradations of Ego; the universe being a cluster of lower egos, man being an Ego at the intermediate level i.e. in between the universe and God and God being the Supreme Ego. This section also summarises Iqbal's critique of pantheistic philosophy of Ibn Arabi. The question of the relationship of human ego with the universe is also
touched herein. It also brings’ out Iqbals’ emphasis on the stabilization of ego through facing challenges and obstructions, authentication of self through creating and positing of values and purposes and freedom of the ego with a view to recasting the world according to its’ values, ideals and purposes. This chapter, subsequently, provides a summary of the role of love in the appropriation of Islamic beliefs and values, as well as, its’ crucial contribution in the upkeep of human life. The last section in this chapter gives an overview of Iqbals ‘Man of Faith’. A brief account of Iqbals’ three stages of human life is also provided herein. Other crucial features of ‘Man of Faith’ such as his love of God, his contentment, his absolute faith and his transformative role are also brought out in this section.

The chapter VI ‘Comparison’ provides a summary of the basic philosophical positions of both Kierkegaard and Iqbal. Thereafter, it brings out the basic similarities between Kierkegaard and Iqbal. It provides a brief account of their differences or dissimilarities as well.

The VII chapter ‘Critical Evaluation’ provides a recapitulation of basic philosophical contention of Kierkegaard and Iqbal. This chapter also works out a critical overview of the basic philosophical positions upheld by Kierkegaard and Iqbal. It is brought out that Kierkegaards’ excessive emphasis on ‘subjectivity’ lands him in unnecessary and
uncalled for irrationalism. Kierkegaard's excessive emphasis on subjectivity also makes him forgetful of most important social and political questions. It also points out that Kierkegaard 'Man of Faith' is excessively caught into vortex of despair. The chapter also brings out the limitations of Iqbal's approach to philosophy. His views on Sufism are not clear and categorical. His ambiguity on Sufism lands him into love-hate relationship with sufi approach to religion and philosophy. His critique of IbnArabi's ontocosmological doctrine is also not necessarily corroborated by the Quran. Although his rejection of the classical proofs for the existence of God is in tune with the approach of subjectivity, his support of religion by recourse to contemporary scientific research violates his basic existentialist approach to religion.
Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis titled "Kierkegaard and Iqbal on Subjectivity: A Critical Study" is an original piece of research carried out by Ms. Kainat (En. No. GC-5897) under my supervision and the same has not been published or submitted elsewhere for the award of any other degree.

Ms. Kainat has consulted all the relevant and appropriate research material with regard to the topic of her Ph.D. project. In my opinion, the present research work is of high quality and fit to be submitted for the award of the Degree of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Philosophy of the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

Dr. Latif Hussain S. Kazmi
(Associate Professor)
(Supervisor)
Dedicated
To
Abbu Ammy
and
Azad
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KAIZAD
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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Philosophical interpretations have either been inspired by religious faith and spiritual imperatives or motivated by quest for scientific standardization and rational systematization. Broadly speaking, human beings are of two types: (a) Men of faith, conviction, action, commitment, values; men deeply imbued with a sense of good and evil and men with a strong vision of and mission for self-transformation and societal change and (b) Men of reason, truth, method, logic, argument, proof, verification; men who want to arrive at universal truth, men who passionately yearn for an understanding of Ultimate Reality. The former are men of action, the latter are men of contemplation. The former pursue the path of action and devotion, the latter pursue the path of knowledge. The former are in search of what is valuable, the latter are in search of what is truthful. The foremost concern of former is to figure out what righteous actions are, the foremost concern of the latter is to arrive at justified true beliefs rather indefeasible propositions. The former is concerned with practices, the latter with indubitable truth-claims. The former is concerned with right action, the latter with right thought. The former is driven by moral duty, the latter inspired by intellectual beauty. The former is pricked by pangs of conscience, the latter is motivated by the imperatives of consciousness. The ultimate concern of former is right conduct, the ultimate concern of the latter is right thinking. The former prefers moral virtues to everything else, the latter prefers intellectual virtues to everything else. The examples of former are Biblical prophets such as Moses, Jesus and Muhammad; the examples of latter are Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

The Biblical Prophets taught unqualified obedience to the commandments of God with a view to attaining to the good-pleasure of God. They underscored the unconditional observance of rituals and prayers. They
underlined the unconditional and absolute faith in and commitment to God. They emphasized on a spiritual relationship with God which is inextricably etched on the soul, mind and body of a believer. The essential teachings of the Prophets included stress on finitude and mortality of man, radical contingency of life and ineradicable human sinfulness. They did not teach intellectual detachment but personal or moral involvement. The Biblical man of faith was not in the Greek mould of “spectator of all time and all existence”. Unlike Greeks, Biblical Revelationists did not deem the philosopher as the highest or the ideal type of man – one who can survey the realm of eternal and universal essences.

The Biblical Prophets taught that the ideal man is the man of faith and not the man of reason – a detached intellectual or the philosopher. The Biblical ideal man is not conceptualized in universal abstractness. The Biblical vision concentrated always on the concrete, particular, individual man. It emphasized on commitment and passionate involvement of man; on human relationships and values. A man abstracted from commitments and involvements would be for Semitic people a complete distortion of the actual existing human person. For Semitics, the rational or intellectual man is essentially alienated from the real problems of life. It is foolish to pride on intellectual sophistication, for the intellect can never touch the real issues of life. The ultimate issues of life transpire at a plane that logical and intellectual sophistication can never arrive at. The ultimate issues of life can be resolved or dealt with only by recourse to ultimate depth of faith. The Biblical vision of and perspective on man was too pre-occupied with the existential features such as human imperfection, sinfulness and finitude to be grandiloquently discoursing on universal and eternal values such as Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

On the other hand, for Greeks, the ideal man was the man of reason, the philosopher who as a spectator of all time and existence can rise above all existential imperfections. The philosopher, according to Plato, can understand the universal and timeless essences, forms and ideas. The ideal man was the
man of theory, the philosopher or the pure scientist, looking upon existence with complete detachment. Man is a rational animal who can discover universal and eternal essences through his intellect.

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the greatest rationalist trio of World philosophy, underlined the ultimate importance of discovering objective, universal and true knowledge by recourse to reason. Socrates critiqued sophists and advanced arguments in support of the conceptual character of all knowledge. Following Socrates, Plato advanced his theory of Ideas. For Plato Ideas were substantial, universal, immutable, essential, perfect, outside space and time and most importantly rational and real. While Socrates had emphasized on dialectical or conversational method with a view to arriving at objective truth, Aristotle invented a fully-fledged new science of Logic in order to arriving at true and objective conclusions.

Following Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the ideal Greek man was conceptualized as a perfect rational philosopher who could, with absolute detachment and objectivity, discover or arrive at the perfect knowledge of such universal and eternal ideas as Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

The Medieval European philosophy was basically dominated by debates pertaining to issues arising from appropriating the horizon of religious faith and commitment. However, eminent Medieval Christian theologians tried their best to reconcile the conflicting claims of Greek rationalism and Biblical faith. Muslim philosophers such as al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd also dedicated themselves to working out a reconciliation between the imperatives of the Qur'anic world-view and rationalist objectivist principles underlined by Greek philosophers.

With the onset of Modern European era and with the rising tide of scientific research, the rationalist objectivist epistemology advanced by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, directed the onward march of European philosophy. The continental rationalists such as Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz
and British empiricists such as Locke, Berkeley and Hume, despite disagreements on the origin and development of knowledge, were all inspired by Greek emphasis on objectivity and rationality. Kant, despite his epistemological reconciliations and hermeneutical concessions, substantially preserved intact, the Greek ideal of objective knowledge. Hegel identified the whole of reality with the manifestation of reason and declared whatever is rational is real and whatever is real is rational.

In nineteenth and twentieth centuries, great scientific and technological achievements were registered by the application of rational or objective criteria of knowledge. The universal physical laws and chemical and biological discoveries were appropriated by recourse to rational, objective and experimental methods. This approach reached its culminating point in the semantic slogan of early twentieth century logical positivists, viz., “the meaning of a statement is the method of its verification”. If there is no method of verification with regard to any proposition, it cannot be accepted either as true or false. It has to be declared as meaningless and nonsense. In view of the same, metaphysical and ethical propositions, having no method of verification, must be deemed to be neither true nor false but cognitively insignificant.

Kierkegaard in the first half of nineteenth century and Iqbal in early twentieth century, advanced radical critiques of Modern Europe’s strident espousal of objectivity. They with reference to their respective cultural matrices, launched powerful protests against the modern fetish for objective knowledge to the utter neglect of the power and relevance of human subjectivity. They revisited and recaptured the Biblical and the Qur’anic emphasis on human commitment, human action, human decision, human values and moral transformation of human society.

As against the modern exclusivistic espousal of objectivity, the Clarion Call of Kierkegaard was that truth is subjectivity and subjectivity is truth. Man can never achieve objective certainty in the realms of philosophy and religion. We can never achieve rational sanction or certification of religious beliefs and
moral values. Christian beliefs and values are grounded on our faith in the absolute paradox that God intervened in temporal history in the person of Christ. Hegel’s rational justification of Christianity is violative of the very purpose of religion. Religion is in no need of rational justificatory apologetics. What counts is man’s ultimate depth of feeling or inwardness in relation to God. An existing individual can provide purpose and significance to his life through freedom, commitment and responsibility. An existing individual has to negotiate deep and abiding moral dilemmas and take painful decisions involving courage of the highest order. The grand speculative formulations advanced by philosophers are pointless in the face of excruciating moral dilemmas. The existing individual faces critical choices and baffling alternatives. Philosophical arguments are of no avail during such critical moments.

There is no royal road to salvation. Man has the choice either to lead an aesthetic mode of life or ethical mode of life. He can either maximize his pleasures or commit himself to ethical values. However, such modes of existence will not relieve him of his sense of finitude or guilt or alienation. The only course open to him for dealienation and self-integration is to appropriate God through a leap unto the darkness i.e. opt for a religious mode of life. Philosophy can illuminate the possibilities and choices available to man and orientate an individual to an authentic appropriation of his subjectivity.

Iqbal too is an uncompromising advocate of subjectivity. An objective demonstration of religious beliefs and values is simply impossible. Like Kant, he repudiates all the proofs for the existence of God. Religious beliefs and values can be appropriated only subjectively. It is not possible to demonstrate existence of God by recourse to rational arguments. It is only through intuition and love that the reality of God and our own reality can be vouchsafed to us. An understanding of the Quran through classical exegetical principles or hermeneutical criteria is also not possible. The Quran needs to be always contemporaneously revealed to the depths of the conscience of its readers. The
truth of religion can be appropriated only by recourse to faith. The way to God is through self realization. Those who strive for the disclosure of the Ultimate Splendor of God must learn to appreciate their own spiritual beauty. In fact, search for God ends up in self-realisation and search for our own selves leads to God-realisation. The human ego is an irreducible ontic entity and the gateway to God. Understanding God entails plumbing the ultimate depths of our own self.

The role of human personality, initiative and freedom, is powerfully underlined by Iqbal. It is through freedom or capacity for initiative that all possible changes, transformations and revolutions are possible. Man as a free personality is co-worker with God. Human freedom cannot only bring about change at personal, social and political levels but earn man liberation from finitude or immortality as well. It is through free spiritual struggle that man can earn his personality through increasing approximation to God. Man’s quest for self-realisation and self-transcendence leading to the proximity and presence of Allah, entails excruciating challenges and insufferable obstructions. An authentic seeker is the one who can dismantle all the impediments in his onward march to salvation and fulfillment.

Man’s moral and spiritual authentication and fulfillment can only be teleologically conceptualised and worked out. Man, according to Iqbal, does not exist because he thinks; he exists because he loves — he loves values, ideals and purposes, he loves God because He is the Ultimate Ground as well as Revelator of values, ideals and purposes and he loves the Prophet because he is the reveletee of values, ideals and purposes besides being the exemplar of a model code of conduct for the entire mankind for all times to come. It is through love and consequent and subsequent subordination to values, ideals and purposes that we earn the stabilization and authentication of our individuality. Our ceaseless spiritual struggle is anchored on our quest for values, ideals and purposes. We exist because we can ceaselessly create values, ideals and purposes and endlessly pursue them to the best of our ability. It is
through subordination to divinely revealed values, ideals and purposes that we can launch ourselves on spiritual highways and byways across the spectrum. The next stage of the spiritual seeker is to undergo most authentic self-control culminating into highest state of ego or self-realisation. Nextly, it is through subordination to divine commandments and self-realisation through self-control that we can attain to the highest stage of life i.e. vicegerency of Allah. This is the ultimate stage of man’s spiritual quest. It is at this stage that man of faith becomes man of God.

The development of religions some three thousand years back and the development of natural and social sciences in modern Europe, are two of the most important paradigms of understanding and interpretation. Religions provided man an interpretation of God, self and the universe. Three of the most important questions with regard to Ultimate Reality, status of the self and destiny of man were sought to be resolved by recourse to religious faith. With the rise of modern science and technology religious beliefs and reassurances were as much undermined as social, political and economic concerns accorded priority and paramountcy. The emphasis on scientific knowledge achieved through laboratorical methods captured the imagination of modern world so much that religion was consigned to the oblivion of cognitive insignificance. Scientific methods provided us objective knowledge and anything short of objective certainty became pointless, meaningless and futile in the eyes of modern man. Kierkegaard in Europe and Iqbal in Asia advanced powerful protests against this reductionistic maltreatment of religion.

According to Kierkegaard the ideal of objective knowledge championed by the so-called enlightened minds, is blind to the inner life or subjective existence of the human individual. The objective theoretical knowledge is of no avail in our quest for understanding human life. Kierkegaard offered extraordinary insights and overwhelming suggestions with a view to underlining the fact that the standard of objectivity in the sphere of religion was not only not perplexing but misleading as well. It was through religious faith
and ethical subjectivity that modern man can reclaim his dignity, integrity and fulfillment. Iqbal, like Kierkegaard appreciated the role of rational, scientific and technological advancement in the modern world. However, in his poetic and prose writings, he consistently and continuously, launched a strident critique of the rationalistic and objectivistic critique of religion carried out by modern philosophers. He underlined that it is through intuition, faith and love that complex ills of modern world can be taken care of and the future of civilization can be made safe.

Kierkegaard and Iqbal, through subjectivity, commitment and faith, tried to revive the pristine vision of the Biblical and the Qur'anic Ideal Man. Their critiques of modern ‘Rational Man’ as envisaged and advanced by the Enlightenment Philosophers, may not have necessarily and substantially demolished the pan-objectivist pretensions of modernist intellectual discourse. However, they have provided a mature and judicious corrective to modernist accounts of man, religion, morality and philosophy by figuring out the distinctive alternative logic and methodology of understanding and interpretation anchored on subjectivity.
CHAPTER - II

KIERKEGAARD'S BACKGROUND

(A) GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

Western philosophy started by early 6th century BC. The ionic philosophers such as Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes started Greek philosophy with the search for the ultimate stuff of the Universe. Pythagoras and his followers in sixth century BC worked out a way of life by recourse to their mystical, religious and ethical teachings. The Eleatics in sixth and fifth century BC, interpreted the universe as Being and advanced philosophical considerations with a view to showing all Becoming to be only apparent and not real and declaring change to be impossible. As against Eleatics, their contemporary Heraclitus advanced arguments with a view to bringing out that motionless and changeless Being is impossible and there is nothing but change. Only change is changeless. Empedocles advanced the view that the world is comprised of four elements; earth, air, water, fire. All its transformations and transmutations, are worked out by Primal forces of Love and Hate. The Atomists argued that the universe we are living in is ultimately comprised of indivisible units. These units or atoms are the ultimate constituents of the world. Anaxagoras also advanced his cosmological views and mainly grappled with the problem of change. He advanced the view that physical particles or atoms by themselves can not explain the law and order as well as the beauty and design of the universe. There must be a non-material, non-corporeal or intelligent principle which he called Nous, responsible for the order and purpose of the universe. The Nous is a teleological or purposive principle which animates all living beings; men, animals, plants. It is essentially the ground of all motion. Its function is not to create the world but to organize it into an ordered and purposive whole.
(a) Sophists

The Sophists were not a school of philosophers like Pythagoreans or Eleatics. They were not interested in metaphysical, ontological or cosmological questions. Their interests were rather practical. Originally, the term 'Sophist' meant a wise and skillful man. Later on, it came to be applied to the professional teachers who travelled about teaching young men the art of thinking and speaking and preparing them for political life. In course of time, 'Sophist' became a term of reproach both because they charged fees for their instructions and advanced highly radical epistemological, ethical and political views (Frank Thilly: *A History of Philosophy*, Central Publishing House, Allahabad, 1985, p. 55).

In view of the great diversity of philosophical theories and intense disagreement between and within various schools of philosophy, Sophists' attention was directed to finding the cause thereof. They came to the conclusion that philosophical disagreement emerged and remained inconclusive because human faculties of understanding were incommensurable to the ineffability and profundity of philosophical problems. Philosophers are involved in widespread disagreement because human reason cannot penetrate to the reality of the universe even if there is one. Gorgias (483-375 B.C.) famously expounded that:

(i) There is no reality whatsoever at all  
(ii) Even if there is reality, it cannot be known, and  
(iii) Even if we can know the reality, it cannot be communicated to others (Y. Masih: *A Critical History of Western Philosophy*: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, Delhi, 2010, p. 34).

Sophists pointed out that philosophers variously accepted water, air, fire, earth, etc. to be the ultimate stuff of reality. One philosopher deems change to be impossible and another one rebuts that there is nothing but change. The all-pervasive, perennial and radical philosophical disagreement persuades Sophists
to conclude that human mind is incapable of resolving the riddle of the universe. While human mind cannot deliver us universal, eternal and transcendental propositions, whatever knowledge we do have is relative to the capability, and direction of our mind. Knowledge depends upon the particular knower. What seems true to him is true for him. There is no objective truth. We cannot but have our subjective opinions. Protagoras brought out the crux of the sophistical philosophical position when he said “Man is the measure of all things” (Frank Thilly, op.cit. p. 57). Each individual man is the standard of what is true to himself. What seems true to me is true for me. What seems true to you is true for you. There is no objective truth, no truth independent of the individual subject. Knowledge is so much related to the knower that all opinions can be declared to be equally true or equally false. It amounts to a declaration that knowledge is impossible. If there is no objective truth, there cannot be any knowledge as well (W.T. Stace; A Critical History of Greek Philosophy; Khosla Publishing House, New Delhi, 2003, p. 116).

The subjectivistic and relativistic account of knowledge advanced by Sophists led to their subjectivistic and relativistic account of morality as well. If it is impossible to have any objective knowledge, it is simultaneously impossible to have any knowledge of right and wrong. Just as conflicting accounts of reality and truth led Sophists to deny any account of objective knowledge, so conflicting customs, morals and traditions led them to question the validity of any absolute or objective standards of conduct. If there can be no objective account of morals then what seems right to each man is right for him. Whatever I think right is right for me. Whatever you think right is right for you. Similarly, there cannot be any objective laws or principles of governance. The laws of the State can be founded upon nothing except force, custom and convention. If there can be no objective laws, all talk of just and good laws is meaningless. There is only one law which prevails and that is law of force. Sophists were the first western thinkers who preached the doctrine that might is right (W.T. Stace, op.cit., p. 119).
(b) Socrates

Socrates, a fifth century B.C. Greek philosopher, is considered to be one of the wisest men of history. Socrates was not attracted to large, wide and deep metaphysical, ontological and cosmological questions. He was not interested either in explaining the nature of Ultimate Reality or in figuring out the origin of the world. Such problems seemed to him to be finally irresolvable and therefore futile (Frank Thilly: op.cit., p. 68). However, he was profoundly concerned with questions pertaining to man. He was especially interested in taking up an analysis of the nature of ethical values and human duties. However, his perspective on values and duties was diametrically opposite to the ethical views of his contemporaries — the Sophists. In fact his philosophical analysis and ethical perspective were formulated as a critique of the subjectivistic and relativistic views advanced and underlined by Sophists. Socrates who’s ethical teachings were founded upon his theory of knowledge, also offered his epistemological viewpoint in unqualified opposition to the epistemological views of Sophists. The Sophists had founded knowledge upon perception. Such an assumption militated against any possibility of arriving at objective standards of truth. Socrates attempted to found knowledge upon reason with a view to restoring the objectivity of truth. Socrates advances the view that all knowledge is knowledge through concepts, thus making reason the source of knowledge.

By identifying knowledge with concepts and by making reason the organ of knowledge, Socrates was restoring the belief in objective truth. Such a truth was universally valid and universally binding as well. Socrates tried to work out the definitions of Knowledge, Truth, Beauty, Man etc., with a view to setting objective standards or criteria. By the process of fixing definitions we can attain objective standards of truth. For example, by working out a definition of the triangle we can compare any geometrical figure with that definition and understand or know which figure is triangular and which is not. Similarly, we can work out the definition of man and by comparison declare...
who is a man and who is not. It can not be, as held by Sophists that any
geometrical figure we deemed to be triangle is triangle and any object we
declare to be man is man. Similarly we can work out a definition of virtue and
then by comparison come to understand which act is virtuous and which is not.
It cannot be that whatever act we choose to call virtuous is virtuous.
Knowledge means knowledge of things as they objectively are. Knowledge is
independent of individual or subjective impressions.

Socratic theory of knowledge was oriented to practical ends. His central
concern was to know what virtue is with a view to practicing virtuous life.
Socrates came to believe and advocate that knowledge is virtue. We cannot
lead virtuous life if we do not correctly understand or know the concept of
virtue. A person who has no knowledge of virtue can not be virtuous and a
person who possess knowledge of virtue cannot do anything vicious.

(c) Plato

Plato's epistemological, metaphysical, ethical and political theories were
in continuation with Socratic critique of Sophists and in accordance with the
教INGS or beliefs and values advanced by Socrates. He did not accept the
epistemological, metaphysical and ethical views underlined by Sophists. To
begin with, he discards the epistemological theory advanced by Sophists.
Knowledge as Sophists held is not perception, for perception yields
contradictory impressions. The assumption that knowledge is perception
destroys the objectivity of truth. Furthermore, perception can not be accepted
as a source of knowledge for in that case we will have to accept the perception
of a child, of an idiot and of an animal to be equally valid with the perception
of an outstanding scientist or scholar. More importantly, there is no such thing
as pure perception. If we take any perceptual statement such as "this paper is
white" or "that rose is red" etc., we shall find that even in such basic
perceptions there are non-perceptual or rational components. In such
statements, we already distinguish the entity 'paper' from all other entities
which are not 'paper' and the entity 'rose' from all other entities which are not
'rose' as well as colour white from non-white colours and the colour red from non-red colour. Making distinctions between these various entities are operations carried out by reason. Before the execution of any so called perceptual operation, there are several rational operations to be undertaken thereof. Perception assumes and entails, the ideas of identity and difference which are the contribution of the intellect rather than the senses. Even the simplest acts of knowledge are directed by or oriented to reason. Knowledge is also not opinion for any opinion may turn out to be true by chance and we may not be having appropriate justificatory grounds for an opinion.

Following Socrates, Plato declares that all knowledge is knowledge through concepts. The concepts are permanent and not liable to mutation or revocation according to the subjective impressions of the individual. Concepts provide us objective truth and since reason is the faculty of concepts it means knowledge is founded on reason. Concepts, for Plato, are not merely ideas in the mind but have a reality of their own outside and independent of mind. Truth means the correspondence of one's ideas with the facts of existence. While, sense-perceptions are devoid of any reality, concepts are true, real and independent of subjective or individual impressions. While our senses furnish us, for example, the knowledge of individual or particular horses, our reason provides us the concept of the horse in general. For Plato, the individual or particular horses perceived by the senses have no reality of their own. This and that particular horse have no true being. Reality belongs only to the idea of the horse in general. Similarly, it is the intellect which furnishes us an understanding of such ideas or concepts as beauty, truth, justice, goodness, knowledge etc. For example, the idea of beauty is objectively, universally, eternally and transcendentally true and real whereas the beautiful objects such as a scenery or a rose or moonlight or a human face perceived by the senses are particular instances of the idea of beauty and have no permanent objective, universal and transcendental reality of their own. They are beautiful in proportion to their extent of participation in the idea of beauty as such. The
idea of beauty is formed by including what is common to all beautiful objects and excluding those points in which they differ.

Thus, for Plato, Concepts or Ideas are ultimately real and absolutely objective realities. All else can be explained by recourse to ultimate absolute and objective Ideas. These Ideas are substances. They are universal. They are objective thought which have reality on their own account, independently of any mind. Each class of objects have one Idea or we can say, each Idea is a unity. Furthermore, Ideas are immutable and imperishable. They are the essences of all things. Each Idea is, in its own kind, an absolute perfection. These Ideas are outside space and time. They are rational, that is to say, they are apprehended through reason (W.T. Stace; op.cit., pp. 177-90).

Plato’s approach to religion emanates out of his critique of the mythological and superstitious character of the popular religion of his times. The basic contention of Plato’s critique of popular religion was that this religion is devoid of any rational basis. It was mostly supported by priests and poets who did not offer any reasons in support of their beliefs. This mythical religion also fails to provide a true and adequate account of God. The mythical accounts of the popular religion show Gods to be engaging in all kinds of dubious behaviours. The poets and priests advance a childishly anthropomorphic account of God. The job of the philosopher is to debunk these mythological and anthropomorphic accounts of God. The philosopher has to demythologise the traditional theology and replace it by a true rational theology. A true religion has to be based upon rational convictions and beliefs. The job of the philosopher is also to bring out the limitations of materialistic, mechanistic and atheistic explanations and interpretations of the universe. He has to demonstrate that the world is an effect of an intelligible cause or of a principle. The job of the philosopher are also to bring out or illuminate the teleological character of the universe. He has also to provide an adequate account of the Divinity. ‘Water’, ‘air’ and ‘fire’ cannot be said to be the teleological principles or causes of the world. The basic stuff out of which the
world might have emanated or evolved can also not be said to be divine. For
Plato, it is rather the immutable, eternal, universal objects of pure intelligence,
the Forms -- that are divine in the strict sense. The totality of the intelligible
Forms together with the Supreme Intelligence that contemplates the Forms,
makes of the divine, the immortal, the intelligible, the undissolable, the ternally
identical realm. Furthermore, the Form of the Good upon which all the other
intelligible realities depend, is the quintessence of Divinity. The Form of Good
is Goodness itself, Being itself, Justice itself. It is not a member of the class of
good things or the class of beings; rather it is that by which things are good,
existent, just and so on. We can say that the Form of Good transcends existence
in goodness, for that which is the principle of existence in goodness cannot
itself be called existent or good. Again for Plato, the Form of Good is
mysterious not because of any obscurity or unintelligibility attached to it but
rather through its own excess of intelligibility. Just as we cannot look directly
to Sun which is the source of the light by which we see other things, so also we
cannot look directly at the source of intelligibility by which we understand
everything else. Thus, according to Plato the Divine is not discontinuous with
the rational order. The mysteriousness of the Divine is derived from an excess
of intelligibility rather than from a break with the intelligible order. It is by
carrying through the activity of intelligence to its ultimate limit or highest point
that we reach the Divine. The philosophical ascent of the mind from the
material world to the intelligible world is also at the same time a religious
ascent. The Divine order and the rational order are coterminous and the
universe is rational and good in so far as God’s rational nature and goodness
are imparted to it; it is irrational and bad in so far as God’s rational nature and
goodness are not wholly imparted to it.

Plato’s religion is philosophical or dependent upon philosophy. It is
elitist in so far as only highly gifted intellectuals can understand it or arrive at
it. On the other hand, the mythical religion is irrational and so is suitable only
to the ignorant people who cannot rise above the world of dreams and illusions.
(d) Aristotle

Aristotle is one of the greatest scholars, philosophers and scientists of human history. His impact on the development of religious, ethical, social, political and scientific thought has been phenomenal. He has been a source of inspiration for scholars and thinkers for the last twenty-three centuries.

He was an ardent disciple of Plato and stayed with Plato at his Academy for a period of twenty years. So the problems of his philosophy and the concerns of his scholarship were powerfully directed by Plato’s philosophical world-view and value-system. In his philosophical investigations, Aristotle started with the foundations laid by Plato. However, he attempted to overcome the difficulties and inconsistencies characterizing Plato’s philosophical system. To begin with Aristotle could not accept Plato’s absolute compartmentalization between the transcendental world of ideas and the actual world of experience, deeming former to be absolutely real and latter to be merely an appearance or imitation.

Plato does not explain the existence of things. He does not explain the relation of ideas to things. Plato cannot also account for the motion of things; the world of change, life and becoming. The ideas of Plato are nothing but hypostatized sense of things according to Aristotle. As anthropomorphic Gods are nothing but deified men, so the Ideas are nothing but eternalized things of nature. Things are not copies of Ideas but in fact the Ideas are only copies of things. Ideas as essences of things cannot exist outside the things themselves. The starting point or the fundamental principle of Aristotle’s own philosophy is that Ideas or essences or universals do exist only in particular objects. Thus, Aristotle retains the changeness eternal forms but rejects their transcendency. Forms or Universals are not apart from things, but inherent in them. They are not transcendent but immanent. Ideas and objects are not separate but eternally together. Individual things are constituted by the combination of matter and form. They move, change, grow or evolve under the control and direction of their forms. The phenomenal world is the real world; it’s not a mere imitation.
or shadow of the world of Ideas. It is not an appearance but a reality as matter is inseparable from its form and is co-existent with it. Matter assumes different forms. Form realizes itself in the thing, it causes the thing to move and to realize an end or purpose. Forms are purposive forces which realize themselves in the world of matter. Motion or change is explained in the union of form and matter. The Idea or Form is what causes motion in matter. The Idea operates as the mover and the matter cooperates as the moved. The eternally ongoing motion is the result of matter, ceaselessly striving to realize the Form. This eternal motion presupposes an eternal Unmoved Mover, a source or force of movement to which all motions can be traced but is not itself moved by anything. As there are unending series of motions, there has got to be the First Cause of series of motions, an Unmoved Mover or God. This argument from motion to Unmoved Mover is the first version of the cosmological argument for the existence of God. As the Unmoved Mover or God is the Final Cause of all that is and all that happens, He is the Highest Purpose or Highest Good of the world. He is the Directing Principle of the world. He is the goal towards which all things strive. He is the Principle which accounts for all order, beauty and life in the universe. He is the Pure Form. He is thought thinking thought. He is the Absolute Form (Samuel Enoch Stumpf; Socrates to Sartre, McGraw Hill Inc, New York, pp. 88-95).

(B) JUDEO-CHRISTIAN THINKERS:

(a) Philo

Philo of Alexandria (30 BC – 50 AD) was a Jew and a senior contemporary of Christ. He was devoutly Jew and also an ardent fan of Greek philosophy. He attempted a synthesis between Judaism and Christianity. Philo saw the Greek philosophy as hinting obscurely at truths that were more fully and explicitly made known in Old Testament. He sharply distinguished between the truths revealed by God through Moses and the truths attained by human wisdom; the revealed truths being higher than philosophical truths and yet revealed truths being continuous with philosophical wisdom. Philosophy
can serve religion by discerning and explicating the true meaning of scriptural allegories. Another crucial job of philosophy can be defending religion in the face of skeptical attacks. Besides, philosophy can also find rational proof for the existence of God.

The underlying assumption of Philo’s philosophy of religion is that there cannot be any contradiction between the Law of Moses and philosophy for philosophical wisdom and divine wisdom emanate from the same God. They had this strong a priori conviction that apparently conflicting claims of revelation and reason can be harmoniously reconciled with one another. Scriptural texts or passages have both a literal and an allegorical meaning. If any passage of a religious text is not in accord with truth or spells anthropomorphic attributions to God or violates the dignity of Divine Wisdom, it need not be taken literally but understood and interpreted allegorically (H.A. Wolfson: Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam; Cambridge, Mass, 1948, vol. I, p. 116). The true meaning of scripture is that which is in accord with truths of human reason. The allegorical method may not tell us positively what the true sense of any scriptural text actually is but it does at least tell us negatively what the true sense is not. Philosophy can be allegorically and hermeneutically instrumental in resolving the apparent textual problems pertaining to the truth of religion.

(b) Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr is the second century Christian scholar and philosopher. He was deeply drunk into Greek philosophy. He was convinced of the fundamental harmony between Platonism and Christianity. He also saw Christ as the universal Logos or Reason in which human reason in its various modes participates. This Logos is the sole source of all man’s knowledge of Divine things. It is also the one who in Christ made himself wholly known to believers. In Christ is incarnated the Truth in its full and definitive form. The philosopher can know this Truth only within the limited capacities of his rational investigations (Norris: 1965, 53).
(c) Clement

Like Martyr, the third century Christian apologist, Clement of Alexandria, underscores the harmony between Greek philosophy and Christian faith. The partial intuitions of Platonism are fully worked out and realized in Christianity. Philosophical understanding and analysis prepare us for a fuller realization and appropriation of faith. Religion is anchored on faith for Christian doctrine can not be rationally demonstrated. However, it should not signify that religious faith or revealatory truths are irrational or blind. We believe in revealatory truth on the authority of God who is the Primal Truth. Reason is not the creation of devil but creation of God. Reason is the image of God in man. It is man’s highest and noblest attribute. In view of the fact that faith can not be rationally demonstrated, knowledge is superior to faith. However, faith will give way to highest knowledge or gnosis in the life hereafter.

(d) Origen

Origen was a Christian thinker of third century. Educated at Alexandria, he was a master of Greek philosophical disciplines. He was well versed in Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophies. He was a biblical exegete and an outstanding hermeneutician of scriptural narratives. According to Origen, faith is laid down by the Apostles and the Church. However, they do not provide the rational ground presupposed by the articles of faith. The role of the theologian is to furnish the rational ground of presuppositions of faith. Reason is capable of defending faith and providing adequate grounds justifying the core articles and dogmas of religion. However, religion is radically distinctive from philosophical or scientific research and it is beyond the Ken of human reason to appreciate the real nature of God. God can be understood only by His grace. A highly distinguished or outstanding philosopher may find certain genuine clues with a view to appropriating God. However, common people can appropriate God through their faith and His grace. The God of faith is available to philosophers as well as non philosophers. It shows the superiority of the Divine
Logos of Christianity to the human Logos of philosophy. Only theological reflection can furnish us knowledge of God. However, we have to be aware of the distinction between the literal and allegorical meaning of the scriptural texts. Scriptural passages have obvious as well as hidden meanings. Behind the contents of Scriptures are certain divine mysteries. We need to distinguish between the apparent and real meaning of scriptural passage. Origen applies allegorical method and more often than not explains various scriptural passages by recourse to non-literal interpretation.

(d) Augustine

Augustine has also dwelt on the relationship of faith and reason. We could not believe unless we have rational powers. Reason can persuade the mind to rise to faith. Reason also seeks to understand what is believed by faith. If faith precedes reason in the case of certain great questions which can not be understood, there cannot be the least doubt that reason which persuades us that faith precedes reason, itself precedes faith. Unless we believe we cannot understand and unless we understand we cannot believe. Faith and reason are interdependent rather than contradicting each other. Augustine tries to demonstrate the existence of God by recourse to rational arguments and advocates that faith in God can be rationally justified.

Soul, according to Augustine, plays an all-important role in the cultivation and attainment of knowledge. Soul is the locus of knowledge. Our bodily perceptions are a function of the impressions generated by the soul. The impressions and perceptions are subsumed by soul under concepts. The concepts of soul correspond to Platonic Forms. These Platonic Forms are thoughts in the Mind of God. These Forms as Thoughts in the Mind of God have an objective existence. Human knowledge is an ongoing process and progress. In our quest for knowledge, we start with lower forms of knowledge and graduate to higher forms of knowledge. The pinnacle of human knowledge is our realization of God (Edward, 1967, vol. III, 15).
In the final analysis, truth is objective rather than subjective. It has a compelling and commanding character. It is independent of human projections and interpretations. The ultimate source of truth is God (Frank Thilly: *op.cit.*, pp. 148-149).

**(f) Auselm**

St. Auselm (1033-1109) was a theological rationalist of considerable sophistication. For him the doctrines of Christianity have got to be anchored on faith. However, they could in principle be rationally demonstrated by necessary arguments. The rational proofs of the existence of the God can not become the ground of the Christian’s faith in God, they could be the logical ground of belief for the non-believer. Rational proofs can confirm what we already know by faith. However, they indicate the possibility of developing a systematic natural theology as well.

For Anselm, our general concepts are real. The Universal Essences do not depend on our mind for their existence. All individual instances of a class share some common nature or identity. The Universals signify common nature of individual objects. They are also general concepts in our minds. They are objective for they eternally exists in the Divine Intellect. Our perceptual knowledge is the basis of our rational knowledge. It is human reason which can understand the nature of universals. The universals have an existence independent of human minds. They have an objective existence (B.A.G. Fuller: *A History of Philosophy*, McMilan, 1976, p. 371).

Anselm advanced the ontological proof for the existence of God. He argued that our idea of God is an idea of an absolutely Perfect Being. God as Absolute Perfection must necessarily be an existent Being. A Perfect Being greater than which nothing can be thought must necessarily be of an existing being. A Perfect Being cannot lack existence. By advancing the ontological argument for the existence of God, Anselm attempted to prove Him by

(g) Abelard

Peter Abelard's (1079-1142), Christian theologian and thinker, brings out the functions of reason with respect of faith: firstly, reason helps in understanding of the meaning of Scripture; secondly, it helps in refuting the objections of philosophers to faith; and, thirdly, it gives rational support to what is believed on God's authority. Abelard points out that God exceeds what can come under human discussion. He is beyond the powers of human intelligence. He is not accessible to human arguments or definable in human linguistic categories (J.R. McCallum: Abelard's Christian Theology, Oxford, 1948, p. 68). In view of the same, without denying the relevance and meaningfulness of rational arguments with regard to faith, Abelard underscores that faith has no merit in the eyes of God if it rests on human arguments rather than divine authority. Faith has to rest on Biblical revelations and declarations of Apostles rather than human arguments. While rational arguments and proofs can be supportive of Christian doctrines, they can never be necessarily demonstrative of the articles of faith.

Revelation, according to Abelard, accords with reason. He underlines that theologians must be deeply grounded in the use of logical methods. Reason, according to Abelard, precedes faith. However, religious dogmas can not be confirmed by recourse to strict logical proofs. In the final analysis, we have to appropriate them through our free will. The believers, according to Abelard, are entitled to carry out deep reflection on and profound analysis of religious beliefs. In case, our rational analysis or reflection fails to arrest our skepticism, we must appropriate religious dogmas by recourse to faith (Frank Thilly: *op.cit.*, p. 173).
(h) Maimonides

Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) also recognizes the transcendence of the realm of the faith with respect to that of philosophical reason and yet he acknowledges the possibility of rational demonstration of religious doctrines. There can not be conclusive demonstration for articles of faith; so however, cannot be any conclusive demonstration of philosophical doctrines accomplished. One way of defending the doctrines of religion is to demonstrate the logical possibility of the falsehood of philosophical doctrines or show their logical unnecessity. The role of philosophy is to show that revelatory teachings are not impossible. Philosophy is not concerned to establish the positive possibility of the truths of faith. Maimonides also underscores the need for distinguishing between the apparent meaning of Scripture and its ‘spiritual’ meaning (David Cooper: World Philosophies; Second edition, Blackwell, 2003).

(i) Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) attempted synthesis of Christian philosophy and Greek philosophy. He was a philosophical theologian caught on the horns of a dilemma; pushed by challenges of reason and pulled by imperatives of revelation. He was categorical in his understanding that religious doctrines are not amenable to rational justification. He also distinguished between the ineffable reality of God and human understanding of God. To Aquinas, God was essentially inaccessible to the human mind:

"Hence in the last resort all that man knows of God is to know that he does not know Him, since he knows that what God is surpasses all that we can understand him" (Karen Armstrong: A History of God; Ballantian Books, New York, 1993, p. 294).

However, as a philosophical theologian, Aquinas tried to articulate Christianity through rational arguments. An excessive philosophical treatment
of religion may be damaging to faith. However, excessive fideism can also easily degenerate into indefensible obscurantism. In view of the same, Aquinas five proofs for God's existence are:

(i) Movement ultimately implying a Prime Mover.
(ii) Causes entailing an Uncaused Cause,
(iii) Contingent beings demanding the existence of a Necessary Being.
(iv) Less imperfect implying more perfect Beings and finally the Most Perfect Being,
(v) The order and purpose in the universe necessitating the Ultimate Designer (Ibid., op.cit., pp. 205-206).

(j) Duns Scouts

John Duns Scouts (1274-1308) made sharp distinction between natural theology based on reason and revealed theology based on faith. Such a distinction was underlined by Scouts with a view to safeguarding Biblical dogmas or doctrines from unwarranted and unacceptable intrusions of reason. The Biblical doctrines or dogmas needed to be appropriated on faith as reason was incapable of dealing with the mysteries of religion. The abiding doctrines or dogmas of religion such as God, Predestination, Immortality of Soul, Creation ex nihilo, Purpose of the Creation, Incarnation etc. can never be appropriated on rational grounds. The proofs for the existence of God might, at best, prove the existence of God but they can never demonstrate the personality of God. Similarly, reason cannot understand the doctrine of creation, the universe having emerged out of the free will of God with the purpose of human beings reaching the final end of beatitude. It is only faith that can sustain a man's acceptance of or absent to religious dogmas. Reason can furnish us scientific and mathematical certainty which is basically propositional or theoretical. However, theological certainty is practical.

Instead of being a rationalist Scouts was a voluntarist. He regards Will superior to Intellect. The Intellect presents choices before the Will. The Will
has full freedom to accept or reject any choice. The intellect is the precondition to the Will but is not determined by the intellect. It is through exercise of free will that we chose to believe in God and abide by His commandments. Through intellect we can, at best, contemplate God. However, Will through love can unit us with God. Intellect can never overcome the dualism of the worshipper and God. It is through love or Will that we can attain to mystical union with God. Faith, hope and love are the real gifts of divine grace (Y. Masih, op.cit., pp. 172-75).

(k) William of Ockham

William of Ockham (1280-1347) was a 14th century English priest and theologian. He was a radical nominalist and is credited with a principle known as ‘Ockham’s razor’. It means that entities are not to be multiplied without necessity. It is vain to do with more what can be done with fewer. Ockham was an empiricist and accepted the necessary truth of deductive reasoning. However, human knowledge is basically anchored on sense experience. Therefore our knowledge has to remain confined to the world of particulars. We cannot have any knowledge with regard to the transcendent entities. We cannot have any demonstrative knowledge of God. By recourse to an examination of the phenomenal objects of the world, we can at the most have only probable knowledge of God. The Biblical doctrines or dogmas are neither defensible nor intelligible by reason. The religious dogmas can be appropriated only on the basis of revelation (Y. Masih, op.cit., p. 176).

(C) MODERN WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS

(a) Descartes

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) is widely regarded as the father of Modern Western philosophy. He was an advocate of radical rationalism in European philosophy. His philosophical project was inspired in contradistinction to Medieval European metaphysical and theological polemics and apologetics. He was fascinated by clarity and certainty of mathematical propositions and
accordingly attempted the application of mathematical method with a view to achieving clarity in his philosophical deductions and conclusions. He thought philosophical disagreements can be dissolved if philosophy is anchored on mathematical method. In his quest for philosophical results which are indefeasible and beyond all possible doubts, he prefaced his philosophical system by his famous method of doubt. He doubted everything till he reached clear and self-evident results (Joseph Burgess: Introduction to History of Philosophy, McGraw Hill Book Company, London, 1939, p. 199). His method of doubt aspired for certainty of knowledge, unfalsifiable results and complete truth (Paul Edward (ed), op.cit., p. 17).

Descartes was a rationalist who regarded reason to be primary source of knowledge. The most reliable knowledge is not arrived at by recourse to sense-experience. It has to rest on innate ideas which we are born with. The axioms of mathematics, the laws of thought etc. are such innate ideas which are neither produced by mind nor inspired by external objects. Our own self is revealed to us by method of doubt, the idea of perfection necessitates the existence of Perfect Being and God's absolute trustworthiness entails the reality of external world. God exists and exists necessarily. The external world is also real and not an illusion. The Perfection of God implies that as the Creator of the universe he could not have deceived us. The physical world, thus, is not a magic but an objective reality (Ibid., p. 17). Descartes believed in the capacity of reason to know all things. From his method of doubt he gets the criterion and from the criterion he establishes the existence of God. From the veracity of God he establishes the reality of external world, the permanent self and knowledge.

(b) Pascal

Pascal (1623-62), a French philosopher has advanced deep, profound and insightful considerations with regard to role and relation of reason to religion. He has tried to expose the limitations and even dangers of philosophy and reason in the domain of religion. The fundamental argument advanced by Pascal is that man is a finite creature and a nonentity in comparison to the
Infinite God. As a finite being he can understand what is finite and what is infinite is beyond his comprehension. The origin and the destiny of the cosmos are impenetrably hidden from his observations, calculations and deductions. He cannot understand his own origin or appreciate the Infinite he is vortexed into. The unbridgeable chasm between man and God cannot be overcome by finite human reason. Our inability to have any natural, rational knowledge of God is rooted in our ontological finitude. The supernatural order is excluded from our purview by our very ontological condition. Even if reason can admit the possibility of a suprarational and supernatural, it can never show whether such a possibility is actually realized; for there is no common ground or affinity between the rational and suprarational or between the natural or supernatural orders. God is Infinite and Incomprehensible. We can never be capable of Knowing His Nature or Existence. Whether God exists or not is the most baffling and perplexing question for us. It is impossible to take sides in such an infinite and perennial debate. Reason here is literally and figuratively on the horns of an infinite dilemma. Such a dilemma situation leads Pascal to advance his famous wager. If we cannot decide about the actuality of God’s existence we must calculate the advantages and disadvantages of our affirmative or negative responses and stances in this regard. Pascal suggests that the respective possible consequences of our belief or disbelief in God’s existence are very high. Therefore, it is better to believe rather than disbelieve. We cannot do anything in this regard for human reason can arrive at blunderous conclusions even with regard to mundane matters. It’s possible blundrous with regard to metaphysical or teleological interpretations which can not even be dreamt of by us. The natural order we are living in is radically ambiguous about God’s existence. It does not provide an unequivocal affirmation or negation so that we could take sides in the God-debate. God’s Existence as well as Non-Existence are beyond human comprehension. Furthermore, our epistemological limitations in conjunction with our moral limitations, make the appropriation of God of Christianity all the more difficult.
There is lot of wishful thinking with regard to our conceptual or definitional accounts of God.

Even if there were cogent reasons or proofs for the existence of God, they would never prove God of the Bible. Objective reasons or proofs will necessarily furnish us with the remote, abstract and impersonal God. Pascal underlines that it is not the job of reason to understand God. It is rather the assignment of the heart to experience God. God understood by recourse to reason does not constitute Christian faith. Faith signifies belief in God appropriated by the feeling of our heart. Religious faith signifies a personal commitment to God. It involves a direct experiential contact with God. The reasons of heart are not known to reason (David Cooper: World Philosophers, Blackwell, 2003, pp. 254-57). Human heart can have a direct intuitive and personal knowledge of God as against the inferential and impersonal rational knowledge. In fact reason can have a critical estimate of its' own powers and can appreciate its limits. This self-abnegating function of reason is indispensable to religious faith. Reason while appreciating its own limits does allow space for revelation and faith.

(c) Hume

David Hume (1711-1776) was a radical empiricist, his empiricism ultimately culminating into wholesale skepticism. He did not accept the assumptions of rationalist epistemology and underscored the primacy of sense experience in our quest for attainment of knowledge. By recourse to empiricist epistemology, Hume derived radical conclusions. He was a thoroughgoing empiricist. Refuting all a priori principles, Hume advocated that the content of mind is wholly the product of sense-experience or perception. These sense-experiences or perceptions do not provide us any knowledge of substance whether material or spiritual. The sense experiences can provide us only probable knowledge. In keeping with the sources and conditions of knowledge, human beings are destined to arrive at probable knowledge only. The philosopher's search for certainty is both mistaken and misleading.
The knowledge of Substance is beyond human appropriation. Substance is an ideal fiction of imagination. The so-called substance is derived neither from sense-experience nor from any other mode of reflection. A Substance as understood by philosophers is an unintelligible chimra. Hume accepts Berkeley's refutation of material Substance. However, in his turn, he vigorously refutes the notion of spiritual Substance as well. Hume argued that there are no impressions or sense experiences from which the idea of a permanent Soul-Substance or self can be derived. The identity of the self is purely fictitious. The fiction of personal identity is a work of imagination. The subject, self or mind for Hume, is just a construct of sensations. It is nothing but a heap or collection of passing sensations. Whenever we try to enter what we call ourselves, we always stumble or some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love on hatred, pain or pleasure. We can never catch ourselves at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but the perception.

Similarly, Hume underlines that 'causal connection' or 'causal relation' is also totally unwarranted. 'A' may be a precedent and 'B' may be a consequent. However, it is impossible to establish or discover any necessary connection between the two. We have no reasons for believing in a necessary and universal causal relationship. The notion of such a relationship is a function of habit, custom or need. There are no empirical grounds that can demonstratively prove our belief in a necessary causal connection. Empirically, we can always observe 'A' preceeding 'B' or 'B' following 'A'. However, we can never demonstrate that whenever 'A' then 'B' (Y. Masih: op.cit., pp. 322-24).

The inductive generalizations are also not anchored on any necessary grounds. Empirically we can observe repeatedly that 'A' is 'B', 'A' is 'B', 'A' is 'B'... etc. However, we can never have any necessary grounds for generalizing that all 'A's are 'B's'. All human enquiry is comprised of (i) relations of ideas and (ii) matters of facts. The mathematical propositions are
demonstrated as relations of ideas whereas scientific propositions are examples of matters of facts. The counterpropositions to mathematically established propositions can spell contradictions. On the other hand, the counterpropositions to scientific propositions do not spell any contradictions. Besides relations of ideas and matters of fact, there are metaphysical, theological and other such propositions which, logically and methodologically speaking can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion. However, fortunately enough, we are guided by principle of custom and habit in establishing our inferential relationships. All human inferences are effects of custom and not of reasoning. We are guided by custom in the highways and byways of life. It is the custom that orientates us to expect similar results or conclusions from similar operations. Epistemologically speaking, we are condemned to skepticism. There have no rational grounds for such notions as substance, causality or induction.

Hume's philosophy of religion is radically agnostic. While being religious, Hume thinks, we are quite beyond the reach of our faculties. Faith entails a total suspension of judgement. A man of faith has to be conscious of a continuous miracle in his own person. Only a miracle can give a man of faith the determination to believe what is contrary to reason and experience.

(d) Kant

Kant (1723-1804) is one of the greatest philosophers of all time and the most prominent among modern European thinkers. He was well versed in the mathematical and physical sciences of his time and was oriented to deep reflection on metaphysical, theological, epistemological and ethical questions raised by western philosophers since ancient Greeks. In his younger days Kant was orthodox Christian and an avide student and fervent follower of Liebniz. However, when he studied British empiricists especially David Hume, he was awakened from his dogmatic slumber. His rationalist smugness and complacency where radically undermined and he embarked on an architectonic restatement of western philosophy. Pure rationalists seemed to him to be
dogmatists and pure empiricists seemed to him to be weltering into unnecessary skepticism. His choicest philosophical project emerged to be the working out of grand reconciliation between dogmatic rationalism and skeptical empiricism. Accordingly, he worked out his critical and transcendental philosophy. In his critique of rationalist dogmatism, he brought out the limits of the jurisdiction of pure reason and in his simultaneous critique of empiricist skepticism he advanced his transcendental method of doing philosophy pointing out the forms or ways in which the human mind by virtue of its constitution, reacts to our sensible experience. The transcendental forms of mind are not built up from experience or influenced by it but are a priori, i.e. existing independently of experience and prior to it. They are rather the agents by which experience is influenced and built up into the shape in which it is presented to us. The analysis and exposition of this transcendental epistemological standpoint became the driving force or mission of Kant’s philosophy (B.A.G. Fuller: op.cit., p. 219).

In his exposition of limitations of reason and transcendental powers of mind, Kant argued that all knowledge begins with experience but all knowledge does not arise out of experience. Our empirical knowledge is, without doubt, received through impressions. However, it is supplied by our faculties of cognition. Our knowledge is not entirely a priori as maintained by rationalists nor entirely aposteriori as assumed by empiricists. It is a synthetic function of a priori and aposteriori factors. Sense experience provides us the matter of knowledge; the forms of knowledge are, however, supplied by reason. Knowledge is a joint processing of the operations of perception and understanding. Knowledge is always obtained through interaction of experience and reason. However, knowledge always appears in the form of judgements. Following the lead of Leibniz and Hume, Kant accepts that there are analytic apriori judgements and synthetic aposteriori judgements. The analytic a priori judgements are independent of experience and their predicate terms are always already contained in their subject term. Judgements such as
“All bachelors are unmarried” or “All triangles have three angles” can be understood without any reference to sense-experiential data and their predicate terms are already contained in their subject term. On the other hand, judgements such as “Oxygen helps in the burning of fire” or “Those roses are red” etc. are synthetic a posteriori judgements. They are ultimately verifiable by recourse to sense-experience or sense-experiential data and their predicate terms provide new information about their subject terms. Analytical judgements, according to Kant, are universal and necessary. They can not be derived from sense experience. On the other hand, synthetic judgments are contingent and probable. Their truth value is dependent upon experience. However, in addition to analytic a priori and synthetic a posteriori judgements, Kant also postulates synthetic a priori judgments. These judgements are synthetic because their predicates state something about their subjects that is not already contained in them and that which is predicated is nevertheless necessarily true and universally valid (Y. Masih; op.cit., pp. 338-341). These judgements are synthetic because they depend upon observation and experience and they are a priori because they are universally and necessarily true. Such judgements as “7+5 = 12”, “A straight line is the shortest distance between the two points”, “Every event has a cause” are deemed by Kant to be the examples of synthetic apriori. The principles of natural sciences such as the law of the conservation of energy, law of universal gravitation or the laws of motion etc. are, according to Kant, synthetic a priori judgments. Scientific knowledge is possible because of this very possibility of synthetic a priori judgements. Mathematical proposition are possible because space and time are preconditions of all experience. Scientific laws as empirical propositions are possible because of the operations carried out by our categories of understanding on the raw material supplied by sense experience. In response to Hume’s skepticism Kant tries to demonstrate how synthetic a priori propositions are possible and how they are synthetic, universal and necessary propositions. The universal and necessary character of these propositions is
determined by the structure of the mind itself. Locke and other British sensationalists had wrongly assumed mind to be an inert block of wax passively receiving and recording the impressions of sense-experience. As against both Continental rationalists and British empiricists, Kant held mind to be a creative, dynamic and active process. The mind is bestowed with certain innate forms with a view to ordering and interpreting the sense experiential data (J.G. Brennan: The Meaning of Philosophy; Harper and Row Publishers, London, 1953, pp. 142-43). The data supplied by sense experience are first oriented in space and time. Space and time, according to Kant, are forms of our intuition and have no objective existence independent of us. Space and time as forms of intuition impress themselves on all human experience. The coordination of experiential data in space and time precedes their categorization by our understanding. Kant assumes human understanding to be possessing twelve innate forms or categories. Apart from other qualities, it is from these categories that our experience derives its universality and necessity. The universality and necessity of judgements are the products of the operations of the categories of the mind upon the stuff of experience. The perceptual and conceptual elements both make knowledge possible. While percepts are furnished by experience, the concepts, as Kant assumes, are formed by the internal structure of mind itself. In any act of knowledge, both perceptual and conceptual elements are indispensable. While “concepts without percepts are empty, percepts without concepts are blind”. The advancement of the knowledge necessitates interpretation of percepts by concepts. Any concept formed without basis in sense-experience will be little better than fiction (ibid., pp. 143-44). Conceptual knowledge, according to Kant, is subjective as concepts are products of the categories of our mind. Our percepts are derived from an objective external source, but they are organized by concepts which owe their nature to the structure of mind. In view of the same, our knowledge is unavoidably and inevitably coloured by our cognitive faculties.
The above summary of Kantian epistemology tantamounts to saying that we can never know the world as it is in itself. We can know the external world as it appears to our faculties of understanding and interpretation. Things as they are i.e. noumena, are unknowable and forever hidden from us. We know only the appearances or phenomena made available to us by the operation of the forms of mind upon the sense-experiential data. Our minds operate like ordering glasses. The world as an ordered, connected and rational whole is a function of our minds for it is through our mental lenses that the flux of the external world filters in an ordered way. Our mind is the source of space and time and the natural order as a whole. Rationalist and empiricist philosophers both had postulated external world to be dictating terms to human mind. Kant worked out an epistemological paradigm-shift. Kant complimented himself for having accomplished this paradigm-shift which he characterized to be a Copernican revolution in philosophy. Kant, to the best of his satisfaction, tried to demonstrate the possibility of human knowledge. However, he could not help accepting the impossibility of metaphysics, theology and psychology. The metaphysical claims with regard to self, universe and God were rationally inadmissible and unjustifiable. The so-called metaphysical, theological, cosmological and psychological truths attempted or worked out by pure reason, are nothing short of transcendental illusions. Pure reason, on its own, can germinate paradoxical and antinomical doctrines which are equally amenable to verification and falsification (Ibid, pp. 145-146).

In view of the above considerations, Kant refuses to accept any of the classical proofs for the existence of God; ontological, cosmological and teleological. All attempts to prove the existence of God cosmologically or ontologically or teleologically do not add up to any proof for the existence of God. The ontological argument involves an illicit transition from the conceptual to the real order. The cosmological argument involves an illicit extension of the principle of causality beyond the world of experience. The teleological argument may prove that there is a designer or programmer who
manages the show but it does not prove God as such. However, Kant also underscores that pure human reason is fatally tempted to use understanding beyond all possible experience. This transcendent use of reason is all the more plausible with respect to the concept of God. He tries to expose the illusory character of this kind of reasoning and the deeply pathological structure of the illusion. The pure reason cannot advance even a shred of evidence for believing in the existence of God. Given the constitution of human mind, it is impossible for us to know God speculatively. We can neither affirm nor deny the existence of God because God is beyond the reach of speculative reason. However, for Kant what is beyond the reach of speculative reason is not thereby beyond the reach of all reason and so meaningless.

Thus, one of the crucial conclusions of Kant’s philosophy is that human reason can neither prove nor disprove the existence of God. In fact it cannot establish anything at all about religion. Reason is inherently agnostic about God. However, religion is not something to be theologically demonstrated but something to be practically or morally appropriated. Our being religious does not depend upon assertion of certain tenets or confirmation of certain propositions but on orientation of our lives in a certain way. Religion is not the domain of intellectual demonstration. Religion is a matter of will or a matter of the practical reason which recognizes that certain acts ought to be done. We appreciate the meaningfulness of God through moral endeavour or struggle. It is through the lived experience of the moral life that we can appropriate the relevance of God. The theoretical reason cannot describe the reality of God but practical reason can intimate to us reality by prescribing how we ought to act. Given the epistemological limitations we are operating within, we can never have a speculative or theoretical knowledge of God. It is in the living out of the moral life through prescriptions of practical reason that reality of God becomes clear to us. Our hope of attaining the highest good and of becoming morally perfect and happy is justified by God.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER – III

IQBAL’S BACKGROUND

(A) THE QUR’AN

The Quran is the springwell or fountain-head of Islamic culture philosophy, beliefs, values, norms, laws and injunctions. It is a revolutionary perspective on our quest for knowledge, search for reality and yearning for guidelines and values in our social, political and economic spheres of operation. It advances a holistic perspective on knowledge, faith, reflection and contemplation. Of all the scriptures across history of mankind, the Qur’an has most powerfully underlined the significance and relevance of knowledge. The Qur’an refers to ‘Tim’ and its other cognate concepts too repeatedly to be easily or summarily tabulated. The entire atmosphere of the Qur’an is both intellectual and mystical. In its more than six thousand verses, the Qur’an exhorts us to reflect upon the ‘Ayat’ of the universe and ‘Ayat’ of the Qur’an as well. The Qur’an repeatedly asks us to appropriate reflective testimony of God by reflection upon the phenomenal signs of the universe as well as the signs incorporated into the Qur’an. The signs of Allah are strewn across the physical Cosmos or Nature, History and human consciousness. The Qur’anic verses are also signs of Allah. These phenomenal and discursive signs of Allah ought to inspire deepest and profoundest possible reflections and interpretations. Only those blessed with great understanding can decipher the hidden meanings of the signs of the Qur’an or only they can understand that an understanding of the allegorical verses of the Qur’an is beyond the ken of human capacities or faculties (Qur’an: 3-7). The phenomenal signs of the Cosmos and discursive signs of the Qur’an are deeply ontogenetic, axiogenetic and epistemogenetic. The following verses from the Qur’an will authenticate the same:

“Behold, In the creation
Of the heavens and the earth,
And the alteration
Of Night and Day,
There are indeed signs
For men of understanding,
Men who celebrate
The praises of God,
Standing, sitting,
And lying down on their sides,
And contemplate
The (wonders of) creation
In the heavens and the earth,
(with the thought)"

Behold! In the creation
Of the heavens and the earth;
In the alternation
Of the Night and the Day;
In the sailing of the ships
Through the Ocean
For the profit of mankind:
In the rain which God
Sends down from the skies,
And the life which it gives
To an earth that is dead;
In the beasts of all kinds
That He scatters
Through the earth,
In the change of the winds,
And the clouds which they
Trail like their slaves
Between the sky and the earth;
Here indeed are signs
For a people that are wise (Qur'an, 2, 164)

Do they not look
At the sky above them?
How we have made it
And adorned it,
And there are no
Flaws in it?

And the earth
We have spread it out,
And set thereon mountains
Standing firm, and produced
Therein every kind of
Beautiful growth (in pairs)

To be observed
And commemorated
By every devotee
Turning (to God).
And we send down
From the sky Rain
Charged with blessing,
And we produce therewith
Gardens and Grain for harvests;

And tall (and stately)
Palm trees, with shoots
Of fruit-stalks, piled
One over another;
As sustenance for
(God’s) Servants; -
And We give (new) life
Therewith to land that is
Dead: thus will be
The Resurrection. (Qur’an: L-6-8)

Among His Signs is this,
That He created you
From dust; and then,
Behold, ye are men
Scattered (for and wide)!

And among His Signs
Is this, that He created
For you mates from among
Yourselves, that ye may
Dwell in tranquillity with them,
And He has put love
And mercy between your (hearts):
Verily in that are Signs
For those who reflect.

And among His Signs
Is the creation of the heavens
And the earth, and the variations
In your languages
And your colours: verily
In that are Signs
For those who know
And among His Signs
Is the sleep that ye take
By night and by day,
And the quest that ye
(Make for livelihood)
Out of His Bounty; verify
In that are Signs
For those who hearken

And among His Signs
He shows you the lightening,
By way both of fear
And of hope, and He sends
Down rain from the sky
And with it gives life to
The earth after it is dead:
Verily in that are Signs
For those who are wise.

And among His Signs is this,
That heaven and earth
Stand by His command:
Then when He calls you,
By a single call, from the earth,
Behold, ye (straightway) come forth.
(Quran, Surah-Rum 20-25)

The Qur'an brings out that the absolute knowledge is the prerogative
and privilege of God only. Man, more often than not, is caught into the vortex
of his own conjectures. These conjectures can not be a substitute for truth or cannot be of any avail against truth (Qur’an: 4-157, 53-28, 10-36). Man generally follows his conjectures. His conjectures often lead to confusions, misunderstandings and distortions. His conjectures cannot lead him to an understanding of reality (Qur’an, 53-78). God is Absolute Reality and His knowledge is also universal, transcendental, eternal and absolute. However, such knowledge is impossible of human understanding and articulation. God is All-Knowing and well-acquainted with everything (Qur’an 6-73). Man can not understand anything except as God will’s or permits (Quran: 2-255). God taught man the Quran and also taught him speech (Qur’an: 55-1,2,3,4). It is only men of knowledge and understanding who can appreciate the message of the Quran and also appropriate the realization of Allah. The Qur’anic revelations can be understood only by those who are well-grounded in knowledge (Qur’an: 4-162). While God, by definition is Omniscient, man is caught into his own conjecture, doubts and uncertainties. While human knowledge does start with conjectures, man through revelation is capable of graduating to highest certainty. Man is destined to start with conjuncture and stop at certainty. While God has unqualified knowledge man, at best, can strive for humanly highest possible state of realization. It is through realisation that man appropriates certainty, which certainty, according to the Quran, is of three degrees. Firstly, man can achieve intellectual certainty or what Quran calls ‘ilm al-yaqin’. Secondly, he can achieve perceptual or intuitive certainty or what Qur’an calls ‘Ain al-yaqin’. And thirdly man can achieve authentic certainty or what Quran calls ‘Haq-al-Yaqin’.

The Qur’an repeatedly exhorts man to understand the phenomenal signs of the universe as well as verses of the Quran by application of his reason. It is through reflection and understanding that the meaning of the Qur’anic verses as well as of the features of the phenomenal world will be revealed to us. Man is asked to reflect upon the countless features of the cosmos. It is men of reasoning and reflection who can understand the divine origin and destiny of
the cosmos. Secondly, man is asked to reflect upon the rise and fall of various civilizations across history. They should visit the sites of great civilizations and observe what has been the fate of high and mighty people at different periods of time. Understanding great historical events or momentous periods of history and periods of rise and fall of various civilizations can provide great social, political and moral lessons to man with a view to conducting his affairs in keeping with natural laws and as well as divine commandments (Qur'an: 12-111; 14-5, 15; 30-9; 33-62; 35-44). Thirdly man has been asked to appreciate the depth and profundity of his inner experiences. The inner experiences furnish us the highest degree of certitude (Sharif (ed), (2001), 150). The Prophets of God appropriate divine revelation through inner or personal experience. All our instinctual, intuitional and inspirational modes of knowledge are appropriated through inner or personal experience (Ibid., p. 150). In view of the same, the Quran lays great emphasis on understanding of or on reflecting upon our inner experiences. Such an understanding and reflection can impart to man his essential non-physical, non-chemical and non-biological origin and destiny. Men of faith can appreciate vital signs of Allah in their own selves. Therefore, it is obligatory on them to reflect upon themselves (Qur'an: 50-20, 21).

The Qur'an itself is the ultimate criterion or standard and truth. The Qur'anic revelation is a criterion separating true beliefs from false beliefs and values from disvalues (Qur'an: 25-1). God communicates to man through revelation and seat of revelatory communication is the heart of man. The revelation is sent down on the Prophets with a view to providing guidance to the man in his social, political and economic spheres of operation. The Qur'anic revelation is comprised of two types of verses; Muhakamat or verses of established meaning and Mutashabihat or allegorical verses. While the meaning of Muhakamat is clear and categorical, the allegorical or analogical verses can be interpreted in various ways. However, an authentic interpretation of an allegorical verse would be to bring out its meaning which is in accord
with Islamic Weltanchauung. Scholars of Islamic Studies developed various sciences with a view to understanding the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. The science of understanding of the Qur’an was designated as ‘Ilm al-Tafsir’, the science of understanding of the traditions of the Prophet was designated as ‘Ilm al-Hadith’, the science of demonstrating legal deductions or arriving at legal inductions, was designated as ‘Ilm al-Figh’, the science of understanding the hidden or inner or implicit meanings of the Qur’an and Sunnah or the role, purpose and function of religion through inner or personal experience was designated as ‘Ilm al-Tasawwuf’ and the science of rationally debating the truth and validity of the Qur’anic doctrines was designated as ‘Ilm al-Kalam’. Besides these sciences Muslim philosophers tried to reconcile the Qur’anic Weltanchauung with Greek rationalist philosophy.

The problems pertaining to the understanding and interpretation of Qur’anic Verses led to the emergence and development of ‘Ilm al-Tafsir. The Quran encapsulates a highly developed world-view and value-system. Its verses are full of philosophical ethical, socio-political and legal wisdom. Besides, its style is highly sophisticated; it constitutes the peak of eloquence in Arabic literature. Its multidimensional implications were not understandable to Arabs who were mostly unlettered during seventh century A.D. Even some highly distinguished men of learning during that period could not fathom all the intricacies and complexities emanating out of the Qur’anic verses. Such a situation necessitated the development of a methodological science which could lead to clarification of the difficulties faced by the people in their quest for understanding and interpretation of the Qur’an. During twenty-three years of his Dispensation, the Prophet would himself clarify the difficulties and ambiguities faced by people in grasping the Qur’an. The Companions of the Prophet and their successors also carried out this clarificatory role after the demise of the Prophet. During the first and second centuries of Islam various scholars clarified specific problems faced by people in their engagement with
the Qur’an. It was only in third century of Islam that a fully-fledged exegetical science of the Qur’an was worked out.

Obviously, there is no royal methodological road to understanding of the Quran. There can be various approaches to our understanding of the Qur’an. However, there is no universal or eternal interpretation which can be appropriated by one and all. Our understanding of the Qur’an is bound to be inspired and determined by the imperatives as well as methodologies of each age. In modern times the Qur’an can be understood or interpreted from several perspectives; philosophical, historical, sociological etc.

Classically, scholars have brought out that Qur’an can be either interpreted by the Qur’an itself, i.e., some difficult verses of the Qur’an can be understood and interpreted in the light of other verses of the Quran, or it can be interpreted by recourse to Ijtihad or independent opinion. A person who is an advanced scholar of Arabic language and literature and well-versed in Arabic culture and history and is also an authentic Muslim, can undertake an exegesis of the Qur’an in the light of his own conscience or, thirdly, an exegesis or interpretation of the Qur’an can be worked out which contrary to apparent meaning of the verses can lay stress on the hidden meanings of the Qur’an. Such an exegesis has been popular among Sufi, Isma’ili and Batini circles across the Islamic world. However, such an exegetical approach has been unacceptable to the orthodoxy who underline that such an approach unnecessarily proliferates mystical interpretations of the Qur’anic verses.

(B) ISLAMIC SCIENCES

(a) Ilm al-Hadith

Ilm al-Hadith was one of the most original, significant and impactful sciences developed by Muslim theologians, scholars and historians. The science has been worked out within the framework of historical scholarship or research. It is concerned with the sayings and at a wider level even with the doings of the Prophet of Islam. Ilm al-Hadith has been deeply and intimately
connected with the origin, rise, explication and validation of social, political, economic, ethical and legal scholarship in Islamic lands.

_Ilm al-Hadith_ developed in response to proliferation of the traditions of the Prophet owing to sectarian and denominational polarization within Islamic world and the consequent need for sifting authentic traditions of the Prophet from the superious ones designed at times to bolster up sectarian convictions and commitments and at times fabricated with the best of intentions. Mostly scholars of _'Ilm al-Hadith_ have devised two methods with a view to demarcating authentic traditions from the inauthentic one's; namely (i) _'Rawayat'_ , (ii) _'Darayat'_.

_Rawayat_ signifies historical research with regard to the narration and transmission of the traditions of the Prophet. The authenticity of each reported tradition of the Prophet was tested through the method of _Rawayat_. Each tradition was sought to be authentically traced back to the Holy Prophet through a trustworthy chain of narrators. The character, truthfulness and integrity of each narrator was examined by the traditionist. They disregarded those reported traditions of those narrators whose memory was weak, whose trustworthiness or truthfulness was not beyond doubt, who were accused of any crime and negligence, who could not give a complete chain of narrators from the last link up to the Prophet, who’s reports violated otherwise established historical evidence or went against the established empirical and scientific facts. The traditionists accepted only those traditions of the Prophet who’s narrators were men of great understanding, learning, piety, caliber and capable of most faithfully reporting the traditions of the Prophet in keeping with the strictest norms and cannons of historical objectivity. Accordingly, the traditionists developed the science of _'Asma al-Rijal'_, bringing out the biographical details of all narrators that could add up to further authentication of the traditions of the Prophet.

As against _Rawayat_ which method traces the authenticity or correctness of the reported traditions of the Prophet by application of the norms or canons
of historical objectivity, the method of Darayat is applied with a view to examining the reasonableness of the reported traditions of the Prophet. The traditionists applied the method of Darayat so as to examine the textual accuracy of the reported traditions of the Prophet. The crux of the matter was to ascertain whether the Prophet could at all have uttered the tradition under consideration and whether it accorded with the principles of humanity, justice, equality, brotherhood etc. By the application of method of Darayat, the traditionists rejected a tradition if it was in contravention to established historical facts, against reason, against commonsense, against the doctrines of Islam, against the teachings of the Qur'an etc. A tradition was rejected if it did not accord with the general letter and spirit of the traditions of the Prophet or did not fit in with the style and syntactic of Arabic language. The traditionist did not accept a tradition if it violated the universally accepted traditions of the Prophet. They also rejected a tradition if it violated and contradicted the letter and spirit of anyone of the verses of the Qur'an for they accepted the Qur'an to be the ultimate criterion of the rationality, justification and validity of any tradition of the Prophet under consideration or investigation (Hanifi: (1992), 17-18).

(b) Ilm al Fiqh

Ilm al-Fiqh is an important Islamic science crucially impacting our understanding and conduct of social, political, economic, educational and cultural affairs. The term Faqh literally signifies understanding. Technically it means, a deep understanding of the principles of Islamic law and their application to concrete problems faced in various areas of human operation. Thus, Ilm al-Fiqh means science of jurisprudence. There are two most important sources of Islamic law; (i) The Quran, (ii) Prophets' sayings and doings. The Quran provides a wide framework of basic beliefs and values and directive principles of law. It is in keeping with the letter and spirit of this framework that Jurists or Doctors of Islamic Jurisprudence do derive specific legal injunctions or can revisit the same framework from time to time.
reinterpret or redesign legal injunctions in accordance with the imperatives and challenges of any given Era or Age. As against the general and universal ambience of the Qur'anic propositions, the sayings and the doings of the Prophet serve as concrete examples of what is legal or illegal, allowed or prohibited, warranted or unwarranted, prescribed or proscribed. The traditions of the Prophet in their totality provide a concrete direction as to how Muslims ought to be conducting themselves in social, political, economic, educational and cultural areas of operation. The propositions Prophet uttered, the pronouncements he made, the additions and alterations he carried out, the actions he performed, the decisions he implemented, the affirmative and negative judgments he formulated, the reservations and exceptions he intimated, the agreements and disagreements he arrived at etc., furnish the fundamental data for the emergence and development of IIm al-Fagh or Islamic Jurisprudence. The scholars of Islamic jurisprudence have even interpreted Prophet’s silences as allowing or disallowing certain actions and practices (Hasan: 1970), 1).

In addition to the Quran and the Sunnah various schools of Islamic Jurisprudence have also accepted Ijma (consensus), Qiyas (analogical reasoning) and Ijtihad (reinterpretation) as sources of Muslim Law. Ijma signifies hammering out a consensus with regard to a legal disagreement. However, there is disagreement as to who’s consensus can be deemed to be a source of Muslim law. Some scholars point out that Ijma signifies consensus among the Companions of the Prophet only while others bring out that consensus signifies an agreement by scholars of any given time with regard to any controversial point of law (‘Ali: 1973, 106). The Qur’an asks us to obey Allah, obey the Prophet and obey those who have authority over you (Qur’an: ........). The Prophet asks us to decide any given controversy or conflict firstly in the light of the Qur’an; secondly, in the light of the Sunnah of the Prophet and thirdly, unanimous agreement. In the light of these commandments or exhortations Muslim Jurists have devised the principle of Ijma with a view to
meeting out the requirements or facing the challenges of an ongoing progressive society from time to time. In view of the same a consentual agreement with a regard to any legal controversy at any given point of time can be amended or even repealed by a fresh consensus arrived at by a subsequent consensus among the Doctors of Islam (Hanifi, op.cit., p. 35). Secondly, Qiyas or analogical reasoning is a method of resolving a legal disagreement by subsuming it under a similar case previously resolved with reference to the Quran, Sunnah and Ijma. While Ijma is a method of resolving legal disagreements by recourse to consensus among various scholars, Qiyas can be done by a single jurist. Broadly speaking, Qiyas has been accepted as a valid source of Faqh, although the infallibility of analogical reasoning or deduction has always been subjected to critical searchlight by highly competent and advanced scholars of jurisprudence. In view of the same, the analogical deductions of one generation can be always revoked, recast and reformulated by the upcoming generation. Nevertheless, the technique of analogical deduction has been applied by all outstanding Jurists throughout the history of Islam. All along the annals of Islam, the principle of analogical deduction has been of great avail in designing the legal injunctions, in keeping with the challenges and imperatives of newly emerging conditions in Islamic lands (Hanifi, op.cit., pp. 36-37). Thirdly, the principle of Ijtihad has been all the more important in resolving the legal difficulties, especially in radically different or new conditions of society, polity and economy. Ijtihad means exerting the faculties of mind to the maximum possible extent with a view to hammering out or arriving at the solution of legal dilemmas. The Qur’an repeatedly asks us to exercise faculties of our understanding to their fullest possible level with a view to solving the difficult challenges and imperatives of life. The Prophet asks us to go in for Ijtihad in case there is no clear cut guidance from the Qur’an and traditions of Prophet while dealing with a difficult question in any sphere of human operation. The Companions of the Prophet and their successors, all exercised Ijtihad with a view to resolving
difficult situations. The principles of Qiyas (Analogical Deductions), Istisaan (Equity), Istislah (public good) and Istiddal (inference) etc. are some of the numerous strategies employed by Doctors of Islam and all such strategies are actually various modes of Ijtihad. The contemporary social, political and economic problems of Muslims can also be resolved by recourse to Ijtihad: only such an Ijtihad cannot be carried out in violation of explicit directives of the Quran and the Sunnah (‘Ali: op.cit., 113-14).

(c) Mutazilites and Asharites

The seventh century A.D. was the century of Islamic revolution. The Qur’anic revelations and the Prophetic sayings and doings from 610 A.D. up to 632 A.D. promulgated and prescribed the basic world-view and value-system of Islam and set the agenda for the historical and institutional implementation of Islamic way of life. The Companions of the Prophet including His four rightly guided caliphs struggled throughout seventh century A.D. for the implementation of Islamic beliefs and values and expansion of Islam around and beyond Arab lands. It was only in eighth century A.D. that thinkers of Islamic community started understanding and interpreting the basic sources of Islam at various centres such as Madina, Macca, Kufa, Basra, Baghdad and Damascus. Accordingly, various sects of interpretation and schools of thought came into existence across Islamic lands. There were Kharijites, Murajites, Quadarites, Jabarites, Mu’tazilites, Ash’arites etc. Here, we shall give an outline of Mu’tazilites and Ash’arite views on reason and revelation in so far as belief in the primacy of reason or revelation directs and determines our ontocosmological and axiological perspectives or standpoints.

The Mu’tazilites and Ash’arites were both believers in and advocates of Islamic world-view and value-system. However, their understanding and interpretation of Islamic beliefs and values led them to the espousal of divergent doctrinal positions. The Mu’tazilites were radical innovators in so far as they attempted to offer rational explanations of Islamic doctrines. Their fundamental self-definition was that they were ‘People of Unity and Justice’.

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They called themselves People of Unity because of their denial of the attributes of God as separate and different from the Divine Essence. They held this view because they thought that if the attributes of God are not considered to be identical with His Essence, the unique and simple unity of God would have to be given up. They called themselves People of Justice because they held that it is incumbent on God to reward the faithful and virtuous and also to punish men without faith or persons committing vicious deeds (Sharif: (2001), 200). From this basic standpoint of Unity and Justice Mu'tazilites worked out their other beliefs: God's justice necessarily implies that human will should be absolutely free and man should be the author of his own actions. The justice of God makes it incumbent upon Him not to do anything contrary to justice and equity. God can only do what is good and salutary for His servants. He cannot bring into effect evil deeds. He cannot ask His servants to do that which is impossible (Sharif: (2001), 200-201). Mu'tazilites also holds that good and evil are inherent in things themselves. They do not become good or evil because God declares them to be so. Human reason can distinguish good from evil on its own, independent of divine revelation which only confirms what can be rationally grasped by man himself. The Ash'atites, on the other hand either qualified the doctrinal positions of Mu'tazilites or forwarded radically different doctrines of their own. For example, Ash'atites do not agree with the Mu'tazilites view that acceptance of divine attributes as separate from His Essence violates the absolute unity of God. Attributes of God are eternal but they are neither identical with His Essence nor are they quite different from His Essence. The Ash'atites argued that if all the attributes of God are deemed identical with His Essence, the Divine Essence will become a combination of contradictory qualities. However, they could also not maintain that the attributes of God are absolutely different form His Essence, for such a thesis would have led to the acceptance of multiple eternals and violated the simplicity of God's unity. Ash'atites, as against Mu'tazilites, held that human will is not free and man is not the author of his own actions. Man is merely
invested with certain subordinate powers of appropriation and acquisition. While all actions are predetermined by Allah, man’s intention to work them out makes him the locus of responsibility and accountability. Man, on his own, cannot originate any action, for God is the originator of all objects, events, actions and accidents (Nadvi: p. 32).

However, here we shall confine ourselves to bringing out the basic epistemological standpoint of Mu’tazilites and Ash’atites. Mu’tazilites and Asharites were basically differing on the criterion of validity and justification; the former vying for the primacy of reason and later espousing the ultimacy of revelation. For Mu’tazilites, it is reason which can serve as a criterion of what is true and what is false. For Ash’atites the criterion of truth and falsehood is revelation. For Mu’tazilites, the revelatory commandments are subject to rational scrutiny. For Ash’atites, the so-called rational judgments or propositions are subject to revelatory commandments. More importantly, reason and revelation respectively served as criteria of what is ethically acceptable or unwarranted according to Mutazalites and Asharites. According to Mu’tazilites it is reason which does guide us in demarcating good from evil. Revelation can only confirm the commandments of reason. Reason dictates that every meritorious and profitable action must be rewarded and every demeritorious and harmful action must be punished. We can also appreciate the significance of religion or revelation only through reason. God repeatedly underlines that we believe in His Existence or follow His commandments because we are rational beings. The Quran asks us to reflect, to ponder over, to understand, to probe, to interpret, to derive lessons from the features of the cosmos, from the rise and fall of civilizations and from mysteries of our own self by recourse to application of reason. Accordingly, Mu’tazilites hold actions to be inherently meritorious or demeritorious and consequently rewardable or punishable. For example, mercy is inherently good and not because it is prescribed by the revelation. On the other hand, cruelty is inherently evil and
not because it is proscribed by the revelation. Revelation authenticates only what is naturally available to the innate light of our reason (ibid., pp. 43-45).

Ash'atites advance radically divergent views on the respective roles of reason and revelation. They point out that all revelatory commandments, injunctions, prescriptions, proscriptions, allowances, disallowances, judgements and propositions cannot be rationally explained. Nor are they in need of rational sanctification. That Quran prohibits prayers and fasting at certain points of time or on certain days, that it forbids eating of pork, that it disallows contracting marriages with certain persons, that it prescribes sacrificing animals and so on and so forth cannot be rationally explained or justified. The very process of revelation is beyond the ken of rational understanding and justification. Therefore, human reason cannot be allowed the role of ultimate criterion of justification. It is revelation which guides us as to what is true and what is false and what is good and what is evil. We can never know through reason as to which actions are rewardable and which are punishable. Actions may be inherently good or evil. However, only revelation can intimate to us that we shall be rewarded for our good actions and punished for our bad ones. Only revelation can intimate to us the moral, spiritual and eschatological significance of human action (Sharif, op.cit., 230-31). Moreover, Asharites underlined that the assumption of ultimacy of human reason negates or annuls the very need and efficacy of Divine Revelation. The assumption of ultimate justificatory, directive and illuminative role of reason makes all the Prophetic Missions questionable and devoid of justification.

(d) Sufism

The origins and emergence of Sufism within the Islamic world-view and value-system grounded on the Qur'an and Sunnah and Traditions of the Prophet, have been widely debated by historians of Islam, Muslim scholars of Sufism and Orientalists. Scholars have given divergent accounts of the impact of non-Islamic sources of Sufism. The Islamic theologians have mostly questioned its Islamic credentials and its validity with reference to basic
sources of Islamic beliefs and values. The debate continues till date, opponents of Sufism citing numerous verses from the Qur'an and various traditions from anthologies of Hadith with a view to questioning the legitimacy of Sufism and proponents of Sufism citing as many Qur'anic verses and traditions of the Prophet with a view to bolstering up the authentic Islamic credentials of Sufism. Notwithstanding what historians and scholars of Sufism have to say the Sufis themselves were not interested in any intellectual or methodological analysis of the Qur'anic verses or Prophet's traditions. The early Sufis especially were not interested in doctrinal disputations or philosophical debates. Inspired by basic beliefs and values of Islam, they were in search of self-realization and God-realisation. They were, however, not satisfied with a purely literalist understanding of Islam and ritualistic approach to God as advocated by theologians. The Shari'ah or Islamic law was also concerned with the resolution of social, political or economic affairs, mostly emphasizing on distribution of property and authentication of marriage. However, as seekers they were intensely interested in exploring their spiritual self-authentication or discovering God. In view of their strong spiritual commitments they were averse to legal rules and regulations. The legal, instrumental and institutional aspects of Islam could not be of any great help in their quest for God-realisation which could be accomplished only by recourse to love of God. The love of God entailed rather necessitated detachment from worldly power, property and pleasures. Instead of engaging in mundane pursuits or being oriented to legal and ritual aspects of Islam, Sufis appropriated Tariqah (spiritual method or way of life). This method or way of life lead's Sufis to seeking guidance from a Preceptor or Murshid who belongs to a line of Preceptors who trace their basic spiritual vision or insight into the Reality from the Prophet of Islam (Smith: (1950), 1-5).

Sufis claim that self-realisation and God-realization cannot be successfully accomplished by approaching Soul or God through reason, sense-experience, analysis, research, argumentation or experimentation. God is
beyond thought or intellectual understanding. The Ultimate Reality of God cannot be deciphered or fathomed by logical, philosophical, dialectical or rhetorical devices and strategies. We can approach God through Qalb (heart), Ruh (Spirit) and Sir (innermost ground of the soul) and by recourse to love and contemplation. When heart is illuminated by faith, every divine quality is reflected through the mirror of our heart. When the heart is liberated from mundane attractions and sensual contamination, it becomes capable of reflecting the glory of God. The ‘Marifat’ or Gnosis appropriated by a Sufi is finally a grace of and gift from God rather than a function of a Sufi’s intellectual and spiritual struggle. God-realisation is a favour of God bestowed as a gift upon His chosen seekers. The ‘Gnosis’ of a Sufi is an overwhelming experience of Divine Grace leading to one’s total transformation and complete transmutation (Nicholson, (1975), 68-72).

Sufis have been oriented to powerful absorptionistic or annihilationistic tendencies. Many prominent Sufis have defined mystical experience to be a profound consciousness of an All-Pervading Unity transcending all mundane experiences of individuality, particularity and multiplicity. The spiritual struggle of the Sufis culminates into liberation from unreal selfhood and mundane attachments and reunion with the Infinite Being. At this stage, the Sufi is liberated from all objects of desire and will, all objects of understanding and knowledge and all worldly pulls and pressures. He transcends the imperatives of power, property and pleasure. His ultimate delight of communion with or nearness of God is anchored on his complete divestment of or detachment from worldly concerns (Ibid, 83-94).

Sufis have been methodologically sagacious and wisened all along and have been especially critical of all rationalistic, philosophical and theological constructions. All philosophical and theological exploration can culminate into agnosticism. While agnosticism can be the end of philosophy, theology and all rationalistic and methodological explorations, it is the beginning of Sufi understanding, interpretation, enlightenment and wisdom. The end of theology
is the beginning of theosophy or philosophy in the classical Greek sense. The Sufi is the real theosopher or philosopher in so far as love of wisdom and Divine wisdom do coincide or can be reconciled with each other. While God is impervious to all methodological approaches, His understanding or vision is vouchsafed to Sufis or Gnostics through intuitive or mystical ecstasy - the divinely blessed or bestowed rapturous experience. The Sufis or Gnostics confirm the existence of the universe and their own selves through their knowledge of God (Nicholson: op.cit., 85).

Hassan al Basari (d. 110/728 A.D.), was possibly the earliest theologian and scholar who is deemed to have pioneered the Sufi way of life. He was a man of exceptional piety and deeply oriented to ascetic mode of life. Scholars and historians of Sufism consider him to have been the first Sufi. He underlined the foundational importance of the purification of heart by recourse to fear of Allah and abstinence from mundane temptations. Only a Sufi of pure heart can eventually appropriate the vision of Allah which is the ultimate end of Sufi spiritual struggle.

Rabia al-Basri (d. 185/801 A.D.), is perhaps the most outstanding woman mystic of Islam who laid emphasis on the spiritual significance of love of God. Her concept of love later became a characterizing feature of Sufi philosophy. Love, in course of time, acquired great ontological, axiological and even epistemological significance. Rabia was fully conscious of the importance of fear of Allah. However, she laid unqualified emphasis on love of God in Sufi struggle for attainment of good pleasure as well as vision of Allah. The Sufi must cultivate pure and unalloyed love of Allah: a love that is neither dictated by fear of hell nor inspired by the prospects of paradisal pleasures of hereafter. Rabia said:

O God! If I worship thee in fear of Hell, burn me in Hell; and if I worship Thee in hope of paradise, exclude me from Paradise; but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold not Thine Everlasting Beauty"! (Nicholson: 1963, 115).
Dhun-Nun Misri (d. 296/859) was an outstanding Egyptian Sufi. He was the founder of first Sufi sect in the history of Islam. He was the author of several treatises on Sufism wherein he expounded such doctrines as *Haıl* (state), 'Maquam' (stage) and 'Wajad' (ecstasy). He was the first Sufi author to have elaborated upon *Marifah* (gnosis) and brought out its characteristics in comparison to intellectual and analytical types of knowledge. According to Dhun Nun Misri, Marifah or gnosis is of three types: (i) Gnosis of scholars who have a rational or intellectual understanding of God, (ii) Gnosis of common Muslims who believe in Allah on the basis of faith and (iii) the Gnosis of mystics who know Allah through their inner and authentic light. It is the mystical Gnosis which constitutes the perfect faith and most authentic certitude. However, such a Gnosis is not appropriated by recourse to any kind of rational demonstration but through intuition (Hai; 1966, 136). He was oriented to pantheistic approach for his doctrine of love of God entailed absorption into the Being of Allah.

Bayzaid-Bustami (d. 874) was one of the foremost radical thinkers of 9th century A.D. He was the first Sufi philosopher who presented the doctrine of *Fana* (passing away in Allah). This doctrine was widely appropriated by subsequent Sufi’s as the ultimate ideal of their spiritual struggle or end of their way of life. Apart from introducing the doctrine of annihilation of self or absorption in Allah, he introduced the concept of *sukr* (intoxication) in Sufism. Bayzaid’s concept of intoxication entailed unqualified love of God; it is in the rapturous love of God that the seeker loses all his attribute so that only those faculties survive in him that do not belong to human genus. Such a rapturous absorption and intoxication is not a function of one’s spiritual endeavour or struggle but purely a gift of God. At this stage man’s activities are attributed to God. At this stage, man in ‘*Sukr*’ strands through God. At this stage the seeker is completely annihilated or absorbed into God. Such an absorption is through self-surrender to God and the process starts with unqualified subordination to the commandments of Allah (Nabi, 1977, 17-18). Bayzaid also pointed out that
one's love of God is analogous to a human love-affair. However, through his introspective discipline he could transcend this personalized conception of God. While approaching the core of his identity in his spiritual explorations, Bayzaid felt that nothing stood between God and himself: indeed, everything that he understood as 'self' seemed to be melting away:

I gazed upon [al-Lah] with the eye of truth and said to Him: “who is this?” He said, “This is neither I nor other than I. There is no God but I”. Then he changed me out of my identity into His Selfhood... Then I communed with Him with the tongue of His Face, saying: “How fares it with me with Thee?” He said, “I am through Thee; there is no god but Thou”. (Armstrong: 1994, 226).

Thus Bayzaid discovered God to be identified with the inmost self. According to Bayzaid it was the destruction of ego that led to sense of absorption in a larger ineffable reality.

Junaid Baghdadi (d. 298/910) is famously called Shaikh al-Tariqa (chief of the Sufi way of life) or Syed-al-Taifah (leader of the Tribe of Sufi’s) in the history of Sufism. He was one of most original Sufi thinkers and intellectuals. He brilliantly defined ‘Tauhid’ as separating what is eternal from all that what is temporal (Nasr, 1964, 83). However, Junaid did not agree with Bistami’s notion of ‘intoxication’. Instead he advanced the notion of sobriety. According to Junaid, our union with God should not signify destruction of our natural capabilities. Rather such a union must ensure greater fructification of our faculties and capabilities. A Sufi who can transcend egotism with a view to discovering the divine presence at the heart of his own being should become capable of higher self-realization and greater self-control. Junaid while accepting the notion of Fana (annihilation) as advanced by Bistami, added that Fana must be succeeded by Baqua (revival), a return to an advanced and upgraded self. While experiencing Fana and Baqua, the Sufi’s passes through a
process of divinization or deification. The fundamental purpose of Sufi spiritual struggle, according to Junaid, was to return to man’s primordial state on the day of creation. It was a return to the source of their being. It was an experience of separation and alienation followed by reappropriation and reunion with their Original source. It was the end of separation and sadness and a reunion with the deeper self. A reunion with the immediate presence of God. In such an experience, the Sufi realizes that God was not an external reality but somehow one with the ground of person’s being (Armstrong; op.cit., 227).

Mansoor al Hallaj (d. 921), is perhaps the most famous Sufi who sacrifices his life for the courage of his convictions’, viz. for exclaiming “Ana ’lHaq” (I am the truth). In his ecstasy, al-Hallaj would cry aloud: “I am the truth”. He expresses his sense of union with God that was so close that it felt like identity. In one of his poems he said:

I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I:

We are two spirits dwelling in one body.

If thou seest me, thou seest Him,

And if thou seest Him, thou seest us both.

(Nicholson, op.cit., 151).

Ghazali is an integral epistemologist. The knowledge of physical or external world is basically acquired by sense-experience or perception. Along with perception, reason plays a very crucial role in our quest for knowledge. It is through reason that we understand the logical and mathematical entailments and implications. Reason also is our capacity to grasp and master theoretical or abstract sciences. Reason also acquires knowledge through historical and collective experience of mankind and through individual’s own experiences at different stages of his life. Man extends the frontiers of his knowledge through rational inductions and deductions or inferences. Human understanding or cognition has multiplicative, even exponential growth. When we understand something, that understanding becomes the basis of other possible
understandings and this process is never-ending and ever-expanding. Fresh cognitions are added to previous understandings and frontiers of knowledge are perennially extended (Faris: 1962, 231).

Ghazali also accepts the epistemological authority of the Quran and of Prophet. The knowledge gained through the verses of the Quran and traditions of the Prophet are morally purificatory and spiritually therapeutic. Necessary knowledge can be absorbed or internalized only by unquestionably following the Qur'anic revelations and Prophetic traditions. The revelations that a Prophet receives are divinely initiated or ordained. The revelations vouchsafed to a Prophet are like heat and light of the Sun received by the Earth without asking as well as without mediation. The Prophet through Divinely ordained revelations is bestowed with Ultimate Spiritual Certitude. The knowledge of the Prophet is of the highest rank for it is not a function of learning or scholarship but emanates from Divine Guidance and Grace (Smith 1938, 365).

In addition to perception, reason and authority of the Qur'anic revelations and Prophetic traditions, Ghazali also accepts intuition or more specifically mystical experience to be the most crucial and vital source of knowledge and understanding or realization. The judgments pertaining to Ultimate Reality can never be authenticated by recourse to theological, philosophical, scientific or experimental methods of validation. It is through mystical experience that we can authenticate such judgments in the depths of our soul. Human soul is capable of reflecting the light of God and attaining to direct vision of the truth if it is liberated from the distractions of worldly concerns. It is through mystical experience that we can attain to the highest certitude and finally dissolve our doubts and hesitations. Mystical experience is finally anchored on or rooted in our soul, which has foundational role in the processing and acquirement of our knowledge. The soul is the tablet or abode of knowledge. Human soul has been blessed with knowledge at the very time of creation. This knowledge can lapse into forgetfulness due to the impact of our passions but it can not altogether disappear. When the soul purifies itself, it
returns to its original state. The knowledge which potentially exists in human soul is recovered in its original shape whenever soul is liberated from behavioural imperfections or mundane engagements. The mystical experience needs to be cultivated through purification of soul. We need to transcend the imperatives of power, property and pleasure. Once we liberate and elevate our soul, we are bestowed with sufficient light leading to authentic God-realization. The knowledge gained through mystical experience is essential to our spiritual perfection. The realization of God is essential to love of God and love of God is essential to realization of God. The realization of God and love of God are essentially interdependent (Karim: 1982, 255).

Ghazali’s quest for certainty entailed a wide and large process of explorations and evaluations. He evaluated knowledge-claims based on authority or tradition, perception and reason etc. However, he found all theological, philosophical, Batinite and legal doctrines to be characterized by radical uncertainty. Ghazali underlined that indubitable knowledge could be achieved only through mystical states. Such states could be vouchsafed to us only by intuition which is supra-empirical, supra-rational and supra-traditional. While the certitude of theologians is based on *Istidlal* (reasoning) and *Qiyas* (analogy) and the certitude of common people is based on *Iman* (faith), the certitude of *al-Marifun* (Gnostics) comprising of *al-Muqarrabun* (mystics who are proximate to God) and *al-Siddiqun* (mystics who have spiritually authenticated and testified to God) is based on *al-Mukashifah* (unveiling) or *al-Mushahidah* (direct witnessing) and *Zauq* (spiritual tasting) (Ismail: 1996, 100-2).

Ghazali divides certitude into two types; (i) negative certitude and (ii) positive certitude. The logicians, philosophers, scholastics and theologians are capable of negative certitude. For them certitude at best, signifies lack of doubt. The negative certitude is achieved through valid inferences from certain premises or through demonstration involving inputs from such channels of understanding as discursive reasoning, perception, instinct, authentic narration, empirical experience etc. The positive certitude is mystical or experiential
certitude. An all-out skeptical standpoint or disbelief constitutes pure darkness according to Ghazali. While negative certitude is objectively demarcating, Positive certitude is subjectively intensifying. The logical or demonstrative or negative certitude is the lowest level of certitude which can be continuously upgraded until it reaches through Kashf (unveiling) and Ilham (inspiration) to the highest level of experiential certitude. It's at this level of certitude that Gnostics have a direct encounter with Ultimate Reality. This level of certitude leads to overpowering transformational and transvaluational impact on the mystics or seers. At this level, the mystic appropriates a degree of realization which can positively orientate him to unexceptional commitment to values and disorientate him to espousal of disvalues. This highest experiential certitude is itself limitless in range. Its numerous gradations are appropriated by Gnostics in proportion to their spiritual achievements, the spectrum ranging from al-Muqarrabun up to al-Siddiqun (Ibid., pp. 107-8).

Ghazali also talks of a priori propositions (al-Alwaliyat), sensory propositions (al-Mahsusat), empirical propositions (al-Tajribiyat), impeccable transmissions (al-Mutawatarat), certified propositions (al-Musallamat), famous propositions (al-Mashhurat), accepted propositions (al-Maqboolat), probable propositions (al-Muznunat), ambiguous propositions (al-Mushabbiyat), imaginative propositions (al-Wahimiyyat), imaginary propositions (al-Mukhayyat) etc., culminating into various types of certainty such as; (i) Demonstrative certainty, (ii) Dialectical certainty, (iii) Rhetorical certainty, (iv) Sophistical certainty etc. However, the highest certitude, according to Ghazali, is achieved through intuitive or mystical experience. Such a certitude encompasses the Absolute Truth and Ultimate Reality of the Universal and Eternal God (Ibid., p. 124).

Ghazali, a Persian scholar, philosopher, theologian, jurist and sufi, was one of the most original thinkers of Islam. His life-long quest for certainty had an abiding impact on Muslim philosophy and culture. His powerful philosophical investigations presaged many doctrinal positions espoused
centuries after him by such modern western philosophers as Descartes, Hume and Kant and even by twentieth century linguistic analysts such as Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Ghazali’s understanding of role of religion and discernment of the function of philosophy in diverse fields of human culture ensconced him on the horns of a dilemma. While religious beliefs and values seemed crucial and fundamental for a civilized life, certification or authentication of religion by rational philosophical criteria or methods seemed to be an impossible task. Ghazali was too mystical or spiritual to ignore the need for faith and too liberal and intellectual to ignore the role of philosophy. In view of the same, Ghazali tried to do what seven hundred years later was attempted by Kant. He came to the conclusion that imperatives of religion and challenges of philosophy demand to demarcate and figure out the respective jurisdictions or provinces of religious faith and philosophical reason. The role of reason was unavoidable and inevitable in astronomical, physical, chemical, biological, logico-mathematical fields of research and investigation. However, reason could not furnish us indubitable spiritual or religious certainty. The application of rational criteria with a view to achieving absolute certainty with regard to doctrines or dogmos of religion was doomed to frustration. There is no way to empirically or rationally test the truth of the propositions with regard to ‘God’, ‘Soul’ or ‘After Life’. How could philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle or Farabi and Ibn-e-Sina rationally demonstrate the existence of God or opine about the nature of His knowledge or prove the eternality or creaturliness of the world or comment upon the possibility or impossibility of ‘bodily resurrection’ etc. How can we know that the conclusions of philosophical arguments were not conceptual delusions or argumentative illusions.

Accordingly, Ghazali developed a very powerful critique of philosophical doctrines or positions originally espoused by Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus and later on grafted upon Islamic beliefs by such Muslim philosophers as Kindi, Farabi and Ibn Sina with a view to working out a synthesis between
Greek rationalism and the Qur'anic doctrines. In his 'Tahafut al-Falasifah' Ghazali especially rebuts arguments of philosophers, firstly, for their belief in the eternity of the world; secondly, for their belief that God's knowledge does not encompass individual objects and thirdly, for their belief in the impossibility of bodily resurrection. For example, Ghazali accuses philosophers of accepting the Greek dogma of the eternity of the world on questionable grounds. The Greek assumptions are neither demonstrable nor self-evident. The assumptions of Greek philosophers that every effect has a cause, that cause must be some action of external force and that cause when executed must immediately lead to the effect, are not logically compelling or coercive. Why should it be accepted that God's Will has a cause or has a cause that is external to it? Where is the logical compulsion to assume that an effect should follow a cause within no time? There is no logical contradiction to assume that a cause can have a delayed effect. If we accept that God's Will is eternal and the object of that Will has occurred at a particular point of time, we are not being caught in a logical contradiction. There is no logical contradiction in upholding the orthodox position that God eternally willed to create the world at a particular point of time (Sharif op. cit., 423). We can believe that God's Will is eternal and yet the object of His Will can occur at a particular point of time. The eternity of God's Will cannot be confused with the eternity of object of His Will. If they believe that God has eternally Willed that the world should come into being at a particular point of time, they are not violating any fundamental principle of logic (Kamali, 1958, 186). God's Supreme Will is absolutely free. Ghazali brings it out in his analysis of notion of causality. Ghazali radically challenges the alleged necessity of the causal connection subscribed to by philosophers. There is logical entailment between the two. There is no necessary relation between burning of fire and blowing up of smoke. Logical inductions can never attain certainty and anybody can doubt them, at any point of time. If objects constantly succeed one another, it proves succession not causation or conjunction not connection. The effect happens with the cause and
not through it (Sharif: 1995, 615-16). The necessity is implied only in logical relations such as identity, implication, disjunction etc. Causal relations are only contingents and may or may not happen. Such happenings entirely depends on the Will of God. Causal necessity is psychological not logical. The happenings of miracles, for example, is logically possible. God can turn a rod into a serpent or resurrect bodies on the Day of judgment. In philosophy nothing may be acceptable unless it is logically necessary. In religion, nothing is impossible unless it is logically contradictory (Sheikh: 1994, 121-25).

After Ghazali, Suhrawardi Maqtul is a prominent Sufi thinker. Like al-Hallaj, Suhrawardi Maqtul was also put to death in 1191 for his radical mystical and philosophical views and ideas. Suhrawardi’s mission was to work out a synthesis between Islam and what he called the original “Oriental Religion”. All the ancient sage’s and mystics, according to Suhrawardi, had preached the same Oriental religion. The ancient Prophets and Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras and Plato had preached the tenets of this original Oriental religion. The Zoroastrian and Magian seers advocated the same religion. The Sufi’s too transmitted it to one another and Suhrawardi claimed it to have received through Bistami and Junaid. The Hikmat-al-Ishraq or Oriental Enlightenment outlined by Suhrawardi is the perennial philosophy which was mystical and imaginative but did not wholly abandon reason. Suhrawardi realizes the importance of intuition in our approach to truth but also advocated the unavoidability or necessity of intellectual rigour. Truth and wisdom are revealed by God and could be retrieved from any source; Zoroastrianism, Paganism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Pythagorean philosophy, Platonic philosophy, pre-Islamic Iranian philosophy, Ptolemaic cosmology and Neoplatonic Emanationism etc. The dogmatic religions were often susceptible to sectarian disputations. The Oriental Mystical philosophy of Suhrawardi would underline the authenticity and meaningfulness of all possible approaches to God. Suhrawardi attempted to discover the imaginative core that lay at the heart of all religion and philosophy and despite his keen awareness of
the limitations of reason he always accepts its right to probe the deepest mysteries. The esoteric mystic and scientific rationalist were equally entitled to seek truth. However, he was not satisfied with the wholly rational and objective orientations of philosophers. An authentic sage had to be both philosophical and mystical. Our world has always been blessed with such a Sage or Spiritual Leader. He is the true pole (Qutb) who’s presence was absolutely essential for the continuance of the world (Armstrong: op.cit., 230-31).

The Ishraqi philosophy of Suhrawardi posits the symbol of light as the perfect synonym for God. In his emanationist cosmology the Light of Lights corresponded to the Necessary Being of the philosophers. In his emanationistic cosmological account, Suhrawardi brings out that a succession of lesser lights is generated in a descending hierarchy; each light, recognizing its dependency upon the Light of Lights. It also develops a shadow self which was the source of material realm. It metaphorically expressed the predicament of the human kind. Each and every human being was similarly a combination of light and darkness. It is through this light embedded in each of us that we can appropriate an authentic spiritual illumination. It is through this authentic spiritual illumination that we can experience God within ourselves (Ibid., pp. 231-32).

Ibn Arabi

Ibn Arabi is one of the greatest Sufi philosophers of all time. However, he is neither a philosophical constructor nor a reconstructor but a deconstructor. He is deeply critical of all theological dogmatisations or so-called philosophical systematizations. He is one of the most profound critics of rationalist theology and metaphysics. He is not attached to any particular school of thought. His penetrating critiques, devastating rejections and demolishing dismissals are directed against all; Muʿtazilites, Ashʿatites, Materialists, Corporealists, Jews, Christians, Idolaters, Transcendentalists, Immanentists, Atheists, Agnostics, Sceptics etc.
Ibn Arabi believes that no thinker or system of thought can provide a definition of what is Ultimately Real (al-Haqq). Philosophers and theologians try to trap God in rational or argumentative pigeonholes. God is without limits or confines. Philosophers and theologians try to confine him within their theological or metaphysical frameworks. They suffer from delusions of argumentative grandeur. They surreptitiously inject some supposed correspondence between their beliefs and the reality of God. They try to catch the Absolute through their relative conceptual frameworks.

Ibn Arabi critiques both affirmative and negative schools of theology. The affirmative theologians such as Ash'atites insist that the content of Divine Reality can be vouchsafed to us through His affirmative attributes. On the other hand, negative theologians such as Mu'tazilites insist that nothing can ultimately be predicated of God - at best, He can be only negatively delineated as to what He is not. He critiques both the fully-fledged anthropomorphism of Ash'atites and nanomorphism of Mu'tazilites. His argument against them both is that the advocates of Tashbih and proponents of Tanzih are mutually reinforcing and their rational/metaphysical formulations are tethered on adversarial dialectics.

For Ibn Arabi, there is an unknowable and unthinkable God beneath all the constructs and concepts of God we design for ourselves. He is beyond names and attributes. He is the source of everything and yet reducible to or exhaustible into nothing. He is beyond the propositional gestalt of all cultures. The error of the rational thinkers is to mistake their constructs as isomorphically corresponding to the Real or God. Such a so-called isomorphic correspondence amounts to implicit or explicit conceptual idolatry born out of a confusion wherein the theologian or the philosopher may develop the unquestioning conviction that his construct is somehow self-sufficient and self-justifying. The Real is conceptually uncontrollable. He is really unthinkable. He is beyond all possible empirical comparisons and conceptual constructions. He is limitless and infinite. Therefore, all rational theologies, ontologies,
cosmologies and epistemologies cannot encompass the Real. Rational theologies and philosophies are blissfully ignorant with regard to the infinity of the Real. All theological and philosophical reductions pale into insignificance in the face of inexhaustible Plenitude of the Real. Any exclusive theological or philosophical appropriation of the Real is also impossible of realization in view of its infinite replenishbility in an eternal series of nanoseconds. No conceptual, cultural, theological, ontocosmological, epistemological or hermeneutical account of the Real can pretend to any exclusive proprietary rights. It is impervious to all cultural, theological and philosophical appropriations and formulations. The Real is eternally and omnipresently manifesting itself in endless and inexhaustible ways. All rational theologies and philosophies are condemned to failure and frustration in trying to fix a rational square peg in a transrational or suprarationalround whole. All rational explanations or interpretations of the Real are trying to arrest or control what is forever unarrestable or uncontrollable. He just cannot fix any rational theological construction unto Allah for no attribute or signifier can be Mailed to Him to the exclusion of inexhaustible versions germane to His irreducible ontic plenitude. All rational constructions fixed unto God even in the face of our utter unfathomability of Him are not only intellectually idolatorous but morally slanderous as well. The knowledge of God is not possible through reason or reflection. The attainment of God-realisation can be obtained only through Kashf (unveiling or divulgement).

Thus, instead of resorting to theological apologetics or sponsoring an objectively all-pervading Universal God, Ibn Arabi made the very ultimate depth of man the locus of God. Divinity and humanity were thus two sides of the same coin. This locating of divinity in the ultimate depth of each human being instead of encompassing God in a set of theological propositions or doctrinal statements makes Ibn Arabi one of the greatest spiritual Immanentists of all time. It cuts across all religious fundamentalism and spiritual chauvinism. The inexhaustible ontic plenitude of God cannot be captured by rational or
reflective prognostications of any cultural tradition or religious legacy but infinitesimally apportioned by each one of us in our unique and unrepeatable ways. This is the philosophy which cuts across all vertical and horizontal lines of prejudice, hate, anger, intolerance and unfreedom. It cuts across all specialist and superioristic lines of spiritual arrogance and intellectual intolerance. It is a philosophy of liberation, freedom and tolerance. It cuts across all kinds of holier than thou attitudes. No religion had the whole truth about God. No religious, cultural or denominational chauvinism was intellectually tenable or morally acceptable. The culturally sponsored, politically convenient and communally charged 'Gods' were created by respective denominational theologies. They are sponsored by religious and cultural prejudices. These theologically orchestrated 'Gods' are societally divisive. It is the mystics or men of spiritual enlightenment who realize that such versions of 'God' or purely symbolic. They realize that different religions are equally valid theophanias. The historically drawn-out societal polarization on religious grounds was uncalled for. Religious intolerance and fanaticism have no place in Ibn Arabi's world-view and value-system.

As against a rational appropriation or explanation of God, we have to realize our essential divinity. We have to realize that we have been created in the image of God Himself. Like other Sufis, IbnArabi was fond of quoting Hadith Qudsi: "I was a hidden treasure and I yearned to be known. Then I created creatures in order to be known by them". It was God's longing for self-introduction which acted as a creative force and brought the whole of our cosmos into existence. This creative divine longing not only brought the entire coir and furniture of the cosmos into being but also exhaled human beings. These human beings act as logoi, words that express God to Himself. Every human being is a unique expression of God, a unique epiphany of Hidden God. Every human being is a manifestation of God in a particular and unrepeatable manner. Each one of us as logoi is a divine presence. However, the reality of God being eternally inexhaustible, the revelation that God has made in each of

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us is unique and innumerable human beings reveal God in their own different and unique ways. Each human being in his or her unique way delivers the Hidden God from his solitude.

Philosophy is an epistemo-ontocosmo-axiological complex. True propositions are correspondences with what is ontocosmologically real as good values are accordance with it. Truth corresponds to reality and goodness accords with it. True propositions represent reality while good values stem from it. The reality is verificatory of truth while it is justificatory of values. A world-view as a gestalt of propositions is true in so far as it depicts which is ultimately real and a value-system is good in proportion to its’ accordance with the beliefs or doctrines constituting a world-view. There are thinkers who maintain that our need for an axiological order leads to the formulation of an ontocosmological system. Our need for a value-system leads to the formulation of a world-view. Axiology precedes ontocosmology and not vice-versa. However, mainstream philosophical traditions have historically maintained that it is the ontocosmological accounts of reality that have been verificatory of truth and justificatory of good.

Rumi

Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (1206-1273), the thirteenth century poet-philosopher of Khurasan is globally acknowledged to be the greatest Sufi-poet. He was a man of great intellectual achievements and greater spiritual accomplishments. His poetry is profoundly informed by the Qur’anic worldview and value-system. He was also convinced of the overwhelming and all-pervading role of love underlined by Jesus and other Christian and Muslim mystics. His *Mathnawi* creatively transcends contradictions and harmonises diversities. As a philosophical spiritualist, Rumi postulates the ground of Being akin to ourselves as Spirit or Ego. The universe is a constitution of infinite egos emanating from the cosmic Ego or God – the Universal Monad (Sharif, (1995) vol. II, 827). Although committed to Semitic beliefs and values, Rumi feels oriented to emanationistic cosmology rather than the creationistic one. All
beings have emanated from the Self-Existent God, from the overflow of the Divine Spirit. However, every being or ego nurses the irresistible urge to return to its origin. This universally and eternally operating urge is called love by Rumi – the love that is the principle of universal evolution. However, the evolution is not physically, chemically and biologically or mechanistically driven by natural selection but teleologically pulled by God who is the Alpha and Omega of the universal evolution. God is the goal of cosmic evolutionary process. Life is evolved out of matter but matter is potentially spiritual (M.M. Sharif, op.cit., 827). The evolutionary process according to Rumi started with the atomic particulars, it negotiated inorganic matter, crossed over to botanical realm, then stopped into animal kingdom, culminating into human order. The evolutionary process will have to ultimately culminate into with God.

Rumi as a philosophical integrationist accommodates rationalist, empiricist and intuitionist theories of knowledge. Sense experience, according to Rumi, is a crucial source of knowledge. However, our perceptual powers cannot appreciate the transphenomenal dimensions of reality. Understanding the transphenomenal reality is not within the purview of sense-experience (Iqbal, A: 1956, 222). Apart from sense experience or perception, reason is the most important source of knowledge, according to Rumi. In logical and mathematical investigations and deductions, the role of reason is all-important. One of the crucial tasks of the reason is to work out the limitations of sense-experience. In view of the dichotomy between appearance and reality, reason rejects the claim of sense-experience to arrive at any certainty. In view of the limitations of sense-experience reason volunteers its own arguments with a view to arriving at sure and certain knowledge about Reality. However, Rumi points out that reason is blissfully ignorant of its limitations. It sets out to accomplish what is beyond its capacity. It is inextricably controlled by infrarational dimensions of our existence. Besides even the most powerful rational arguments generate as well as invite counter-arguments. In this argumentative crossfire reason unavoidably and inevitably proliferates riddles,
puzzles, paradoxes and contradictions. Thus rational arguments can get pathologically dialectical and philosophers can knot themselves in hair-splitting debates leading to inseparable and irresolvable difficulties. Moreover, reason is powerfully oriented to utilitarian calculations or considerations of profit and loss. Human reason can guide us only up to an extent. It has finally to subordinate itself to the divulgements and disclosures of intuition or love.

Love or intuition plays the most crucial role in the epistemological, ontocosmological and axiological accounts advanced by Rumi. Just as phenomenal features of the universe can be grasped through perceptual encounter and logico-mathematical deductions and scientific inductions can be carried out by recourse to application of reason, so can intuition or love furnish us an appreciation or realization of Ultimate Reality or God. God is personification of Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Perfection. Love is the universal principle of appropriation, absorption, evolution, assimilation, growth and reproduction. While reason or intellect is ineradicably votexed into calculations and considerations, love is a madness oriented to an appropriation of Ultimate Reality. It is the Ultimate cosmological principle, the principle of the genesis and evolution of the Universe. Reason can orientate us towards a realization of God but it cannot explain the relationship between God and man. It is so because reason is descriptive and analogical and anchored on conjunctions and disjunctions whereas there is no uniting and separating in the realm of spirit (Rumi: *Mathnawi*, (1966) Book IV, Verse, 3696). The intellect cannot find the way to man's divine connection for it is in bondage to separation and union (*ibid*, verse 4699).

Rumi is more of a teleologist and evolutionist than that of an epistemologist or metaphysician. As a teleological seer, he is thoroughly cognizant of turns and twists and vicissitudes of life; inorganic matter dying unto itself, becoming organic and living a higher life in the plant; plant dying unto itself and living into still higher life in the animal and the entire evolutionary process illustrating the principle of dying to live or vindicating the
paradox of love, viz., it is by giving we take and by dying we live. For Rumi the principle of growth and development through the organic power of assimilation is the highest principle of explanation. It is impossible to explain mind body relationship by recourse to physical causation. The evolution of life exhibits qualitative transformation. We cannot have a causal explanation as to how fuel turns into fire or bread turns into life or life turns into consciousness. Rumi brings out that we may not have a causal explanation of man finally connecting with the Divine but it seems possible that through a new qualitative transformation man might actually turn into or become identical with God (Hakim, 1959, 49-50).

It is only through intuition or love that we can appreciate this perennially ongoing and ascending evolutionary process. Reason being essentially a principle of differentiation and separation can analyse, dissect and split reality into many parts but cannot take holistic view of reality. While reason cannot take any integral view of reality, language is opaque to an understanding and expression of metaphysical and spiritual verities of life. Life and existence are impervious to linguistic expressions. And even when we formulate whatsoever expression with regard to life and existence, we can not simplify them or analyse them into complete clarity or transparency. Further linguistic clarifications, interpretations and explanations would all the more mystify the original linguistic positions so that we can go on advancing linguistic substitutions or replacements without ever resolving the controversies or clinching the issues under consideration. Our apparently attempted rational solutions and linguistic encapsulations would only lead to multiplication or proliferation of ever-going and never-ending complications. The rationally and linguistically designed mystifications, obscurities, confusions, bewilderments and obfuscations could be seen through, clarified and resolved by recourse to intuitive divulgements and disclosures. They cannot be illustrated or illuminated by substitutive rationalisations and linguistifications. The following lines from Rumi’s Mathnawi would be in order:
"Would that Being had a tongue, that it might remove the veils from existent beings.

"O breath of (phenomenal) existence, whatsoever words thou mayest utter, know that thereby thou hast bound another veil upon it (the mystery).

"That utterance and (that) state (of existence) are the bane of spiritual understanding; to wash away blood with blood is absurd, absurd" (Rumi, *Mathnawi*, Book III, Verses 4725-4727)

The normal modes of understanding, explanation and interpretation such as sense-experience, reason and language suffer from inseparable limitations. In view of the same, philosophical systems and theological interpretations cannot furnish us an appreciation of Reality. For Rumi, only a man of intuition or man of love can be the real criterion of knowledge, truth and reality. Even the doubt of the man of love has the scent of certainty. Even his infidelity has a ring of true religion. Even his falsehood smells true. The irresistible onward march of love can be consumed only in the fire of love (Hakim, *op.cit.*, 55-56).

It is not the man of learning and intelligence who inaugurates revolutionary turnarounds in history. It is the men of love, intuition and revelation – the Prophets; who direct and execute breakthroughs in our onward march of spiritual evolution. Hundreds of thousands of lances of Pharaoh were shattered by one staff of Moses. The great medical achievements of Greece were a laughing stock in the presence of the breath of Jesus. Great poetical achievements of Arabs paled into insignificance in comparison to the revelations of an illiterate Prophet (Rumi, Book I, Verses 527-29). A man of love, intuition and revelation realizes his divinity and becomes the source of infinite power and knowledge. Such a realized soul is like Christ, the spirit of God-realising our transcendental or eternal self is the end and goal of life. He is the ideal Man clothed with the attributes of divinity. He is identical to Logos or
the Universal Reason. His eyes pierce every veil because he sees with the light of God:

"The spiritual insight is the gift of God; it is a fountain in the midst of the soul". (Rumi: *Mathnawi*, Book IV, Verse 1964).

"Whosoever has a door opened in his breast sees the Sun in every item" (Khalifa Abdul Hakim, op.cit., p. 100)

"The Sufi's book is not composed of ink and letters: it is naught but a heart white as snow" (Rumi: Book II, Verse 159)

"He who has an impressionless and clear breast becomes a mirror for the impression of the Unseen" (Hakim: op.cit., p. 100)

Rumi stresses that propositional knowledge cannot furnish certainty about what is Ultimately Real. In order to authentically appropriate the certainty with regard to Reality of God the seeker will have to actually burn into the fire of love of God. It is only the love of God which can culminate into the vision of the Splendour and Beatitude of God.

**Mulla Sadra**

Mulla Sadra (1571-1640 A.D.), an outstanding Iranian Sufi philosopher was inspired by Greek Masters, the Quran and Sunnah, and esoteric teachings of the Imams. He was also profoundly inspired by the mystic philosophy of Plotinus philosophical *weltanschauung* of Ibn Sina and gnostic wisdom of Ibn Arabi. He synthesized religious revelation, philosophical demonstration and mystical illumination with a view to achieving integral truth in all its gradations and manifestations. As a multidimensional and integral genius he was open to the challenges and imperatives of religion, philosophy and mysticism. In his intellectual achievements and spiritual accomplishments, he was as impressive and influential as Ghazali, Ibn Arabi and Rumi.
Mulla Sadra classifies knowledge into various schemes: there are Theoretical Sciences and Practical Sciences. There are also science of words (Ilm al-Aqwal), the science of act (Ilm al-Afal) and the science of contemplation (Ilm al-Ahwal). There are also worldly sciences and other-worldly sciences. Broadly speaking, there are mainly two types of knowledge; (i) formal knowledge, and (ii) intuitional knowledge. Formal knowledge can be acquired through schooling and training. Intuitional knowledge is the privilege of the Prophets and the Saints who attain to this knowledge through intellectual illumination and spiritual purification.

Mulla Sadra's philosophy is anchored on the unity and gradation of Being. While Being’s fundamental quiddities are nothing but accidents, they do not have a reality independent of Being. Metaphysics is an investigation of Absolute Being which is unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity and essentially indivisible and beyond all contradictions. While God is self-subsisting. Being, everything beside God is a part of collective Being. While God is Necessary Being, the universe is possible Being. There are particular quiddities and universal quiddities. The terrestrial world is the home of particulars and the universal quiddities are as archetypes in the spiritual world. The activities of the human and non-human species are governed by their respective archetypes (Kazmi, (2003, 59-65).

The universe is a manifestation of Being. However, there are degrees and stages of manifestation. While God is Absolute Being, things besides God can be hierarchized in a chain of respective relativity ranging from the pure potentiality of the matter to the highest realm of Pure Intelligences. Becoming is nothing but recreation of the accidents as well as the substance of the universe at every instance. The velocity of the change is so rapid that the all-pervading substantial motion gets imperceptible. The Being of the universe is renewed at every moment through substantial motion. The world is created at every instant. The first determination of Divine Essence is the reality of Mohammad, the pure intelligences emerging subsequently. The Prophets and
Saints are given revelations and intuitions through the Last Intelligence which determines and govern the terrestrial world. Knowledge is the very substance of cosmic manifestation itself. Knowledge and Being or the Knower and Known are essentially the same. God’s knowledge of things is identical with their being. God’s Being and Essence are identical. While knowing His Essence, God is simultaneously the Knower, the Knowledge and the Known. Mulla Sadra presages Hegel in the espousal of the identity of Thought and Being.

Soul passes through an evolutionary process starting through material, vegetative and animal stages. It finally emerges unto human plane. It is invested with perceptual, imaginative and intellectual faculties through which human knowledge is acquired and appropriated.

**Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi**

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, qualified or critiqued the doctrine of *Wahdat-al-Wujud* (Oneness of Being) advanced by Ibn Arabi. Sirhindi’s doctrine was designated as *Wahdat-al-Shuhud* (Oneness of appearance). The doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wujud* of Ibn Arabi advances the view that Being is One and that only that One Being or Allah exists. What appears, universe is manifestations of His Attributes. Thus, the universe is merely nominal, unreal, imaginary, objectively non-existent and God alone exists. The world of multiplicity exists only as the modes of His Unity (Faruqi, 1977, 86-91).

Shaikh Sirhindi launched a powerful critique of Ibn Arabi’s ontocosmological position. As a mystic or Sufi seer Sirhindi claims to have negotiated three stages of realization: firstly, he experienced the stage of *Wujudiyat* or pantheism, secondly, he passed through *Zilliyat* or adumberation and thirdly, he negotiated the stage of *Abdiyyat* or servitude. At the first stage of *Wujudiyat* or pantheism, Sirhindi intimately experiences the surety or certainty of God. At this stage, like Ibn Arabi, he also experiences the identity of God and the Universe. The second stage of his spiritual experience intimates
to him the realization that the universe has a measure of reality of its own even though it is just a shadow or adumbration of the reality of God. At the third and final stage of Abdiyyat or servitude, Sirhindi comes to realize that two of his previous realizations or experiences were purely subjective or unreliable. At this stage, Sirhindi finds no scope for the identity of God, man and universe. In the process, Sirhindi questions the very epistemic validity of mystical experiences and claims. Finally, Sirhindi realizes the utter impossibility of grasping God through mystical experience. Sirhindi becomes categorically convinced that God is beyond the categories of human understanding and interpretations. He is absolutely outside the cognitive faculties human beings are blessed with. He is absolutely transcendental and we can realize or appropriate him only through faith (Farauqi, op. cit., 98). Accordingly, Sirhindi questions all the mystical claims advanced by Ibn Arabi. He questions the modus operandi, locus standi and raison de'etre of Ibn Arabi’s mystical weltanschauung.

Firstly, he questions Ibn Arabi’s claim that Attributes of Allah are identical with His Being and world is the emanation of His Attributes. The Divine Attributes are perfect whereas the world supposed to be their emanation is radically imperfect. There is, for example, no resemblance between Divine Knowledge and human knowledge and it is absolutely questionable to regard human knowledge in whatsoever sense an emanation or manifestation from Divine Knowledge.

Secondly, Mujadid says that Ibn Arabi’s basic contention that only God exists and nothing exists apart from God is a function of the mystical stage of Fana (annihilation of self). At this stage, the mystic is so much absorbed in the God that he becomes utterly oblivious of the phenomenal features, objects and events of the world. However, it does not mean that the world does not exist. Stars in the sky do disappear from sunrise to sunset but it doesn’t mean that they no longer exist. Our experience of concentration on or absorption into God can for a while eclipse the phenomenal world but it doesn’t mean that the world
as such does not exist or stops existing at all (ibid: p. 103). Only a higher mystical experience which goes beyond the stage of Fana can furnish us the realization that assumption of the unreality of the world is a pernicious mistake.

Thirdly, Sirhindi contends that Ibn Arabi’s ontocosmological position does not accord with two of the fundamental teachings of the Quran viz; God’s being absolutely distinct from the world and the world itself being a reality and not something unreal, imaginary or nominal. The entire Qur’anic commandments, injunctions, propositions, promises of reward, warnings of punishment etc., assume the reality of the world. In case, God forbidding, the world is unreal, the entire Qur’anic world-view and value-system becomes’ infructuous and pointless (ibid: 104).

Fourthly, Ibn Arabi’s basic contention of the identity of God, man and the universe is a function of the mystical stage of *Tajalli-i-Dhati* (vision of Being). At this stage, the mystic feels that he is directly vouchsafed the plenitude and beatitude of God. However, this is only a feeling or appearance of the divulgement of God’s reality to the mystic. Only when a mystic outgrows this mystical stage, can he realize that God is wholly other and cannot be approached through any experience. It is at this stage that the mystic can grasp the utter futility of the identity-thesis. Ibn Arabi’s uncompromising espousal and radical advocacy of identity-thesis has got to be appreciated against the backdrop of his failure to graduate from a lower mystical stage to a higher one (ibid: 104).

Fifthly, Sirhindi contends that Ibn Arabi’s doctrine of adumbration is highly untenable. Firstly, the world is not an adumbration of God. Now, even if we accept the world to be an adumbration of God, it does not necessarily establish their identity. Ibn Arabi’s contention of identifying man with God is also a fabrication or concoction of his fertile imagination. Quran does bring out that God is nearer to man than his jugular vein or God has made man in His own image. However, it does not prove the identity of man with God. At best,
it establishes that God and human soul are non-spatial and thus resemble, in this respect, with each other (Ibid., pp. 105-117).

_Sixthly_, Sirhindī questions Ibn Arabī’s ontocosmology by pointing out that his position is antithetical to the teachings of the Prophet. The Prophets do not teach Oneness of Being; they, instead teach Oneness of God. The fundamental proposition advanced by Prophets is that there is no God but Allāh but they do not teach that nothing exists besides Allāh. The basic assumption of the religion of Prophets is the duality of God and world. The doctrine of the identity of God and world is a contradiction of the teachings of the Prophets. Instead of proclaiming the identity of God and world, Prophets underline that God is the creator of the universe and the universe is His creation.

_Seventhly_, Ibn Arabī’s doctrine is unacceptable to Sirhindī for its espousal of relative evil and denial of real evil. If universe is deemed to be a manifestation of God then there is no scope for evil in this universe for it is a manifestation of the Perfect God. However, Islam categorically brings out unconditional evil such as heresy— which is an unqualified evil. Ibn Arabī’s doctrine can at best explain or accommodate relative evil but it cannot explain or give a coherent account of absolute evil. However, the unacceptability and inexplicability of absolute evil is an unqualified negation and contradiction of Islamic value-system.

_Eightly_, Ibn Arabī’s doctrine of Oneness of Being cuts at the very roots of man’s moral agenthood. Consequently, it demolishes the very notion of moral responsibility and abolishes the very concept of our eschatological accountability. It is so on account of the fact that Ibn Arabī’s doctrine implies that whatever action is carried out by any human being at any point of time is, in fact, carried out by God. Sirhindī contends that such an implication tantamounts to demolishing of one of the cornerstones of Islam, viz; the moral agent-hood and freedom of man (Mir: 2008, 57-9).
Ninthly, Sirhindi criticizes Ibn ARabi’s doctrine of Oneness of Being for violating some continuously held beliefs and practices of Muslim community. By identifying world with God, Ibn Arabi is seamlessly getting omnijustificatory. Any beliefs and any practices; whatsoever, whenssoever, wheresoever, can be justified by recourse to Ibn Arabi’s ontocosmology. For example, Ibn Arabi can provide justification for Idol worship. It can be argued that worship of any object as manifestation of God can be construed as worship of God (Ibid., p. 58).

Tenthly, Sirhindi criticizes Ibn Arabi for presenting a doctrine which has not been advanced by any of the outstanding Sufi’s from the advent of Islam since the early seventh century A.D. to the end of twenty century A.D. i.e. for almost first six hundred years of Islamic history. In view of the same, Sirhindi declares Ibn Arabi’s doctrine to be totally incompatible with authentic beliefs and values of Islam (Ansari, (1966), 106-10).

In view of the above considerations, Sirhindi stresses that Ibn Arabi’s doctrine of Oneness of Being is untenable, groundless and false. The mystic experience of Oneness of Being is a function of the institutional training and conditioning of seekers. We just cannot know God by recourse to intuition or mystical experience. God has created the entire universe out of absolute nothing. The world has an existence besides God. Of course, the world has no genuine reality of its own. It is not more than an appearance. However, it’s appearance does not depend on our fancy or imagination. It does exist independent of us. For all its reflected glory, the world nevertheless is a creation of God. Man too despite his spiritual immanence is a worshipper and servant of God. Accordingly man has to be guided by the commandments of Allah. Only through faith in and obedience to Allah can man achieve the supreme felicity, as man is incapable of knowing God by whatsoever means. The path to Allah is that of devotion and not that of knowledge (Farauqi, 117-139).
Shah Wali Allah

Shah Wali Allah was an outstanding Sufi philosopher of eighteenth century India. He had a special acumen for what may be called hermeneutics of reconciliation. He tried to workout reconciliation among (i) various schools of jurisprudence, (ii) various Sufi Orders, (iii) Shari’ah and Tariqqah and (iv) Wahdat al wujud and Wahdat al-Shuhud.

Shah is especially famous for his reconciliation between Wujudi and Shuhudi ontocosmological standpoints. Shah Wali Allah’s reconciliation between Wahdat al-Wujud and Wahdat al-Shuhud starts with the assumption that God created Nafs-i-Kulli or the Universal Soul ex-Nihlo. The differentiation of this Universal Soul constitutes our universe. The Universe we are living in manifests the Universal Soul in various modes. When Sufis talk of Unity-in-diversity, they are talking of the unity of the Universal Soul. It should not be construed to be the unity of the world and Divine Being, although, explaining the distinction between God and Universal Soul is impossible of formulation. It is beyond the grasp of human faculties of understanding to clearly and categorically distinguish between the Divine Being and Universal Soul. Confusing one with the other by Sufis can be highly misleading. The following words are worthy of serious consideration:

Shah Wali Allah contends that pantheists have failed to grasp the real nature of God. The failure has been mainly due to deficient intellect and immature faculties. They could not understand the transcendent and independent nature of God owing to their preoccupation with the nature of Divine manifestation. Unlike, the common pantheists Shah Wali Allah believed in the transcendental nature of God. However, he also believed in His Immanence. In fact, Shah Wali Allah maintains that Wahdat al-Wujud and Wahdat al Shuhud are two related terms used at two different places in an argument on Divine Being.³ (Islamic Culture, 1952, 12).
According to Shah Wali Allah, the Universal Soul is the source of all forms of existence. The primordial process of origination brings about the emergence of the Universal Soul. From this Universal Soul originates the multiplicity or the multi-complexity of the entire universe. The Universal Soul subsists by itself. It is simultaneously the cause of the subsistence of everything other than itself. It is both immanent and transcendent and pervades the entire universe. The human faculties of understanding and interpretation can not graduate beyond a consideration of the Universal Soul to the original Sanctum Sanctorum or realm of Divine Existence or realm of Allah. Our highest spiritual progress is limited to a realization of the Universal Soul (Jalbani, 98).

Shah Wali Allah works out a creative synthesis or reconciliation between the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wujud* as formulated by Ibn Arabi and doctrine of *Wahdat al-Shuhud* as outlined by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. Both these doctrines, according to Shah Wali Allah try to explain the relationship between the Absolute and its manifestations or revelations in the light of their respective mystical intuitions. The mystical intuition of a Sufi seer like IbnArabi orientates him to perceive all existent phenomenon as modes of Being. The mystical intuition of a Sufi seer like Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi orientates him to view phenomenon as autonomously and independently existing (Rizvi, 1978, 258). The apparent differences between the *Wujudi* and *Shuhudi* doctrines are occaigned by differing linguistic expressions employed by their exponents. When Ibn Arabi says that the names and attributes of Universal Soul signifies the realities of the existing things and when Shaikh Sirhindi says that existing things are totally devoid of any reality and their reality if any is granted to them through the reflection of the lights of name and attributes of the Universal Soul, they are essentially saying the same thing (Jalbani, 99). There is no substantial difference between these two doctrines. The Mujadid and Ibn Arabi relate the same fact in two different languages. But the short-sighted critiques look upon these matter of vital difference (Sharif : (1995), 1572).
(C) PHILOSOPHERS

(a) Ikhwan Al-Safa

By late tenth century A.D. an association of men of science, religion, mysticism and philosophy was formed at Baghdad. The scientists, religionists, mystics and philosophers comprising Ikhwan al-Safa were committed to a rational discussion and critical evaluation of all that was under the Sun. In their fifty two treatises they discussed physical, chemical, biological, geographical, astronomical, mystical, metaphysical, mathematical, logical, social, political and anthropological questions and issues of fundamental significance. They were highly eclectic and derived their philosophical elements from Hebraic, Syriac, Christian, Zoroastrian, Hindu, Islamic and Greek thought. More importantly, Pythagoreas, Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus were their philosophical heroes. They were guided by the assumption of the ultimate compatibility among religious, scientific and philosophical pursuits.

In keeping with the Platonic and Neo-Platonic mysticism, they assumed the purification of the soul to be the ultimate purpose of knowledge or gnosis. Along with body, man is also blessed with rational and spiritual elements which constitute his soul. The soul in its search for purification graduates from consideration of the concrete to the assimilation of the abstract. While sense experience furnishes us the knowledge of the phenomenal world, logical and mathematical propositions are intuitively grasped by our soul. The soul belongs to the realm of rational and super-sensible. This realm is also the abode of Universals of Plato, Laws of Logic, Axioms of Mathematics, Absolute Values and Religious Verities etc. The soul, spirit and reason belong to the same realm. Absolute values such as Truth, Beauty and Goodness also belong to this realm. Human soul is primordially and innately endowed with all actual and possible knowledge. If we can realize our innate potential, we can achieve all actual and possible knowledge. All knowledge is recollection of the laws of pure reason by our soul (De Boer, 1985, 84-5).
Ikhwan al-Safa, in deference to Pythagoreas, Plato and Aristotle underlined the importance of studying mathematics and logic with a view to purifying our soul. They also laid great emphasis on the righteous conduct and religious life as measures for the purification of soul. The ontological, cosmological and metaphysics orientation of Ikhwan al-Safa was directed by Neo-Platonic views. For them, as for Plotinus, human thought and knowledge can never encompass God. Common people tend to develop sensuous and pictorial conception of God.

Philosophers, in view of their advanced spiritual endeavours correspondingly developed a higher or advanced conception of God. For Ikhwan al-Safa God is beyond all material and mental distinctions and oppositions. The world is derived from God by recourse to an emanatory process. While all individual souls return to the World Soul, the World Soul will also finally return to God. All individual souls have to pass through the purificatory process in view of their material entanglements. Every Soul has been blessed with various faculties or powers. The highest faculties according to human soul are philosophical and religious powers. The highest accomplishment to be worked out by religion and philosophy is complete moral and spiritual transformation of man.

(b) Farabi

Farabi (870-950 A.D.) is one of the most celebrated philosophers of Muslim world. He was an outstanding logician, metaphysician, cosmologist and epistemologist. He was also one of the greatest political and ethical philosophers of all time. Besides being a profound Islamic scholar, he had mastered Greek philosophical sciences as well. Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus had especially impacted his philosophical development. He struggled all along his philosophical career to working out a creative synthesis between Greek philosophical doctrines and the Qur’anic beliefs and values.
For Farabi, Being is the most universal and most indefinable of concepts. There are two types of Being: Necessary Being (Wajib al-Wujud) and Possible Being (Mumkin al-Wujud). The Necessary Being is substantial and independent of all possible beings. The non-existence of Necessary Being is inconceivable and unthinkable. The Necessary Being has to necessarily exist; it cannot but exist. The Necessary Being is universal, eternal, substantial and such a Being cannot be anything but God according to Farabi. What exists beside God is contingent and may or may not exist. Farabi’s proof for the existence of God are from Motion, Cause and Contingency. Firstly, the all-pervading movement across the spectrum implies that there has to be a Prime Mover. The causal chain across the spectrum implies that there has to be an Ultimate First Cause. The chain of contingent existents implies that there has to be a Necessary Existence. That Prime Mover, that First Cause and that Necessary Existence is God.

In his epistemological investigations, Farabi is both an empiricist and rationalist. The knowledge of individuals and particulars are furnished to us through five senses. However, the conceptual or universal knowledge is provided to us through our intellect. We are also blessed with imaginative, cogitative and recollecting powers. Even our instincts have innate cognitive functions. For example, animals are instinctively oriented to dangers from predators and accordingly conduct themselves to safety. Our intellectual powers are characteristically human powers by recourse to which we judge true from false, good from evil, real from unreal, significant from insignificant and beautiful from ugly. Man is blessed with (i) a speculative intellect and (ii) a practical intellect; the formal understanding the universal and eternal principles and later governing the operations within the sensible world. The speculative intellect is comprised of four faculties: (i) the Passive Intellect, (ii) the Active Intellect, (iii) the Acquired Intellect and (iv) Actual Intellect. The Passive Intellect is potentially the source of intelligibility of phenomenal features or objects. It graduates from mere potentiality to actuality when it sifts the
individuating notes from the essences of objects. The Active Intellect is the cause of the Passive Intellect's passing from potentiality to actuality. The Passive Intellect has the potentiality which is actualized by the Active Intellect. The Acquired Intellect has the function of comprehending abstractions. The Acquired Intellect is the agent of actualization. The Agent or Actual Intellect is that principle which makes that essence which was in intellect in potentiality, an intellect in actuality and which makes the intelligible in potentiality into intelligible into actuality. It is treated as an immaterial, eternal substance that functions as the efficient cause of human intellection enabling universal concept to be abstracted from sensible images (Nasr & Leaman: 1990, 186). Farabi also brings out an account of the Prophetic revelation. The Prophet with a supremely powerful imagination can commune with the Active Intelligence and can attain to most authentic inspirations and visions. The revelations are emanations from God which the Prophet negotiates through the intermediation of Active Intelligence. The mystics are also blessed with visions and inspirations through contact with the Active Intelligence. Every person is potentially capable of communing with Agent Intelligence through imagination. However, only privileged and chosen people have such a powerful imagination. The Prophets can commune with Active Intelligence through imagination and philosophers are too capable of doing the same through contemplation. Thus religious truth and philosophical truth are both radiations of Divine Illumination.

(c) Ibn Sina

Ibn Sina was one of the foremost philosophers and creative thinkers in the history of Islam. He is inspired by Aristotle and Plotinus. He is also deeply impacted by Farabi. Like Farabi his main philosophical mission was working out a reconciliation between Islamic world-view and assumptions and principles of Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic systems of philosophy.

Ibn Sina’s metaphysics, theology and ontocosmology are a synthesis of Greek philosophical doctrines and the Qur’anic beliefs. For Ibn Sina, God is
eternally and supremely transcendental. However, God’s relationship with the world is negotiated by intermediary links. These links relate Absolute Eternity and Necessity of God with a world of pure contingency. Following Neo-Platonic theory of emanation, Ibn Sina argues that the First Intelligence alone flows from God. He being an Absolute Unity, only one thing can emanate from Him. The First Intelligence gives rise to two entities: (i) The Second Intelligence and (ii) the First and Highest sphere. This dual emanatory process continues down to Tenth Intelligence which presides over sublunary world. The existence of God, according to Ibn Sina does not require any metaphysical or theological proof. God is the ground of Being. His Existence is Self-Evident. Given God we can understand the existence of the world. Ibn Sina advocates mind-body dualism. For him, soul is a substance capable of existing independently of body. The soul is an independent substance and is our transcendent self, a pure spiritual entity. However, at the phenomenal level there exists a mystic link between each soul and body which renders them exclusively appropriate for each other. Ibn Sina advocates that soul is capable of transcending its own body. At this level, the soul becomes akin to Universal Soul. It is of the nature of mind to influence matter and it is of the nature of matter to obediently follow the instructions of mind (Sharif: (1995). 487-492).

According to Ibn Sina, human thinking, in its raw form, is ultimately linked to errors of appearance and desire and epistemic and moral limitations. It needs great intellectual struggle to elevate the representations of the sense-experience to the pure truth of Reason. It is through reason that we can gain necessary knowledge with regard to respective propositions in their different permutations and combinations. The existence originates in the mind of God and when existents appear in material forms, we are confronted by plurality and multiplicity. It is only at the human intellectual level that universal ideas are established.

Ibn Sina classifies soul into three kinds: (a) the vegetable minds or souls, (b) the animal minds or souls and (c) the rational or human minds or
souls. The vegetable mind possesses three faculties: (i) nutritive power, (ii) power of growth and (iii) power of reproduction. The animal mind possesses two faculties: (i) motivative faculties and (ii) perceptive faculties over and above the three faculties they share with vegetable mind. All the faculties of vegetable and animal minds are shared by the human mind. However, man is also blessed with reason or intellect. The human rational soul can be divided into (a) practical and (b) theoretical faculties. The practical faculties or the principle of movement of the human body, motivate the body to actions characterized by deliberation and purposive consideration. The function of the theoretical faculty is to attune to the higher realm of ideas. This faculty receives the impressions of the Universal Forms. Ibn Sina classifies Theoretical Intellect also as (i) Habitual Intellect, (ii) Actual Intellect and (iii) Acquired Intellect. Man is also bestowed with various kinds of perceptions such as perception by sense, perception by imagination and perception by estimation.

Reason stands at the apex of the intellectual powers of the soul. The Unity of Reason is exhibited in self-consciousness. Reason lifts up the lower powers of the soul and refines sense-perception. Reason at first, a mere capacity for thought becomes elaborated by the finished material conveyed to it by the external and internal senses. Real essence of man lies in his rational soul to which is given the higher enlightenment by the world-spirit (De Boer: 141-142).

Ibn Sina also brings out the necessity for divinely ordained Prophetic revelation. The Prophet, without much formal instruction, can by his very nature become the repository of truth. He must be an exceptionally endowed man who has a total contact with reality which translates itself into propositions about the nature of reality and about future history. It is simultaneously intellectual and spiritual. It is on the basis of his spiritual insight that the true Prophet creates new moral values and influences human history. The Prophet has a deep and unalterable self-assurance and faith in his own capacity for true knowledge and accurate moral judgment. His faith in himself makes others
believe in him. The creative knowledge of the Prophet is christened by Ibn Sina as Active Intellect and identified with the angel of revelation. The Prophet qua Prophet is identical with the Active Intellect. The Prophetic revelation impels people to action. The Prophet can express his moral insights into definite purposes, principles and indeed into socio-political structure. The Prophet therefore has to be a law-giver and a statesman par-excellence. The philosopher is gifted with a special tablet to appreciate the real meaning and significance of the Law given by the Prophet. For non-philosophers who can not attain to philosophical understanding of the Law, the letter of the Law must remain the literal truth (Sharif: (1995) 498-501). Ibn Sina’s epistemological perspective is deeply embedded by mystical elements as well. Through allegorical strategies he tries to explain the ascent of human soul or spirit to the sanctam sanctorum of Divine Beauty and Light.

(d) Ibn Rushd

Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) was possibly the foremost Arab Spanish philosopher and the foremost rationalist philosopher amongst Muslim philosophers. His Arabic commentaries on Aristotle’s treatises passed on to Europe in Latin translation and were instrumental in disseminating Greek scientific and philosophical culture to Mainland paving the way for Renaissance and subsequent advanced intellectual and cultural achievements across the Continent. Following Farabi and Ibn Sina, he worked out reconciliation between Islam and Greek rationalism with consummate hermeneutical skill and intellectual daring. He advanced forceful arguments in his Tahafat al Tahafah (Incoherence of the Incoherence) which he wrote as a critical response to Ghazali’s Tahafat al Falasifah (Incoherence of philosophers), in defence of the philosophical approach to an appropriation of Islam.

Ibn Rushd underscores that philosophy far from being antithetical to Islam, is actually proactively recommended, prescribed and ordained by the Quran. Scores of verses underlining the relevance and significance of
philosophy can be cited from the Qur'an indicating that the general Muslim aversion to philosophy is driven more by the Mullah than by the Allah. Dogmatic theologians brimming with their pointless literalism and bereft of the requisite hermeneutical nuances and sophistications, advance accounts both of philosophy and Islam which are confused and confusing. Philosophy is nothing more than speculating on the beings and considering them in so far as they lead to the knowledge of the Creator. As against dialectical, rhetorical and sophistical methods of deduction, the Qur'an asks us to appropriate God through rational consideration and demonstrative method (Sharif: (1995), 545). The Quran exhorts us to cultivate rational approach with a view to deciphering the significance of the cosmos. It exhorts us to derive appropriate lessons from the rise and fall of civilizations and from the various states of our own soul.

In working out a reconciliation between the beliefs outlined in the Quran and rational philosophical claims advanced by Greek philosophers, Ibn Rushd underlines the truth of both religion and philosophy. He emphasized that both religious beliefs and philosophical propositions were true. Any conflicts between religion and philosophy were apparent. There is no basic disharmony between philosophical propositions and scriptural revelations. The apparent contradiction, if any, can be removed by recourse to appropriate hermeneutical response (Watt; 1962, 140).

The following assumptions of Ibn Rushd's method of interpretation bring out his strategy aimed at reconciling the apparent conflict between religion and philosophy:

(i) “Whenever the conclusion of a demonstration is in conflict with the apparent meaning of scripture, that apparent meaning admits of allegorical interpretation” (Ibn Rushd: Fasl al-Ma‘qal, p. 292).

(ii) “Philosophy is in general true and unalterable and the work of reconciliation has to be effected chiefly through finding harmonious interpretation of scriptures” (Montgomery Watt: op.cit., p. 140).
(iii) "If the traditional (al-Manqul) is found to be contrary to the rational (al-Maqul), it is to be interpreted in such a way as to be in harmony with the rational" (Sharif, op.cit., 546).

(iv) "Although Averroes believed that religion and philosophy are in two different orbits, he nevertheless felt the necessity of reconciling the two and of so stating the philosophic doctrines as not to offend religion and of so conceiving the religious dogmas that they would not conflict with philosophies" (Paul Edward (ed.), Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol. IV, 1967, 222).

According to Ibn Rushd, philosophical mode of grasping the truth is demonstrative whereas religious mode of grasping the truth is figurative or allegorical. Philosophy and religion are alternative modes of understanding the same truth. It is imprudent of theologians to publicly circulate the apparent conflicts between philosophical arguments and scriptural revelations that can easily be resolved by appropriate interpretation. It is equally imprudent of philosophers to reveal their esoteric interpretations for public consumption as such an approach proliferates sectarian polarisation. Philosophers can carry out and carry on their demonstrations. However, the people at large who are not inclined to demonstrative reasoning but are temperamentally oriented to dialectical or rhetorical modes of presentation or persuasion should not get embroiled in philosophical disputations. As a matter of fact, philosophers endeavour to arrive at truth as it is and common people appropriate truth as they themselves are. Philosophers strive for objective truth. Common people appropriate truth that is subjective. The common people can imaginatively and subjectively arrive at the same basic beliefs which philosophers can arrive at through rational deliberations. It is impossible as well as unnecessary to strive for a universally acceptable conception of God. We have different emotional and intellectual needs. Common people can feel more satisfied by imagining God somehow somewhat pictorially. The philosophers can conceive Him on a highly sophisticated and abstract plane. The purpose of the Quran is to
orientate masses to belief in the Oneness and Supremacy of Allah, belief in the authenticity of the Prophethood and belief in the reality of the Day of Judgement and accountability. The inculcation and stabilization of religious beliefs would hardly have been buttressed up or reinforced by recourse to fine-spun philosophical sophistications.

(e) Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan

Sir Sayyid was an outstanding Muslim thinker of nineteenth century India. Following Mu'tazilites and Ibn-e-Rushd, Sir Sayyid is an uncompromising radical rationalist who advanced a thoroughgoing rationalist explanation or interpretation of Islamic beliefs and values. Of course, as a believing Muslim, Sir Sayyid does not and cannot offer a rational explanation of the Qur'anic beliefs which beliefs are to be appropriated by recourse to unconditional and unexceptional faith. Sir Sayyid too accepts God as Self Existent, One, First, Last, Hidden, Manifest, Eternal, Universal, Truth, Beauty, Goodness, Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent. However, in his articulations and justifications, Sir Sayyid sides with Mu'tazilites. His philosophical approach and theological outlook is rationalist. Sir Sayyid refers to teleological arguments advanced by the Quran as indicative of a Divine Designer or Planner behind the cosmic situation. However, he does not entirely depend on teleological considerations with a view to proving the existence of God. In order to prove the existence of God, he also advances the cosmological argument. Sir Sayyid discerns universal causal nexus across the entire space-time continuum. All phenomenal features are casually interlinked. Sir Sayyid brings out that this causal chain cannot go on forever and has to stop somewhere. At the end of the chain there has to be a cause which is itself uncaused. This Uncaused Cause is the First Cause. This First Cause is God (Maqalat-i-Sir Sayyid, 1962, 15).

The Universe, according to Sir Sayyid, is governed by universal and eternal astronomical, physical and chemical laws. The laws governing the Universe are immutable, irreversible and inviolable. There is no scope for
anything happening capriciously or whimsically. There is no room for suspension of laws governing the Universe. Similarly and analogously, Sir Sayyid advances the view that there is a moral order which is perennially governed by fixed moral laws. The moral laws are as inviolate as physical laws are immutable. Human actions are necessarily followed by their respective consequences whether pleasurable or painful. As man sows so shall he reap. God's interventions, favourable or unfavourable, in this regard cannot even be thought of for such an interference would constitute the violation of His own promises to the effect that He never violates His own promises (Sir Sayyid: *Tafsir al Quran*, vol. III, 1885, 28).

The fact that God is Omnipotent does not signify that He is arbitrary. God can do anything. However, He will not do anything and everything. No external limitations can be placed on God’s undertakings. However, He is absolutely self-determined. He is regulated by His own plans and purposes. In view of the same, the possibility of miracles is ruled out both logically and actually. Miracles as occurrences going against the laws of nature are ruled out by the Qur’an as well (*Ibid.*, p. 33). The immutability of natural laws also impinges on the efficacy of our prayers. According to Sir Syed, our advantages or disadvantages are directly proportional to the righteousness or viciousness of our actions. Prayers only relieve the individual of his anxiety. They have a directive or orientative function. However, such a radical interpretation of the efficacy of prayers was condemned by orthodoxy (Sharif (ed.) (1961) 1605).
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KIERKEGAARD ON SUBJECTIVITY

(A) SUBJECTIVITY

Kierkegaard’s approach to philosophy underlines that philosophy is not an exercise in speculative system building. It is rather a systematic and sustained reflection upon the concrete problems of human existence. As against profound logical, mathematical and scientific investigations for the solutions of the problems under consideration, the nature of theological and philosophical problems is radically and categorically different. Logicians, mathematicians and scientists can achieve great levels of concentration in their respective fields of operation. However, a theologian and a philosopher can experience a sense of incomparable engagement while reflecting upon issues such as existence of God and soul or a set of values leading to good life etc. The theological or philosophical problems are existential in the sense that a sustained reflection on such problems can culminate into a deep and abiding self-transformation and self-authentication.

While being engaged in philosophical problems our whole mode of existence is at stake. A discussion on existence of God or the acceptability of a set of values can not be carried out with geometrical detachment or experimental objectivity. If we accept the existence of God or the moral efficacy of a set of values, there have got to be corresponding changes in our mode of being and style of conduct. The theological beliefs and philosophical ideals entail a pursuit, a struggle, a programme or a plan of action. Scientific research may also lead to action such as manipulation or explanation of external spatio-temporal objects. However, unlike our philosophical engagements it can never touch our depths, our values, our aspirations and our hopes. Philosophical thinking entails need for self-integration and self-transformation. It entails need for total commitment corresponding to a set of
beliefs and values. Such characterizing features of philosophical engagement are totally absent from scientific or mathematical involvements.

Philosophical questions at their core are existential questions as they deeply impact our attitudes, aspirations and responses. Crucial philosophical questions are intimately linked to the choice of way of life. What way of life should we adopt critically depends upon the choice of our beliefs and values. There are alternative sets of beliefs and values and there are no logical and experimental grounds that conclusively clinch one particular set of beliefs and values. Our ontological, cosmological, axiological, teleological, eschatological and sortoriological accounts push us to different or alternative directions and no particular direction can be proved to be the right one. The choice of goal of life or of an ideology or of a value system or of a way of life, is always open-ended and the dilemma arising out of making such choices can never be resolved by recourse to logico-mathematical demonstration or experimental verification. One can make such choices in consultation with our inner voice or echo of conscience or whisper of our ultimate depth, so to say. Such questions are inextricably subjective in character. Answers to such questions can never be demonstrable or verifiable. Such questions are decisional and they are characterized by faith, commitment and choice. Such questions touch the depths of our existence for they can never have definitive answers and often lead us into perplexity and bafflement. In such face of the perplexity and bafflement any response to such questions entails great courage and profound faith; characteristics totally absent from our appropriation of objective truths.

The Kierkegaardian critique of academic philosophy brings out that the apparently non-existential theories such as Materialism, Monism, Dualism, idealism, Rationalism etc. are basically rooted in existential questions with regard to meaning of human life, place of man in the universe or man’s relation to the universe etc. These so-called metaphysical theories have been debated and formulated by academic philosophers as if they could be established by a confirmatory set of arguments or methodologically clinched this or that way.
Therefore, the most fundamental and radical charge against metaphysical or academic philosophy by Kierkegaard is that it is abstract and general and its formulations are worked out in isolation from the concrete problems of life. Historically speaking, western philosophers have been debating highly general and abstract questions about reality, truth, knowledge, meaning etc., and in this exercise the finite human person engaged in struggle and withdrawal, hope and despair, courage and fear, love and hate etc. has been completely forgotten.

The technical questions of philosophy have so much engaged philosophers that the practical problems of life have been almost totally ignored or sidelined by them. Existentialism of Kierkegaard is a protest against philosophical abstractions and conceptualizations which have deposited throughout the historical development of western philosophy. The job of philosophy is not analysis or construction of concepts or essences. It's function is to intensify an individuals' awareness of his own deeper self, his reality as an existing being. In there profound philosophical investigations, aiming at the discovery of Ultimate Reality, academic philosophers or metaphysicians have forgotten the far more important project of self-discovery and self-illumination. The Kierkegaardian approach to philosophy underlines the central significance of the individual as the subject of all philosophical reflections. For Kierkegaard philosophy is not an exercise in abstract arguments but a depth analysis of total human personality with a view to transforming him through a set of freely chosen values. The function of philosophy is the awakening or illumination of the individual existence.

Rationalist philosophers have been, by and large, essentialists. Plato was an essentialist of the highest order. The father of Modern Western Philosophy Descartes was also a hardcore essentialist by recourse to his famous method of Doubt. Descartes eventually tried to prove the existence of self, God and world by offering arguments. As an essentialist he defined mind to be pure consciousness and body to be pure extension. Now to say that the essence of mind is consciousness or thought is to be oversimplificatory and reductionistic.
Our thought cannot capture the concrete and differentiated wealth of the modes of human existence such as choosing, doubting, loving, reasoning, struggling, failing, believing, hoping, etc. and other such determinate modes of human existence. The claim that the essence of mind is thought is highly misleading for willing or choosing is as much the function of mind as is understanding.

However, Descartes’s attempt to prove self, God, world and other people was also uncalled for. Such doubts are pseudo-doubts and such argumentative exercises divert our attention from facing problems of life. The fundamental crisis of life is that we are offered various modes of existence such as aesthetic mode, intellectual mode, ethical mode, mystical mode, spiritual mode, religious mode etc. and we have to appreciate the values of all these modes of existence and choose one mode with a view to achieving self-integration and self-authentication. Philosophy has always dabbled into ontological, cosmological or epistemological questions. However, the most important questions have always been moral. Philosophical ontologists, cosmologists and epistemologists have made philosophy and arena of theoretical clashes. Such theoretical clashes have been essentially mistaken, misplaced and misconstrued. The job of philosophy has always been to illuminate the possibilities of human existence and to help an individual in choosing and appropriating a definite mode of existence, otherwise all philosophical investigations are misleading and misdirecting. By indulging in technical obfuscations, philosophy serves as a diversionary tactics from facing the real problems of life. It serves as escape from the hard but necessary problems of life.

Kierkegaard was brought up in nineteenth century Europe dominated by scientistic or mechanistic world-view and value-system, rationalist-empiricist epistemology and objectivistic attitudes and collectivistic mindset. As a reaction to such an intellectual atmosphere Kierkegaard underlined the importance of the individual thinker. Kierkegaard’s critique of nineteenth century centered on European philosophical disdain for passionate individual
inwardness and emphasis on the cultivation of scientific, rationalist, objectivist and collectivist intellectual responses. The characterizing feature of nineteenth century philosophy, according to Kierkegaard, was what he termed a dissolute pantheistic contempt for individual man (Kierkegaard: 1941, 33). The thrust of nineteenth century philosophical milieu was on hard objectivity and absence of personality. An overriding emphasis on “the masses”, “the public”, “the group”, “the crowd” etc. have smothered the individual and the personal. The human being who is an individual, who is not an organ of a larger body, but a person is radically ignored in the age of “the crowd”.

Contemporary society bypasses or ignores the need for passionate commitment which entails living dangerously and instead prefers to be guided by detached understanding and cool reflection. The scholars and intellectuals have mastered the art of reflection. In their quest for absolute truth their lives reflect total lack of involvement and devotion. They understand life but have forgotten how to live. Accordingly, scholars have attempted to hammer out the compatibility of Christianity with the imperatives of modern world. The greater their ability at reflection, the greater their disability to cope with the imperatives of life.

Objectivist philosophers from Plato upto Hegel have effectively excluded everything personal or subjective from philosophy. Kierkegaard brings out that essential philosophical truth cannot be determined objectively, universally and collectively, such truths can be determined only by the individual subjective thinker. Such truths as existence of God or man’s relationship to God etc. cannot be propositionally articulated and subjected to objective or methodological validation and verification. Such truths are expressions of individual commitment. Believing in God is akin to commitment of love, which commitment can never be argumentatively clinched. Similarly on a far more deeper level, a justification or proof for the existence of God is simply impossible of attainment. It is the intensity and not
the objective necessity of our belief which determines its truth. The truth of our belief in God can be authenticated only by the intensity of our commitment.

"An objective uncertainty held fast in the approximation – process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual" (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, op.cit., p. 182).

Kierkegaard has drastically altered our conception as well as function of philosophy. Kierkegaard's perspective on philosophy like that of Wittgenstein is also dissolutionary, disillusionary and liberatory. The fundamental objective of Kierkegaardian perspective on philosophy is to disabuse us of the expectations held aloft by traditional objectivist or rationalist mode of doing philosophy. The traditional philosophical rationalist or objectivist has all along nurtured the hope of finally resolving philosophical problems by advancing disinterested and clear arguments. The leitmotif of Kierkegaardian perspective on philosophy is to persuade us that philosophical problems are not finally disagreements to be settled by highly advanced philosophical arguments; rather the most important philosophical questions are ultimately choices of commitment. Rival or alternative philosophical theories are to be treated as entailing alternative programmes of action; they are not to be treated as conceptual dilemmas being ultimately resolvable by highly advanced and sophisticated pieces of reasoning or by irrefutable and cutting arguments. Philosophical analysis can clarify the illusionary obfuscations of traditional philosophy. It can negatively bring out as to what philosophy cannot accomplish. However, it cannot bring out any positive or affirmative role for philosophy, for ultimate philosophical affirmations or positions can be appropriated by an individual thinker in the ultimate depths of his authenticity or subjectivity. Each one of us has to strive to furnish to ourselves appropriate philosophical responses amid a plethora of conflicting dilemmas and paradoxes.

Kierkegaard objected not just to Hegel's peculiar variety of 'systematic' philosophy, but to the entire Western philosophical tradition which took the
medium of philosophical enquiry to be "The Concept" and objective conceptual truth as its goal. This search for universal, impersonal truth was the defining mark of virtually every major Western philosopher from Plato until Kant and Hegel. Only those truths which held for "every rational creature", regardless of situation and psychological peculiarities, were acceptable as philosophical truth and could be disclosed by a Greek philosopher of fifth century B.C., and if true, must be valid for a Chinese philosopher of the same period as well as for an American philosopher of the twentieth century. A Philosophical truth, for example, the Principle of Universal Causation or the Law of Induction, was not indigenous or peculiar to any particular philosophical style, or to any particular group of philosophers. These laws hold for every man, and the philosopher takes it upon himself to do nothing other than to formulate and prove these principles. The philosopher is explicitly concerned with these principles, but he has no privileged relationship to them (Solomon: From Rationalism to Existentialism, p. 71).

The phrase 'individual existence' is used by Kierkegaard for a man who is not merely a biological organism or a psychological creature or a product of social condition. Only a man who is not merely biologically, psychologically and sociologically determined but is guided by individually appropriated values can be said to be existing in the special Kierkegaardian sense of existence. The really existing individual is passionately anti-social or at least asocial who recognizes his freedom in despair and owns responsibility for his actions. The existing individual is master of his life and legislator of his values. Those who cannot command their lives and legislate their values may also be said to be existing as per the dictional or literal connotation of the term existence. Such people are not the driving force of events and affairs but driven to their arbitrary destinations by powers that be:

And it is just this that it means to exist, if one is to become conscious of it. Eternity is a winged horse, infinitely fast, and time is a worn-out jade; the existing
individual is the driver. That is to say, he is such a driver when his mode of existence is not an existence loosely so called; for then he is no driver but a drunken peasant who lies asleep in the wagon and lets the horses take care of themselves. To be sure, he also drives and is a driver, and so there are many who – also exist (Solomon: 78-85).

For Kierkegaard, existence is not self-evident but something to be striven for through passionate commitment and through realization of one’s personal freedom and through feelings of responsibility. Human existence cannot be achieved through walking, breathing, digesting and performing countless similar chores. Authentic or true existence can also not be achieved by abstract thinking. An authentic existence entails a despairing struggle through realization of various projects by our exercise of freedom with a sense of responsibility.

The achievement of authentic individual existence entails passionate commitment to a way of life. Human existence as such is a perennial conflict between ongoing emergencies, competing desires and confronting alternatives amongst which we have to make choices. Human existence does not derive its significance from any perennially given a priori but from an ultimate commitment to a mode of existence or framework of values within which particular choices can be worked out and implemented.

Western philosophy has, by and large, ignored human existence in the special Kierkegaardian sense. To be sure, modern western philosophy started with the Cartesian ‘Cogito Ergo Sum’ – ‘I think therefore I exist’. Kant’s transcendental as well as empirical self, Fitch’s Ego and Hegel’s Spirit – all pertained to human existence or refer to human subjectivity. However, this is not the subject which ought to have been the starting point of philosophy for Kierkegaard. The Cartesian, Kantian, Fichteian and Hegelian ‘subject’ is the cognitive subject. Such a subject has cognitive reality. Its reality is what it thinks. Descartes claims that this subject is a thinking substance that has
thoughts. Kant argues that one must presuppose a thinking subject in all our mental operations and this thinking subject as against the empirical one is the real subject according to Kant. Kierkegaard does not agree with Descartes or Kant:

The real subject is not the cognitive subject ... the real subject is the ethically existing subject (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 281).

Kierkegaard implies that the entire body corpus of western metaphysical discourse as well as epistemological debates originate from prioritizing, rather primordialising the cognitive or thinking subject in contradistinction to willing, striving, living and existing subject. Kierkegaard questions the vary existence of the thinking subject or the Cartesian Cogito. The Cartesian Cogito does not mean a particular existing being. It does not refer to myself or yourself or anywhich self. It solely refers to the ‘Pure Ego’. A pure ego, by the very nature of case, can have a purely conceptual existence (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 281). A purely conceptual existence can never lead us to real existence. We can never derive existence from thought. An abstract thought, is a thought without a thinker. Trying to prove existence from abstract thought is a contradiction in terms. The very act of abstraction, in fact, is a sort of proof for the existence of the abstract thinker. Pure or abstract thought can neither yield existence nor entirely snuff it out into nothingness (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 281). The real anti-dote against metaphysical agnosticism and epistemological skepticism is to switch over to positing ethical subject to be the fundamental or primordial reality of man.

The choice of a way of life or a mode of existence or a set of values is, in the final analysis, irrational. An ultimate set of goals or ends or a way of life has to be appropriated without any recourse to rational justification. whatsoever our ultimate goals or ends or values, we cannot justify them by recourse to any moral or rational considerations. Kant’s attempt to justify ultimate categorical imperatives or values by showing that these values are
transcendentally necessary for any morality, is finally unattainable. Even if we agree with Kant that certain values can be defended by appeal to reason, one can turn about and challenge the very authority of reason. Morality may be justified on rational grounds but why should I choose to act morally or rationally is a pertinent question which Hegel asks and Kant has no answer to respond to. The criteria of ‘reasonableness’, ‘goodness’, ‘happiness’, ‘social solidarity’, ‘greatest happiness of the greatest number’ on which we might justify a set of moral values, will all rebound or boomerang for it can always be asked as to why we should choose to be reasonable or good, happy, socially concerned, or concerned about the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. Every suggested ultimate ethical criterion can be similarly challenged.

Now, the question is how we are going to choose our way of life or a set of values, what are the grounds on which to choose a set of values or what are the criteria which can justify a way of life. Kierkegaard emphatically denies that there are any grounds or criteria which can justify a way of life or a set of values. The solution offered by Kierkegaard is that we must simply choose a way of life. Our choice in this regard will have to be exercised without appeal to standards, reasons and justifications. No set of reasons or rational justifications can ever lead us to a way of life. The choice of a way of life is an ultimate decision and rationalizations or justifications can play no part in arriving at such an ultimate decision. In the final analysis, choice of a way of life, emanates from our need from a pure or unalloyed commitment. Such a commitment must well up from the depths of our own inwardness or subjectivity, without any appeal to any supporting principles or reasons. The choice of our way of life is totally irrational or we cannot give reasons for our ultimate choice of a way of life. The ultimate choice itself is unjustifiable (Solomon, pp. 88-89).

Kierkegaard is absolutely convinced that our ultimate choice of a way of life is unjustifiable. However, his emphasis on choice of an appropriate way of life is unqualified. The choice of a way of life is the most crucial and
categorical imperative of achieving or appropriating human existence. If we are to exist, we have to leap to a way of life. An emphasis on the absence of ultimate justification can otherwise lead us either to suicide or total retreat to inactivity. Or it might lead us to giving up on choice of existence altogether leading to convenient merger into crowd mentality. However, as the choice of an ultimate way of life is unjustifiable, and making a choice is unavoidable, man is caught on the horns of supreme dilemma. It is crucifying to make such a choice. The poignancy of such a human dilemma is brought out by Robert C. Solomon in the following words:

For the burden of choice is entirely on one’s own shoulder; no other support, whether it be from society, from one’s religious teachings, or from Reason itself can be made responsible of one’s decisions. Because no criteria can be used in ultimate decisions, one cannot blame these criteria for the choice that one makes. The incredible responsibility of having no one and no value to which to turn leads Kierkegaard to cite despair as an essential ingredient in freedom of choice, to cite guilt as an essential component of responsibility, and to identify dread, the dread of an indefinitely large range of possibilities which it is one’s own responsibility to choose between, as the defining passions of human existence (Solomon, op.cit., p. 89).

Kierkegaard does emphasize that there are no reasons or grounds for choosing one way of life rather than another. However, the absence of ultimate justification is actually the absence of ultimate object of justification. There is no objective justification which can justify a single way of life for all men. However, as against, objective reasons there are most crucial subjective considerations which do guide or at least orientate us towards making a choice of a way of life. Our subjective or personal desires, hopes, fears, struggles,
needs, habits, proclivities, predilections, orientations, etc., do silently and subtly persuade us towards an appropriation of a way of life. The choice of a way of life can be made only by a person who has to live within a given scale of life. This is what Kierkegaard means by “Truth is subjectivity”.

Kierkegaard figures out three man conceptions of life. His existential dialectic as against Hegel’s historical dialectic, is the formulation of various opposed conceptions or modes of existence. As against in Hegel’s historical dialectic in which various forms of consciousness are opposed to each other because each gives a one-sided view of life, there opposition can be reflectively mediated into higher forms in which one-sidedness can be ironed out. The inadequacies in the conception of oneself as an individual are corrected in the conception of one self as a rational or moral being, as a member of society. The inadequacies of the ethical conception of self are corrected in the religious stage in which the conception of one self, as Spirit, as part of the absolute ‘God’ becomes fully explicit. At this stage one’s conception of oneself is ‘Absolute’; it is without inadequacies, for it opposes oneself to nothing. Kierkegaard points out that such a mediation may be worked out between opposing ideas but is of no avail to an ethically existing individual who wants to know how to live. The opposed ways of life or alternative courses of action facing an Individual are paradoxes impossible of mediation or resolution. These unsolvable paradoxes are absolute and one can choose either one or other but not have the best of both. Kierkegard’s formulation of three incompatible ways of life – the aesthetic mode, the ethical mode and the religious mode – signify three fundamental commitments or views of life or modes of existence. Amongst these three conceptions of life each entailing a distinct set of values, one can only choose any one of these modes. Any mediation or compromise between these modes of life just canno be worked out. Each mode of existence with its corresponding set of values is rationally indispensable. No way or mode of life can be said to be more rational or reasonable than the other. Our choice of fundamental values is essentially irrational. No set of values can be
epistemologically or methodologically certified to be true. We cannot provide a rational validation of values. We can only be unflinchingly committed to a set of values (Solomon, op. cit., 91).

Kierkegaard made a clear and categorical distinction between scientific hypothesis or philosophical beliefs and religious faith. Both natural theologians and religious apologists fail to make this basic distinction. They confuse scientific or philosophical beliefs with religious faith and design or devise arguments with a view to establishing or proving the respective claims of their respective religions. Thus, religious faith is confused with objectively verifiable beliefs and detailed sophisticated logical arguments are advanced to substantiate its veracity. Kierkegaard radically questioned the soundness or wisdom of the horizontal or all-pervasive application of scientific method or rationalistic arguments. We cannot achieve anything or arrive at any result by recourse to scientific research in the sphere of religion. Nor can we make any headway in this regard by appropriation of a rationalist mindset. Religious faith is categorically different from a scientifically hypothesis. Faith in God can not be logically validated or scientific confirmed. Faith in God was not amenable to logical sophistication or scientific verification. Faith in God signified transformation of a believers' personality through inwardness, subjectivity and commitment.

The following lines bring out Kierkegaard's contention in this regard:

"Faith was not similar to the acceptance of a scientific or factual hypothesis. The belief in God or Christ was not a hypothesis, and hence it was not proper to apply scientific tests of the validity or truth of a hypothesis to such a belief. Faith in God was an act of commitment to a supreme Being or Authority. One either had faith, or did not have it. But faith could never be created with the help of arguments and proofs. The problem was not to prove the truths of Christianity. Indeed, this attempt was
impossible, and betrayed an utter confusion between religious faith and scientific belief. The problem was to become a Christian or be a Christian. If one was already committed to God or Christ, then Apologetics was superfluous. If one was not, then Apologetics or Natural Theology could never make one into a Christian, i.e., a person fully committed to God. This commitment could come as a result of an intense reflection upon his authentic self, that might inwardly and silently be pressing the individual towards a definite choice. A true Apologetics is, thus, the cultivation by the individual of the life of inwardness. Let him listen to the pulsations and whisperings of his authentic self, rather than to the language of verbal creeds and dogmas that may have been poured into his conscious religious education and training. More often than not, they hinder rather than help the traditional Christian in committing himself to Christ. (Jamal Khwaja; 1965, 134-35).

Kierkegaard went through an agonizing spiritual crisis in his younger days. Consequently, he internalized an abiding conviction that he was a man of destiny with a special calling from God. Kierkegaard was blessed with a profound awareness of the human condition and had a deeply entrenched Messianic strain in his personality. Kierkegaard had this profound conviction that he was an exceptional individual with a divinely assigned spiritual mission of reviving new Testament Christianity with a view to resolving the moral and religious crisis his contemporaries were going through. He subordinated his exceptional intellectual and literary skills to working out the moral and religious transformation of his age. Christian beliefs and values were his immediate horizon. His Christian upbringing powerfully inculcated in him the recognition of human finitude and the need to operate as a free authentic
individual without becoming oblivious to the immense possibilities inherent in human personality. Kierkegaard like Pascal was fired with the irresistible ambition of revisiting and restoring the authentic perspective on human condition originally advanced by Christianity. However, such an authentic perspective cannot be restored by recourse to logical induction or deduction. The discovery of Christian truth is true for oneself, it is an existential truth. Kierkegaard was fully convinced that a pantheistic world-view and value-system where spiritually deadening and enervating. A genuine and authentic religious life could be anchored on complete banishment of Pantheistic philosophy. All Pantheistic absolutistic and monistic beliefs and values according to Kierkegaard were anathematic to the essence of Christianity.

Kierkegaard underlined the view that a lonely and solitary individual is the locus of authenticity, although he did not deny the distant possibility of the fellowship of the Church. Kierkegaard's opposition to absolutism of any kind was absolute. His contempt for Pantheism for its contempt of the individual was complete. His unflinching critique of Hegelian.Penchant for universal was unqualified. Accordingly he believed only in Personal Transcendental God and the dependent finite man. Each man stands before God only as lonely single individual. Each one, like Abraham has to face God supported only by one's unconditional dedication to Him. Kierkegaard takes Hegelian absolutism to task for its inability to come to grips with the problem of change and becoming. Kierkegaard was not concerned with the problem of change and becoming as such. His concern with the problem of change was to the extent an individual is involved in becoming himself. One of the main reasons for Kierkegaard's opposition to the Hegelian approach is its identification of the structure of thought with that of Being. Such an identification culminates into Hegel's inability to appreciate the finite mode of the existent or the concrete being. The finite existent beings are in peculiar relationship to God. They are neither excluded from Him nor included in Him. They are neither isolated from Him or identical with Him. The entire order of existence may be said to be included in
God. However, such an inclusion can be out of God's free creative causality. Such an inclusion can not be, as Hegel conceived it, by way of a necessary dialectical identity. The finite existents are radically characterized by becoming. Hegel's failure to grasp the meaning of finite existents makes him incapable of understanding real change. The movement of finite existents is not mere appearance but their characterizing and salient features. Only God is the Real, Necessary, Eternal and Immutable. Finite existents are radically contingent, temporal and changing. Man's historical process is also radically contingent as it is based on a free relationship between man and God (Kierkegaard; *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, op.cit., 79). The finite existents are striving constantly throughout the historical process, existential thinking has to be instantly practical and existential truth always remained unfinished. The existential truth is always paradoxical (*Ibid.*, 117). The mode of the being of the finite existents is always temporal and oriented to future; it is an ongoing existence. As history is contingent and time and becoming are real, there is always scope for novelty and surprise. There is always hope in future for man can always go on choosing fresh possibility. Our ceaseless capacity to choose from ongoing choices fructifies into our self-authentication. It is through ceaseless choices that our unique personality is carved out. Our capacity to lead authentic lives entails a leap – a leap from despair to hope. Our ceaseless capacity for self-authentication signifies our freedom. One who resolves for self-authentication before God is a free man, a man of true faith. Such a passionate decision is profoundly existential in character. Such a profound decision can not be taken by recourse to logical reasoning. Abstract or pure thought can not grapple with such a decision. Abstract or general scientific thinking can, of course, make highly relevant and fruitful contribution in non-existentia! fields of empirical sciences. However, scientific and logical modes of reasoning can contribute little or nothing in negotiating passionate existential decisions.
As against reason which is always concerned with the general and
universal and ideal and systematic, subjectivity is concerned with the
individual existent. Only the individual existent can invite practical interest and
passion from us. Existence is always individual existence. Existence is always
taken as for granted; it is never sought to be demonstrated:

I always reason from existence, not toward existence,
whether I move a sphere of palpable sensible fact or in
the realm of thought. I do not for example prove that a
stone exists, but that some existing thing is a stone. The
procedure in a court of justice does not prove that a
criminal exists, but that the accused, whose existence is
given, is a criminal. Whether we call existence an
accessoriam or the eternal prios, it is never subject to
demonstration. (*Philosophical Fragments*, 31-2).

`Subjectivity' in the context of Kierkegaard's perspective on religion
should not be confused with subjectivism. A subjectivist is a person who
equates belief with feeling or emotion or psychological experience. In
Kierkegaard's philosophy 'subjectivity' denotes personal appropriation of an
object; it is in diametrical opposition to impersonal assent to certain beliefs or
contemplation of a spiritual entity such as soul or God. Subjectivity implies a
deep, persistent and abiding interest towards the object such as God. Such an
object assumes the significance of the SummumBonum or Highest Good or
Supreme Value in the life of a person. It implies a passionate practical
commitment to the object of our concern. It implies unqualified freedom of
choice. The objects of reason necessarily exact our assent by the sheer force of
their evidence. On the other hand, there is no support of evidential data with
reference to which we could subjectively appropriate our object of faith. The
subjective appropriation is devoid of objective grounding or anchoring. A
subjective appropriation of an object of faith implies ineliminable or
ineradicable element of risk. It is leap unto the darkness. It is the greatest
gamble of life for at stake is our be all end-all. Evidentially necessitated object of faith for Kierkegaard is no faith, at all. Authentic faith has to be rooted in freedom of choice. Just as an imposed relationship cannot be authentic so a rationally necessitated and empirically dictated faith cannot be an authentic faith. We can appropriate God through unqualified freedom:

"Freedom is the true wonderful lamp;

When a man rubs it with ethical passion,

God comes into being for him" (Ibid., 124).

Subjectivity as a mode of understanding or realization operates in direct contradistinction to our speculativity. Religious faith is subjectivity at its highest. As any act of subjectivity is posited by will, religious faith as a form of subjectivity is posited by ultimate will. As religious faith entails my relationship with God, it concerns with my eternal welfare, it correspondingly inspires my infinite interest and demands the greatest degree of personal response and commitment from me. God as appropriated by my subjectivity is both supremely existent and absolutely paradoxical. In view of the same, the role of will in religious faith becomes all-important. As the subjective appropriation of God is most dangerous leap that can be taken by man, the risks involved are the highest. The role of rational justification in such a subjective appropriation of God is not only irrelevant but at its most comical (Concluding Unscientific Postscripts, op.cit., 53).

From the Christian point of view faith belongs to the existential. God did not appear in the character of a professor who has some doctrines which must be first believed and then understood. Faith expresses a relation from personality to personality (The Last years: Journals 1853-1885 (ed.) R. Grager Smith, London, 1965, 99-100).

For Kierkegaard, religious faith is perennially opposite to speculative or rational justification. In view of the same, Kierkegaard has assembled one of the most powerful critiques of rationalist philosophy. He has
marshalled devastating considerations against any possible rationalist or objectivist appropriation of religious faith. Nevertheless, rationalist and objectivist philosophy makes an all-important contribution towards our attunements to subjective appropriation of religious faith. The logical possibility of a realm that cannot be understood by reason dawns upon us through our engagement with philosophy. It is through reason that we appreciate the difference between objectivity and subjectivity. Religious faith and subjectivity can be grasped only against the backdrop of philosophical and scientific objectivity. Without understanding the mode of philosophy we cannot follow the direction of subjectivity and faith. It is through the temptations and attractions of speculative philosophy that we are awakened to the full realization of subjectivity. Thus philosophy plays a negatively necessary role in our understanding of religious faith. Only philosophical reflection shows us the impossibility of any rational justification of faith. It is through philosophical reflection that we understand that we cannot understand Christianity.

People have always thought that reflection would destroy Christianity, and is its natural enemy. I hope I have shown, with God’s aid, that religious reflection can retie the knot which a superficial reflection has unraveled for so many years. The authority of the bible, and all that belongs to it, have been abolished, and it looks as if one were only waiting for the ultimate stage of reflection to clear up everything. But see how, on the contrary, reflection is going to render service by putting springs under Christianity again, and in such a way that it is able to hold out against reflection. Christianity of course remains completely unchanged; not a jot has been altered. But the struggle has become different: previously it was only between reflection and immediate simple Christianity; now it is between reflection and simplicity.
armed by reflection... The real task is not to understand Christianity but to understand that one cannot understand it. This is the sacred cause of faith and reflection is sanctified by being used for it. (Kierkegaard: The Works of Love, trans. D.F. Swenson and L. Swenson, Princeton, 1946, 248).

The purpose of Kierkegaard’s writings was to awaken us to the need for unconditional religious commitments. He was trying to jolt his readers out of their complacency into a realization of the need for making the leap of faith. Kierkegaard’s writings were elaborated as a reaction against Hegelian ‘system’. Hegel’s religious rationalism was tantamount to radical denigration and misunderstanding of the logic of religion – it was rather a rejection of Christian faith. As a reaction against the rational extravagences of Hegel, Kierkegaard by recourse to his typical style characterized by rhetorical, paradoxical and ironical exaggerations exalted the irrational and absurd bordering on willful obscurantism. More often than not, Kierkegaard’s celebration of irrationality and absurdity of religious faith and his radical denial of reason give the impression that believability or plausibility of religious faith was directly proportional to its paradoxicality and irrationality. However, irrationality were not for Kierkegaard the ground of religious faith. It is only when philosophical rationalism attempts to play a positive role in the religious sphere by offering explanations, proofs and justifications of religious faith that it is to be rejected. However, this rejection of reason is itself philosophical. Philosophy while appreciating the limits of reason also entertains the domain or jurisdiction of faith as a mode of being and doing other than and beyond its own. In the final analysis, while faith entertains belief against all claims of understanding, it also uses understanding (Soren Kierkegaard — The Last years: Journals 1853-55, 1965, 504).

Broadly speaking, Kierkegaard is operating within the epistemological and methodological framework outlined by Kant. Following Kant’s critique of
Pure Reason, Kierkegaard points out that it is by reason that we understand that there are limits to reason and that there is at least the possibility of objects existing that we do not and cannot know the ‘unknown’ (Soren Kierkegaard: *Philosophical Fragments; op.cit.*, 35). Kierkegaard further writes:

> Every man can distinguish between what he understands and what he does not understand .... And he can discover that there is something which is, inspite of the fact that it is against his understanding and way of thinking. (Soren Kierkegaard: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript; 495*).

The realm or the sphere of the unknown can not be known by any of the faculties of understanding. It is essentially unknowable. Human understanding can not specify and determine it in any way. The unknown is the limit of the human reason. It is absolutely different from what is understandable. There is no mark by which the unknown could be distinguished from what is known. The unknown is understandable and even unutterable. It is beyond the limits of understandability and intelligibility. It lags beyond the limits of knowledge of any kind (*Philosophical Fragments, 35*). Reason knows that there is the possibility of objects existing that we do not and cannot know by reason. Reason does also appreciate that the objective and speculative modes of understanding do not exhaust all the possible modes of understanding. For example, in direct contrast to objective and speculative modes of understanding, there is what Kierkegaard calls ‘Subjectivity’. It is a specific mode of non-speculative personal understanding. Of course, subjectivity as a mode of understanding may not fructify into specific cognitive propositions. It rather results into existential appropriations and commitments.

Religious faith, according to Kierkegaard operates on a different plane in contradistinction to logic or methodology of traditional rationalist philosophy. Religious faith is concerned with the objects that are beyond the reason. As against reason, its mode of understanding is subjectivity. While God is Infinite, human reason is related to the dialectic of finitude, i.e. reason can
know only what is finite (Soren Kierkegaard — The Last Years: Journals 1853-55, op.cit., p. 246). Secondly, the objects of faith are paradoxical, for Christianity claims that infinite God became the finite man in the person of Christ. Thirdly, religious faith entails a vital and personal response and commitment from us. The objects of religious faith do not merely demand speculative assent. Faith is related in the existential. The knowledge of the facts and figures of the entire cosmos cannot increase or decrease an iota of faith. Faith entails a relationship between human personality and Divine Personality. God does not invite theoretical assent from us. He is not an object of our intellectual and mystical contemplation. God invites the supreme personal interest from us. Our speculative contemplation of God necessitates complete dispassionate detachment from us. It entails distanciated and impersonal approach from us. However, the interest of a man of faith in God is profoundly personal and engaging. He sees God as the source of his eternal happiness:

The subject is infinitely interested in his eternal happiness... But in order to philosophise he must proceed in precisely the opposite direction, giving himself up and losing himself in objectivity, thus vanishing from himself.... Christianity does not tend itself to objective observation, precisely because it proposes to intensify subjectivity to the utmost. (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 55).

Here we are on the horns of dilemma. While responding to God we can not be simultaneously personally passionate and objectively impersonal. According to Kierkegaard, it is a fully fledged either/or situation. If we are infinitely interested in God we can not be speculatively convinced of His truth and vice versa. We have to be either this or that; we can not be both:

The inquiring subject must be in one or the other of two situations. Either he is in faith convinced of the truth of Christianity, and in faith assured of his own relationship
to it: in which case he can not be infinitely interested in all the rest, since faith itself is the infinite interest in Christianity... or the inquirer is, on the other hand, not in an attitude of faith, but objectively in an attitude of contemplation and hence not infinitely interested in the determination of the question. (Ibid., 23).

The following quotation brings out categorically Kierkegaard’s conception of subjective truth:

If the religious level of existence is understood as a stage upon life’s way, then quite clearly the truth that religion is concerned with is not at all the same as the objective truth of a creed or belief. Religion is not a system of intellectual propositions to which the believer assents because he knows it to be true, as a system of geometry is true, existentially; for the individual himself, religion means in the end simply to be religious. In order to make clear what it means to be religious, Kierkegaard had to reopen the whole question of the meaning of truth. His was the first radical reappraisal of the subject since the thirteenth century when St. Thomas Aquina’s monumental De Veritatehad settled the meaning of truth for the next five centuries of philosophy; and like that earlier treatment, Kierkegaard’s stand on the question may well have marked a turning point in European philosophy. (Ibid., 31).

For Kierkegaard, the objective truth is easily recognized, and indeed today it has come to be almost the only sense of the term in our usage. If I know that twice two is four, this knowledge is in the highest degree impersonal; once I know it, I know it, and I need not struggle continuously to make it my own: it is a reliable piece of lumber in the mental attic, one on
which I can put my hand any time I have need for it. But the truth of religion is not at all like that: it is a truth that must penetrate my own personal existence, or it is nothing; and I must struggle to renew it in my life everyday:

What is in question here, says Kierkegaard, is one's own personal appropriation of the truth—appropriation coming from the Latin root proprius meaning one's own. A learned theologian may be in possession of all the so-called truths of rational theology, able to prove and disprove propositions and generally hold his own dielectrically with the best, and yet in his heart God may have died or never lived. On the other hand, an illustrate peasant who knows nothing of formal theology, who may not even be able to state accurately the tenants of his creed, nevertheless may succeed in being religious. He is in the truth, as we say, and people who know him can recognize this fact from his presence, his bearing, his way of life. In the Oriental religious and philosophical tradition, where truth has never been defined as belonging basically to the intellect, the Master is able to discern whether or not a disciple has attained enlightenment from how he behaves, what kind of a person he has come to be, not from hearing him reason about Sutras. This kind of truth is not a truth of the intellect but of the whole man. Strictly speaking, subjective truth is not a truth that I have, but a truth that I am (Irrational Man, 152).

(B) ATTACK ON HEGEL:

Hegel as a paradigmatic rationalist philosopher was Kierkegaard’s focal target of criticism. Kierkegaard revolts against the abstract philosophical interpretations advanced by Hegel. Hegel attempted to capture all reality in his
system of thought. However, in this process, he lost the most important element, namely, existence, which implies subjectivity, choice and decision. Hegel is primarily interested in creating a complete theoretical system that informs all spheres of reality. Kierkegaard advanced radical objections against the abstract metaphysical approach of Hegel. Hegel's intellectual or rational quest for figuring out exhaustive explanations of all that is out there seemed comic to Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard underlined that philosophy must be anchored upon personal experience rather than abstract reasoning; inwardness rather than objectivity. Kierkegaard rejects the theoretical goals of Hegelian philosophical systematizations. Hegel's system-building distracts our attention from transformative existential aspirations and directs us into the welter of metaphysical explanations. Hegel avoids subjective viewpoint or the existence of the individual and this constitutes the failure or irrelevance of Hegel's philosophy and, for that matter, of all traditional rationalistic western philosophy. Such a failure does not emanate from conscious ignorance of the subject and subjective truth. It is also not due to an oversight on the part of rationalist philosophers. It is in the very nature of speculative and objective mode of doing philosophy to ignore subjectivity.

The western rationalistic perspective on man advanced by numerous western philosophers from Plato to Hegel was utterly unacceptable to Kierkegaard. The grand rationalistic constructions or speculative systems accomplished by rationalists also aroused Kierkegaard's irresistible anger. These rationalist systems try to define human beings in terms of reason only and they attempt to be so complete that every aspect of reality can be accounted for by them. In such systems the truth of a proposition was a matter of finding an appropriate place within the system. There was no place for subjective dimensions of human existence in such systems.

The fundamental objection advanced by Kierkegaard against Hegel's philosophy is that it can not accommodate the existing individual at all. Kierkegaard brings out that an individual's relation to himself is not a cognitive
one. Hegelian abstractions cannot accommodate our too concrete and unique situations. Hegel's system is incapable of guiding me in taking the crucial decisions of my life. In fact, Hegel's philosophy prevents people from facing up to the decisions which shape their lives. Hegel rather orientates us to a passive identification with the anonymous public. Hegel has a pantheistic contempt for the individual man (Kierkegaard: Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 317). Hegel's treatment of religion as a symbolic expression of the metaphysical truth that Absolute Spirit exists only in and through the cosmos which expresses it is also deeply violative of Kierkegaard's religious sensibility. Such a Hegelian interpretation, according to Kierkegaard, is a betrayal of the Christian truth that God is entirely transcendent of the world and ourselves (David Cooper, 347).

Kierkegaard has attacked all philosophical systems advanced by Western philosophers from time to time. He has especially attacked his predecessor Hegel's system. For Kierkegaard Hegel's philosophical system leaves no room for wisdom and ethics. Hegel might have achieved a great philosophical system but he has missed on how to live and thus his philosophy has missed on everything. The only reality for an existing individual is his own ethical individuality. The discovery of so called objective truths, the formulation of the great systems of philosophy etc. are worthless if philosophy cannot provide us the direction or orientation as to how to conduct ourselves here and now in the face of formidable challenges of life (Solomon, p. 78). Hegel's "Absolute Knowledge" is devoid of practical wisdom and ethical guidance. Such a philosophy can be only used as a ruse to excuse ourselves from making ethical or practical decisions. Philosophy according to Kierkegaard is pointless if it is not edifying.

Hegel like all rationalistic philosophers avoids the subjective viewpoint of the existing individual. The avoidance of the subject and the subjective truth is an inherent feature in the very conception of the systematic philosophy. In Hegel's system, for example, the individual human existence as a concept is
included as one of the stages in the conceptual development of Spirit. However, the reduction of existence to a concept is an impossible task (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 173). Soloman writes:

The Hegelian system does attempt to capture individual existence in the logical development of concepts, but it captures only the concept of the individual, and not the individual. “Subjectivity” (the existence of an individual human being) can never be captured in logic for it is forever “irreducible to a concept. (Soloman: 79).

The logical inductions and deductions cannot capture the peculiar feelings, thought, emotions and dispositions of an existing individual. It is the unique, peculiar and non-universal features of an individual which constitute his personality. Philosophy according to Kierkegaard should furnish an understanding of psychological differences rather them of logical similarities. Philosophy should help us in recognising our uniqueness rather than helping us recognizing ourselves as an instance of the concept of humanity. Only a recognition of our peculiarities can inspire us the need for making the most fundamental commitments. Understanding the nature of such commitments ought to be the central task of philosophy. The job of philosophy is not to engage in conceptual analysis or furnish us conceptual knowledge. The central concern of philosophy is the individual and his way of life. As existing individuals we are not primarily knowing subjects but moral agents. The primary concerns of philosophy are not epistemological but ethical. The central question of philosophy is not “what can I know” ?but “what should I do?” (Solomon: 79).

For Hegel all paradoxes are resolvable. A paradox or contradiction could always be resolved by finding a higher ‘synthesis’ which embraces the central principles of the opposite thesis. Kierkegaard points out that such a resolution and mediation was possible only between concepts. Conceptual or logical paradoxes may be resolvable. However, Kierkegaard is concerned with
ethical paradoxes of an individual which paradoxes according to him are absolute and not amenable to resolution. Ethical paradoxes do not refer to an opposition of concepts but to an opposition of courses of action. Ethical paradoxes are absolute because ethical decisions are based on a choice between incompatible ways of life. One can either appropriate this or that way of life. The choice of a way of life always involves a commitment to act in certain ways in the face of objective uncertainty. An action is always objectively uncertain, as it is always projected towards future. Ethical wisdom always entails risk. Action always precedes results. The paradoxes of practical wisdom cannot be viewed with cool reflection and detachment. Their solution always demands commitment to a way of life. Kierkegaard’s fundamental objection to Hegel is that the great the German rationalist fails to seriously grasp the ultimate significance of ethical dilemmas confronting an existing individual. Hegel could not appreciate the implications of individual existence viz., ‘choice’, ‘individual freedom’, ‘responsibility’, ‘commitment’, ‘despair’ and ‘guilt’ etc. The following words from Solomon bring out the crux of Kierkegaard:

“Unlike the Hegel and the rationalists before him, Kierkegaard leaves the correctness of the ways of life to which one commits himself an open question to be settled only by the individual. In other words Kant and Hegel had attempted to prove the objective necessity for believing in God and as such, to prove that every rational being ought to believe. Kierkegaard denies that any such objective necessity can be demonstrated, and then, in the face of this ‘objective uncertainty’ ...., it is the choice of individual whether to believe or not, this is the subjective truth...” (Solomon: 84).

Kierkegaard revolts against the speculative system of Hegel, for he thinks that in speculative philosophy the individual man vanishes. He points
out that a logical system is possible, but an existential system is not possible. In
the construction of a logical system care is taken to see that anything which
exists is not included. The system of logic is abstract. But even in such a
system Hegel wants to introduce movement. But it is surely strange to make
movement fundamental in a sphere in which it is unthinkable. Kierkegaard
wishes to put forward the thesis that an existential system cannot be
formulated. Existence may be a system for God, but it cannot be a system for
any existing human being. System and existence cannot be thought together. If
systematic thought has to think of existence, it has to be abrogated and must be
thought as not existing. For Kierkegaard, existence separates and holds the
various moments of existence discretely apart; systematic thought consists of
the finality which brings them together. The fact that the thinker is an existing
individual signifies that existence imposes its restrictions upon him. The
systematic thinker is one who is outside existence and yet in existence, who is
in his eternity forever complete and yet includes all existence within himself. If
the existing thinker comes into existence after a systematic understanding, the
strangely ironical conclusion would follow that he would have no
understanding of himself in his existence. Such a thinker would have to be
God. In a logical system the existence of the individual is excluded and this
gives rise to ironical conclusions, for a logical thinker can have no
understanding of himself in his existence, for he has no existence. Such a
situation has an obvious immorality and so it has been said about Hegel that we
owe to him the completion of the system, the absolute system without the
inclusion of an Ethics. Kierkegaard then points out that for an existential
system to be possible, it has to be completed by one individual or by some
individuals participating with one another. But if such persons are human
beings, then two alternatives are open. Either the existing individual or
individuals can forget that they are existing beings, by which they become
comic figures, since existence has the remarkable trait of compelling an
existing individual to exist, whether he wills or not', or such individuals can
concentrate their energy upon the fact that they are existing individuals. But to be an existing human being does not mean to be a human being in general, for such a being can be agreed to by the speculative philosopher, rather it means that you and I and he are human beings each one for himself.

About the Hegelian system Kierkegaard says moreover that it seems to be the work of a man who is absent-minded about his existence and such a system does not care for the moral problems of an individual human being. On the other hand, philosophy which is propounded by an existing individual for existing individuals, gives emphasis on the ethical aspects of life. When philosophy is so understood, it becomes evident then that the ideal of a persistent striving is the only view of life that does not carry with it an inevitable disillusionment. The persistent striving is the ethical view of the existing individual. This striving is not to be understood metaphysically. It represents the consciousness of being an existing individual.

In systematic philosophy an identity of subject and object is established through the unity of thought and being. But existence consists in their separation. In the objective sense, thought is understood to be pure thought. This correspondence, equally between its subject and object, is also the thought itself. Thus truth becomes the correspondence of thought with itself. This objective thought has no relation to the existing subject and in such a situation the existing subject tends more and more to disappear. The human being becomes aware through the imagination of participating in the pure abstract relation between thought and being. The being which is ascribed to the thinker does not signify that he is, but only that he is engaged in thinking. The existing subject, on the other hand, is engaged in existing, which is indeed the case with every human being. The objective tendency, according to Kierkegaard, is comical. For example, if a dancer could leap very high, we could admire her. But if she would give the impression that he could fly, it would be a matter of laughter. Leaping is the accomplishment of a being who belongs to the earth, who obey’s the earth’s gravitational force, as leaping is only momentary.
Systematic speculative philosophy has abolished the individual being of a man and every speculative philosopher concerns himself with humanity at large. In such a system the individual man becomes something infinitely great and at the same time nothing at all. It is true that a man in the street or a pavement dweller can play the game of being humanity, but one learns at last that being purely and simply a human being is a more significant thing than playing the society game. When a pavement dweller plays this game, everyone thinks it ridiculous: and yet it is equally ridiculous for the greatest man in the world to do it.

Hegel's understanding and interpretation of Christianity are also unwarranted, according to Kierkegaard. Christianity as assumed by Hegel, is not a set of doctrines. To be a Christian was not to believe in a certain set of doctrines. Any attempt at proving the truth of Christianity or showing it's reasonableness is both impossible of attainment and unnecessary. The central problem of Christianity is not self-validation but the transformation of the individual according to the values encapsulated into Christianity. Faith is the essence of Christianity. No doctrine or religion or church can instill faith in us. Faith is a function of our own subjectivity. It is the individual who has to choose the path of faith. Christianity, as a way of life, is an individual's own choice and this choice is not to be made on grounds of truth or plausibility. The choice is a personnel commitment without any appeal to rational grounds or criteria. Philosophical systematization, rational investigation or scientific inquiry can never generate faith in Christianity. Faith is beyond philosophical, rational and scientific criteria:

Faith does not result simply from scientific inquiry: it does not come directly at all. On the contrary, in this objectivity one tends to lose that infinite personal interest which is the condition of faith. (Kierkegaard: Concluding Unscientific Postscript: 30).
Hegel’s logic traces or exposes the concepts which are necessary conditions for consciousness. Hegel is concerned with the fundamental categories or concepts of logic, for the universal, for the a priori. While logic can capture the universal similarities, it can not capture the psychological differences. It cannot capture the peculiarities of an individual person. Logical generalizations cannot capture individual feelings, particular emotions and personal dispositions. They can not capture unique or peculiar aspects or non-universal dimensions of human personalities. The job of philosophy is not to arrive at inductive generalizations or workout deductive conclusions. The job of philosophy is to recognize the uniqueness of a person rather than recognize him as an instance of the concept of humanity. Our fundamental commitments can be anchored on the unique self-awareness that philosophy can furnish us. Understanding the nature of such commitment constitutes the central problem of Kierkegaard’s philosophy.

Philosophy is an appropriation of an individual’s way of life rather than accumulation of conceptual knowledge. Objectivist metaphysicians wrongly assume that explanation of individuality can be furnished through logic. Such an assumption on the part of rationalist or objectivist metaphysicians is both unwarranted and illusory. Instead of turning to Hegel’s detached and objectivist metaphysical system, Kierkegaard appeals to Socratic wisdom. Socrates avoided or bypassed the metaphysical quest for indifferent principles. The job of philosophy according to Socrates is to furnish practical guidance for living. Kierkegaard shares with Socrates the final goal of philosophical inquiry, viz. self-knowledge or self-awareness. The Hegelian system is too closed to leave any room for future ethical guidance or direction. For Hegel, the inadequate and outmoded concept of the individual had been surpassed in the directive of the system, which assumption is the very negation of the existing individual according to Kierkegaard. In view of the same, Kierkegaard writes:

An existential system is impossible.... System and existence are incapable of being thought together:

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because in order to think existence at all, systematic thought must think it as abrogated, and hence as not existing. Existence separates, and holds the various moments of existence discreetly apart, the systematic thought consists of the finality which brings them together. (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 107).

Kierkegaard underlines that Hegel’s philosophy characteristically avoids the existence of the individual. In his so-called system the existence or non-existence of the individual becomes a matter of accidental importance or pales into insignificance. To Hegel’s systematic philosophy, individual existence is included as one of the stages in the conceptual development of spirit. However existence cannot be reduced to the concept. A concept is a mere possibility. The Hegelian system does attempt to capture individual existence in the logical development of concepts but it captures only the concept of the individual and not the individual. In the speculative system of Hegel, the individual man is lost as an expression of Infinite Spirit. Hegel’s system cannot accommodate the existing individual at all. Each one of us is too unique, and our situations are too concrete for Hegelian abstractions to provide us with a sense of individuality. Hegel’s system is incapable of guiding us in taking the vital decisions of our lives which shape or shake us to our foundations. Individuals for Hegel are mere accidents of the state, whose laws and traditions they are to obey (David Cooper: 2003, 347).

(C) CHRISTIAN WAY OF LIFE

Kierkegaard was a man of exceptional intellectual power. He was also an exceptional Christian. His Christian inwardness was both genuine and total. He indefatigably challenged his countrymen on their pretention of Christian faith. He launched a carefully planned challenge to his time. He was a copious and energetic writer with effects that still reverberate in philosophy and theology.
Kierkegaard did not develop any philosophical system. He was a tenacious critic of the elaborate system of philosophy established by Hegel. Kierkegaard raised his voice in protest against the absurdity of pure thought. He writes:

Let a doubting youth, an existing doubter imbued with a lovable and unlimited youthful confidence in a hero of thought, confidingly seek in Hegel's positive philosophy the truth, the truth for existence: he will write a formidable epigram over Hegel... let him submit himself unconditionally in feminine devotion, but with sufficient vigour of determination to hold fast to his problem: he will become a satirist without suspecting it. The youth is an existing doubter, hovering in doubt and without a foothold for his life, he reaches out for the truth in order to exist in it. He is negative and the philosophy of Hegel is positive - what wonder then that he seeks anchorage in Hegel. But a philosophy of pure thought is for an existing individual is a chimera, if the truth that is sought is something to exist in. To exist under the guidance of pure thought is like travelling in Denmark with the help of a small map of Europe, on which Denmark shows no larger than a steel pen point - aye, it is still more impossible. The admiration and enthusiasm of the youth, his boundless confidence in Hegel, is precisely the satire upon Hegel' (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 3).

Kierkegaard was profoundly disillusioned with speculative philosophy. In fact he was, continuously despaired of philosophical speculation. In view of the same, he continuously revisited to the question of Christian faith. He was deeply hostile to objective system-building deeming it to be both distractionary and disillusionary. The historically established speculative systems of philosophy
were, in fact, antithetical to truly philosophical thinking and living. Speculative philosophical systems provide a life-long escape from the real problems of individuals existence.

Kierkegaard put up a massive intellectual struggle to renew the meaning of Christianity by bringing out the permanent cleavage between faith and reason, Christianity and culture. As Kierkegaard saw it, Christian revelation can not be naturalized and assimilated or made probable and acceptable. It can not be reconciled with the rest of history in a total world-view. A genuine Christianity has got to be an irremediable absurdity. It has got to be a perpetual offence to reason. It has got to pose a choice, a fateful decision. Any attempt to reconcile faith and reason, to philosophise Christian beliefs and to graft revelation into the tree of natural theology is bound to rebound or boomrang. Christian beliefs are wholly alien to reason and experience. They are incapable of assimilation. They constitute a limit and a challenge to human thought. They constitute the tension, not only between a skeptical mind and a religious heart but also between Christian dogma and secular culture.

The most crucial philosophical engagement of Kierkegaard was his endeavour to understand Christian faith. The claims of Jesus to be God is the supreme paradox for Kierkegaard. It is simply impossible to gather authenticatory evidence in support of this claim. The historical success of Christianity can not be deemed to be authenticating this supreme paradox. For all rational and even historical purposes it is the most absurd of claims. The objective certainty with regard to this absurd claim is impossible of argument and even formulation. In fact we can not carry out any investigation or research in this regard. In view of the fact that the divine reality is absolutely discontinuous with human reality even on the conceptual plane, it is unthinkable to entertain in any way the possibility of the truth of this paradox. A religious truth is diametrically opposite to a geometric truth which can be learnt through appropriation of rules and understanding of logical entailments. As against the truth of a geometrical theorem, the truth of Incarnation is
impossible of learning and even understanding. The paradox of incarnation is beyond reason. It imposes a limit on thought and throws the inquirer into a passion of uncertainty. The appropriation of the paradox in the patience of faith can not bring certainty. The paradox remains absolutely unintelligible. Faith can not reduce its offence to reason. It is a perpetual affront to human intelligence and a perennial source of suffering for it poses itself as a limit of all thought.

Historically speaking, many Christian theologians had tried to demonstrate Christian doctrines, to rationally defend them. They thought that these doctrines could be objectively validated by recourse to philosophical reasoning. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, had this abiding and unshakable conviction that a successful rational defence of Christianity could never be successfully accomplished. Christianity was not a set of reasonable doctrines. Its doctrines were rather paradigmatically absurd. Philosophy and Christianity were impossible of reconciliation. Christianity was essentially paradoxical and irrational.

Christianity cannot be inherited like family property. It cannot be a parental gift. One does not become a Christian by one's accident of birth. Nor can Christianity be appropriated by recourse to certain ritual performances. To be a Christian was not to be born into a Christian family. Christians cannot be mass-produced by State or church. The society, at large, can not deliver generations of Christians. Nor can the state manufacture them with the trademark 'Christian' embossed on them.

To be Christian is to live in a state of suffering, unhappiness, dread, guilt and sin. To be Christian is not to accept or reject a set of doctrines. To be Christian is to appropriate a way of life, it is not to espouse or propound a body of knowledge. Acceptance of Christianity or believing in Christ can never constitute a piece of knowledge. The problem is not to understand Christianity but to understand that it cannot be understood (Solomon: 74).
It is true that Christianity is anchored on certain fundamental or foundational doctrines. However, acceptance of these doctrines do not constitute the sufficient condition of being a Christian. Christian doctrines are absurd and such doctrines can not be accepted to be true. Christianity is beyond the ken of our understanding. In view of the same, our ascent to its doctrines cannot constitute our appropriate or relevant response. To be a Christian is to be suffused with the passion of faith. The doctrines of Christianity are not to be believed in literally but are meant to be used as a foil for passion of faith. To be Christian is to accept a way of life characterized by ineffable and inscrutable suffering. This suffering emanates from our relationship to God as signified by Christ. This relationship is neither true nor knowable nor literally believable. It is a perennially mysterious and incomprehensible feeling of guilt and despair, in the face of one's inscrutable sin before God. Christianity really signifies espousal of an "irrational" way of life. The historically long drawn-out apologetics carried out with the best of intentions has been deeply detrimental to the growth of Christian way of life. It has essentially distorted the vision and mission of Christianity. Appropriation of the doctrine of Trinity analogous to the law of Universal Gravitation can lend some plausibility to our beliefs but can rob us of our way of life. To rationalize Christianity is to scuttle the emotional appeal of Christianity. To attempt to prove the faith is to rob us of our passionate commitment to Christianity:

When faith begins to lose its passion, when faith begins to cease to be faith, then a proof becomes necessary, so as to command respect from the side of unbelief

(Concluding Unscientific Post Script, 202).

Unlike many Christian theologians and philosophers who worked out a reconciliation between philosophy and religion, Kierkegaard struggled to bring out the radical incompatibility between the two. The Christian doctrines could never be shown objectively valid. A rational defence or justification of Christianity can never be successfully accomplished. For Christianity is not
comprised of a set of reasonable doctrines but an unfathomable, an indecipherable complex of absurdities and paradoxes. Reconciliation between rationality and Christianity was an impossible task. A rational justification of Christianity was needed to buttress the official, institutional and collective Christian theology for mass consumption. The institutional and theological Christianity is bent upon to mass producing generation after generation of Christians with maximum possible uniformity as if they were the products of a factory. In point of fact, Christianity is not a set of doctrines to be accepted or rejected or a body of true propositions but a way of life. Christianity was also not a way to happiness or satisfaction or successful secular life. It was essentially an appropriation of suffering, a mode of life born out of a deep sense of guilt and sinfulness (Solomon: 73).

Kierkegaard questions the conventional conception of Christianity. The fundamental doctrines of Christianity can never be proved to be logically consistent and coherent deductions or scientifically arrived at inductive generalizations. The Christian doctrines are essentially absurd and Christian apologetics has all along been endeavoring to make Christianity plausible. However, such a plausibility can be achieved only on the cost of Christianity itself. Becoming a Christian is accepting a set of essentially absurd doctrines, especially the doctrine that a man was God is absolutely paradoxical. Belief in Christ can never be demonstrated to be a true proposition, thus Christianity and philosophy are essentially incompatible. Christianity cannot be known but appropriated only through passionate faith. Christianity is passionate inwardness. Truth is passionate inwardness as well. Christianity is not an acceptance of a literal truth of a set of doctrines. It is rather an acceptance of a way of life, a life of suffering:

At the basis of this suffering is the doctrine of one’s relationship before God, as signified by Christ. This doctrine is not something true or known or even literally believed. It is a feeling one has of constant guilt and
despair, but whose object (one's Sin before God) must forever remain, not only a 'mystery', but simply incomprehensible. To be a Christian, therefore is to embark upon this 'irrational' way of life (Solomon, 75).

The validation of Christianity by recourse to apologetics robs us from Christianity as a way of life. The acceptance of doctrine of Trinity is poles apart from our acceptance of Scientific laws. The plausibility of Christianity could be purchased only on the cost of giving up Christianity as a way of life.

The long drawn-out historical quest for furnishing a proof or a set of proofs for the existence of God is all the more unacceptable and unwarranted. Kant's refutation of the traditional proofs for the existence of God is joyfully and gratefully acknowledged and celebrated by Kierkegaard. The very quest for proof is inspired by our lack of passionate faith.

Europeans philosophers and theologians have all along deemed Christianity to be a set of doctrines. To be a Christian was to believe in these doctrines. Furthermore, with a view to purchasing the platability and plausibility of Christianity, philosophers gave totally alien meanings to central Christian concepts. However, Christianity according to Kierkegaard is not a set of doctrines that can be proved to be true or made reasonable. Christianity is not oriented to exploring its truth, it's upshot is the relation of the individual to God. One cannot become a Christian as a result of philosophical or scientific research. Being Christian involves deep personal involvement or faith. Faith as subjectivity cannot be inculcated in us by appropriating a doctrine or a religion or a Church. Faith as subjectivity has to be chosen by an individual. Faith is chosen not because it is true or is plausible but because we personally commit ourselves to it without any reasons thereof. The philosophisation of Christianity leads to emasculation of Christianity (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 324-325).

To be Christian according to Kierkegaard is not to master ponderous tomes of theology but to suffer before God. Christian theologians can write
volumes on suffering. They can display great understanding and detailed information about suffering. However, they are not prepared to experience suffering, "There are two ways, One is to suffer; the other is to become a professor of the fact that another suffered" (Auden, W.H., *The Living Thoughts of Kierkegaard*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1952, 26).

An objective acceptance of Christianity is paganism or thoughtlessness. Christianity protests against every form of objectivity; it desires that the subject should be infinitely concerned about himself. It is with subjectivity that Christianity is concerned, and it is only in subjectivity that its truth exists, if it exists at all. Objectively, Christianity has absolutely no existence. If the truth happens to be only in a single subject it exists in him alone; and there is greater Christian joy in heaven over this one individual than over Universal History or the system (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 116).

It is always beguiling and attractive to deem Christian doctrines as objectively true. We are always inclined to argue that Christianity is rational and can be defended on solid rational grounds. We think that Christianity can be learnt as well as taught. Kierkegaard repeatedly underlines that such an objective estimation or understanding of Christianity tantamounts to its utmost trivialization. The central paradox of Christianity is the incarnation; that a God was incarnated at a particular point of space and time. This paradox constitutes the alpha and omega of absurdity. Such a paradoxical absurdity or absurd paradox can never be made rationally and objectively acceptable. It can be known only subjectively. If we suppose Christianity to be objectively true or scientifically acceptable, we are contradicting its very logic and topsy-turvy ing its very *raison de'être, locus standi* and *modus operandi*. However, most Christians find it hard to bear the thought of their own individuality and responsibility. They prefer to be members of a sect or community and persuading them to see themselves as concrete individuals is an experience of conversion for them (Mary Warnock; *Existentialism*, Oxford University Press, London Oxford, 1970, 11).
Jesus himself constitutes the Truth. Christ is the Truth, Christ is the Teacher and Christ is teaching the Truth. Christianity cannot be learnt in a theological Seminary. Learning of Christianity entails an encounter or confrontation with God. This brings out the spiritual authoritarianism of Christianity indicating that Christianity is centered on a spiritual authority rather than on a rational authority. Reality is spiritual rather than rational. Nevertheless, reason has a very crucial role to play in the context of Christianity. It has to recognize and appreciate the absurdity of the doctrines of Christianity. Its fundamental role is discovering the utter irrationality of accepting the Christian way of life. Once we understand the utter irrational character of Christian beliefs and values, there is nothing left to be understood.

Rational justification of Christianity is neither possible nor necessary. There is no need to strive for rational confirmation or validation of Christianity. There cannot be a Christian Theology or Christology. God, Christ and Holy Spirit are not objects of knowledge. Theology is impossible of attainment or formulation. Christianity is irrational in the sense that its doctrines are absurd. It must be accepted though it cannot be understood. Any so-called rationalization of Christianity would toss out its fundamental structure and character out of existence or distort it beyond redemption. We need to accept the doctrines of Christianity and live by them rather than fret about working out a philosophical theology. There cannot be any rational understanding of Christianity for there is no scope for employment of reason with reference to Christian doctrines. In view of the same, Christianity cannot be based on reason. It must be based on authority; the authority of paradox can be appropriated only through faith. Such a faith entails religious life characterized by the feeling of continuous presence of God. There is no scope for uncertainty or skepticism. A man of faith lives in the continuous presence of God with devotion and awe. His life becomes a daily witness to that presence. To be a Christian is to love this continuous presence of God. To be a Christian is to live passionately in the presence of God. To be the Christian “Knight of Faith” is
simply to exist in the presence of God. To be a Christian is to tear through all
the rational prognostications and skeptical investigations and to unquestionably
surrender before the ineffable and inscrutable presence of God.

Christianity as a way of life or as a set of values is what’s most
significant for Kierkegaard. Christianity as a set of doctrines such as
Incarnation or Trinity is only important in so far as they orientate a religious
attitude in us. For Kierkegaard, the appropriate religious attitudes are fear,
dread and even terror before an almighty yet unknowable God. Secondly, we
must go through unqualified despair and unmitigated suffering at our personal
limitations. Thirdly, we must cultivate an overpowering guilt in the face of sin
before God. Religious life is deeply characterized by an all-pervasive feeling of
sinfulness and an extreme sense of paradox. It entail’s an awareness that
ordinary rules and laws may have to be suspended in order to follow God’s
will. The more irrational of our faith in God becomes, the more authentic our
religious faith gets, for it gets shorn of the support of objective reasons.
Kierkegaard repeatedly underlines that belief in the Christian God is
paradoxical because it asserts that an eternal transcendent God becomes
incarnate in human history. This central paradox of Christianity is beyond the
ken of human rationality.

(D) THREE MODES OF EXISTENCE

Kierkegaard’s appropriation of subjectivity leads him finally to outlining
three possible modes of human existence. These three modes of existence are
not logically compelling or justifiable. They constitute Kierkegaard’s
existential dialectic. They have their specific values and it is upto man to opt
for mode of existence. These three modes are, (a) Aesthetic Mode, (b) Ethical
Mode and (c) Religious Mode.

(a) The Aesthetic Mode

According to Kierkegaard, a man choosing aesthetic mode of existence is not
bothered by considerations of duty, self-control, obligation or responsibility.
Such a man strives for immediate satisfaction and gratification. He is not bothered by considerations of good or evil or principles of morality. He can only experience feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, fulfilment and frustration, pleasure and pain, happiness and suffering, ecstasy and despair. He leads a life of romantic immediacy. He lives from moment to moment and craves for immediate pleasure or satisfaction. A typical aesthetic life is almost pathologically engaged in enjoyment of pleasant or pleasurable. It can be enjoyment of health and wealth, beauty and talent, honour and prestige, arts and philosophy, literature and theology etc.

However, aesthetic life is constantly threatened by the ever present prospect of pain and suffering, frustration and boredom. The aesthete, with a view to escaping boredom, is ever in search of novel pleasures. He stoutly refuses to engage in reflection or ponder over the significance of his doings. However, willy-nilly, he cannot help reflecting on the significance of his momentary pleasures. Eventually, he is confronted by the emptiness and ultimate meaninglessness of his perennial quest for gratifications. All immediate gratifications sound to be holo and one becomes a skeptical of one’s chosen mode of life. The skepticism leads to cynicism and cynicism culminates into despair. In utter desperation most of the aesthes loose themselves in the crowd and the hustle and bustle of everyday collective life. However, some of them are endowed with requisite resilience to withstand the pressure of merging into the crowd and opt for what Kierkegaard characterize, as ethical mode of existence (David West: *An Introduction to Continental Philosophy*, Polity Press, 1996, 123-24).

(b) The Ethical Mode

The ethical mode of existence as formulated and advanced by Kierkegaard is guided by rational, universal and secular principles and standards. An ethical person against an aesthete can control his itch for immediate pleasures and is also not bogged down by considerations of sin and guilt which characterize a religious mode of existence. The ethical life is societal and communitarian. In
this mode of existence one controls one's desires and interests and is motivated by considerations of personal duties and social responsibility. Ethical life consists of the applications of universal rational principles. Ethical principles apply to all human beings and all human beings deserve to be treated ethically. Each human being is to be treated as an end in himself and each human being has to operate within the kingdom of ends as was expounded by Kant. However, Kant's rational justification of moral principles is utterly unacceptable according to Kierkegaard.

In ethical mode of existence man engages in self-evaluation, self-appraisal and reflection. The ethical man is always concerned about the meaningfulness or meaninglessness of his life and can measure up to this or that standard of morality. He undertakes his actions and projects after due deliberation and action. The actions of an ethical man are significant in view of their accordance with moral principles and not because they are immediately pleasant or pleasurable. The commitment to ethical principles imparts a measure of meaningfulness to the life of an ethical man. The application of ethical principles gives meaning to life. An ethical reflection discloses to us the meaninglessness of aesthetic life as well.

So long as one remains in this secular, ethical mould, one can lead a meaningful life by one's unqualified dutifulness. Sometimes one can fall short of one's ethical standard or momentarily lapse into self-gratification or pursue personal interest at the cost of societal or communitarian welfare. Such momentary lapses can occasion repentence in him and by way of compensation or atonement he can go in for the upkeep of moral values or principles with greater zeal and enthusiasm. However, if his reflection leads him from secular to religious sphere of existence and he experiences sin and consequent guilt, he can again experience meaninglessness and despair. The despair of the revelation of sin and guilt cannot be overcome by mere subordination to ethical values and principles. The terrifying revelation of sin and guilt can be overcome by religious faith and subordination to God (Ibid., 124-25).
(c) The Religious Mode

The religious mode of existence is anchored on man’s relationship with God. The religious sphere of existence is personally deemed by the Kierkegaard to be the best and he himself admits to have been endabaring in his writings to awaken his readers to an espousal of religious view and way of life (Solomon, p. 98). Kierkegaard deemed Christian conception of existence to be the highest, although, unlike Kant and Hegel he did not advance any rational justification of Christianity. Nevertheless like Kant he deemed God to be essentially unknowable and incomprehensible. God to Kierkegaard was not an object of knowledge but simply an object of faith.

The central doctrine of Christianity viz. the historical existence of God in the form of man, is essentially absurd and an absolute paradox which cannot be hermeneutically manipulated with a view to making it reasonable and acceptable. A rationally imposed plausibility cuts at the very roots of the doctrine it may be purporting to be rescuing. The doctrine that Christ is eternal like God and temporal like man is fundamentally absurd. As this doctrine is central to Christianity, the religion is unavoidably and inevitably absurd and paradoxical from the rational point of view. However, what is crucial according to Kierkegaard is not the rationality or truth of Christian doctrines. What is important is the cultivation of appropriate attitudes of the believers and practitioners towards the Christian doctrines such as God, Christ, Trinity, Incarnation etc. For example, Kierkegaard exhorts, a Christian must cultivate such attitudes as fear, dread and even terror before an almighty or unknowable God. He must be full of despair and suffering at irredeemable personal limitations and failures. He must be suffering from overwhelming sense of guilt in the face of sin before God. However, a Christian has to cultivate love of God as well. He must be ever full of fear and despair in the presence of God but also have faith in His goodness and justice. He must shun all doubts as well as
rational justifications and passionately exist in the presence of God (Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 288).

Reason cannot provide a justification of Christianity. It can only make us understand absurdity of Christian doctrine. Through reason we can discover the utter irrationality of accepting the Christian way of life. The Christian way of life is irrational because there is no standard for choosing it and the choice must be a simple leap of faith. Reason cannot even comprehend the doctrines of Christianity. Christianity is irrational in the sense that it must be accepted even though it cannot be understood. Rather than trying to understand it we must live by it. The ethical principles are rationally justifiable but religious truth is not amenable to rational validation. Accordingly, Christian teaching cannot be based on reason; they can be anchored only on authority, the authority of the teacher, namely Jesus. He is not only the teacher but Himself constitutes the Truth. Christianity entails being confronted with God. The historical existence of Christ constitutes the miracle that is the Truth for Christianity. Christ while living constituted God’s revelation to us. Presently, we are not living with the Christ but we have to analogously feel the presence of Christ here and now. One can become a Christian only by feeling oneself in the actual presence of God. Being in the presence of God unavoidably brings one’s to the recognition to one’s own incompleteness. One recognizes one’s own sinfulness in the presence of God. Man’s sinfulness is not an outcome of the transgression of any moral principle or of any divinely prescribed injunction. No amount of reasoning can disclose man’s sinfulness. Man by his very being sins against God. Feeling guilty about it, despairing at the ineradicability or ineliminability of one’s sinfulness, recognizing that one is essentially incomplete and thereby an insult to God, and sincerely repenting at one’s incorrigibility, is the Christian way of life.

As a philosophical theologian and more aptly as a religious prophet, the mission of Kierkegaard was to awaken us to the need for unconditional religious commitment. Accordingly, Kierkegaard employed all his dialectical
skills — rhetorical exaggerations, paradoxes and ironies to jolt us out of our intellectual slumber and moral complacency with a view to realizing the need for making the leap of faith.

Kierkegaard's philosophical reflections were largely elaborated by way of reaction against the 'System' of Hegel. Kierkegaard's extravagant anti-rationalism is directly proportional to Hegel's religious rationalism. Throughout his writings, Kierkegaard appears to exalt the irrational and absurd and paradoxical at the expense of the rational. At its face value, Kierkegaard seems to be wallowing into sheer and willful obscurantism. He seems to be deliberately denigrating reason and glorifying the irrationality and absurdity of religious faith. Kierkegaard seems to be holding the position that it was precisely because religious faith was paradoxical and flouted reason that it was thereby believable.
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CHAPTER – V

IQBAL ON SUBJECTIVITY

Of all the modern Muslim philosophers, thinkers, intellectuals and poets-scholars, Iqbal’s philosophical canvas has been latitudinously and longitudinously widened and enlarged by his vertical and horizontal interactions with western philosophy. In his poetic and prose writings he has alluded to most of the Greek, Medieval, Modern and Contemporary western philosophers. He has been especially impacted by several post-Kantian philosophers such as Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson and many more.

Iqbal seems to have been impacted by various western philosophers in various ways. He has similarities and dissimilarities with numerous illustrious western philosophers whose writings he had gone through and whose doctrines and principles he had either fully or partially accepted and rejected. However, there is no evidence that he had directly come into contact with the writings of Kierkegaard whose existentialist approach to philosophy became acceptable and later on popular only in mid-twentieth century when the writings of such existentialists as Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre became available to people at large. But Iqbal need not have been directly or indirectly impacted by Kierkegaard, for in his approach to religion and philosophy, in his radical espousal of subjectivity, in his indefetgible advocacy of faith and love, in his repudiation of the absolutistic claims of reason, in his acceptance of the ultimacy of the Will and in his appropriation of religious experience as revelatory of the Ultimate Reality, he was more Kierkegaardian than Kierkegaard himself. In their attitudes and values and more importantly in their methods and approaches they were almost each others clones. Like Kierkegaard Iqbal rejects abstractions of academic philosophy as pointless and futile for they divert out attention from the real concrete problems of the individual. Conventional philosophers have made

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philosophy a technique of conceptual analysis. In their so-called search for Ultimate Reality the Philosophers work out elaborate explorations and investigations. Instead of finding out what is Ultimately Real, the philosopher is himself lost in his own elaborations.

(A) BASIC PHILOSOPHICAL ORIENTATION

However, despite his exceptional perspicuity in Western philosophy, Iqbal's philosophical development has been fundamentally inspired by the world-view and value-system of the Qur'an as well as teachings of the Prophet. He also had a profound understanding of and grounding in Islamic philosophy. Besides, he was deeply drunk into Western and Muslim literary traditions. He was also one of the most concerned intellectuals of his times and therefore abreast of contemporaneous literary, cultural and philosophical trends across the board. However, most importantly, he was influenced by post-Kantian German voluntarists such as Fichte, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche as well as the highly original French philosopher of twentieth century, namely, Henry Bergeson. Of all the Muslim thinkers, philosophers, scholars and poet's, he was irreversibly transmuted by Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, an outstanding Persian sufi-poet born in 1207 at Balkh (now in Afghanistan) and buried at Quania (now in Turkey). Iqbal was also quite familiar with Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina religious and cultural traditions and highly accomplished in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, English and German languages. In fact, Iqbal has been inspired by diverse sources in the formulation of his main philosophical tenets.

Iqbal is an unflinching advocate of the pivotal role of human personality in the cultural and civilizational evolution across the board. He is not a rationalist and yet he is a humanist of the highest order. His humanism is not secularist or rationalist in the modernist sense of European philosophical discourse. He is humanist in the sense that man's moral and spiritual consciousness is vitally and crucially indispensable for the evolution and transformation of our society, polity, economy and culture. Whereas, human rationality is vortexed into innumerable limitations, man's spiritual vision and
creativity accompanied and directed by Divine grace, are irresistible forces of evolution, revolution and transformation. As against secularist rationalist humanism, Iqbal is an advocate of spiritualist humanism. In fact, Iqbal is a perennialist philosopher. Though highly accomplished in modern philosophical trends and movements, he is irretrievably and irreversibly inspired by the vision and mission of Prophets; the latest version of this vision and mission having been incorporated into the Qur'an and Prophethood of Muhammad. His philosophical beliefs and values are, to the best of his consciousness and conscience, in almost isomorphic consonance with verses of the Quran and sayings and doings of the Prophet of Islam. His entire intellectual life and philosophical struggle were oriented to figuring out the features of the ideal Muslim. An indefinite and unfailling search for the ideal Muslim was the Cynosure of his intellectual freedom and philosophical wisdom.

The goal of human life according to Islam is glorification and implementation of Divine Writ. The heart of a Muslim has got to be dyed into Divine colour. An Ideal Muslim is unfaillingly inspired by the vision of the Qur'an and mission of the Prophet. He is in abiding love with God and the Prophet. Iqbal says that a Muslim who is innocent of love is innocent of faith as well. A Muslim eats, drinks, sleeps, sees and sees not in accordance with the Will of Allah. A Muslim transcends the verbal interpretations and appropriates intuitive intimations. Accordingly, his doings are illuminated by light of truth. He lives in contentment even when blessed with royal opportunities. He is spiritually insightful and ever-conscious of God. Every action of a Muslim is aimed at attaining to the proximity of God. In fact, attainment of ever-increasing nearness to God is the only criterion for actions being righteous or vicious. Pursuit of war aiming at attaining to Divine Proximity, is ethically righteous. Pursuit of peace aiming at something other than Divine Proximity is ethically unjustified and unjustifiable and therefore a vicious action. Iqbal has
outlined the crux of his philosophical vision and mission in the following verses:

Imbue thine heart with the tincture of Allah,
Give honour and glory to love!

The Muslim’s nature prevails by means of love:
The Muslim, if he be not loving, is an infidel.

Upon God depends his seeing and not-seeing,
His eating, drinking and sleeping.

In his will that which God wills becomes lost –
“How small a man believe this saying?”

Whatever thou dost, let it be thine aim therein to draw nigh to God,
That his glory may be made manifest by thee.

Peace becomes an evil, if its object be aught else;
War is good if its object is God

Iqbal’s critique of establishmentarian Muslims and especially of entrenched Mulladom is devastating. Its wistfulness or poignancy can be discerned in his entire poetic contributions. The Muallas in the propagation and appropriation of their vested interests compromised the pristine glory and authenticity of the Quran and Sunnah. They admixture Islamic beliefs, values, norms, standards of behavior and criteria of evaluation with unIslamic presuppositions, practices and rituals. They were the professed guardians of faith but their quest for personal survival, prestige and profit took precedence over their commitment to the principles and practices of Islam. They became
innocent of their value, significance and meaningfulness as standard bearers of Islam and indulged in the imitation of modes of behavior and patterns of thinking espoused by non-Muslim communities. They lost self-authentication as Muslims and became spiritually vacuous. They became alienated from their spiritual moorings and lived by dint of borrowed beliefs and values. They became divested of Islamic behavior and consequently Muslims lost their prestige and leadership role in the country of nations. They worshipped the idols of their wish fulfillment and consequently idolators have been looking askance at us. The Mulas sold Islam in their love for personal idols and in the process corrupted monotheistic vision with polytheistic outlook. The unavoidable and inevitable degeneration culminated into Mulas and Sufis donning ludicrous apparels and cultivating long tresses so that they along with the Muslim community became a laughing stock in the eyes of the world. Their hearts are devoid of monotheistic orientation or direction. They are a heartless, mindless and lightless flock of power-seekers and office-worshippers. They are not only unmindful of the requirements of the community; they have rather immensely tarnished the glorious faith of Islam by their ceaseless striving for pleasure, pelf and power. For all practical purposes they have become the grandiloquent salesmen of Islam:

The Ka’ba is filled with our idols,
Infidelity mocks at our Islam.
Our Shaykh hath gambled Islam away for love of idols, And made a rosary of the zunnar.
Our spiritual directors owe their rank to their white hairs,
And are the laughing-stock of children in the street.

Their hearts bear no impress of the Faith,

But house the idols of sensuality.

Our preacher fixed his eyes on the pagoda,

And the mufti of the Faith sold his verdict.

Iqbal is highly respectful and deeply appreciative of the role of ever-expanding horizons of knowledge. He is especially appreciative of the modern scientific, logico-mathematical, methodological and epistemological investigations carried out by Modern West since sixteenth century A.D. onwards. Modern western scientific achievements and technological astonishments constitute some of the mightiest contributions to the growth of human civilizations. The knowledge that is rationally arrived at or worked out is the characterising feature or hallmark of us humans in comparison to other species of animals across the spectrum. Our rational or logical inductions and deductions have yielded limitless information or countless data of experience. On the basis of these sense experiential data and inductions and deductions thereof, man has been able to discover universal and eternal Laws of nature. On the basis of these Laws, we have been able to devise and design astonishing technological solutions to ever-increasing social, political and economic problems. However, propositions of science and statements of knowledge, though necessary and unavoidable in the growth of human civilization as well as culture do not and can not exhaust the multicomplex mystery that man is. Man does not live by bread alone. So he does not live by clothes, housing facilities, career opportunities and promotions, great industrial achievements and large urban centres, swanky cars and glittering shopping malls etc. More than scientific Laws and technological goods, man lives by faith and love, truth and beauty, goodness and justice etc. These life-sustaining and life-nourishing values can not emanate from scientific propositions or Laws. Scientific Laws are discovered or arrived at by recourse to observational, inductive and experimental research or by rational derivations and deductions etc. Values are
not necessitated or dictated by experimental investigations or rational deductions. They are neither objects nor products and can neither be objectified nor produced. As against scientific research, it is religion which vouchsafes the framework for the meaningfulness, validity, necessity, desirability and relevance of values. Cultural advancement and historical evolution do also necessitate value-interactions and value-interventions. But our historical and cultural consciousness has been abidingly impacted by our religious world-views or outlooks. Social, political and ethical philosophes can debate as to how far values have a necessary connection with religion and how far they are a function of cultural and historical developments. However, one thing can be indisputably advanced; scientific research or rational knowledge can not provide a basis for values. The necessity and relevance of values can be established only in contradistinction to scientific research, logical deductions and methodical explorations.

Iqbal is hundred-percent convinced that modern, primarily European natural and social scientific investigations can never provide us any ground for values such as love and quest for truth. The modern scientific investigations are devoid of quest for truth and taste for values. Iqbal claims to have spent decades in the pursuit of modern scholarship inspired by European scientific or naturalistic vision. He has found it to be morally uninspiring and spiritually enervating. The following lines from Asrar-i-Khudi bring out the same:

 Thou hast cast knowledge of God behind thee
And squandered thy religion for the sake of a loaf.
But do not seek the glow of love from the knowledge of today,
Do not seek the nature of Truth from this infidel’s cup!

Modern knowledge is the greatest blind —
Idol worshipping, idol-selling, idol making!
Shackled in the prison of phenomena,
It has not overleaped the limits of the sensible
Its fire is cold as the flame of the tulip;
Its flames are frozen like hail.

(B) CRITIQUE OF REASON

Iqbal has advanced an extraordinarily radical critique of reason. His Urdu and Persian poetry especially has assembled a devastating critique of human reason. The culminating point of rational investigations is impotence to what is Ultimately Real. Philosophy worked out of human reason alienates from real life. A philosophical system activated by rational speculation like that of Hegel, is like a shell without a pearl; such philosophical systems are illusory, misleading, and fictitious. Reason, at the most, is like a lamp that illuminates our courtyard. However, it cannot illuminate the inner recesses or dark rooms of our house:

قید ہے کہ برم ہو روشن نہ ہے خود ہی چپاہے چپا ہے غر ہے

Reason is the light of the eyes of a wayfarer
Reason is nothing but a candle of the street
What tumultuous events occur inside the house
The candle of the street does not have any inkling of them.

Iqbal was an outstanding philosopher of early twentieth century. However, his was a multidimensional personality. He was a seer. He was a savant. He was a scholar. He was a visionary. He was also a poet of international renown. Most importantly, he was a non-reductionist and an integrationist. He is an integral epistemologist. He cannot be pigeonholed.
within watertight western epistemological compartments. He is not either an empiricist or a rationalist or an intuitionist. He is all the three integrated into one. With exceptional epistemological perspicuity and prescience, he clearly and categorically appreciates the respective functions of sense-experience, reason and Intuition and is not broiled into mystifying controversies advanced by modern western epistemologists. Sense-experience, reason and intuition are not mutually exclusive. Knowledge is a process which cannot be carried out without the crucial and critical contributions or inputs of all the three sources; sense-experience, reason and intuition.

Iqbal recognizes sense-experience as a valid source of knowledge. The sense-organs give us knowledge of the physical phenomena after coming into contact with the external world. Apart from sense-experiential sources, Iqbal acknowledges the reality of the physical world by citing of the Qur’anic verses. According to him, Reality reveals its symbols within the realms of Spirit and Matter. The Quran has laid great emphasis on the study of the observable aspects of Reality. It was this empirical attitude of the Quran which taught the Muslims to cultivate concern for external world and made them the founders of modern science (Iqbal: *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 15).

However, our senses enable us only to observe the phenomena. They are unable to obtain the truth of things. Hence, we need some other means of knowledge beyond senses. This leads us to a consideration of the most important role played by human reason as a source of knowledge. Iqbal also acknowledges reason to be a highly significant source of valid knowledge.

However, Iqbal has developed a powerful critique of modern western epistemology with its emphasis on empirical, rational and experimental knowledge. In his poetry, especially, he has masterfully assembled a critique of rationalist epistemology. Reason may not necessarily be negating the existence of any Higher Reality. However, it is beyond the capabilities of reason to grasp or appropriate any clue to an understanding of the Higher Reality. Reason can proliferate speculations and conjectures with regard to what is Ultimately Real.
Such speculations and conjectures can not provide any confirmation with regard to Ultimate Reality. The Ultimate Reality can be appropriated only by recourse to Religious Experience, Intuition or What Iqbal calls Love. Iqbal brings out that while rational knowledge is characterized by fears and doubts, the Love or Intuition is inseparable from firm faith and resolution:

\[\text{عَشَقُ رَاسَمرْماَىَه اَزَم وَشَكَ اَسْتَ}}\]

The wherewithal of reason is fear and doubt,

Love is inseparably armed with resolution and conviction.

Iqbal stresses that with a view to achieving a complete vision of Reality, the sense-experience must be replaced by the perception of what the Quran describes as 'Fuad' or 'Qalb' i.e. heart (Ibid., 15). Iqbal, in his 'Reconstruction' further brings out that 'Heart' is a kind of inner intuition or insight which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the Sun and brings us into contact with aspects of reality other than those open to sense-perception (Ibid.). It is according to the Qur'an, something which sees and its reports, if properly interpreted, are never false (Ibid., 16). It is an extraordinary experience of Reality through intuition. Iqbal called this kind of experience as 'mystic experience'. The region of mystic experience, according to Iqbal, is as real as any other region of human experience (Ibid., 2). Natural science, gives us reliable knowledge but makes available only a sectional view of 'Reality'. Different sciences deal with different fields of knowledge or areas of research. But mystic experience gives us the total view of Reality.

Sense-experience and reason are critically important in all operations of knowledge. However, knowledge of what is Ultimately Real is beyond the ken of empirical and rational modes of knowing. Kant has rightly shown that knowledge of the phenomenal world is co-operatively worked out by our sense-experiential and rational faculties. However, knowledge of the transphenomenal or noumenal realm is not available to sense-experience or reason. Reason, is especially, almost inexorably led to demonstrate or prove the
existence of God. However, attempted demonstrations of pure reason, inevitably eventuate into antinomies. Following Kant, Iqbal also tries to bring out the untenability of classical proofs for the existence of God, with a view to showing the incapability of reason to furnish us any realization of Noumenal Reality and paving the way for intuitive appropriation of God.

Classical and medieval philosophers have advanced three main proofs with a view to demonstrating the existence of God: cosmological proof, ontological proof and teleological proof. Iqbal concedes that these proofs are arguments embody a real movement of thought in its quest after the Absolute (Ibid., 23). However, Iqbal, following Kant, has brought out the limitations of these proofs or arguments. He says that, as logical proofs, they are open to serious criticism. They betray a superficial interpretation of experience.

The advocates of cosmological argument deem this world to be a finite effect. It has to have a cause which cause has to be an effect of another cause and so on and so forth. Now, in order to avoid infinite regress, we have to stop at an Uncaused First Cause. However, according to Iqbal, we cannot privilege – a cause at any point to be an Uncaused First Cause, for it is the negation of the very law of causation on which the whole argument proceeds. Furthermore, the Uncaused First Cause arrived at by cosmological argument cannot be regarded as a Necessary Being. In the relation of cause and effect, the two terms of relation are equally necessary to each other. More importantly, the cosmological argument can, at best, demonstrate the conceptual necessity of causation. However, such a conceptual necessity of causation can in no way be deemed identical with the necessity of existence as such. The cosmological argument is an attempt to reaching the Infinite by negating the finite. However, the Infinite arrived at by the negation of the finite is a false infinite. Such an Infinite is neither self-explanatory nor offers a cogent explanation of the finite. The true infinite does not exclude the finite. It rather embraces the finite without disturbing its finitude. It also provides an explanation as well as justification of the being of the finite. However, the movement from the finite
to the Infinite as attempted in the cosmological proof for the existence of God is quite illegitimate. The argument fails to demonstrate the existence of God as envisaged by classical and medieval philosophers (Ibid., 23-24).

The teleological argument, according to Iqbal, is also of no avail. The advocates of teleological argument for the existence of God, scrutinize the effect i.e. the world, with a view to figuring out the nature of its cause. In view of the fact that nature displays the traces of foresight, purpose and adaptation, they infer thereby and therefrom, the existence of a self-conscious Being of Infinite intelligence and power. Such an argument according to Iqbal, can prove the existence of a contriver and not that of a Creator. "Even if we suppose him to be also the Creator of his material, it does no credit to his wisdom to create his own difficulties by first creating intractable material and then overcoming its resistance by the application of methods alien to its original nature. The designer regarded as external to his material must always remain limited by his material, and hence a finite designer who's limited resources compel him to overcome his difficulties after the fashion of a human mechanician". As a matter of fact, natural phenomena constitute a system of wholly interdependent members whereas a human artificer works out his plan by selecting and isolating his materials from their natural relations and situations. In view of the same there is really no analogy between human contrivance and natural integration and evolution of organic wholes (Ibid., 24).

The ontological argument for the existence of God has underlined that God as a Perfect Being must be necessarily existing. This argument cannot withstand the logical scrutiny in view of the fact that God is Perfect by definition but is not Existent by definition. His existence is sought to be proved by recourse to ontological argument and it cannot be assumed to be a fact as such an assumption is an example of petitio principle i.e. taking for granted the very point in question. The conception of an existence can never be a proof of its objective existence. Kant rightly pointed out that the notion of three hundred dollars in my mind cannot prove that I have them in my pocket. The idea of a
Perfect Being in my mind and the reality of that Perfect Being are separated by an unbridgeable gulf which cannot be papered over by any piece of logical sophistry.

In view of the above limitations of reason, Iqbal tries to bring out that it is through intuition or mystical experience or religions experience that we can appropriate God. Reason only prepares ground for the operation of intuition which reveals to us the secrets of hidden Reality (Reconstruction, p. 16). Iqbal in his 'Reconstruction' outlines five features of intuition or religions experience.

Firstly, the religious or mystical experience is characterized by immediacy. We know God through mystical experience as we know other objects. Secondly, the wholeness of mystical experience is unanalyzable. The mystical experience is not analyzable as our sense-experience can be subjected to a detailed analysis. In a mystical state, our contact with Reality is so engrossing and intimate that the ordinary subject-object distinction is obliterated. Thirdly, the mystical experience is a moment of intimate association with a Unique other Self. This Unique Other Self transcends, encompasses and momentarily suppresses the private personality of the subject of experience. Fourthly, a mystical experience is not communicable. It is more like a feeling than thought. "The interpretation which the mystic or the Prophet puts on the content of his religious consciousness can be conveyed to others in the form of propositions, but the content itself cannot be so transmitted". The mystical experience is a matter of inarticulate feeling, although it has a cognitive element as well. It is because of this cognitive aspect of feeling that while religion starts with feeling, it has never, in its history, taken itself as a matter of feeling alone and has constantly striven after metaphysics (Ibid., 17). Fifthly, the mystical experience as an intimate association with the Eternal, results in a sense of the unreality of serial time. However, the mystic or the Prophet immediately returns to normal levels of experience, even though the subject of experience is invested with a deep sense of authority.
From the above analysis, it becomes clear that the limitations of reason are astounding and baffling. We can arrive at certain general statements about the world by the application of reason. However, it can lead to transcendental illusions when applied to Theological, Psychological, and Cosmological issues. Furthermore, reason is not a disinterested tool that can be applied in our search for truth. It is deeply conditioned by our Biological, psychological, Social, Political, Economic and above all our Ideological motivations or biases. Our very rationality is determined by irrational forces. Thus, the capacity of reason to arrive at so-called justified true beliefs is highly doubtful. The validity of knowledge-claims arrived at by means of reason cannot be accepted unless it is categorically established that reason is an innate, universal and immutable faculty of mind. Logical inference does give us valid conclusions. However, logical inference is an implicative derivation from given premises. Besides such claims are a priori. The central question is whether reason can arrive at justified true beliefs that are synthetic a posteriori pertaining to not only physical investigations but metaphysical, ethical and spiritual inquiries as well. The reach of reason in these inquiries is painfully limited.

Iqbal in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* brings out a holistic or integral epistemological account. Following both the Qur’anic epistemological insights and common-sense epistemological reflections, Iqbal accepts the validity of all the three levels or types of knowledge: empirical, rational and intuitive. For Iqbal, the rational knowledge is rooted in empirical observations and is capable of intuitive flashlights or direct apprehension and understanding of Reality.

The thrust of Iqbalian epistemology is in underscoring the pivotal or foundational role of intuition or mystical experience or religious experience in intimating to us the realization of the Ultimate Reality. Iqbal’s fundamental epistemological assumption is that self-realisation is the basis of God-realisation. Realisation of ourself analogously furnishes us the realization of God. An intuitive understanding of our self is the gateway of our intuitive
understanding of God. Our intuition reveals God to us as the Supreme Ego or Ultimate Self. Scores of attributes are ascribed to this Supreme Ego by the Quran; Creativity, Eternity, Omnipotence and Omniscience being the main attributes among them all.

All knowledge furnished by recourse to sense-experience or reason has got to be uncertain and cannot provide any certainty with regard to world, self and God. It is Intuition or Love that does furnish us knowledge of our own selves:

The Intellect entertained many a doubt as to whether I exist or not.
By Intuition this secret was revealed unto me that I do really exist.

Thus the secret of Ego or self and that of Supreme Ego or God is vouchsafed to Iqbal by recourse to intuition or mystical experience or religious experience.

(C) PHILOSOPHY OF EGO

Iqbal is neither an epistemological nor a metaphysical reductionist. He has a holistic approach. He is an integrationist and a perennialist. The entire human personality centred on ‘Ego’ is the central epistemic, semantic, metaphysical and ethical category of his philosophy. Human ‘Ego’ is inspired by the ‘Supreme Ego’ or God. The foremost assignment of man is the achievement of realization or enlightenment. He has to achieve self-realisation leading to God-realisation. Such a realization can be achieved by subordination to or synchronization with Divine commandments. It is through such subordination or synchronization that we can accomplish self-divulgement or self-disclosure. The essence of religion is nothing but self-realisation paving the way to God-realisation. Religion is nothing but divulgement or discovery of the secrets of self. Human life without self-divulgement tantamounts to death. A man who realizes himself, supersedes the entire universe in esteem and
glory. He becomes cognizant of the conscience of the universe. He is the
cynosure of Space and Spacelessness. The entire universe revolves round his
personality. He is the successor of the Prophets of Allah. He cannot be
accommodated elsewhere. He demolishes the old world with a view to
establishing a new world of fresh possibilities. He is oblivious to all that is
besides God and is inflamed by the candle of his own ‘Ego’. He is
dimensionless in the world of dimensions. He is the sanctum sanctorum and the
entire universe revolves around him. However, as a spark of the ‘Supreme
Ego’, he is resistant to all fluctuations and challenges. He is eternal and
eternally resistant to any whif of dissolution into ‘Supreme Ego’.

He is, accordingly, a perennial centre of love and commitment. Iqbal, in
view of this core principle of his philosophy, refuses to acknowledge validity
of any non-dualistic, monistic, absolutistic and pantheistic interpretation of the
cosmos. He upholds the flag of spiritual pluralism flagging.

The absolutist, non-dualist, monist and pantheistic – philosophical or
theological moments-have always stressed on Absolute Oneness. They have
downplayed the undeniable but inexplicable reality and personality of finite
centres of experience or consciousness widely exemplified by each individual
thinking subject and moral agent. The absolutists have underlined that all finite
centres of experience while culminating into Absolute Oneness lose their
finiteness or fixity and personality into it. These finite centres of experience are
ultimately an illusion. The criterion of reality is all-pervasiveness and all
limitedness is inherently relative in character and thus nothing more than an
illusion. For Iqbal, every inexplicable centre of consciousness or subjectivity is
the basic reality of our universe. Every mode of life is individual and there is
simply nothing such as universal life. God too is an individual although
Supremely Unique Individual. The universe is a conglomeration of individuals.
However, this conglomervative or aggregative exercise is not characterized by
perfect order, control and harmony. We are gradually approximating from this
disorder to order and are ourselves participating in this ongoing process. The
members participating in this process are not finished or fixated. New members continue coming into being and participating in this process. The universe is not a finished product but an ongoing process. In view of the same, we cannot bring out an any law or generalization about the universe. The universe is perfectible and the process of creation is going on. Man participates in this process in so far as he is instrumental in transforming disorder into order. Iqbal says that even in the Quran we find a clue as to the possible existence of other creators besides God.

This view of man and universe is in radical contradistinction with the world-view forwarded by pantheistic Sufism, according to which the supreme goal and salavation of man lies in his complete dissolution into Universal Life or World-Soul. Iqbal says that man's highest moral or spiritual ideal is not self-negation but self-affirmation. The realization of this ideal depends on the achievement of maximum individuality and uniqueness. The Prophet has exhorted us to cultivate divine attributes in ourselves. Man can achieve maximum individuality by appropriating maximum resemblance to the Supremely Unique Individual. Presently, the highest manifestation of life is 'Ego'. Every individual is a specific and complete centre of Ego. Although man is physically and spiritually a complete centre, he is not a perfect individual as yet. The greater the distance from God, the greater man’s lack of individuality. A man with greatest proximity to God will be the most complete individual. However, such a man is not dissolved into God but dissolves God into himself.

The perfect man not only dissolves God into his 'ego', but overpowers the material universe as well. Life, according to Iqbal, is a ceaseless absorptive movement and is capable of dissolving all roadblocks into itself. The essence of life is creation of new aspirations and ideals. Life has invented or promoted such resources as five senses or reason etc. with a view to sustaining and expanding itself. These resources help in overcoming resistances. The greatest roadblock in life is matter. However, nature is just not pure evil as it is helpful in fructifying the latent potentialities of life. The 'Ego' in overcoming all
resistances is blessed with freedom. It is partly autonomous and partly determined. By orienting itself to the Supremely Autonomous Person such as God, the 'ego' can achieve more and more freedom. Life itself is this very quest for freedom.

According to Iqbal the centre of life in man manifests itself in the form of 'ego' or personality. The personality is a perennial state of tension and the development of the personality depends upon this very tension. In the absence of this tension we are caught into the coils of lassitude and inaction. This state of tension is man's prime capital and he should not waste it at any cost. He should refrain from falling into lassitude. This very state of tension glorifies us with immortality. Our personality, furthermore, provides us a criterion and in the light of this very criterion the problem of Good and Evil is resolved. Anything which weakens our personality is evil and anything that stabilizes our personality is good. We should consider aesthetic, religious, and moral values on the basis of this very criterion of personality.

As matter constitutes the greatest hurdle in ego's freedom, so time constitutes the greatest hurdle in our quest for immortality. Time is not an infinite linear process. Such a concept of time is artificial. Time as pure duration is innocent of any dimension of length. Our personal immortality is an aspiration and it is realizable by recourse to struggle. Its achievement or appropriation is dependent on such a mode of reflection and action which sustains tension in us. Accordingly, Iqbal opines that such an ideal can not be realized by recourse to values fostered by Buddhism and Persian Sufism. Iqbal further states that if we sustain tension in our lives death can not overpower us. There is a gap between our death and the Day of Judgment interpreted by the Qur'an as 'Burzukh'. Only such 'Egos' sustain during this gap as have strenuously prepared for the same.

Love, according to Iqbal, is the foremost establishing factor of our Ego. The highest form of love is creation of values and ideals and our ceaseless struggle for their realization. Love blesses both lover and beloved with
individuality. The quest for unique individuality imparts unique distinction upon the seeker who congrues with the individuality of sought. However just as love stabilizes Ego so seeking or demanding a favour weakens the ‘Ego’. The stability or upkeep of ‘Ego’ entails promotion of love on the one hand and avoidance of inaction on the other. The best example of the most profound lover of God of values, and of ideals and also of a ceaseless striver is Prophet of Islam, according to Iqbal.

The Ego, according to Iqbal with a view to appropriating unique individuality, has to negotiate three stages: (1) subordination to the commandments of Allah, (2) Self-control, which is the highest form of Ego or self-awareness and (3) vicegerency of Allah, the third and final form of human evolution is deputyship of Allah: Deputy here means ‘Khalifatullah’ who is the ultimate statement or symbol of most perfect Ego, the pinnacle of humanity. Such a personality is devoid of mental conflicts and rather characterized by harmony. Such a personality is an integrated manifestation of Supreme Power and highest knowledge. The life of a ‘khalifatullah’ is an integration of thought and action and reason and emotion. He is the ultimate fruit of the three of humanity. He is the leader of humankind and his kingdom is the kingdom of God. He blesses people with his qualities of head and heart and brings them nearer to himself. The more we register the progress in the process of evolution, the nearer shall we be to Him. The appropriation of such a proximity can lead us to a qualitatively higher plane of existence. The intellectual and physical evolution of mankind is a precondition for his emergence. Presently it sounds to be nearly a dream. However, humankind is under the process of evolution and committed with creation of such an ideal race which gives birth to this perfect man. The establishment of kingdom of God depends upon such unique individuals whose leader is a highly unique personality to the maximum possible extent. Nietzsche’s philosophy adumbrates the idea of such an ideal race. However, his atheism and elitistic bias have completely besmirched his idea of ideal race.
While taking sides in his metaphysical quest, Iqbal breaks free both of idealism and materialism. He is deeply impacted by the Quranic world-view and value-system. Among the Western Philosophical movements he has been powerfully influenced by Post-Kantian voluntarism. His interpretation of the Quran and understanding of nineteenth century European voluntarism orientate him towards voluntarism and Vitalism. Iqbal starts with the contention that the ultimate ground of all experiences is a rationally directed creative will. Iqbal advances plausible arguments stipulating this creative will has an Ego. For Iqbal, the Space-Time continuum or universe is itself of the nature of free creative will. The entire cosmic existence is informed by the operations of will. The phenomenal universe is vibrating with the pulls and pressures of the will. The will is all-pervasive and omnideterminant. However, nothing can determine will itself.

The free creative will or flow of will can be conceived to be going on either teleologically or ateleologically. It can be either rationally directed creative and purposive force oriented towards sure and certain telos or it can move on as a purposeless blind force.

Iqbal points out that law and order of the cosmic situation indicates it to be a teleological and rational whole. The world as we experience it is not a chaotic jumble. Human life too is oriented to ends and purposes. Our own consciousness does not testify the view advanced by various thinkers, that life is characterized by chaos. The universe and our own self rather testifies that we are living in rationally directed order. It is not an ateleologically orchestrated or mechanistically worked out blind dance of atoms.

In his ontocosmological reflections, Iqbal does not accept the world to be directed by a Being outside it. For Iqbal world is itself an intelligent and purposeful self. The end or goal or telos of the world is not superimposed on it from outside. Any transcosmic superimposition would imply negation of all creative freedom in the universe. Any alleged or possible outside prescription reduces the creativity and freedom of the universe to utter pointlessness and
meaninglessness. With a view to obviating such a cosmic determinism, Iqbal accepts the universe itself as a self or an Ego. There is a will to egohood everywhere. The entire universe is characterized by a gradual rising note of egohoods. Our experience of our own self justifies such a hypothesis; an experience which is intimate and profound. Our experience of our personal consciousness can furnish us a contact with Ultimate Reality. It can intimate to us the ultimate meaning of existence itself. An analysis of our personal consciousness intimates to us a perpetual and constant flow of physical states or a flux of sensations; we experience a ceaseless flow of feelings, values and ideas.

The finite ego is an ongoing process of discrete states. However, it is not a rigid block or a static substratum. Nevertheless a finite ego should not be construed as a chaotic jumble, even in face of fluctuating states furnished to us through conscious experience. For Iqbal, the finite ego has rather a definite centre. It has a totality or organic wholeness of its own. Moreover, the dynamic flow of the finite ego is revealed to us as teleologically oriented. It is revealed as a harmonious, ordered and directed rational will.

Iqbal, on the analogy of dynamic flow of creative self, tries to establish the entire universe as a creative and dynamic process. Iqbal cites even contemporary scientific research as revealing the material or phenomenal modes of existence as active, moving, changing and perpetually fluctuating. An analysis of matter on atomic plane furnishes us only electrical charges such as electrons protons, neutrons and positrons. In fact, scientific research is increasingly turning out to be corroborative of the dynamic conception of human consciousness underlined by Iqbal.

In view of the above considerations, Iqbal brings out that Reality is characterized by a dynamic, creative, indivisible and continuous flow. An indivisible movement is the characterizing feature of the whole of Reality. This movement is neither successive nor serial; it is a pure duration. However, the unity of pure duration necessarily entails the prediction of the self to it. For
Iqbal, this self is the Supreme Ego or God. This Supreme Ego or God is beyond plurality or multiplicity of instants designed, out of practical compulsions, by our efficient self. It is the Supreme Ego or God who transforms pure durations into a totality or unity.

The Supreme Self as advanced by Iqbal is diametrically opposite to the unmoved Prime Mover of Aristotle. It is not the Uncaused Cause or First Cause of all movement and change. The Divine Reality is Supremely dynamic in character and essence. Movement as ascribed to man is diametrically opposite to movement ascribed to Divine Reality. Human change is indicative of shortcomings and imperfections. On the other hand, God’s Dynamic Reality moves in the realm of pure duration and is beyond serial character. God is Life and Movement. However, it does not imply any contradiction in His perfection. God’s movement does not entail any shortcoming or signify any imperfection in His Character. God’s movement signifies His eternal self-revealation. The Dynamic Character of God is brought out or authenticated by the following lines: (quotation page 81) (M.M. Sharif, vol. I, page 481).

In his ‘Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam’, Iqbal cites Surah Ikhlas as an example of the Quran underscoring the individuality of the Ultimate Ego. The Surah reads as follows:

قَلْ هُوَ الَّذِي احْدَى اللَّهُ الصَّمَدَ لم يُولِدْ وَلَمْ يُولِدْهُ وَلَمْ يَكْسِبْهُ كَفْوًا أَحَدَهُ

Say: He is God,

The One and Only,

God the Eternal, Absolute;

He begetteth not,

Nor is He begotten;

And there is none like unto Him.
The above Surah according to Iqbal categorically, transparently and succinctly delineates the perfect individuality of the Ultimate Ego. The Surah brings out that the Ultimate Ego is pairless and unique. As a perfect individual it must be closed off as an Ego. The Perfect Ego must be non-reproductive in character or beyond any tendency of reproduction. This emphasis on perfect individuality of God in the Qur'an is in contradistinction to widely persistent pantheistic interpretations of Ultimate Reality which conceive God as some pervasive Cosmic Principle such as light. The Quran is radically opposed to all pantheistic interpretations. The Quran does identify God as light. However, it must not be hermeneutically stretched with a view to supporting the pantheistic perspective upon the universe. The Aayat-i-Noor (verse of the Light) need not necessarily be pantheistically interpreted. The text of this verse can more authentically be cited in support of the individualistic view of the Ultimate Reality. The text of this verse in translation is:

God is the Light
Of the heavens and the earth.
The parable of His Light
Is as if there were a Niche
And within it a Lamp:
The Lamp enclosed in Glass:
The glass as it were
A brilliant star:
Lit from a blessed Tree,
An Olive, neither of the East
Nor of the West,
Whose oil is well-nigh
Luminous,
Though fire scarce touched it:
Light upon Light!
God doth guide
Whom He will
To His Light;
God doth set forth Parables
For men: and God
Doth know all things.

Iqbal brings out in his 'Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam' that the opening line of this celebrated verse of Qur'an can be cited in support of a pantheistic interpretation of God. However, any pantheistic insinuation is radically negated by rest of the verse.

Iqbal interprets the Qur'anic metaphor of light in a rather radically innovative way. In view of the fact that the velocity of the light can not be exceeded in the world of flux and relativity, light may possibly most appropriately symbolize the Absolute. The metaphor of light can be interpreted as suggesting the absoluteness of God; it need not necessarily be interpreted as suggesting His Omnipresence for such an interpretation can be tangentially exploited by the advocates of pantheistic world-view. Iqbal does concede that the opening line of the Aayat-i-Nur can easily be interpretatively stretched into a pantheistic world-outlook. However, the amenability of the first line to a non-individualistic or pantheistic interpretation of God is possible only if it is interpreted out of context.

Iqbal contends that the divine individuality should not be understood within the context of material, spatial and temporal parameters of human individuality. We cannot conceive the Ultimate Ego or God as spatially infinite. Even the absoluteness of space and time postulated by classical physics has been radically undermined by contemporary scientific research. Presently, space and time are deemed to be human interpretations of complex interrelated events. They are not something over and above the creative activity of the Ultimate Ego. God is not spatially closed off and His infinity refers only to His own inner unlimited possibilities. The universe, at best, can be deemed
to be a partial expression of His creativity. God is intensively rather than extensively Infinite.

Ego is the starting point as well as the central explanatory category in the philosophy of Iqbal. This central role of Ego in the philosophy of Iqbal makes it akin to the philosophical system of J.G. Fichte. Both have elaborated their philosophies of Ego in the light of their personal, historical and cultural backgrounds. However their starting point is the same.

For J.G. Fichte, scientific materialistic dogmatism and idealism offer the fundamental philosophical choice. The scientific or materialistic dogmatism views man as only a link in a vast chain dominated by the law of causality. In contradistinction to scientific dogmatism, idealism accepts the primacy of consciousness and the reality and the value of the individual. In view of the same, idealism accepts the freedom of the individual as well. Now, we are free either to be scientific dogmatists or idealists. If we are not interested in merely explaining the world but changing it, we must choose to be idealists. We must start from our own consciousness. Fichte was the first modern European philosopher who made ‘Ego’ the starting point of his philosophy. Ego, according to him, is the ‘thing-in-itself’ (Mayer: A History of Modern Philosophy, p. 334).

Fichte thinks that subjective ego postulates its own existence and thus it’s the fundamental principle on which philosophy can be based (Ibid: p. 335). There is no rational explanation of the reality of ego. It has only a volitional meaning. Subsequently, we postulate the antithesis of the ‘Ego’ i.e. Non-Ego as well. Above the Ego and Non-Ego, is the Absolute Ego i.e., God, who created them for self-expression (Ibid: 335).

The affirmation of Ego so stridently underlined by Fichte and made the starting point of his philosophy, was warmly welcomed by Iqbal as it seemed to him to be close to the spirit of Islam. Iqbal accepted both the metaphysical and moral implications of this Fichtean point of view. He clearly agrees with Fichte
when he conceives Ultimate Reality as the ‘Supreme Ego’ or the ‘Absolute Ego’. All the egos and non-egos are the self-revelation of this Supreme Ego. The following quotation from Iqbal’s *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* will clearly reveal Iqbal’s basic agreement with the philosophy of Fichte;

I have conceived the Ultimate Reality as an Ego; and I must add now that from the ultimate Ego only egos proceed. The creative energy of the Ultimate Ego, in whom deed and thought are identical, functions as ego-unities. The world, in all its details, from the mechanical movement of what we call the atom of matter to the free movement of thought in the human ego, is the self-revelation of the ‘Great I am’. Every atom of divine energy, however low in the scale of existence, is an ego. But there are degrees in the expression of egohood. Throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of egohood until it reaches its perfection in man. That is why the Qur’an declares the Ultimate Ego to be nearer to man than his own neck-vein. Like pearls do we live and move and have our being in the perpetual flow of Divine life. (Iqbal: *The Reconstruction*, 71).

According to Iqbal, the essential nature of the Reality is spiritual. For Iqbal, the very test of Reality is self-consciousness. “Only that is, strictly speaking, real which is directly conscious of its own reality” (*Ibid.*, 72). To possess self-consciousness is to possess an ego. To possess an ego is to be able to say I am or “I exist”. According to Iqbal, to be able to say so is the test of real existence. He asserts that the degree of reality of a thing varies with the degree of the feeling of ‘I am ness’. In accordance with the degree of the feeling of egohood, there are degrees in spirit. The Ultimate Reality is the Supreme Ego. From the Ultimate Egos, finite egos issue forth. Every form of the world down from an atom to human self is the unfoldment of God’s self-
consciousness. Every form is an ego or self. He regards 'Matter' also as a colony of egos but only of a lower order. The degrees of the expression of the egohood varies. Some egos or selves are lower, others are higher. A thing is lower or higher in the scale of being according to the degree of intuition of 'I-am-ness' which is possessed by that thing. The ego of metal is lower as compared to the ego of a plant and so on. Iqbal says that the gradually rising note of egohood runs throughout the entire gamut of being. This note reaches its perfection in man'.

According to Iqbal, each ego is individual, unique and distinct from other egos. He holds that every ego is "self-centred and possesses a private circuit of individuality". However, he believes that these egos can interact with and respond to one another. Iqbal regards God also as an Ego and hence an individual, rather "Most Unique" Individual.

Further, Iqbal says that in the history of religious thought, sometimes, personality and individuality have not been attributed to the Ultimate Reality or God. The Reality has been regarded as some vague, omnipresent element, e.g. light. He holds that such a view of God leads to a form of Pantheism which regards Reality as identical with the world and nothing beyond. He, on the other hand, emphatically affirms the personality or individuality of God. He criticizes those thinkers who try to deduce Pantheism from the Qur'anic metaphor of light used to describe God. It does not imply Pantheism. He conceives the personality of God on the pattern of human self which is a unity. All the individual life and thought in the universe is a derivation from the Supreme Self (Muhammad Rafique: Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal; Aligarh Muslim University, 1974, 80-81).

All forms of pantheism are anathematic to Iqbal. Any pantheistic world-outlook whether anchored on the principle of mind or of life is utterly unacceptable to Iqbal. All intellectualistic explanations of reality incur his deep suspicion. The inexplicable finite centers of experience constitute the fundamental fact of the universe. There is no universal life; all life is
individual. God Himself is the most Unique Individual and the entire coir and furniture of the universe is comprised of egos of countless grades or stages. Whatever is, is comprised of the secrets and manifestations of the self. Iqbal agrees with Fichte that at the very outset Ego posit's itself as there must be a self that knows. However, the process of knowledge entails something to be known. In view of the same, the next step of the Ego is to posit Non-Ego. However, this Non-Ego is not something alien to Ego. Ego itself is the source of Non-Ego. This Non-Ego is posited by Ego itself with a view to possibilising evolution through intellectual achievement and moral struggle. The following verses from 'Asrar-i-khudi' illustrate the same.

Iqbal has concentrated his attention on the repudiation of Ibn-i-Arabi's doctrine of Pantheism. The doctrine is similar to the one advanced by Shankaracharya of India in early 9th century AD. For Shankar, Brahman was the Ultimate Reality. Human soul and Brahman were identical. The world was an illusion (Maya). He also advanced the thesis that the salvation of man lies in merger of the soul into the Brahman. On the ethical plane, he advocated complete renunciation. In the introduction to the first edition of the Asrar-i-khudi, Iqbal wrote that some of the great Indian thinkers have arrived at the conclusion that the continuity in the life of self, which is at the root of all pain and suffering, is achieved through activity. If we want to liberate ourselves from our previous actions and reactions entangling us into the cycle of birth and rebirth, we must cease doing any activity at all. The Gita critiqued this position and advanced the doctrine of Nishkama karma signifying that renunciation does not mean complete inactivity but means to be indifferent to the deeds and their consequences.

According to Iqbal, Islam laid radical emphasis on activity. However, some Muslim thinkers such as Ibn al-Arabi espoused the same interpretation of Islam as was advanced by Shankaracharya with regard to Upanishads and Gita. With his exceptional scholarship and great hermeneutical skill Ibn Arabi advanced the thesis that the world is a mere illusion and God is the only true
reality. God is characterized by eternity, absoluteness, infinity. The entire universe is grounded on Him. God is the only Reality and the phenomenal world is just a passing shadow of the Reality of God.

Iqbal was radically critical of the philosophical interpretation of Islam advanced by Ibn-i-Arabi who was christened by Sufis as Shaikh-i-Akbar (the greatest Doctor). The fundamental assumption of Ibn-i-Arabi is that God is the Absolute Being. He is the only Reality or nothing is real besides Him. As Absolute Being, He is the Source and Cause of all existence. He is the Essence of everything or everything is God. The traditional doctrine of Tawhid encapsulated in the Kalima ‘there is no God but God’ is transformed by Ibn-i-Arabi into the doctrine of Wahadat al-Wujud (The Oneness of Being), amounting to ‘there is nothing in existence except God’.

The question of the relationship of ego with the universe or external world or more specifically with the environment is highly significant with reference to the upkeep and sustenance of human civilization. Modern European Science has made the most significant contribution to human civilization by undertaking, methodologically speaking, the most crucial empirical investigations of the physical, chemical and biological orders of existence, both vertically and horizontally and both at micro and macro planes, with a view to achieving maximum material, economic and commercial benefits and more importantly demythologizing the universe and liberating us from mellenia-old superstitions and false gods of varying hues and colours. Knowledge is power. Man armed with the weapon of knowledge can dominate his physical environment. Scientific research and investigation are the crowning achievements of human self. It is man’s self that constructs a cosmos out of the perceptual or experiential chaos that confronts us, to begin with. Knowledge is the characterising and distinguishing feature of man in comparison to other animals, according to the Qur’an. However modern European civilization can not sustain itself on scientific research or knowledge alone. Civilisations cannot thrive or sustain on one-sidedness of whatsoever
variety. All civilisations succeeded as well as failed by virtue of excess. The contemporary western civilization with its concentration sole on scientific research culminating into commercial success and economic prosperity, can not go on forever. A sustainable civilization has to be vitally concerned with moral, religious and spiritual values. If knowledge is divorced from moral, religious, and spiritual concerns, human civilization is doomed to extinction. The imperatives of mind have got to be supplemented by the imperatives of heart. Scientific research will give us power. However, it is through spiritual intuition that we can appropriate the requisite vision and mission necessary for a balanced and integrated civilization. The following verses from Iqbal constitute a telling critique of one-sided pursuit of knowledge or knowledge divorced from spiritual concerns:

When the heart is wedded to truth, it results into Prophethood
If it is alienated from truth, it leads to infidelity,
If we assemble scholarship without the warmth of heart, we wallow into evilish mode of existence
Such a light leads to the darkness of the entire globe,
The heart of the Europeans is fired with this very knowledge
They are intoxicated into bloodshed and warfare because of this very knowledge,
Knowledge sans love is from transgressors
Knowledge with Love is from celestial world.

The development and evolution of the self demands perennial resistance. It is the very resistance of air that enables a bird to fly; no flight is possible in a vacuum. The ego's search for the ideal, presupposes the presence of resistance.
and the consequent struggle and endeavor. The placing of Adam in a painful environment should not be construed to mean that it is a part of punishment. Such an environment was devised with a view to providing the ego with necessary means for its integration. In view of the same, the presence of evil in human life is indispensable. For the realization of the ideal of selfhood, struggle against all odds is an essential condition. Accordingly, Iqbal points out that the presence of a strong enemy is, in fact, a blessing from Allah. He challenges our potential for resistance, our courage of convictions and our capacity for survival and self-integration. An enemy is like a raincloud to the seed of man for he awakens his potentiates:

To tell you the truth: Thine enemy is thy friend;
His existence crowns thee with glory
Whosoever knows the states of self
Considers a powerful enemy to be a blessing from God
To the seed of man an enemy is as a raincloud
He awakens its potentialities.

While outlining the characterizing features of Imam ‘Ali’s personality, Iqbal underlines that Ali was a man of unconditional faith and unqualified love. His spiritual sagacity could transcend the material imperatives of human conditions. Through self-realization, he operated as the hand of God and became a symbol of political majesty and spiritual glory. By transcending the material imperatives of human condition and by becoming a spiritual master of the highest order, Imam ‘Ali became the standard — bearer or benchmark of world-transforming or world-transmuting manliness, magnanimity and equanimity. With reference to Ali’s qualities of head and heart, Iqbal exhorts us to go in for a total revolution both on personal and collective planes. With a
view to establishing an equitable, egalitarian, judicious and balanced socio-political order we must cultivate frames as hard as stone replacing the rosy features of our constitution. We must create a new man and a new world order. We cannot go on bemoaning and groaning about obstructions of life. We must realize that action is the essence of life and creative transformation the law of life. We cannot surrender to obstructions and obtrusions of life. We have to go in for a fresh world-order. If the world does not accord with our goals and ideals we have to fight with the world till it corresponds to our aspirations. Unless such an accordance is achieved, we will have to go on shaking the foundations of this world and working out new configurations thereof. A man of action through sheer force of his character dictates a new world order into existence. The obstructions that the world offers only sharpens his will power by being engaged into supreme adventures. It is through such adventures that the potentialities of men of action are fructified or realized.

Life is a manifestation of power and it is essentially a taste for adventures. Weakness or powerlessness robs life of its beauty and grandeur. The obstructions of life are so overwhelming that most of us are inclined to taking a line of least resistance. The beguilements of life are so attractive that most of us succumb to its multifaceted rationalisations and ratiocinations. Helplessness or powerlessness generate highly sophisticated self-justifications. It inspires a world-view and value-system of its own. It underlines such values as mercy, softness, gentleness, humility and kindness. Sometimes it masquerades into the philosophy of determinism and sometimes it spins finest excuses in defence mechanisms. It changes its colours like a chameleon. However, as a matter of historical fact, power and truth are two sides of the same coin. Power is the supreme criterion of evaluation. Power is the supreme value of life; it is the criterion of distinction or demarcation between truth and untruth. The contentions of men of power are hardly in need of rational justifications. It is through appropriation of power that untruth acquires the glory of truth. Power transforms poison into nectar; it transmutes good into
evil. Accordingly, we need to realize this fundamental truth of human existence and orient ourselves to the highways and byways of life (Asrar-i-Khudi, published by Kutub Khanai Naziriya, Muslim Manzil, Khari Bavli, Delhi-6, 2nd edition, 1971, pp. 42-45).

In view of the above considerations, Iqbal is acutely conscious of the role of power in human history, society, polity and economy. The all-important role of power is brought out by Iqbal in the following verses of Asrar-i-Khudi:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Life is the seed, and power the crop:} \\
\text{Power explains the mystery of truth and falsehood.} \\
\text{A claimant, if he be possessed of power,} \\
\text{Needs no argument for his claim.} \\
\text{Falsehood derives from power an authority of truth,} \\
\text{And by falsifying truth deems itself true.} \\
\text{Its creative word transforms poison into nectar;} \\
\text{It says to good, “Thou art bad”, and Good becomes Evil.}
\end{align*}
\]

Iqbal exhorts man to stop complaining about the obstructions that life offers to us all. In point of fact, these obstructions are the necessary preconditions for self-realisation, for moral upliftment and for spiritual enlightenment. Those who are spiritually enlightened transcend the imperatives of elements. They consider the obstructions of life and grace of God and opportunities for self-authentication. Those who appropriate themselves with the full might of the potentialities of their self, he can topsy-turvy the entire established order. They fizzle out who become oblivious to the possibilities of their own self. Only those who are anchored on the full realization of their potentialities can get immortal. Death is not separation of
body and soul but oblivion to the possibilities to the self. Only self-realised ones case undertake projects and attain to Reality by appropriating the mysteries of the universe:

When thou makest thyself strong with self
Thou will destroy the world at thy pleasure
What is death? To become oblivious to self
Why imagine that it is parting of soul and body?
Think of self and be a man of action
Be a man of God, bear mysteries within.

Iqbal is not a conventional Urdu or Persian poet who through symbolical, metaphorical, allegorical and other figurative uses of language brings out various dimensions of love. He is also not a conventional philosopher trying to outline a neat system of philosophy and thereby attempting to respond to various issues pertaining to reality, value, knowledge, truth, good beauty, free-will and determinism, mind and body etc. He is an exceptionally outstanding poet-philosopher of the East with a missionary zeal for reunderstanding and reinterpreting Islamic world-view and value-system with a view to recharging and revitalizing Muslims of the world wallowing into social, political, economic, cultural and intellectual stagnation. He uses his poetic genius as a vehicle for the transformation of global society with special reference to Muslims of the world. Iqbal announces his mission in the following verses under the inspiration of Rumi:

ناک‌ها اعتناژ‌ن‌واو‌نجادادی‌کن
خیز و جان‌ن‌نوب‌ه‌د‌ه‌زند‌ه‌رای
خیز‌وْپ‌ا‌ب‌ر‌ج‌ا‌د‌اه‌دی‌گ‌ر‌بن‌ه

بّزن اُرْ‌از‌ه‌لوَمْ‌آ‌ب‌ادکن
از قَم‌‌خ‌وُد‌ه‌ن‌ه‌تر‌کن‌زند‌ه‌را
جُوش سوْدال کِهْن اَز سرْبَنَه
Create a new style for thy song.
Enrich the assembly with thy piercing strains!
Up, and re-inspire every living soul
Say 'Arise!' and by that word quicken the living!
Arise, and set thy feet on another path;
Put aside the passionate melancholy of old!

Human Ego, according to Iqbal, is blessed with freedom of world-shattering, world-shaping and world-civilising significance. However, it is through facing pain, suffering, evil as well as forces of resistance and obstruction that we can feel the thrill of our freedom. Man is determined by circumstances and conditions or forces of obstruction in so as far as they pose a challenge to his personal projects. If man surrenders to obstructions, he can be said to be fully determined in the face of natural or institutional impediments. However, if he chooses to confront the ongoing and upcoming impediments, he can put himself on the track to realizing as well as earning his freedom. Human freedom is not a gift to be appreciated or being grateful for. It is to be earned after putting up a no holds barred struggle. The more we overcome obstacles the more we can feel the growth of our freedom.

Apparently man is determined by natural, historical, social, psychological and genetic factors. However, this determination or control of human freedom is not absolute or unqualified. These determinations only mark off the field of human operations and endeavours. They also prescribe the methods of human operation. When man boldly confronts the environing conditions and factors and with intelligent and purposeful creativity strategises his steps and methods of intervention, the environing conditions are substantially changed or drastically recast. In furtherance of its desires and aspirations and values and ideals, the self has to engage with its obstructing environment with maximum possible dexterity, ingenuity and creativity. Only by responding to environing challenges and conditioning imperatives with sufficient or maximum creativity can we extend the frontiers of our freedom.
This ever-widening freedom of the human ego finally synchronises with Divine Freedom. Man becomes a co-worker with God. However, given the imperatives and parameters of human ego, man is ever liable to lapse into unfreedom, surrender and helplessness. Islam has, accordingly, prescribed rituals and prayers throughout day and night, with a view to perennially reconnect man with God. Prayers at regular intervals restore or increase human freedom by bringing the ego into closer touch with the Ultimate Source of life and freedom. The following lines from Zabur-i-Ajam are to the point:

The king of Badar (Prophet) has so promulgated,
That Faith is in between freedom and determinism.
You deem every creature to be determined,
And caught into the coils of space and time.
However, life is bestowed by the creator,
Who is hidden despite so many wide-open splendours.
Just liberate yourself from the world of attributes,
And move on from determination to liberation.
When you rub off yourself from dust of determination,
You can trample down your world like that of a she-camel.

However freedom cannot be deemed to be an end-in-itself. We cannot appropriate freedom for the sake of freedom. A free individual will have to put himself under reasonable restraint. A man finds himself determined by environing circumstances and conditions. He breaks free of this determinism by assertion of his will and creativity and puts up an indomitable struggle with a view to achieving freedom of choice. However this hard-one freedom will
have to operate under reasonable constraints or man has to graduate to the level of self-determination. This may be said to be higher determinism. This stage of higher determinism is born out of self-realisation and realization of our psychological, moral, and spiritual challenges and imperatives. This stage is the first stage out of the three stages Iqbal regards as essential for the development of the ego. This first stage is 'obedience to law'. The second stage of the discipline is self-control. The third and the highest stage attainable by human ego is the highest stage of God’s vicegerency.

Furthermore, human self is sustained by creating and positing of ideals and purposes. It is through pursuit of ideals and purposes that man can carry on the constructive and transformative projects of civilisation. Man does not live by bread alone. He lives by ideals, purposes and values. He lives by dedication and devotion to the highest ideals and values. He lives by commitment and faith. Mere proliferation of knowledge also can not sustain him. Knowledge is an instrument of security. It cannot furnish us a spiritual vision or moral mission. We need to appropriate the highest ideals of truth beauty and goodness. We need to explore our connection or relationship with the divine. Intellectual and scientific struggles and social, political and economic endeavours, cannot carry us that far on the track of civilisation. We need universal, eternal, all-consuming and all-powerful ideals. Such ideals can be prescribed or promulgated by Supremely All-powerful and All-knowing God. The source of ideals should be imperishable and immutable and ideals should be such as to be authenticating and buttressing up what is true, beautiful and good and abolishing or eliminating what is false, ugly and evil.

The ego or self, according to Iqbal, can not be abstractly assumed or conceptually figured out. The ego or self is a vital force. It can lead to great intellectual and socio-political transformations. However, human ego or self itself needs to be sustained by recourse to its commitment to a higher vision and mission, a higher system of beliefs and values. The ego or self lives through the creation of values and ideals and through a constant, consistent and
continuous desire and struggle to realize them in one's life and surroundings. The perennial desire and struggle is the origin or cradle of self. We need to keep the flame of desire burning lest our self is entombed into purposelessness or vagrancy. It is through sustained desire for perfection that human self can upkeep its moral and spiritual struggle. Life without desire is as impossible as world without heat and sunshine. The following lines from *Asrar-i-Khudi* beautifully summarize the role of desire in the sustenance and development of self and life:

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Life is latent in seeking.
Its origin is hidden in desire
Keep desire alive in thy heart,
Lest thy little dust become a tomb.
Desire is the soul of this world of
Hue and scent,
The nature of everything is a storehouse of desire.
Desire sets the heart dancing in the breast,
And by it's the breast is made bright as a mirror.
It giving to earth the power of soaring,
It is a Khijr to the Moses of perceptions.
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From the flame of desire the heart takes life,
And when it takes life, all dies that is not true.
When it refrains from forming desires,
Its pinion breaks and it cannot soar.
Desire keeps the self in perpetual uproar.
It is a restless wave of the self's sea.
Desire is a noose for hunting ideals,
A binder of the book of deeds
This desire that enriches life,
And the mind is a child of its womb.

(D) ROLE OF LOVE

Iqbal underlines that it is love that establishes human self or personality and when it is established, it's manifest and hidden powers conquer the entire world order (Asrar-i-Khudi; Kutub Khana-e-Naziriah, Delhi, 1971, pp. 16-22).

As a self-professed disciple of Jallaluddin Rumi, he accepts the extraordinary rather all-important role and function of love in the economy of life. Rumi looks upon love as the great cosmic force which is at the back of the whole process of evolution. The processes of assimilation, growth and reproduction are all manifestations of Love. The striving for the ideal is love's movement towards Beauty and perfection. Beneath the visible evolution of forms is the force of love which actualizes all strivings and movements. Iqbal while agreeing with this account of love advanced by Rumi summarizes his position on love in the following words:

Reason understands the secret of the universe, i.e., apprehends it as it is manifested to us in the physical world while love enjoys a direct vision. Reason is limited to the categories of space and time while love is able to transcend these limits and come face to face with Reality. The object of Reason and love is the same, apprehension of Reality.
reason's search is incomplete while love is the true guide on this path. (Dar: *A Study in Iqbal's Philosophy*, 168)

The development of human ego or personality, according to Iqbal, has been the ultimate fruit of evolutionary process so far. This evolutionary process, as of now, aims at the immortalization of human self. It is beyond ken of reason to either appreciate such a destiny of man or be of some help in this regard. As against reason, love is supremely or perfectly qualified and competent to undertake such a project. Iqbal, following Rumi, also believes in love as a cosmic assimilative force. It has been the function of love to transform the inorganic into organic and organic into the animal. It will be through love that self ever-increasingly approximates to immortality. Human self is a point of light, the spark of life in our earthen frame. It is through love that the self is made more lasting, more living, more burning, more growing. From love proceeds the radiance of its being and the development of its hidden potentialities. The essence of life is ignited by love or love imparts fire to life. It is through love that man learns the art of universal efflorescence. The origin of love is not from earth, water or air; love is deathless and shorn of the fear of mortality; love is both peace and strife; love is both the elixir and sharp cutting edge of life. Iqbal describes the connection between ‘Love’ and the Ego in his *Asrar-i-Khudi* as follows:

The luminous point whose name is the self
Is the life-spark beneath our dust.
By love it is made more lasting,
More living, more burning, more glowing.
Transmute thy handful of earth into gold,
Kiss the threshold of a Perfect Man.

From the wine of Love, spring many spiritual qualities:

Amongst the attributes of Love is blind devotion.

Be a lover constant in devotion to the beloved,

That thou mayst cast thy noose and capture God.

(Diwan-i-Iqbal Lahori, op.cit., pp.93-5, (tr. R.A.Nicholson, pp.28-36)

Love is transforming and transmuting. It has the wherewithal to redesign a higher man, an altogether advanced man, a man of deeper morality and deeper spirituality. Iqbal cries out:

بیا لی عشق لے رمز دل میا یا لی کشت ما لے حاصل ما

کہن گشتند ایس خلکی نهادان دگر آدم بناء کن از گل میا

Come on O' Love! O' Secret of my heart,

Come on O' my field! O' my produce;

Senile have become these clay-encased men,

Create a new Adam out of our mud.

(Diwan-i-Iqbal Lahori, op.cit., p. 205, (self translation).

Iqbal asserts that a man of Love absorbs the qualities of Allah. He is as impartial as the Sun, as generous as a river and as forbearing as the Earth. Like Allah, he is affectionate to one and all. Thus, he maintains that humanity in real sense exists due to internal personal love and compassion. He says in his Jawid Namah:

آسمی از ریت و ضبط تن به تن
بنده ی عشق از خدا گیرد طرق
کف شد و بنده را گیر در پیشانی دل
این همه آفاق آفق دل است

Man continues through inter-personal love and discipline,

On the path of friendship he strikes steps;

A man of love appropriates the style of God,
And becomes equally affectionate to believers and unbelievers; Bracket up infidelity and religion in the expense of thy heart, If the heart is not so commodious, fie on it; Though heart is confined to the realm of water and mud, This entire cosmos is the horizons of heart. (cf. Kazmi, (1997) Javid Namah., p. 418).

He emphasizes that Love is the driving force of human evolution. Human splendor with all its achievements and accomplishments is one of the manifestations of love. Man too is a manifestation of God because of the inspiration of love:

عشق اندر جستجو افتاد و آدم حصل است جلوه‌ُ او آشکار نز پرده‌َ آب و گل است

‘Adam is the fruit of the perennial struggle of Love,

The splendor of God is manifest through the veil of human existence. (Ibid., p.76, (self translation).

Indeed for Iqbal, Love is the Fountain of life; love is the flashing sword of Death. In this way, the multifunctional and multidimensional character of Love has been forcefully brought out by Iqbal in his Jawaid Namah with the beautiful similes about it:

Love dwells within the soul as sight doth in the eye,
Within the house and yet without the door;
Love is both ashes and torch
‘Tis greater than one’s knowledge and one’s faith;
    Love is the king and the clear proof,
    Love is the foundation of both worlds;
    Timelessness, yesterday, and tomorrow,
    No-place, up and down proceed from love;
    If it seeks selfhood from God, it sways the world,
    The place of heart and breaks the ancient spell of this old idol-house;
    The lover gives his self to God,
    And they sacrifice the interpretive reason;
    If your are a lover go from hither to thither,
    Avoid death by all means.


The following verses from Iqbal’s Urdu poetry also bring out the all-important rather omnipotent role of love in man’s life and in the larger project of human civilization:

Love is the primal Mentor of reason, heart and observation
Religion and law, without love, are nothing but idol-houses of concepts.
The authenticity of Abraham too is Love, the patience of Husain too is love
In the battleground of Being, Badar and Hunain (wars fought by the Prophet of Islam) too are love.

With love, even infidelity tantamounts to Islam
Without love, even a Muslim is an infidel.

The comparison between ‘reason and love’ or ‘knowledge and love’ is an ongoing or running theme of Iqbal’s Urdu and Persian poetry. While the role
of love, according to Iqbal is all-important and all-powerful, the limitations of reason and knowledge are obvious, their crucial contributions notwithstanding:

Unless knowledge is rooted in love
It is no more than a gallery of ideas

The hypocritical reason can put on hundreds of masks

Love is innocent – neither a theologian, nor a Sufi nor a philosopher

(Kulliyat-i-Iqbal, op.cit., p. 352)

Love is the law and code of life

Love is the essence of civilization and religion

The consummation of religion is dependent on norms of love

Learn religion through the love of men of love

The love of the Prophet of Islam is one of the running themes or motifs of Iqbal’s poetry:

That Veteran of spiritual pathways

The Master of the Choir and furniture of the Universe

Last of the Messengers.

Who imparted the splendor of valley of Sinai to the dust of roads,

In the eyes of Love and absorption he is the first and the last,

He is the Qur’an, he is the Furgan,

He is the Yasin, he is the Taha
The Love of the Prophet is not only the characterizing feature of a man of faith, it is his be-all and end-all. One who is invested with the Love of the Prophet, has the choir and furniture of the universe under his lock and key. Believers, individually and collectively, derive their sustenance from the Love of the Prophet. Nay, the entire universe is flourishing around his Love:

Whoever has the wherewithal of Prophet’s love
The entire world is at his feet
The community owes its existence to the love of the prophet
Nay, the life of the universe is dependent on his love
Our soul is restless in his love
His love is a day bereft of any evening.

The Love of the Prophet is central to the very vision and mission of Islam. He is the source of inspiration and locus of honour:

There is a beloved hidden within thine heart:
I will show him to thee, if thou hast eyes to see.

His lovers are fairer than the fair,
Sweeter and comelier and more beloved.

By love of him the heart is made strong
And earth rubs shoulders with the Pleiades
The soil of Najd was quickened by his grace
And fell into a rapture and rose to the skies.

In the Muslim's heart is the home of Muhammad,

All our glory is from the name of Muhammad.

The man of God is inspired by love for love is deathless and eternal. Love is formidably challenging, indomitably victorious and powerfully all-pervading and all-encompassing:

The actions of a man of God are inspired by love
Love is the essence of life, it is innocent of death
Although the tide of time is of ferocious velocity
Love itself is a flood and thawarts the flood as well.
In the constitution of love, besides the present age,
There are countless eras, presently unidentifiable
Love is the breath of Gabriel, love is the breath of the Prophet
Love is the messenger of Allah, love is the logos of Allah.

(E) MAN OF FAITH

For Iqbal, an ideal Muslim is one who does not engage himself in metaphysical disputations, theological interpretations, hermeneutical sophistications and ideological controversies. He, rather, is a man of action. He is socially, politically and economically engaged with a view to working out his own destiny and that of the world around him albeit within the parameters of divinely ordained prescriptions and proscriptions or Shari'ah outlined in the Quran. In one of his last poems titled “Iblees Ki Majlis-i-Shura” the “Advisory Council of Satan”, Iqbal, in his unique and specific literary style brings out the strategy and programme of Satan as formulated in consultation with his advisors. Several advisors of Satan in their presentations and speeches point out
various imminent dangers and challenges to the supremacy of the Satan. They cite the rise of Democracy and spread of Marxism as two of the several challenges posing a threat to the kingdom of their master, Satan. In his concluding remarks, the Satan responds to the wistful presentations of his advisors and assures them that the so-called democratic and socialist revolutions do not pose any threat to his abiding kingdom across the globe. However, Islamic world-view and value-system pose a real threat to his supremacy, for it is irresistibly against exploitation of man by man and enslavement of one by another. There cannot be a greater intellectual and practical revolution than the Islamic teaching that the entire land or total economic resources do not belong to kings but to Allah alone. It is in the best interests of the Satanic System or Order to conceal the revolutionary features of Islamic Shari‘ah from the eyes of the world. Anyone fully cognizant of the realities of the world knows that it is Islam rather than Democracy and Socialism which pose a real challenge to Satanic Establishment. So we need to strategise with a view to keeping Islamic Shari‘ah out of the bounds of society, polity, economy and culture. The best way to keep Muslims and Islam away from the most important practical concerns of life is to engage them in pointless scholastic debates as hereunder:

1. Whether Christ is alive or has passed away?
2. Whether the Attributes of Allah are included in His Essence or separate from His Essence?
3. Whether the second coming of Jesus signifies Jesus himself or some another renovator characterized by the virtues of Jesus?
4. Whether the words of the Quran are eternal or are created?
5. Which of the doctrines can lead to the salivation of Ummah etc.?

Such scholastic engagements will alienate him from the world of practical concerns so that Satanic Order remains intact and unchallenged. Better to engage him in such poetry and Tasawwuf which disorients him from the practical imperatives of life. I am perennially afraid lest the Muslims
community is awakened to the vision and mission of Islam leading to devastating interrogation of the Satanic Order and its subsequent replacement by Islamic Order. It is in the fitness of things to inculcates among Muslims life-negating monastic attitudes with a view to cementing the Satanic Order for all times to come.

Iqbal’s ‘Man of Faith’ is not only a revolutionary but a reinterpretative force as well. He creates new form of life as well as reinterprets or reconceptualizes new models of life. He reinterprets our dream of life for he is persuasive enough to re-cast or transubstantiate our desires, drives, hopes and aspirations. Nature is red in tooth and claw but the end-product and the possible justification of this blood-drenched evolution is the emergence of ‘Man of faith’.

Iqbal’s Ideal Man definitely has great similarities with the superman of Nietzsche, although dissimilarities are very stricking. Nietzsche’s Superman and Iqbal’s Ideal Man spring from the idea of ‘will to power’. Both the Superman of Nietzsche and Ideal Man of Iqbal are oriented to future. While Iqbal’s account of Ideal Man is teleological, Nietzsche’s account of Superman though not mechanistic is a teleological. Nietzsche’s Superman is his replacement for God and Iqbal’s Ideal Man is representative of God and God’s Will is to be perfected in this world through him. In fact, man as underlined by Iqbal, is Gods’ co-worker and co-creator. The following verses from ‘Pyam-i-Mashriq’ bring out the crucial rather substantial role played by man in the trans-substantiation, transformation and transcreation of the world. Man says to God:

\[
\text{سقفل آفریدی؛ ایاغ آفریدم} \\
\text{من آنتم که از زهر نوشینه سازم} \\
\text{خیابان و گلزار و باع آفریدم} \\
\text{توشب آفریدی؛ چراغ آفریدم} \\
\text{من آنتم که از سلنک آگیته ساز} \\
\text{بابان و هزارو راوا آفریدی}
\]

‘Thou didst create the night and I made the lamp, 
Thou didst create clay and I made the cup.’

\[1\] Diwan-i-Iqbal Lahori, op.cit., p. 242, (tr. A.A. Ansari, op.cit., p. 135).
It is I who turn stone into a mirror, 
And it is I who turn poison into an antidote.
Thou didst create the deserts, mountains forests, 
I produced the orchards, gardens and groves


He is a response to the prayers of human civilization through aeons. As he is from the realm of love, he is cogniscient of the mysteries of human existence:

For centuries life cries in mosques and temples.
So that from the realm of love one knower of mysteries emerges.

The ‘Man of Faith’ outlined in Iqbal’s poetry is self-transformed and world-transforming. He rolls’ up the conventional or traditional forms of life and inaugurates new patterns of being, thinking and living. His creative genius is revolutionary. His aims and objectives and projects and programmes manifest in social, political and economic order for he is passionately creative and creating. His perennial emergence is perennially directing a new world order.

It is true that both Kierkegaard’s and Iqbal’s Ideal Man or Perfect Man is a man of faith. However, the element of power is absent from Kierkegaard’s account of Ideal Man. He is bereft of any element of power characterizing him, Iqbal’s Ideal Man or Man of Faith is radically invested with power. Iqbal’s Ideal Man is the Vicegerent (khalifah) of God. He is an embodiment of overmastering power for he has to execute the commandments of God on earth.

Iqbal rejects the mechanistic-materialistic as well as the subjective idealistic interpretations of the universe crystallised in eighteenth century under the impact of Newtonian Physics and as a reaction against the same by Berkeley. For Iqbal, the world is not lifeless matter. It is also not comprised of mere minds in the Berkelian sense. As Iqbal interprets it, the world consists of
living-willing egos. These egos are ceaselessly struggling to graduate to higher stages of life and will. The universe is an ordered system of egos or individualities. Continuation of the individuality entails strengthening of ego or self. The world is comprised of finite egos. These finite egos are centres of will and life. There is no form of being in the world which is completely lifeless and will-less. The universe we are living or operating through is an evolving universe. It accommodates different grades of individualities in which the lower types of ego struggle to become higher. Our universe is a perpetual process. Here lower becomes higher by becoming a higher individual.

According to Iqbal, human ego has to negotiate three stages with a view to achieving its purification, edification, education and authentication: Firstly it has to surrender to the commandments or prescriptions and proscriptions ordained by Allah or promulgated by Prophet of Islam. The commandments of Allah or promulgations of the Prophet are obviously not natural laws operating automatically across space-time continuum. These commandments or promulgations are spiritual or moral laws. They are, in the Kantian parlance, categorical imperatives, which have to be rationally and voluntarily appropriated or internalized. We have to obey them, come what may, hell or high water. These spiritual or moral imperatives are the laws of the preservation and sustenance of our existence. Obedience or subordination to these laws does not mean surrender to external dictates but submission to the demands and imperatives of our own conscience. Such a surrender does not signify the abdication of our freedom but restoration of the real freedom which is not a condition of unbridled vagrancy but born out of voluntary subordination to imperatives of our duty.

Without obedience to law or without a proper self-restraint, the freedom of choice enjoyed by the individual is sure not only to lead him astray and defeat the very purpose of evolution, it will be equally disastrous for the maintenance of social relationships without which an individual can not hope to attain his desired ends. In view of the same, Iqbal recommends that an
individual should surrender himself of his own sweet will, to the commandments of Shari'ah encapsulated into categorical propositions of the Quran and doings and sayings of the Prophet.

Self control is the second stage in the ongoing evolution of human ego. The commandments of the Shari'ah have got to be internalized out of free choice by recourse to self-control. A person devoid of self-control, will be controlled by his lower self. In order to help an individual attain self-control Iqbal suggests him to follow the moral and religious code of Islam in its entirety. To begin with, the acceptance of the supremacy of Allah will relieve an individual of all fears and superstitions.

An ordinary or normal self is characterized by so many limitations of arising out of fear and love. Man is afraid of this world, of the world to come and of life and limb. He is afraid of the suffering the world has in store for him. He is pathologically involved in self-love, spousal love, love of property and riches and love of his country and love of what not. He is caught into gluttony indulging in what has been proscribed and forbidden by God. Once he is blissed with the master-key of human existence viz.; La illaha illal lah (there is no god but Allah) formula for baptisation into Islam, all his fears are lost and all his attachments are dissolved into nothingness. Once the fear of Allah is installed in his heart, he is liberated from all kinds of mundane fears. Once he is settled into the realm of God — consciousness, he is liberated from all attachments as well. Furthermore, by offering prayers, by keeping fast, by paying legal alms and by performing Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), we are purged of vices and permeated by virtues. These compulsory prayers, rituals and practices can fortify our ego leading to complete self-control.

Thirdly, the ego will have to shoulder the highest responsibility of being the vicegerent of God. Vicegerency of Allah or Deputyship of God (Khalifatullah) is the consummation and culmination or ultimate realization of all human potentialities, faculties and possibilities. Such a human being augurs well for the glory of the world, leading to appropriation of a political order that
transcends the vicissitudes of spatial and temporal mutations and fluctuations. The Vicegerent of God leads to blissful and blessed worldly human order for he perfectly lords over all the elements of terrestrial existence. He is the soul of the world and his existence is the shadow of the Logos. He is fully cognizant of all the elements of the Whole and is sustained by the commands of Allah. He dismantals the older order replacing it by total revolution. He is the giver of glad tidings and Warner to the entire mankind of all possible dangers. He is the chief of the army of believers. He is the culminating point of all knowledge and secret of all spiritual pathways. He is the explanation and the justification of the entire universe and his glory spells salvation for the entire humankind. He gives a new explanation and interpretation of the mystery of existence. His rule spells universal peace, human brotherhood and perennial love. He is the ultimate destiny of human evolution:

It’s sweet to be God’s Vicegerent in the world
And exercise sway over the elements
God’s vicegerent is as the soul of the universe,
His being is the shadow of the Greatest Name.
He knows the mysteries of part and whole,
He executes the command of Allah in the world.
To the human race he brings both a glad message and a warning.
He comes both as a soldier and as a marshal and prince.
He is the final cause of “God taught Adam the names of all things”,
He is the inmost sense of “Glory to Him
That transported His servant by night”,

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He gives a new explanation of life,
A new interpretation of this dream.

While outlining his concept of vicegerent of God, Iqbal writes:

He is the completest ego, the goal of humanity, the acme of life both in mind and body; in him discord of our mental life becomes a harmony. The highest power is united in him with the highest knowledge. In his life, thought and action, instinct and reason, become one. He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity and all the trials of a painful evolution are justified because he is to come at the end. He is the real ruler of mankind; his kingdom is the kingdom of God on earth. Out of the richness of his nature, he lavishes the wealth of life on others and brings them nearer and nearer to himself. The more we advance in evolution the nearer we get to him. In approaching him we are raising ourselves in the scale of life. The development of humanity both in mind and body is a condition precedent to his birth. For the present he is a mere ideal, but the evolution of humanity is tending towards the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents. Thus the kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth.

(Iqbal: *Introduction to Asrar-i-Khudi*, p.5)

The man of faith is on an eternal quest for God, for values, for ideals. The greater the environmental, geographical, historical, social, political and economic challenges; the greater the authentication and realization of his personality. The more the going gets tough, the more he gets going. The stabilization of human ego or self is accomplished only through facing
challenges shaking our very foundations, so to say. It is through facing the excruciating challenges that our ego or self accomplishes spiritual disclosures of ultimate significance. It is through these disclosures or divulgements that we appropriate God-realisation. The man of God does not see anything but God. He is oblivious or impervious to his personal existence – his desires and aspirations, his needs and drives, his instincts and impulses, etc. He is fired by unflinching and unfailing commitment to one single supreme God, to the implementation and execution of the commandments of Allah. He is so passionate as to be boiling in his blood for the realization of divinely ordained values and ideals. His loveful and passionate commitment to God is unqualified or absolute. It is through love of God that he achieves moral credibility, spiritual authenticity, self-authentication and personal glory and majesty. All the excruciating challenges in the way of God, are for him, occasions to be celebrated, moments of joy and bliss; for such occasions and moments ooze out of his labour of spiritual love, commitment and struggle. In his quest for truth, all the sufferings are joyfully negotiated. While carrying out this divinely ordained loving struggle, all that appears to be evil, is transmuted into good. In this loving struggle, all the apparent unkindnesses, are inverted love-affairs of highest moral and spiritual value:

Our ego is fortified by great challenges,
Till the Reality of God is disclosed to man.
The man of God does not see himself apart from Truth,
Mouthing 'La-ilah', he sacrifices himself for Truth.
It is an honour for Love to stew up in blood,
Being cut, beaten and hanged is an occasion for celebration.
Whatever happens in the way of God is good,
The apparent unkindnesses of Allah are moments of joy.

The ‘Man of Faith’ is above all worldly attractions and beguilements. He is not enamoured of worldly pomp and show. He is not bedazzled by ostentation of power, wealth, office or status. He is beyond slavery and enslavement. He is a man of freedom and truth. He is directed by divine commandments. In his personal, religious and legal matters, he is oriented to and impacted by God. His standards of good and evil or bitter and sweet etc. are divinely revealed:

بنّادة حق بني نسازا هير مصام
ملك و آکینش خداداد است بس
زشت و خوب و تلخ و نوشیش زحق

The man of God is averse to all status symbols,
None is subservient to him, he is subservient to none.

The man of God is nothing but a man of freedom,
His country and value-system are just the gifts of Allah
The patterns of his religion and value-system are from Allah
The criteria of his good and evil and bitter and sweet are from Allah.

Iqbal’s Man of Faith or Man of God is not only a servant of God or seeker of God. He is a co-worker or colleague of God. He is not absorbed into God, he absorbs God into himself. Consequently, he becomes instrumental in the implementation of divine strategies and plans or Will of God. He strides like a colossus on the social, political and economic scene and operates as a great transformative force. He is a dominant creative force, a great transformative agency, a great revolutionary power. He has originated from mud but he is oriented to spiritual light or enlightenment. He is invested with attributes of Allah. He is so engrossed into the love of Allah that pleasures and attractions of all the possible worlds leave him unshaken and undisturbed. His faith is the centre-point of all truth and all being. In comparison to the truth of
his faith, the status of this world is superstitious, magical and figurative. Iqbal in *Bal-i-Jibril* in a long poem: "*Masjid-i-Qartabah*" says:

> "The hand of *Mo'min* (Perfect Man) is the hand of God;
> His hand is dominant creator and solver of the problems and doer of work.
> Although is made of dust, his foundation is of light;
> He is God's servant but he possesses the attributes of God.

(*Kulliyat-i-Iqbal, op.cit., p. 389*)

Life without faith is hopelessness — an irredeemable despair. It is an absolute or unqualified darkness. Faith is the only spark which can sustain human civilization across all evolutionary vicissitudes. It is the only jewel which shines by its' own light:

> The Faith of a Muslim is to this doubt-anchored world
> What a hermits' candle is to the dark night of wilderness

The faith of a man of God is at the centre of the Truth or centrally informs the truth. This universe independent of faith is devoid of meaning and truth:

> The centrepoint of the compass of Truth is the faith of a man of God,
> And this entire choir and furniture of the universe is nothing but imagination, magic and appearance

A man of faith need not be a scholar. He need not be a professor of theology or philosophy, a historian or a hermeneuticist. An awareness of the methodological and hermeneutical intricacies involved in the Quranic Exegesis will not vouchsafe to us the blessings of faith. Each man of faith will have to negotiate the experience of revelation himself. We cannot achieve clarity with
regard to the Quran unless the Quran is always contemporaneously experienced as revealing on our conscience:

تيمہ طیسر پہ بچہ کا نہیں زوال کتاب گورہ چکا نہیں زوال د پاچ مکھ فات

Until the Qur'an is revealed on your own conscience, Commentators such as Razi and author of Kashaf' (Zamakhshri) are not going to untie its' knots.

The insignificance of human learning and scholarship cannot be overstressed in the realms of spirituality and faith:

کافر نہ دو زوال لا السـے کے د بہتر تجربہ کا

The man of God possesses nothing save two letters of La-i-lah

It is the jurisconsult of the city who has amassed large lexicographical compendia of Arabia.

The man of faith or man of God is socially, politically, economically, culturally and more importantly spiritually a power centre of unique significance. He is oriented to action although he is rooted in beliefs and values. He is the greatest agent of social transformation and intellectual transmutation. God-realisation is the foundation or anchor of his personality but action is his approach to or method of social transformation. It is through action that secrets of self and universe are revealed to him. He is characterised by power, courage, initiative, fortitude, determination, perseverance, constancy, equanimity and magnanimity etc:

کوئی اسلامہ کر سکا بہ اتنے کے زوال ہو کا گناہ مر مومن سے بنل پالن کے قبیلے

Nobody can estimate the prowess of his arms.

A mere wink of a Man of Faith is sufficient to transform destinies.

The Man of Faith or Man of God, is the culmination of biological and cultural evolution. He is the locus of inspiration in the space-time continuum. In his long poem, Masjid-i Qartabah, Iqbal says:
He is the destination of Reason, and the end of Love;
He is the very life of the Assembly of the universe.

*(Kulliyat-i-Iqbal, op.cit., p. 390, (tr A.A. Ansari, op.cit., p. 22)).*

It is not the formal trappings that make us a Man of God. Rather it is our spiritual attunement with God that imparts divinity to us:

An infidel with an alert heart in front of an idol,
Is better than the so-called Muslim who slept in Ka'bah

Faith is the elixir, faith is the panacea. It is faith that can resolve the problems and work out solutions. It is faith that can inspire an all-out transformation and revolution:

When a man is fired by the warmth of conviction,
He is invested with the wings of Gabriel.

Iqbal offers a passionate prayer for the early arrival of his Ideal Man. His arrival will spell peace, brotherhood, love and compassion. He is the ultimate fruit of the garden of life. In fact, he is the ultimate destiny of biological, moral and spiritual evolution. Iqbal says in his *Asrar-i-Khudi*:

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Appear, O rider of destiny!
Appear O light of the dark realm of change!
Illumine the scene of existence,
Dwell in the blackness of our eyes!
Silence the noise of the Nations,
Imparadise our ears with thy music!
Arise and tune the harp of brotherhood,
Give us back the cup of wine of love!
Bring once more days of peace to the world,
Give a message of peace to them that seek battle!
Humankind is the cornfield and thou the harvest,
Thou art the goal of life’s Caravan.


There has not been a better critique of human rationality and classical, medieval and modern almost pathological obsession for objectivity. Iqbal claimed to have negotiated the fire of European scholarship and philosophy with the equanimity of Abraham. It is not an overstatement.
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CHAPTER - VI
COMPARISON

Kierkegaard and Iqbal share many things despite their considerable differences. Both are powerful critics of theological rationalism attempting to rationally prove and appropriate religion. Both anchor their Christian and Muslim beliefs and values on faith rather than argument or method. Both advocate that philosophical or religious truth in its highest sense can be appropriated only subjectively and all attempts at objective appropriation of such a truth can land us only into the morass of irremediable and irredeemable confusion. For Kierkegaard, subjectivity is truth and truth is subjectivity. Iqbal says that if we try to seek God, we would not see anything but ourselves and if we try to seek ourselves, we would not find anything but God. Even the Qur'an, according to Iqbal, cannot be understood by recourse to ponderous theological scholarship or methodological sophistication but by spiritual internalization, subjectivisation and conscientisation. Truth rotates round the faith of the man of God. The so-called objective world is, in comparison, nothing but fanciful, magical and illusory and cannot be cited with a view to establishing or validating what is Ultimately True or Real.

Kierkegaard and Iqbal, both are primarily and respectively, inspired by the more or less equivalent versions of the Primordial Semitic Vision pertaining to Man, Universe and God enshrined in the Bible and the Qur'an. Both of them are essentially exhortative philosophers as both of them ask Christians and Muslims to reappropriate the original Biblical and Qur'anic beliefs and values. Both ask Christians and Muslims respectively to abandon or give up skeptical, cynical, nihilistic and life-negating attitudes and orientations born out of the so-called western modernist rationalist critique of religions albeit the Biblical or the Qur'anic world-view and value-system.

The purpose of Kierkegaard's philosophy was to summon the nineteenth century smug Christendom of Europe to the passionate commitment to original
Christian world-view and value-system. He offered a radical re-examination of what it means to become a Christian using his rhetorical and satirical skills to disclose the limits of reason and open the door to faith.

Iqbal's poetry and prose writings too are primarily addressed to a restoration of the original vision and mission of Islam. Just as Christ is central to Kierkegaardian account of Christianity, so is Muhammad the cynosure of Iqbal's reinterpretation and reconstruction of Islamic beliefs and values. He categorically and specifically asks Muslims to reappropriate the Prophet for he constitutes the alpha and omega of Islam, the rest being antithetical to the essence and core of religion. Just as Kierkegaard was underlining the strenuous and demanding requirements of authentic Christianity so was Iqbal frighteningly aware to the exacting and overtaxing demands of being attuned to original vision and pristine mission of Islam. Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal underline the absolute need for and foundational importance of authentic commitment to religious beliefs and values. Kierkegaard emphasised on passionate appropriation of the central paradox of Christianity viz; God-man or Christ, against all protests and objections of reason. For Iqbal, all legal, ethical and theological doctrines are nothing but conceptual idolatry if not animated by love. Sans illumination of love, life is suffering; reason a distanciation from the primal source of our being and religion an insufferable burden. With love, even apostasy is transmuted into faith, sans love even a believer is an apostate.

Kierkegaard in nineteenth century Europe and Iqbal in twentieth century Asia have advanced extraordinarily powerful critiques of Enlightenment rationalism and humanism. Both of them have appreciated the subterranean and inherent alienation beneath the apparently shining façade of Enlightenment project. Both of them have protested against the reducitonistic accounts of man, religion and morality inspired by rationalist and humanist turnaround in eighteenth century Europe. Kierkegaard advanced the view that the ideal of rational and objective knowledge underscored by the Enlightenment was inherently blind to the demands of the imperatives of inner or subjective
existence. A rational and objective account of religion would paradoxically
enough pulverisethe very logic and function of religion which can be religion
only to the extent it is subjectively appropriated. Iqbal deemed human reason
operating as a street-lamp which can furnish light across the compound of a
house but can give no inkling as to what is going on inside the house. It is
through faith that we can undergo self-mortification and experience God-
intoxication. Faithlessness according to Iqbal is worse than slavery. It is
through intuition and love that we can affirm the existence of our ego, the
Supreme Ego and graduate to the highest stage of Divine Vicegerency. What
needs to be underlined is that Iqbal shares a deep philosophical kinship with
Kierkegaard, for both recognized the limits of reason and science in grasping
the nature of self, God and faith.

Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal were fired by missionary zeal. Both were
inspired by grand spiritual visions and moral missions encapsulated into New
Testament and the Quran. Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal felt they were divinely
commissioned with the task of rejuvenating Christianity and Islam. Kierkegaard felt that the institutionalized, organized and establishmentarian
nineteenth century Christianity was the violation and distortion of the original
Mission of Christianity and he further felt called upon to reawaken Christians
to the pristine glory of their religion. Iqbal deemed poetry to be a part of the
Messengership. While he saluted the Sufi and the Mullah for imparting the
fundamental doctrines of Islam, he was deeply skeptical with regard to their
interpretation of Islam. He likened himself to Rumi and claimed that what
Rumi was to the tumultuous Medieval times, he was to intellectually
mischievous present day world. Iqbal’s art and thought was especially
addressed to the revival of original Islamic Mission and rejuvenation of
Muslim community across the globe.

Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal protested against distorted interpretations of
Christianity and Islam respectively. Kierkegaard was especially critical of
Hegel’s treatment of Christianity as a symbolic expression of the metaphysical
truth that Absolute Spirit exists only in and through the cosmos. Such a Hegelian interpretation is a betrayal of the original Christian position believing God to be transcending the physical world and human persons. Similarly Iqbal has repeatedly critiqued rationalist philosophers and theologians for trying to adjust the Qur'anic revelations to the dictates and criteria of human reason. Iqbal brings out that at every point of history the Qur'an can be appropriated only by those who are experientially feeling themselves attuned to it as if it is being revealed on them. Any purely theological espousal of Islam can be highly distorting and misleading.

Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal are deeply critical of speculative abstractions. Kierkegaard was radically critical of Hegel’s speculative philosophy. Kierkegaard deemed Hegel to be comic for trying to capture all of reality in his system of thought. In his extravagant speculative flights of fancy, Hegel lost touch with existence of the individual human beings. Kierkegaard launched a life-long revolt against such abstract and speculative philosophy. Iqbal too thinks Hegel’s shell to be devoid of the pearl. The destiny of pure speculation culminates in being impresent to God. The speculative philosophy distanciates us from life or existence.

Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal were deeply outraged by all shades of pantheistic philosophy. Kierkegaard is highly critical of Hegel’s pantheistic contempt for the individual man and of his speculative attempts at submerging concrete human beings in a totality. Hegel like all speculative philosophers could not see himself to be a distinct atomic individual amenable to experiencing terrible cosmic isolation, loneliness and dreadful responsibility. So he was attracted to interpreting all human beings to be components or expressions of World-Spirit. Iqbal too was radically critical of the pantheistic interpretation of Islam worked out by Ibn Arabi. Apart from negating the transcendental God of the Quran, Ibn Arabi’s doctrine of Oneness of Being, undercuts human freedom and demolishes every criterion of good and evil.
Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal advocated that pantheistic philosophy is antithetical to genuine moral and spiritual life. A robust religious life is impossible without the complete banishment of pantheistic doctrine. The essence of Christianity and Islam, they believed, is opposed to all pantheistic, absolutistic, and monistic dogmas.

Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal stress on the unqualified significance of man-God relationship. Both are categorically clear that all so-called proofs for the existence of God are fallacious, spurious, unnecessary and uncalled for. Both are critically cognizant of the need for cultivating a profound man-God relationship. However, any relationship with or appropriation of God can never be rationally or intellectually worked out or carried out. Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal emphasize on subjective appropriation of God. Iqbal emphasizes on relating ourselves to God by recourse to intuition and love. He goes to the extent of saying that love is so powerful a force as to be capable of purchasing the will of God. Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal agree that any objective demonstration of God is eternally impossible and God can be appropriated only through subjectivity and inwardness.

Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal deem Christ and Muhammad to be central to Christianity and Islam respectively. For Kierkegaard the Ultimate Mystery of Christianity is that the eternal God was incarnated into a historical man i.e. Jesus Christ. This central absurdity can never be conveniently or plausibly explained. Any such explanation would involve distorting the core of Christianity, for the doctrine that man was God, is essentially absurd. However, the incarnation of the Christ is central to the original Christian narrative. Similarly, the Prophet of Islam, according to Iqbal, is the be-all and end-all of Islam. Iqbal unlines that in the spiritual pathway of Islam, Prophet is the first and the last or the origin and the destiny. If we authentically reach the Prophet, that constitutes the sum and substance of Islam as a way of life. All else is idol-worship and infidelity.
Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal emphasise on authenticity. An authentic man is a man of faith. It is only an authentic man of faith who according to Kierkegaard can appropriate God through subjectivity and inwardness. The authenticity of a man of faith is beyond pleasure and pain, profit and loss, powerfulness and powerlessness, honour and dishonor, popularity and unpopularity and other such considerations. An authentic faith is a categorical imperative. It is a leap unto the darkness. Similarly Iqbal brings out that when a man is fired by authentic faith, he is invested with the wings of Gabriel. The Qur'anic revelations can also be appropriated only by an authentic man of faith. An authentic man of faith can offer his own life as a gift to God. An authentic love of God can joyously lead us to self-mortification and self-sacrifice. Such a sacrifice is the ultimate joy for an authentic man of faith.

Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal, advance their respective formulations of the dialectic of existence. Kierkegaard classifies three possible modes of existence; aesthetic mode, ethical mode and religious mode. When we live in existential mode, we strive for maximization of immediate pleasures. However such a mode is bound to lead to monotony, boredom and frustration. While living in ethical mode, we commit ourselves to ethical principles and values and are concerned about wider circles of human fraternity. However this mode of existence is also incapable of liberating us from frustration, alienation and spiritual crisis. Such a crisis can be eliminated only if we appropriate the religious mode of existence by a leap of faith. Only an unqualified commitment to God can fill in the void of our existence. Similarly, Iqbal advances his own version of an existential dialectic. According to Iqbal, an authentic Muslim has to firstly subordinate himself to the commandments of Shari‘ah. Secondly, he has to carry on an excruciating moral and spiritual struggle with a view to achieving complete self-control. Thirdly, a man can appropriate the highest stage of Divine Vicegerency. Each human being is capable of becoming the vicegerent of God. The Divine Vicegerent is the Perfect Man of Iqbal, the highest product of evolution.
Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal underscore the significance of human freedom. Freedom is essential to authenticity. We can never achieve authentic existence if we are unfree. Kierkegaard points out that if religion could be rationally proved or demonstratively clinched, we would lose all scope for freedom and the entire quest for authenticity. The fact that we are given the choice to believe or not to believe in God, indicates our unqualified freedom. Freedom to Kierkegaard is the core or crux of faith and authenticity. Iqbal, throughout his poetry has celebrated the freedom of man. For Iqbal, the man of authentic faith is the man of freedom. While a slave is determined by circumstances, a free man of authentic faith determines the very circumstances. While in servitude, life is a handful of water, in freedom it is a boundless ocean. Iqbal emphasizes that while geological and biological phenomena are determined by destiny, an authentic man of faith and freedom is voluntarily directed by the commandments of Allah. An authentic free man cannot compromise with circumstances. When challenged by circumstances, the man of authentic faith and freedom; by the sheer force of his values, ideals, purposes and aspirations, destroys the old patterns of life and recreates a new world-order according to his own lights. The highest example of such a man of faith and freedom is the Prophet of Islam.

However, Kierkegaard and Iqbal are not carbon copies of each other. They belong to two different religious, intellectual and cultural backgrounds. They were also different by training and temperament. In view of the same, a brief account of their dissimilarities would be in order:

Kierkegaard’s world is essentially a world of despair. He is temperamentally melancholic and philosophically oriented to despair. According to Kierkegaard, despair inevitably crops up when one is inexorably driven to God and yet finds it impossible to reach the synthesis of finite-infinite relationship. The very incarnation of the Infinite God in historical Jesus is the highest absurdity and an irresolvable paradox. Kierkegaard believes in the paradox but wants to comprehend it on the basis of faith. In view of the
essential incomprehensibility of this paradox, Kierkegaard finds himself irretrievably condemned to the sad world of despair. Iqbal, on the other hand, is an incorrigible optimist. He points out that any complaint with regard to Divine Determination is futile, for man is capable of determining the course of Divine Will. Iqbal is cocksure that we can appropriate God through intuition and love. It is through love and self-sacrifice that God's Will can be dissolved in man's will. If man can rise on the scale of egohood, God can consult him with regard to his desires and aspirations. Iqbal finds joy even in the sufferings inflicted on man by God, for it is through suffering and strife that we can achieve highest spiritual stature.

Iqbal's man of faith negotiates highest possible mystical intimations and spiritual disclosures by recourse to contemplation and intuition. He loves to retire to his solitude. He is solitary. However, he is not lonely. Kierkegaard's radical espousal of subjectivity makes any sort of communication impossible. Kierkegaard's authentic man is irretrievably lost into despair for in his critical moments and existential choices, he is alone, bearing the burden of all his decisions as responsibilities. Especially the decision of subjective appropriation of and commitment to God is the most vital decision of the authentic man of faith and entails unfathomable suffering and despair, for such a decision is hedged on absolute uncertainty and impervious to all calculations of consequences; profit-wise or loss-wise.

Kierkegaard is too much of a radical advocate of subjectivity. He is intensely religious which impels him to become an extreme outsider. Iqbal's advocacy of faith and love is radical too. However, in comparison to Kierkegaard, his religious orientations sound to be more sober. In view of the same, he can see the other side of the picture as well. Iqbal's man of faith does integrate himself with the external human world and he is especially in genuine emotional and intellectual communion with fellow Muslims. Iqbal's authentic man of faith can transcend his ego-centric predicament by his unqualified and
unconditional love. Iqbal’s man of faith, following Allah, becomes equally affectionate with believers and non-believers.

The divergent religious attitudes of Kierkegaard and Iqbal are inspired because of their divergent doctrinal backgrounds. In the context of Iqbal’s religious tradition God reveals His commandments through the Prophet in the form of a ‘Book’. On the other hand, Kierkegaard belongs to a religious tradition in which the revelation of God takes place in the historic person of Christ. In the Islamic religious tradition, God as a law-giver is addressing to the entire community of Muslims. The Muslim community as a whole becomes an expression of God’s Will. In fact, the Muslim community as a whole, is the social and political locus of Divine vicegerency. Therefore, Iqbal throughout his poetic career, has been continuously and consistently addressing to the global Muslim community, exhorting them to appropriate the pristine glory of Islam with a view to scaling on the pinnacle of worldly success as well as spiritual plenitude. By contrast, Kierkegaard’s man of faith, remains a lonely individual. Iqbal’s man of faith comes closer to becoming a ‘person’.

Kierkegaard’s authentic man of faith is completely dependent and absolutely finite. He stands perennially as a lonely individual before the Personal transcendental God. He is like Abraham standing before him only as a lonely single individual who is supported by none or nothing save his unconditional commitment to God. Iqbal’s religious model was the Prophet of Islam, who founded the ‘Community of the believers’ in early seventh century Arabia. Therefore Iqbal’s espousal of the ‘individual’ was not unqualified. Despite his overwhelming appreciation of the role of individual consciousness and conscience, Iqbal’s commitment to the communitarian solidarity was unqualified as well.

Kierkegaard was too much focused on the ‘individual’ to ponder over the question of social and political power. As against Kierkegaard, Iqbal is a fully-fledged political philosopher. ‘The will to power’, is almost as central to Iqbal as it is to Nietzsche. Power, is the determinant of good and evil, in the
final analysis of Iqbal. Power and truth are the two sides of the same coin. Power interprets what is and what is not true. In fact, in his account of power, Iqbal presages Foucault and other postmodern political philosophers.

Kierkegaard did not forward any metaphysical doctrines. He was passionately involved in exploring the existential dialectic of a lonely individual apparently pitted against the ontologically silent or clueless cosmos. Iqbal too was involved in a life-long exploration of human subjectivity. However, he formulated a considerably strong rather imposing metaphysical apparatus in contradistinction to the pantheistic system propounded by IbnArabi. His metaphysics of man as ‘ego’, God as ‘Supreme Ego’ and the universe being a pulsating constellation of countless ‘egos’ was more akin to Leibnizean monadology than to Kierkegaardian existential phenomenology. Of course, Iqbalian metaphysics was formulated in keeping with the abiding axiological concerns and considerations characterising Semitic Monotheistic Weltanschauung. The axiological thrust of Iqbalian ontology was also galvanized by the larger sociopolitical agenda of revitalising the Muslim Ummah caught into the vortex of European imperialism. In comparison, Kierkegaard was oblivious to sociopolitical polarization of his times and almost fanatically concerned with the existentially challenging predicaments and crises of the individual.

Philosophical reflection upon human subjectivity is as old as human civilization. All religious world-views and value-systems have formulated and forwarded their respective perspectives on subjectivity. The question of subjectivity has been central to Modern Western Philosophy as well. For example, Cartesian, Kantian and Hegelian philosophical systems are also both epistemologically and ontologically anchored on subjectivity. Even the post-Kantian and post-Hegelian philosophy is centrally informed by reflections on subjectivity. Contemporary postmodern antihumanist critiques of the subjectivity also underline the central significance of the problem even in the ongoing philosophical narratives. However, of all the western philosophers,
Kierkegaard's standpoint on subjectivity seems to be most radical and most engaging. He defined subjectivity to be truth and truth to be subjectivity. Truth can only be authentically appropriated, passionately stood for and lived by and finally surrendered to in unconditional commitment rather than laboratorically confirmed or objectively demonstrated.

Iqbal's life-long engagement with Islamic world-view and value-system and his simultaneous critique and appropriation of Sufi interpretation of Islam resulted into the accomplishment of a philosophical vision wherein universe, man and the God are conceptualized as hierarchical gradations of 'Egohood' or 'Will', which vision on the epistemological plane can only be intuitively appropriated rather than methodologically, critically and analytically confirmed or established. Truth is centred on faith rather than experimental verification or logical demonstration. Allah is to be appropriated through passionate faith and authentic commitment rather than discovered by recourse to a critical examination of ponderous volumes incorporating theological scholarship and learning.

Subjectivity and correspondingly, inwardness, faith, authenticity, commitment, primacy of ethical struggle, self-transformation, emphasis on action and decision etc. are some of the crucial and characterizing concerns of both Kierkegaard and Iqbal's philosophical vision and mission. A more detailed comparative and critical study of Kierkegaard and Iqbal's perspectives on subjectivity would therefore be a highly rewarding philosophical endeavour. It will hopefully also be a significant contribution to the ongoing Comparative Philosophy in the emerging global society.
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CHAPTER - VII

CRITICAL EVALUATION

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) was a Danish religious thinker and philosopher. His insistence on the priority of individual existence, subjective reflection, choice and responsibility make him the earliest contributor to the philosophy of existentialism. His dynamic concept of the self, as well as his passionate defense of religious faith, had significant influence on leading theologians and major thinkers in continental philosophy in the twentieth century.

Iqbal (1877-1939), the greatest twentieth century Indo-Islamic poet-philosopher, was an outstanding exponent of non-pantheistic perspective on man, universe and God. He put up a life-long struggle against all those philosophical or mystical interpretations which defined the ultimate human destiny in terms of absorption, or dissolution into World-Soul or God. For Iqbal every man is invested with a perennially irreducible individuality. Every man is an ego or centre of experience and the universe itself is a conglomeration of countless egos. God is the Supremely Perfect Ego as well. Man as a subjective centre of experience or ego in its onward march to self-realization, does not absorb himself into God, but absorb’s God into himself.

For Kierkegaard, truth is subjectivity and subjectivity is truth. Subjectivity is what makes up each person’s unique existence. For Kierkegaard, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual is simply an objective uncertainty held fast in the mostpassionate personal experience. Subjective truth does not aspire to the certainty of objective theoretical knowledge. There can be no rationally certified system of moralityor religion. There are no irrefutable theological or ethical arguments in favour of living life in a particular way. In any case, theoretical certainty about moral or religious truth world abolish freedom at the same time as it relieved us of uncertainty.
Furthermore, rational arguments could never motivate us to actually lead moral lives if they could correctly define the true beliefs or right values.

For Kierkegaard, Hegel’s philosophy was a conglomeration of bloodless ideas in which individuals are virtually lost into interpretative oblivion. He laid out a pantheistic world-view that absorbed everything into the "absolute Spirit". Hegel treated Christianity as a historical phase in the development of spirit and incorporated it into his rationalist philosophical system. He saw Christianity as a thing short of philosophical or dialectical annulment of Christianity as a principle. For Kierkegaard Christianity is anchored on inviolable faith in the "eternal paradox" that an eternal being came into existence in temporal history. Hegel is pointlessly and unnecessarily trying to provide some dialectical or rational justification of Christianity thus violating the very purpose as well as logic and methodology of religion. Kierkegaard accuses Hegel of utter abandonment of the individual. In fact, all traditional rationalistic philosophers have failed in appreciating the "subjective viewpoint" or the "existence of the individual". The Hegelian or general rationalistic failure of ignoring the subjective viewpoint does neither stem from an oversight nor from any deliberate disavowal of the subject. Rather, the very craze at philosophical systematization inherently militates against the accommodation of "subjective viewpoint". The whole emphasis in such a philosophical struggle is at conceptual systematization. Individual human existence is also treated as one of the stages of the conceptual development of the spirit. Kierkegaard was deeply distrustful of Hegel’s attempt to merge man and nature with the World-Soul. If we simply see our consciousness as an aspect of World Soul, we are no longer truly individuals. Kierkegaard emphasized the absolute isolation of every single human being. Each one of us is alone, lost and terrified in the vast crowd. It is when we turn to God and God turns to us that we are redeemed from this anonymity and fear. God does not detract from our individuality but enables us to attain full self-consciousness.
The dialectical sophistry of Hegel is actually justificatory apologetics and dogmatics of a rationalist philosopher in search of a rationale of history. For Hegel all changes, transitions or modifications are necessary dialectical movements in the ongoing march of history towards the realization and exploration of 'World-Spirit'. This justificatory apologetics not only erodes but negates human freedom and concomitantly human responsibility. It effectively makes human life purposeless and meaningless. Kierkegaard with extraordinary missionary zeal summoned all his intellectual powers with a view to calling individuals to a sense of their value. In calling individuals to the imperatives of ethical responsibility and religious faith, Kierkegaard underlined the need for the cultivation of subjectivity and inwardness.

Like the classical Greek thinker Socrates, Kierkegaard was interested in self-understanding instead of indulging in the formulation of metaphysical principles. We must start with an understanding of our own existence. The function of philosophy is not the discovery of physical and natural principles with a view to explaining the universe but to explore the problems of human subjectivity. The keynote of Kierkegaard like that of Socrates is —“Know thyself”. The speculative systems of philosophers are illusory for they do not correspond to any reality whatsoever. The only reality is our finite subjective existence. Following Kant, knowledge is a conditional imperative whereas morality is a categorical imperative for the existing individual, according to Kierkegaard. The existing individual provides significance to his life through realisation of his personal freedom, through commitment, through responsibility, through deep and abiding engagement in moral dilemmas and through moments of painful decisions and actions involving courage of the highest order.

To Kierkegaard God is infinite, incomprehensible and transcendent Being. However, his concept of God is antithetical to officially established Christian Orthodoxy. It is man's ultimate depth of feeling or inwardness in relation to God that counts. Kierkegaard like Augustine and Luther emphasized
the personal relationship between man and God. However, this relationship cannot be governed by theological standards and definite dogmas. It is beyond the description of theological categories as well, for such a relationship transcends all intellectual determinations. The professors of philosophy and theology were pre-eminently ill-qualified to provide rational or intellectual grounds for appropriation of God. The intellectual or rational appropriation of God was simply impossible of conceptualization or formulation. However, the Greek and especially Platonic emphasis on rationality and objectivity permeated subsequent philosophical and theological attempts aimed at grasping God, universe, man and human values. The grand formulations of philosophical systems eventually come to nothing unless they lead attention back to the individual.

Therational and objective methods can and do resolve great questions in the spheres of mathematical and natural scientific areas of investigation or fields of research. However, beyond questions that are amenable to inductive and deductive resolution each one of us faces critical choices, baffling dilemmas and painful alternatives. The so-called general principles or methods are of no avail during these critical moments. No amount of scientific and mathematical reasoning could have helped Abraham in taking the supremely overwhelming decision whether to sacrifice his son or not at the behest of God.

Man can either opt for a pleasure-centric/aesthetic mode of life or value-centric/ethical mode of life. However, he can overcome his overwhelming sense of finitude or pervasive and tragic sense of guilt, estrangement and alienation by appropriating God through a leap unto the darkness or by opting for a religious mode of life. These three modes of life viz; aesthetic or hedonistic gratificationism, ethical communitarianism and religious theocentrism, are fundamentally incompatible in that one can only choose among them; there is no possibility of compromise with a view to finding the best of each mode of life. The foremost task of philosophy is to illuminate this
existential dialectic with a view to orientating the individual to an authentic appropriation of his subjectivity.

Iqbal's world-view and value-system is Islamic. However, an objective demonstration of these beliefs and values is impossible of formulation. Following Kant he rejects all the celebrated proofs for the existence of God. These beliefs and values can be appropriated only subjectively. It is through intuition that our own reality and the Reality of God can be revealed to us.

For Iqbal, fine-spun and sophisticated principles of scriptural hermeneutics are not going to divulge to us the thematic glories and semantic layers of the Qur'an. The Qur'anic verses must be revealed to the depths of the conscience of the seeker himself. The centrepoint of truth is the faith of the man of God. Everything else, in comparison, is whimsical, magical and illusory.

Iqbal exhorts us to learn to circumambulate around our own selves and appropriate skills of digging up the depths of our own hearts. For, if we really crave for a transparent divulgement of the ultimate splendour and beauty of God, we must learn to transparently appreciate the splendour and beauty of our own ego. If we earnestly try to seek him, we world not see anything but ourselves and if we authentically try to realize ourselves we would find nothing but Him.

The highest manifestation of life is ego or self. The individual human being as the embodiment of self or ego is a fully-fledged centre of consciousness. However, despite being a complete physical and spiritual centre, man is not a perfect individual. The perfection of human individuality entails increasing proximity to the Supreme Individuality of God. The nearer man is to God, the more integrated his individuality, and conversely, the greater man's distance from Him, the less integrated his individuality. The most integrated personality or individuality is one who is nearest to God. However, such a
perfect individual does not absorb himself into God but absorbs God into himself.

Iqbal radically affirmed human "ego" as a perennially irreducible ontic entity or domain. Human ego is the gateway to God. If we want to understand God, we will have to plumb the ultimate depths of our own self. Only self-realisation can lead to God-realisation. Though the Supreme Ego is the source of human ego, yet human ego has a separate and distinct reality of it's own. However, at times, Iqbal in his own poetic and mystical impulses almost identifies Supreme Ego with human ego.

Iqbal's philosophy of man, universe and God is diametrically opposite to or poles apart from the pantheistic perspective on man, universe and God. For pantheists or monists or absolutists, the ultimate salvation of man lies in his complete absorption into the Absolute or World-Spirit. For Iqbal, not self-absorption or self-dissolution but self-assertion and self-authentication lead man to moral fulfilment and spiritual salvation. Man's moral commitment and spiritual realization entail appropriation of higher levels of individuality and uniqueness.

Therefore, one of the life-long commitments and intellectual concerns of Iqbal was bringing out the limitations of the pantheistic world-view and value-system of Ibn Arabi, who as against the monotheistic emphasis on absolute unity of God propounded the absolute unity of all things in God. This pantheistic doctrine is patently unacceptable to Iqbal whose pluralist and transcendentalist philosophy is deeply imbued with revolutionary romanticism. It deems not only the unique personality of the Divine Being and His Existence as distinct from the universe but also the existence of human individuals and their partnership with God as a necessary condition for constituting the commonwealth of ends or ideals.

Iqbal's critique of pantheistic ontocosmology is anchored on axiological grounds. The foremost moral consideration brought against the doctrine is its'
inability to provide us a criterion of distinguishing good from evil. As everything emanates from The Absolute, so nothing can be deemed to be evil. In the absence of a criterion of good and evil, the so-called moral struggle becomes meaningless and in the absence of a genuine moral struggle, human freedom is effectively smothered. The quest for the establishment of a just and egalitarian social, political and economic order is lost for ever.

In his interpretation of human existence, Iqbal accords special place to human freedom. Man's freedom or capacity for initiative is the only instrument of change and revolution in human society and history. Man, according to the Qur'an is the trustee of a free personality. His capacity to take initiatives subsequently make or mar his destiny. He earns his own rewards and punishments. Freedom is man's medium of communication with God. Only a free agent can transcend space-time limits, overcome finitude and attain immortality through prayer. Only a free man can transcend the limitations of his own empirical ego and achieve self-transcendence. In his onward march to self-realisation and self-transcendence leading to the proximity and presence of Allah, man is bound to negotiate insurmountable obstructions and insufferable impediments. The genuine seeker will successfully cross them all through putting up relentless and ceaseless struggle. Man is free to undo his unfreedom.

Analogous to Kierkegaard's existential dialectic, Iqbal formulates his own existential dialectic. The promotion, authentication and stabilisation of human individuality entail subordination to values. Our uniqueness can be reinforced and sustained in pursuit of ideals. The ceaseless struggle of life is perennially anchored on aspirations, goals and purposes. We create ideals therefore we are. Man, in order to achieve self-realisation and usher into the ultimate goal of the establishment of the kingdom of God will have, to begin with, subordinate himself to the dictates and injunctions of Allah. Secondly, he will have to undergo most authentic and genuine self-control, which according to Iqbal is the highest state of ego or most enlightened form of self-realisation. Thirdly, by recourse to subordination to divine dictates and self-control leading
to self-realisation, can man aspire to the highest stage of vicegerency of Allah. This is the final stage of human evolution. At this stage man is invested with the Deputyhood of God. This is the most perfect stage of human ego. This stage symbolises the pinnacle of humanity. The physical, mental, moral and spiritual potentialities of man negotiate their ultimate plane of evolution, realization, fulfillment and ascension at this stage. Man transcends all intellectual dilemmas and ideological conflicts and all his dichotomies and tensions are harmoniously reconciled. The Ideal Man or Deputy of God is the harmonious manifestation of supreme power and highest knowledge.

Kierkegaard and Iqbal share many things despite their considerable differences. Both are powerful critics of theological rationalism or attempts to rationally prove and appropriate religion. Both anchor their Christian and Muslim beliefs and values on faith rather than argument or method. Both advocate philosophical or religious truth in its highest sense can be appropriated only subjectively and all attempts at objective appropriation of such a truth can land us only into the morass of irremediable and irredeemable uncertainty. For Kierkegaard subjectivity is truth and truth is subjectivity. Iqbal says that if we try to seek God, we would not see anything but ourselves and if we try to seek ourselves, we would not find anything but God. Even the Qur’an, according to Iqbal, cannot be understood by recourse to ponderous theological scholarship or methodological sophistication but by spiritual internalization, subjectivisation and conscientisation. Truth rotates round the faith of the man of God. The so-called objective world is, in comparison, nothing but fanciful, magical and illusory and cannot be cited with a view to establishing or validating what is ultimately true or real.

Kierkegaard and Iqbal, both are primarily and respectively inspired by the more or less equivalent versions of the primordial Semitic vision pertaining to Man, Universe and God enshrined in the Bible and the Qur’an. Both of them are essentially exhortative philosophers as both of them ask Christians and Muslims to reappropriate the original Biblical and Qur’anic beliefs and values.
Both ask Christians and Muslims respectively to abandon or give up skeptical, cynical, nihilistic, pessimistic and life-negating attitudes and orientations born out of the so-called western modernist rationalist critique of religious albeit the Biblical or the Qur’anic world-view and value-system.

The purpose of Kierkegaard’s philosophy was to summon the nineteenth century-smug Christendom of Europe to the passionate commitment to original Christian world-view and value-system. He offered a radical re-examination of what it means to become a Christian using his rhetorical and analytical skills to disclose the limits of reason and open the door to faith.

Iqbal’s poetry and prose writings too are primarily addressed to a restoration of the original vision and mission of Islam. Just as Christ is central to Kierkegaardian account of Christianity, so is Muhammad the ultimate cynosure in Iqbal’s reinterpretation and reconstruction of Islamic beliefs and values. He categorically and specifically asks Muslims to reappropriate the Prophet for he constitutes the alpha and omega of Islam, the rest being antithetical to the essence and core of religion. Just as Kierkegaard was underlining the strenuous and demanding requirements of authentic Christianity so was Iqbal frighteningly aware to the exacting and overtaxing demands of being attuned to original vision and pristine mission of Islam. Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal underline the absolute need for and foundational importance of authentic commitment to religious beliefs and values. Kierkegaard emphasised on passionate appropriation of the central paradox of Christianity viz; God-man or Christ, against all protests and objections of reason. For Iqbal, all legal, ethical and theological doctrines are nothing but conceptual idolatry if not animated by love. Sans illumination of love, life is suffering, reason is distanciation and religion an imposition. With love, even apostasy is transmuted into faith, sans love even a believer is an apostate.

However, both are not carbon copies of each other. Kierkegaard did not forward any metaphysical tenets. He was passionately involved in exploring the existential dialectic of a lonely individual apparently pitted against the
ontologically silent or clueless cosmos. Iqbal too was involved in a life-long exploration of human subjectivity or ego. However, he formulated a considerably strong rather imposing metaphysical apparatus in contradistinction to the pantheistic system propounded by Ibn Arabi. His metaphysics of man as 'ego', God as 'Supreme Ego' and the universe being a pulsating constellation of countless 'egos' was more akin to Leibnizean monadology than to Kierkegaardian existential phenomenology. Of course, Iqbalian metaphysics was formulated in keeping with the abiding axiological concerns and considerations characterising Semitic Monotheistic Weltanschauung. The axiological thrust of Iqbalian ontology was also galvanized by the larger sociopolitical agenda of revitalising the Muslim Ummah caught into the vortex of European imperialism. In comparison, Kierkegaard was oblivious to sociopolitical polarization of his times and almost fanatically concerned with the existentially challenging predicaments and crises of the individual.

Kierkegaard account of religious faith can have its own merits. Firstly, his subjective appropriation of Christianity guarantees the autonomy of religious faith. Kierkegaard establishes religious faith as philosophy independent or reason-independent. What he underlined most forcefully was that faith originates in our inward certainty. If certainty of faith was grounded on a metaphysical scheme then it could sustain till the metaphysical scheme lasted and vanish with the withering away of the given metaphysical scheme. Such a grounding would patently violate the autonomy of faith. Just as Kant advocated autonomy of morals, so does Kierkegaard advocate the autonomy of religious faith. Kant's fundamental position about the autonomy of morals is transposed unto the religious plane by Kierkegaard. Kant in his advocacy of autonomy of morals underlined that any attempted justification or explanation of the moral order necessarily meant that it was explained away and reduced to other, non-moral terms. Similarly, Kierkegaard underlined that any explanation or justification of the religious order would mean that it was being explained
away in non-religious terms. The function of an explanation should not be reductionistic, according to Kierkegaard. An explanation should take away the obscurity and not explain away the object under explanation. An explanation should not culminate into correction, rectification or redirection.

Secondly, Kierkegaard’s account of religious faith appropriated by recourse to subjectivity undercuts the long drawn-out theological apologetics. Theologians of all doctrinal positions have carried out elaborate disputation with regard to correctness or incorrectness of various beliefs pertaining to God, Soul and eschatological salvation. These disputation often accentuated political polarization and consequent endless violence, pointless bloodshed and vast suffering in terms of death and destruction. Kierkegaard’s appropriation of faith through subjectivity does full justice to practical character of religious beliefs. For Kierkegaard religious faith does not entail giving assent to doctrines but to act in a certain way. It is to orient one’s life in a certain direction. Christianity is not sum of certain doctrines for it is radically opposite to speculative thought. Christianity is centrally concerned with existence, with an act of existing. However, existence is radically opposite of speculation.

However, Kierkegaard’s subjective appropriation of faith has its radical disadvantages as well. It throws away the substantial child with the methodological bathwater. By placing faith beyond reason, Kierkegaard cuts the religious order completely from both human culture and natural order. It cuts religion completely from philosophical interpretations, historical investigations and scientific explorations. Such an eventuality is perfectly acceptable to Kierkegaard. This immeasurable space-time continuum or cosmos with all its philosophical interpretations, historical investigations and scientific explorations is irrelevant both to authentication and inauthentication of religious faith. The world with all its attractions and beguilements is far from being perfect. Citing New Testament, Kierkegaard brings out that this is an evil world and direly in need of Divine Message for its continuance and upkeep. However, religious faith cannot be completely impervious to rational
intervention. Kierkegaard does admit that there are rational limits to what can be believed in by recourse to faith. Faith is subject to reason to the extent that every irrational whim or nonsensical fancy can not be believed in on the pretext of faith. We must have some criterion to distinguish between the paradoxical which can be appropriated by faith and the plainly nonsensical and contradictory utterances or pronouncements.

Whatever the enormity and solidity of any critique of reason with reference to any segment of culture be it religion or literature or art, it is just impossible to completely eliminate and eradicate the role of reason in any sphere of our practical and theoretical operations. The role of reason is simply ineliminable and ineradicable. L. Dupra's words bring it out so succinctly and clearly:

Since faith is paradoxical, reason is assigned the negative but indispensable task of pointing up the incomprehensibility of faith. Consequently, reason must know precisely what is and what is not outside its competence and such knowledge is prerequisite for defining with accuracy the sphere of faith. Instead of dispelling the mysteriousness of faith, reason must set itself the task of bringing it into relief. This requires that it be able to distinguish between the contradictory and the incomprehensible. (L. Dupra: Kierkegaard as Theologian: London, 1964, 146).

Kierkegaard has provided an insightful and excellent account of the practicality of faith. However, the dichotomous and disjunctive incommensurability he set between the speculative and subjective, makes it impossible to pinpoint the object of faith. Kierkegaard underlines that faith signifies passionate engagement and abiding interest, it signifies a way of life and it signifies adoption of a particular, existential and personal point of view.
On the other hand, speculation signifies objective disinterestedness, disengagement from the particularity of existence and adoption of a general or universal or impersonal point of view. If we accept this dichotomy set up by Kierkegaard, then any speculation is impossible and impermissible within the realm of faith. Any knowledge of our object of faith would be impossible. We can just cultivate infinite passion but cannot understand the object of our commitment. Faith is not theoretical understanding or analytical knowledge of the object of faith. It is acting in certain ways or cultivating certain fundamental attitudes to life. Central to subjectivity and faith is 'how' and not 'what':

"The objective accent falls on what is said, the subjective accent on how it is said... it is the passion of the infinite that is the decisive factor, and not its content, for its content is precisely itself. In this manner subjectivity and the subjective "how" constitute the truth" (Ibid., p. 181).

What is fundamental, crucial and central to faith according to Kierkegaard is truthfulness or spiritual authenticity. A heathen authentically praying a false god is superior to a Christian inauthentically praying to the true God. The authenticity of the heathen tantamount's to praying to true God whereas the inauthenticity of the Christian tantamounts' to praying to an idol. However, even such a distinction sounds implausible in view of the fact that we just do not know the object of our commitment. Adoption of any attitude whatsoever to life entails a modicum of understanding. We cannot say how we ought to act without specifying what we are acting for. Faith cannot be absolutely divorced from knowledge. The Kierkegaardian faith would be completely blind. The believer would be unable to express it to others and, in fact, even to himself. If sincere idolator is superior to the insincere Christian, then truth is being estimated by the standards of sincerity. However, authenticity, sincerity and intensity of faith can not be said to be constituting the warp and woof of truth. We can be authentic, sincere and intense in the appropriation of and devotion to what is false or even wicked. We need to have
some objectively true conception of God. Kierkegaard's subjectivity and faith need to have cognitively specifiable object. A measure of philosophical justification seems to be unavoidable, Kierkegaard's methodologically sophisticated and brilliant protestations notwithstanding.

Kierkegaard's radical espousal of subjectivity does establish his intense commitment to Christianity. However, by all commonsense standards, excess of everything is bad. Excess of subjectivity is also bad. In view of the same, Kierkegaard's man of authentic faith is inextricably lost into suffering and despair. He is bearing the burden of his existential choice alone. He cannot engage in a rational conversation or communication with regard to his fundamental existential choice, i.e. appropriation of Christianity subjectively. As Kierkegaard is categorically clear to the limitations of rationalism, he switches over to religious irrationalism with alacrity. Just as religious rationalism is fraught with serious limitation, so is religious irrationalism suffering from grave shortcomings. It is true that religious beliefs and values do not have a rational validation. There is no logical or demonstrative proof of the truth of religion. All scientific and social scientific methods cannot add up to a religious world-view and value-system. However, it does not mean that religion is impervious to all rational considerations. Philosophers have cited conceptual, causal and teleological considerations with a view to proving the existence of God. However, such considerations have not been able to prove God. But that should not mean that all such considerations are irrelevant to God-debate. For example, the teleological features of the world can be perennially cited by theists in support of God's Existence. Such features may not be like links of a chain but they can always be like legs of a chair. What is important to note is that religious subjectivity should not necessarily land us into religious irrationality.

In order to be authentically religious, we need not necessarily stand as lonely individuals before the transcendental God. We need to communicate with others, especially with the followers of our Faith. Religious dialogue can
open up the possibilities of reasonable conversations. We can agree with Kierkegaard, that we can never cite logical or experimental grounds on which to anchor our Faith. However, we can definitely forward crucial considerations — social, political, ethical — with a view to buttressing up our argument for the existence of God.

Kierkegaard was pathologically concentrated on the 'individual'. That again indicates the one-sidedness of Kierkegaard. As it happens, man cannot help being societal, political and institutional. A mature and judicious philosophy will take an integrated view of human condition. It will strive for outlining a judicious and balanced socio-political blueprint as well. Kierkegaard’s ‘individual’ cannot even be conceived without a social and political order.

Iqbal has been perhaps the most outstanding Asian exponent of ‘Subjectivity’ in modern times. Iqbal’s rejection of classical proofs for the existence of God is in consonance with his emphasis on subjectivity. At best the classical proofs can prove the existence of a First Cause or a Necessary Being or a Designer, they certainly cannot prove the existence of God in the full religious sense. It can be safely maintained that God can be only subjectively appropriated through religious faith. He cannot be objectively proved through some rational argument or mathematical demonstration or empirical research. Such stance of Iqbal is in complete agreement with Kierkegaard’s radical espousal of subjectivity.

However, another methodological stance of Iqbal does not accord with Kierkegaardian celebration of subjectivity. In his ‘Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam’, Iqbal advances the latest findings of the natural sciences in support of religion. He quotes extensively from the writings of numerous astronomers, physicists and biologists with a view to buttressing the claims of a religious perspective on the universe or imparting plausibility to religious world-view. For instance, Iqbal contends that classical scientific assumptions have been shaken to their foundations by modern scientific investigations.
Classical physicists had assumed matter to be the primal self-existent reality. The twentieth century scientific research exploded the myth of the reality of matter. It deemed matter-in-motion as the primal stuff of reality. Subsequently, motion or energy per se was substituted in place of matter. The Newtonian concepts of space and time as absolute and objective were radically critiqued by Einsteinian Theory of Relativity. He showed that space and time were mutually correlative dimensions of Reality and further brought out that motion and time could never be absolute; motion being relative to point of reference while time to a particular person. Iqbal points out that this dynamic view of reality in which time, motion and the person concerned make all scientific knowledge relative, paves the way for the validity of the religious world-view as well and imparts powerful plausibility to the doctrines and principles of religion.

The quest for such a plausibility for religion has however dangerous implications. Scientific research is paradigmatically incommensurable with religious faith. Science is guided by hypothetical guidelines, data collection, experimentation, verification and disverification and prediction etc. However, with all their technical sophistication and methodological exactitude, scientific results are perennially subject to revocation. At times, scientific research may seem to be supporting religion and at other times it may well seem to be opposing it. While scientific research is self-professedly revocable, religious faith appropriates certain perennial dogmas and doctrines. Therefore, a religious worldview can not be anchored on switch-on/switch-off scientific support. A religious interpretation is essentially an existential interpretation of the universe. It is rooted in and motivated by values and ideals. Experimental research seems to have no bearing on normative analysis or elucidation.

Iqbal is a great advocate or votary of “religious experience” or “mystical intuition”. In his ‘Reconstruction of Religious Thought In Islam’, Iqbal testifies to the epistemic validity of the contents of ‘religious experience’ or ‘mystical intuition’. He has brought out the characterizing features of such an experience
or intuition. He claims that such an experience or intuition is immediate, and unanalyzable. It is a moment of intimate association with a unique other self. A mystical experience is not communicable for it is more like a feeling than a thought. Moreover, the mystical experience for a while results in a sense of the unreality of the serial time. Obviously, such an analysis or interpretation of religious experience or intuition is highly personal and recommendatory. Such an interpretation may be acceptable to some students of mysticism and may be unacceptable according to others.

However, Iqbal’s interpretation of religious experience or intuition or for that matter any other account of such an experience will have to negotiate certain formidable methodological challenges. At the beginning one can question the epistemic validity of the revelatory content of such an experience. Historically speaking, claimants of mystical experience have belonged to various cultures, tradition’s and religions. All of them have had or do have their respective presuppositions, predilections, preunderstandings and prejudices. All of them are culture-bound, tradition-bound and history-bound. All of them start with their respective culturally conditioned consciousness. None of them starts with a clean state. Each one of them has imbied a set of belief’s and values. Each mystic starts with a set of assumptions and orientations before being initiated into exercises leading to mystical experience thereby revealing what is really Real. Each mystic participates in his Collective Unconscious. Each mystic belongs to some mystical order of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Taoism or Shintoism etc. Within each religious or mystical tradition the disciples are prescribed their respective set of exercises which exercises have to be carried out under the supervision of respective mentors. The mentors orientate their respective disciples in the light of the prescriptions, assumptions and postulates of their respective orders. These various mystical orders operate under the overall cultural, ideological and theological gestalts of their respective religions. In view of the same, the mystical experiences of various disciples, doctored or mentored as they are, are
oriented to confirm or substantiate what they are directed, expected and inspired to do. Thus a Christian mystic confirms the validity of Trinity in his mystical experience. A Buddhist mystic has a flashlight of Nirvana in his mystical experience. A Sankarite experiences the dissolution of his Atman into Parmatman. A follower of Ibn Arabi experiences the truth of the doctrine of 'Wahdat al-Wujud'. And so on and so forth.

Paradoxically, some mystics experience that mystical experience is of no avail in furnishing us any divulgment of Ultimate Reality. Thus mystical experience cannot make any substantial contribution in demonstrating the truth of a metaphysical or religious doctrine. Mystical experience cannot resolve philosophical, theological or doctrinal disagreement. The mystical experiences themselves are the product of the institutional upbringing and social conditioning. In view of these vital considerations, Iqbal cannot anchor his religious tenents on mystical experience. It is through sheer faith that we can approach God or negotiate the realization of His Existence.

The problem of self or soul or ego has been central to all classical and medieval modes of doing philosophy. Ancient Indian philosophers have brought out profound insights on the nature and role of soul. The problem has been taken up in Vedas, Upanishads Epics, and almost all the systems of Indian philosophy. Greek philosophers also advanced profound prognostications on the problem of soul. According to Plato and Aristotle, ego is a substance to which our activities are referred to. Our activities are related to the ego as qualities like whiteness, hardness etc. are related to certain material things. However, just as material things are above and beyond their attributes, so is soul or ego as a substance beyond its experiences and activities. Furthermore, the soul substance was deemed to be unchanging through the perpetual flux of its states. Besides soul was an absolute unity, a simple indivisible substance; it was also immortal not dissolving at the death of body but continuing to exist in a disembodied state. This theory of soul was appropriated by all medieval Christian and Muslim philosophers. Even Modern Western philosophers such as
Descartes, Lock and Berkeley also held the same theory of soul substance. Hume was the first modern western philosopher who questioned the substantial theory of soul on psychological and epistemological grounds. Kant advanced the view that reality of soul cannot be proved or logically demonstrated. “I think or cogito” of Descartes was only a formal condition of all thinking and it is illegitimate to transcend from a purely logical concept to an ontological substance like soul.

The question of soul-substance has also been widely debated within the domain of Muslim philosophy. Most importantly, Sufi thinkers have been deeply interested in the explication of the soul-substance. For example, Shaikh Ali Hujwari in his “Kashful Mahjub”, advances several views on the nature and role of soul. He says that Sufi view of soul is that it is a substance and not an attribute. It is deposited in the body and may be separated from it as insleep. It is a subtle body which comes and goes by the command of God. It is corporeal and hence visible though only to the eye of the heart. The Asharaite school of Mutakallimin, also advances an atomistic and corporeal view of soul. Hallaj advanced his philosophy of soul under the impact of Christian and Islamic mysticism. According to Hallaj, God created an image of Himself with all his Attributes and Names. This image was Adam whom God glorified and exalted. Glory to God who manifested his Nasut wherein lay the brilliant light of His Lahut. Hallaj regarded man as consisting of two elements, the divine and the human. Muslim mystics or Sufi’s almost unanimously accepted Hallajian account of soul. They cited the Quranic verses underlining that God breathed His spirit into the body of Adam and moulded it into shape from mud. Hallaji’s Anal-Haqq (I am the Creative Truth), which created a great controversy culminating into his death, was also in perfect consonance with the Quranic view of man.

Anal-Haqq (I am the Creative Truth) brought out by Hallaj was pantheistically understood and interpreted by many of his contemporary and subsequent interpreters. Iqbal did not agree with the pantheistic interpretation
of Hallajian dictum. He underlined that such an interpretation of Hallaj was highly erroneous.

Iqbal’s doctrine of ego (Khudi), is basically inspired by the Quranic view of soul. Iqbal has formulated his conception of ego on the basis of the Quranic verse wherein the soul has been defined to be the command of the Lord (Qur’an: XVII 85). While interpreting this verse Iqbal says that it indicates the directive nature of the soul as it proceeds from the directive energy of God. It further indicates that human personality is not a thing, it is an act. My experience is only a series of acts, mutually referring to one another, and held together by the unity of a directive purpose.

The question of the relationship of the self with the physical world should not necessarily land us into either dualism of Descartes or parallelism of Spinoza. Matter and mind are not too distinct ultimate units which need to be brought together. According to Iqbal they are two faces of the same coin. Iqbal thinks that according to the teaching of the Qur’an, they do belong to the same system “To Him belong Khalq (creation) and Amr (direction)”. As “a spiritual pluralist Iqbal holds matter to be a colony of egos of a low order out of which emerge finite life and consciousness of a higher order, when there association and interaction reach a certain degree of complexity.... Nor is there such a thing as a purely physical level in the sense of possessing a materiality elementally incapable of evolving the creative synthesis we call life and mind and needing a transcendental Deity to impregnate it with the sentient and the mental” (Reconstruction, pp. 147-48).

All this can be fine-spun and can go so far as it goes. However, his strident critique of pantheism on the one hand, and strong espousal of panagoism on the other, do not resolve our ontocosmological confusions but proliferate them. Whether we absorb ourselves into God or absorb God into ourselves, it is pantheism all the way.
Iqbal's unflinching stress on faith and radical advocacy of love, his critique of rational and scientific methods and his emphasis on and appropriation of religious or mystical experience together constitute his indefatigable espousal of subjectivity. However Iqbal is not categorically clear in his espousal and appropriation of subjectivity. Take, for example, his approach to Sufism. In his “Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam”, he accepts the validity of the mystical experience or intuition but elsewhere in his poetry and miscellaneous writings he assembles a radical critique of what he calls non-Islamic mysticism as against Islamic mysticism. For him Islamic mysticism is a cognitive-cum-effective experience by recourse to which man transcends his personal attitudes, impulses and speculations and willingly surrenders to the commandments of Allah. However, theoretical Sufism is as good or bad as any system of philosophy or theology and has to face relevant tests of validity and its general acceptability will have to be a function of its fruitful contribution to human civilization.

Of all the Sufi philosophers, Iqbal is uncompromisingly critical of Ibn Arabi’s doctrine of Wahadat al Wujud. He deems the doctrine to be a categorical misinterpretation or even violation of Islamic worldview and value-system. In view of the same, Ibn Arabi’s ontocosmological doctrine is utterly unacceptable. The fundamental mistake committed by Ibn Arabi is his confusion between the concepts of Tawhid (Oneness of God) and Wahadat al-Wujud (oneness of Being). While the doctrine of “Oneness of God” is of the highest religious and moral significance, the doctrine of “Oneness of Being” is purely a philosophical interpretation unnecessarily superimposed by Ibn Arabi on simple teachings of Islam. The fundamental teachings of Islam are highly clear and transparent. Its basic emphasis is on the Ultimate Reality of Allah, His Oneness, His Lordship and His Supremacy. The phenomenal universe is a creation of God. The Creator can, in noway be identified with the creation. The doctrine of “Wahadat al-Wujud” is completely antithetical to the worldview and value-system of Quran. The Quranic ontocosmological doctrine is radically
creationistic and there is an unbridgeable chasm between Allah, the Creator and Universe, the creation. The Creator of the Universe, i.e. Allah, as disclosed through intuition is the ultimate Ego, the Perfect Individuality and the Complete Personality. Human beings as finite egos are not absorbed into the Ultimate Ego. They retain identities and personalities. Therefore, Ibn Arabi’s contention that the physical world comprising of phenomenal objects and human beings has no being or meaning apart from and independently of God is unacceptable in the face of the Quranic world-view. What, however, needs to be underlined is that the Quranic propositional gestalt is not all that simple as is simplistically brought out by exegetes and commentators of the Quran. An indepth hermeneutical analysis of the Quranic propositions will reveal that the Quran is comprised of informative, expressive and directive propositions which can be explained or interpreted multidimensionally, multifunctionally and multicontextually. They are amenable to pluriformulations and multiversional interpretations. They can be interpreted from various angles and vantage points.

Thus, historians, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, phenomenologists, philologists, scientists, and philosophers can interpret Quranic verses from their respective standpoints and perspectives. Within Islamic society, the Quran has received various treatments from various angels of interpretation, sectarian, ideological, legal, socio-political, philosophical, mystical, etc. A jurisconsult can put a legal gloss on the Quranic verses. A philosopher can workout his interpretation of the Quran in keeping with his philosophical assumptions. So can a sufi bring out an interpretation of Quranic verses from his perspective. For example, Ibn Arabi work out as a pantheistic interpretation of the Quran with reference to several of its verses. The Quran categorically brings out that God is the First and the Last, the Hidden and the Manifest. Now such a verse can hardly be understood or interpreted within a radical creationistic perspective, so powerfully espoused and endorsed by Iqbal. If all that is manifest is also God, then Ibn Arabi’s doctrine of wahadat al-wujud is clearly vindicated. Similarly, the Quranic verse, “wheresoever you
see, there is the splendor of Allah” can also be pantheistically appropriated. There are other numerous verses of the Quran such as “God is the light of Heavens and the Earth”, “God is nearer to man than his juglar vein” etc., which can be cited by Sufi pantheists in support of their contention. What needs to be underlined is that no interpretation of the Qur’an is necessarily worthy or capable of graduating to standard-bearer of the truth or wisdom of the Quran. The interpretations are not discoveries, they are constructions worked out in keeping with numerous intangibles and imponderables of interpreters. There is nothing necessarily true about a pantheistic interpretation of the Qur’an; nor is a creationistic ontocosmological doctrine necessitated by the Qur’an. It is how you marshal the verses of the Quran and repeatedly and powerfully underline your contention that an interpretation can be assembled into a necessary deduction or a plausible induction. Mutazilites, Asharites, philosophers, Sufis, theologians, literalists, liberalists etc. all cite verses from the Qur’an with a view to proving their respective contentions. Iqbal like most Muslim thinkers sides with the creationistic interpretation because it is accepted or upheld by an overwhelming majority of Muslim Ummah. However, that should never be seen as lending philosophical validity and dignity to the creationistic dogma. Philosophical contentions are never settled by plebiscitary mechanisms or electoral methods. Popularity or social acceptability of an interpretation or a formulation is no guarantee of its philosophical truth.

Iqbal was not innocent of the hermeneutical strategies employed by philosophers to vindicate or justify their contentions. He was fully cognizant of the strategy of Tawi’il employed by philosophers of various hues and colours. He chastised reason as ‘aqli tawi’lli’ (justificatory or reconciliatory reason). However Iqbal had powerful considerations to go in for a radical critique of Ibn Arabi’s pantheistic interpretation of Islam. He was an outstanding man of Islamic Renaissance in twentieth century. He was a powerful ideologue of contemporary Muslim Resurgence. He felt that Ibn-Arabi’s doctrine negates the very freedom of human will and consequently denies the very rationale of
our moral struggle. Ibn Arabi’s doctrine cannot provide us a criterion of Good and Evil. Every action, howsoever good or bad, is ascribed to God and consequently human responsibility and accountability are also denied. Such a doctrinal formulation cuts at the very roots of our moral commitments. Our moral struggle for the establishment of a just and egalitarian social, political and economic order can not be reinforced by an appropriation of Ibn-Arabi’s doctrine. In view of these vital considerations, Iqbal advances a philosophical approach diametrically opposite to the pantheistic ontocosmology formulated by Ibn Arabi. These vital ethical, socio-political and ideological compulsions or imperatives of cultural conditioning pushed Iqbal towards the overwhelmingly popular creationistic interpretation. However, it should not be construed as a rejection of Ibn Arabi’s doctrine in the face of some so-called standardized ontocosmological version of the Quran. Some very powerful verses of the Quran can be cited in support of Ibn Arabis’ ontocosmological position as well.

In the final analysis, One can say that Kierkegaard and Iqbal have with passionate zeal and inwardness attempted the herculean task of bringing out the logic of religion against the backdrop of global rush for and celebration of objective, experimental and value-free knowledge. They have put up valiant intellectual struggle against both technologisation of culture and theologisation of religion. The debate between ‘subjectivity’ and ‘objectivity’ has been historically long drawn-out and we shall never be able to receive the final judgement resolving this debate. ‘Subjectivity’ and ‘objectivity’ are less of two epistemological approaches and more of two philosophical mindsets. In times to come, every Kierkegaard and Iqbal will have to face a Hegel and a Sir Syed and vice-versa. The contribution of great men of philosophy and religion is to uplift the debate unto a higher plane, in the process, leading to our methodological clarification as well as existential authentication.

Art, religion, philosophy and science are the four fundamental frameworks within which human mind has been operating during the recorded history of man. Philosophers, in their love of wisdom, have been studying art,
religion and science for the last three thousand years. In fact, they have been studying culture, literature, history, society, polity, economy and what not. However, perhaps most importantly, they have been studying the nature and function of religion and science with exceptional zeal and gausto; for religion and science are two of the most fundamental ways of understanding and appropriating reality. Scientific research has been investigating the empirically observable physical or phenomenal features of the cosmos by recourse to classification, hypothesis formulation, data-collection, experimentation, verification/disverificaiton, discovery of causal explanations, prediction of results and inductive confirmation and deductive derivation of universal laws. While there is nothing final in science and ‘trial and error’ is the perennial method and an ineliminable characteristic of scientific research and while all scientific truths, explanations and laws are revocable by recourse to some extraordinary discovery or paradigm-shift or simply by reconsideration and reauthentication of available data etc., yet there is a large body of scientific results, principles or laws which stand confirmed or consolidated by appropriate methodological strategies. In view of the same, philosophers of science can provide a reasonable account of science despite insuperable methodological and substantive problems thereof. On the other hand, philosophers of religion are all the more pitted against far more complex odds and challenges. They can not depend upon explicit methods of hypothesis-formulation, data-collection, experimentation, verification/disverification and discovery of universal laws. Religions claim to have been inspired, processed, appropriated, crystallized and transcribed by recourse to revelation. Their raison de’tre, locus standi and modus operandi can be appreciated only by men of highest wisdom and scholarship. More fundamentally, almost all religious traditions underline that religion is not something to be methodologically or philosophically debated or deliberated upon and understood as one of the sciences or disciplines of academic interest; rather a minimal understanding of doctrines, beliefs, values and injunctions is to be followed by maximum
possible commitment, righteousness or virtuousness, value-orientation, public service and courage of conviction.

Whether philosophy is distinct from religion and religion irreconcilable with philosophy or whether religion ought to be included in philosophy or philosophy included in religion or whether both are domains in contradistinction to each other etc., are highly debatable questions and have generated conflicts, confrontations and polarizations across the history of human thought. In ancient Greece there have been philosophical schools such as Pythagoreanism and Stoicism which like religions can be deemed to be ways of life. Some Asian philosophical schools such as ‘Advaita Vedanta’ founded by Indian thinker Shankara and ‘Wahadat al Wujud’ advanced by Islamic sufi philosopher Ibn Arabi, have maintained that understanding and realization can lead to eschatological salvation. However, there is another widely influential view that religious doctrines, beliefs and values can not be rationally and methodologically proved, understood or demonstrated. The job of philosophy is defensive or apologetical one. It has to justify preambles of faith or defend articles of faith vouchsafed to Prophets through revelation. A possible rational defence of religion too has to emanate from or be anchored upon faith.

There can be other responses with regard to the relationship between philosophy and religion. Again the backdrop of the onslaught of multidimensional Western Scientific revolution in post-Enlightenment era, Kierkegaard and Iqbal, like Augustine, Ghazali and Kant, chose to critique the very rationale of rationality. They especially pointed out the field-confusion of rationalist philosophers in trying to disprove religion through reason when it cannot be proved through reason even unto eternity. The panrationalists and hyperrationalists need to understand that the very human understanding is fraught with insuperable limitations. Therefore, human reason itself needs to appropriate a less ambitious or more modest a role. Reason can neither prove nor disprove religion while it has always nursed the ambition of both proving and disproving it. Kierkegaard and Iqbal, once again, brought out, a massive
and mighty deconstruction of reason itself, thereby reminding us of the perennial need for faith, commitment, love and above all subjectivity. Christ and Muhammad, respectively, were the sheet anchors of their faith. They inherited the legacy of the Prophets. Without being apologists, they appropriated their vision and mission, through intellectual freedom and philosophical wisdom.


14. *Diwan-i-Iqbal Lahori*, (Persian Collection), (Intishahrat-i Pagah, Tehran, Iran, 1361 (Shamsi).


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B. WORKS ON IOBAL


C. WORKS BY KIERKEGAARD


D. WORKS ON KIERKEGAARD AND EXISTENTIALISM


