

## 6

## Between Hegel and Rumi: Iqbal's Contrapuntal Encounters with the Islamic Philosophical Traditions

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The colonial period in British India witnessed the rise of different responses articulated by religious communities to both their traditions of scriptural and vernacular knowledge systems as well as attempts to make sense of how modernity challenged their practices, modes of life, and epistemologies of the cosmos that they inhabited. In effect, all of these responses were incubated in the laboratory of imperial modernity – new political systems of governance, the new science, new epistemologies and pedagogies, print and new media, and a world opened up before them albeit within the confines of the status of imperial subjects – and perhaps in that sense it would not be incorrect to label them all as ‘modernist’. The failure of the old elites to resist the imperial powers – and the ongoing issue of whether the success of the colonisers was somehow linked to their ‘muscular Protestantism’ – led to a rethinking of traditions and their refashioning in the image of the conqueror (van der Veer 2001; Viswanathan 1989; Prakash 1999). The development of the field of Islamic intellectual history in South Asia has brought out in particular five or six such responses – and captured the interest of the subject of this volume and of this chapter (for example, Muhammad Iqbal) who had a relationship in some way or the other with each of them: the return to scripturalism and in particular to the texts that portrayed the Prophetic way of life (the hadith) in Deoband (India) from 1867, the reaffirmation of the vibrancy and relevance of traditional devotion to the Prophet and Sufi piety of the movement

of Aḥmad Rizā Khān of Bareilly (India), the alternative scripturalism of the ahl al-Qurʾān in the Punjab (India), the Aligarh movement and its embrace of a new colonial elite fashioned on the fields of Eton and in the quadrangles of Oxford (United Kingdom), the struggle of survival of the old Shiʿa nawabi elites of Avadh to retain status and their epistemologies, and the ‘new faiths’ such as the Aḥmadī movement with their desire to link reform and reconciliation with modernity through a recourse to an old notion of ‘prophecy continuous’ (Metcalf 1982; Sanyal 1996; Qasmi 2011; Lelyveld 1978; Jones 2012; Friedman 1989). Each one of these appealed to some notion of the tradition, and each one in a sense forged a modernist project appropriate to their context. At times, religious traditions retained a sense of autonomy from the state but they shared in the emergence of practices of what Foucault called ‘governmentality’, connecting the techniques of governing the self with techniques of dominating the other (van der Veer 2014; cf. Inda 2005; Lemke 2011). These movements were thus as constitutive of the ‘apparatus’ of imperial modernity as the British state in India (Agamben 2009).

The old sociological dichotomy between tradition and modernity, which examined them chronologically, is, of course, well past its expiry date: these movements fashioned their modernity in ways that were spiritual, scriptural, philosophical, Muslim, Indian, and modern. Forged in imperial modernity, they did much to make that context modern and sustainable as well. The impact thus on the British was also quite clear, and how could it not be? As Subrahmanyam puts it, ‘[O]nly an utter devotion to structuralist forms of history and structuralist understandings of culture – and a corresponding neglect of diachronic processes – would force us to regard this as an unnatural or even an unusual outcome’ (2012: 30).

In that sense, asking the question of the influences on the thinker such as Iqbal from Rūmī or Nietzsche, McTaggart or Mullā Ṣadrā is somewhat misleading. He was an existentialist but Kierkegaard, despite his hopeful faith, is not a good comparison, as his privileging of action as being owes much to Mullā Ṣadrā. He read Hegel through Mullā Ṣadrā and Bēdil through Bergson. His poetry and prose thus reveals these facets of rather contrapuntal readings of texts – in fact, for those excited by how contrapuntal readings lie at the heart of postcolonialism, one can do a lot worse than turn back to Iqbal (for example, Majeed 2009). Even his own diary or jottings that he initiated

on return from Europe in about 1910 and published as *Stray Reflections* – and perhaps in the vein of our discussion it should have been called his *Bayāz* – amply reflects this:

I confess I owe a great deal to Hegel, Goethe, Mirza Ghalib, Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil and Wordsworth. The first two led me into the ‘inside’ of things; the third and fourth taught me how to remain oriental in spirit and expression after having assimilated foreign ideals of poetry, and the last saved me from atheism in my student days. (Iqbal 2012: 53)

After the rupture in the educational system in the subcontinent following 1857, a number of hybrid Muslim intellectuals such as Iqbal trained in European pedagogical methods began to re-assess their intellectual heritage. Works were written in Urdu and in English that grappled with the philosophy of Avicenna and Mullā Ṣadrā, drawing upon the texts that were still (just about) being studied in madrasas and were becoming known to German and British orientalism (such as the famous Max Horten). It is within this context of assessing one’s heritage and seeking a space for it within the contemporary context of European thought at the turn of the twentieth century that one ought to locate and make sense of Iqbal’s early work on the Islamic philosophical traditions (the subject of his doctorate) as well as the development of his thought from these beginnings to his later lectures on the reconstruction of religious thought. Iqbal’s engagement with the Islamicate and Persianate tradition of *ḥikmat* (beyond analyses of ‘Muslim pantheism’) has been rather neglected in scholarship and demands a serious reassessment – Hegel and Bergson are privileged over Rūmī and Mullā Ṣadrā (cf. Raschid 2010).

Iqbal’s own career falls broadly into two parts. His early apprenticeship under Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan (d. 1929) in Sialkot, Dāgh (d. 1905), Shibli Nu‘mānī (d. 1914), and Thomas Arnold (d. 1930) culminated in an MA in philosophy in 1898 followed by his trip to Europe where he gained an MA at Cambridge in 1907 and a PhD from Munich in 1907. These figures bridged the traditional and modernist: Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan and Dāgh representing the former, and the friends Nu‘mānī and Arnold being associated with the Aligarh movement. Ḥasan was a traditional scholar who taught Iqbal Arabic and inspired in him an interest in philosophy and Persian poetry (Ḥusayn 2007).

Dāgh was rather typical of the Delhi intellectuals of his time (Anjum 1986). Born in 1831, he was initially exposed to the Delhi renaissance that included his poetic masters Ghalib and Zauq and to the court itself since his mother after the death of his father married Prince Mirzā Fakhrū in 1844 (Anjum 2001). He fled at the revolt and sought the patronage of first Nawab Kalb ‘Alī Khān of Rampur and later in the Deccan Plateau with Nawab Mīr Maḥbūb ‘Alī Khān. He trained a large number of poets – including briefly Iqbal by correspondence – and died in Hyderabad in 1905. As such he bridged the classical period of Urdu poetry with the Ghalib circle and the court with the rise of modernism in the colonial period and the search for identity and belonging in India. Dāgh was a popular poet, famed for his erotic verse and for his *masnavī* style – and had somewhat of a reputation of an old court dandy or even a playboy, a figure that recalls the later poet Josh Malihabadi (d. 1982) in the twentieth century. Iqbal was his student by correspondence, as Dāgh had been appointed as the laureate at the court of the Nizam as attested to in the introduction to *Bāng-e darā* (*The Peal of the Bell*) where the ‘corrections’ to his ghazals by Dāgh were acknowledged. Some of his early ghazals bear the influence of Dāgh’s themes and concerns even if in his more philosophical and critical reflections on personhood and identity later Iqbal’s verse had more in common with Alṭāf Ḥusayn Ḥālī and Akbar Ilāhābādī. It is quite possible then that the reason that Iqbal sought out Dāgh as his teacher was the desire to link himself to the classical poetic tradition of the Delhi renaissance (Āzād 1986: 187). Even before leaving for Europe, and under the influence of European poets, he set aside the ghazal tradition, signalling his break from Dāgh (Āzād 1986). Nevertheless, Dāgh had a large number of students – none more famous than Iqbal – and it is very much the success of his verse that convinced many of the mobilising force of poetry for intellectual and political action in the new century (Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn 1986). Furthermore, other critics have argued that *Faryād-e Dāgh*, an important autobiographical *masnavī* composed in 1300/1883 had an influence on a number of works, including *Shikvā* of Iqbal (Parbatī 2010: 106–8).

Shibli was more of a hybrid scholar who was the first major popular historian of modern Muslim South Asia, writing on a range of topics, glorifying heroes of the past, and writing critical appraisals of the intellectual traditions from a thoroughly orientalist perspective (Nadvī 1970; Ṣiddīqī 2012;

Akhtar et al. 2009; cf. Nu‘manī 1898, 1964, 2012). His project was a rather conservative but modernist defence of the faith in favour of latitude through rethinking law and theology (McDonough 2005). Shiblī was a strong critic of Ash‘arī theology and a proponent of the complementarity of faith and reason, critical of the Aligarh school’s dismissal of the tradition as incapable of resisting the new philosophy and science (Murad 1973: 3–36). As part of this process, he deployed Rūmī – that we also see later in Iqbal. Arnold represented the other element of the orientalising Muslim modernism of the period (Morison and Gibb 1930; Arnold 1896, 1924). Through their association at Aligarh, they were friends and their collaboration bore fruit in works such as Arnold’s *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*.

The fruits of this period were the early poems of ‘Bāng-e darā’, including his ‘Himāla’ (Himalaya), ‘Tarāna-ye hindī’ (Indian Anthem – ‘The best land in the world is our India; we are its nightingales; this is our garden. . .’), ‘Tarāna-ye milli’ (The Muslim community’s anthem – ‘China and Arabia and ours; India in ours. We are Muslims, the whole world is ours. . .’), ‘Nayā shivāla’ (A New Shiva Temple – ‘Let me tell you truth, Brahmin, if you will not be offended. The idols of your temples have become old. . .’), and ‘Shikvā’ (Complaint), which he wrote of the sense of India and nation based on the model of Dāgh as well as his elegy for Dāgh (‘Dāgh is dead! Alas! His corpse brings adornment to our shoulders, The last poet of Shāhjahānābād is dead. . .’) (Matthews 1993: 16–22, 28–29, 31–41).

But before we move to a closer consideration of Iqbal, we need to consider first how Muslim intellectuals before him and contemporary to him were trying to make sense of their intellectual heritage within the apparatus of imperial modernity and how the study of the Islamic intellectual heritage developed in academia within the philosophical taste prevalent in Britain and Germany of Iqbal’s student days. Already before the advent of official empire there was a shift towards hybrid institutions in which both epistemologies and curricula coincided, bringing together selective elements of European and North Indian Muslim curricula forging ahead with some of the brightest minds of the ‘Delhi renaissance’ at Delhi College run by the British and funded by Indian notables (Minault 2000; Pernau 2006). The college brought in the skills of the madrasa-trained to be deployed for British

pedagogical aims, drawing in Sehbā'ī, Imām Bakhsh, Ghālib, Āzurda, and others. The rise in print and the public sphere consuming intelligence, information, and 'knowledge' from the West accelerated the process of encounters around the pivotal events of 1857 (Şābrī 1953, I: 121–224; Khan 1991: 65–114; Yūsuf 2008: 47–120; Minault 2005; Pernau 1996). The post-1857 scenario was rather different, and the hybridity in many ways gave way to an internalization of orientalist paradigms and the rise of the role of missionary schools in the dissemination of education through a change in the colonial government's policy towards an Anglicist perspective. This new policy had a significant 'civilising' mission. As the missionaries Henry Elliot and Henry Tucker explained in their report on education following 1857:

He [the student] enters the school premises, becomes acquainted with mathematical science, with astronomy and geometry. Naturally, he loses confidence in his own religion when he finds that it contains so many ridiculous and impossible explanations. Propositions of Euclid and Sir Isaac Newton confute the fables . . . of their religion . . . It is impossible, even if we wished it, to be absolutely neutral in dealing with the false religions of India; for they are so intimately blended with false science that we cannot teach the simplest lessons of true science without contradicting the false sciences contained in their religious books . . . and so far proving their religions themselves to be false. (Elliot 1858: 67)

In the confidence of this 'scientific' mode coupled with a new metaphysics coming from the Enlightenment, intellectuals became increasingly deracinated from their intellectual heritage even as they sought to retain their links. Pre-colonial pedagogies and epistemologies became obsolete – or at least needed to be rethought in the reform movements mentioned above – and were replaced by outsider perspectives. In this way when one analyses the reflection on Islamic intellectual history made by Muslims at the turn of the twentieth century, one finds racial categories, attitudes, and perspectives on thought that were prevalent in Europe in the works later of Max Horten.

To take an example of two works in Urdu in the early twentieth century – *Āftāb-e hikmat* (*The Sun of Philosophy*) by Gobind Prasad 'Āftāb' dedicated to the Bēgum of Bhopal in gratitude and printed at the famous Newal Kishore Press in Lucknow in 1916, and *Mir'at al-ḥukamā' yā Guldasta-yi farhang*

(*The Mirror of Philosophers or the Bouquet of Culture*) of Shams al-‘ulamā’ Sayyid Imdād Imām ‘Aṣar’ published in 1879 in Patna (originally written in 1877). Both are good examples of elite expression and reveal a concern with internalising the post-Cartesian mind–body problem and both seem rather influenced by the dominance of idealism in British and German philosophy of the time – much like we shall see with Iqbal.

*Mir’āt al-ḥukamā’* is dedicated to J. M. Lewes, magistrate of Bhagalpur in Bihar. Imām was a scion of a prominent elite family, which produced a number of barristers known for their learning. In the Urdu preface, he states that his aim was to present European thought, and to bring it into conversation with the Arabic Islamic tradition, making it accessible to those who did not have access to English sources (Imām 1879). In particular, he considers it his remit to introduce a number of European thinkers, especially on matters relating to mental states. He also laments the absence of a philosophical lexicon in Urdu and apologises for the need to draw upon the Arabic scholastic terms that do not quite capture the new European thought he wishes to convey. The English preface is somewhat different. He claims to have ‘systematically and scientifically cemented together the metaphysical views hitherto promulgated by some of the distinguished speculative authors both of Europe and Asia’ (Imām 1879: 1). Although he mentions Aristotle, Locke, Descartes, and Reid alongside Avicenna, Ghazālī, and Mullā Ṣadrā, he is rather dismissive of the contribution of ‘Arabic writers’ on ‘mental science’ partly because they ‘blindly adhered’ to Aristotle and partly because they made no original contribution: ‘there is no Arabian work treating of mental science’ (Imām 1879: 3–5, English). He criticises the traditional ‘ulema whom he feels will be rather slighted by his account. This is very much an orientalisising project steeped in the modernist tradition:

I think this is an attempt on my part to make my countrymen aspire for the learning and the sciences of the West, to invite my co-religionists to taste the honey of the European sciences, and lastly to convince the prejudiced sect of the old-typed moulvies, that Europe at present occupies the highest position throughout the world in point of knowledge attainable by man. If I err not the moulvies are the greatest impediment to the furtherance of my views – so that if these my learned friends be gained over to my side, I

can justly hope that the future generation may turn out a more reasonable class of men than what their fathers are now. I would not be hyperbolic if I were to assert that our mouly sahibs do really consider it a sin to ascribe any thing recommendatory to Europe. This view as far as I know has no religious basis to stand upon, but simply rests on their groundless belief of the imaginary excellence of the old scientific investigations. (Imām 1879: 6, English).

The most important influences on him seem to be the Scottish philosophers Thomas Reid (d. 1796) and Sir William Hamilton (d. 1856) – two thinkers associated with empiricism and a logical approach to the analysis of the mind and the cosmos known as ‘direct realism’. It was later replaced by idealism but Imām’s philosophical tastes, probably incubated in his younger days, were rooted in the early part of the nineteenth century. Imām tries to argue that the European tradition from its inception was far more concerned with matters of the mind, of epistemology, and logic than with metaphysics, the concern of Islamic thinkers (Imām 1879: 44–54). Because he holds the opinion that for knowledge to be beneficial it needs to be expressed in English he does lament the fact that most of the central works of the Islamic tradition in India are not available in that language, including *Sharḥ al-mawāqif* (of Jurjānī (d. 1411)), *al-Ufuq al-mubīn* (of Mīr Dāmād (d. 1631)), the *Zawāhid* (that is, the three *marginalia* of Mīr Zāhid Hirawī (d. 1699) on the *Sharḥ Tahdhīb al-mantiq*, on *Sharḥ al-mawāqif*, and on the *Sharḥ ‘Aqā’id al-‘adudīya*), and *Sharḥ Sullam al-‘ulūm* (of Muḥibbullāh Bihārī (d. 1707)) (Imām 1879: 73). These were key philosophical and theological texts of the Dars-e nizāmī established in the eighteenth century in North India (Malik 1997: 522–35; Qamaruddīn 1996: 345–52). But even then his examination of the psychology of the Islamic tradition is based entirely on Avicenna, Fārābī, and Ghazālī, which was also the focus of Orientalist literature as well in the same period. It was Bacon and Descartes who brought about the revolution that ended the hegemony of the schoolmen (Imām 1879: 87–95). Throughout his analysis there is little engagement with the actual contents of the works of the Islamic philosophical curriculum in India, and even in the biographies of philosophers appended – entitled *Rawzat al-ḥukamā’* – there are few figures mentioned who were not known to late nineteenth-century



orientalists (Imām 1879: 409–535). This is very much a history of philosophy that mentions Arabic figures of significance for medieval scholasticism – the expression of a self-orientalised intellectual.

A young Kayasth, Gobin Prasad, authored *Āftāb-e ḥikmat*. Some of the prefaces sound rather patronising to him, encouraging his efforts in the study of Islamic (thoroughly Pythagoreanising Neoplatonic) philosophy (Āftāb 1916: 1–3). Prasad thanks the efforts of his father and the Begum of Bhopal who supported his education at the Alexandra School (that she had founded to train children and prepare them for Aligarh) where he picked up English and the desire to read (4). He divides his text into five sections: on propaedeutics such as the nature of the self, and of key concepts such as form, analysis, and division to demonstrate that there is a radical distinction between body and soul; on mathematics (*riyāzīyāt*, rather traditional Euclidean) that begins with a classification of the sciences common to the *ma‘qūlātī* tradition of North India; on logic (*manṭiqīyāt*, the Arabic modified Aristotelian organon); on natural philosophy (*ṭabī‘īyāt*), starting from Aristotelian hylo-morphism to traditional Ptolemaic cosmology, including ethics (*taḥdhīb al-akhlāq*), and discussions of the afterlife and its pains and pleasures; and finally on matters pertaining to reason (*‘aqlīyāt*), starting with Pythagoras on the intellect and moving onto other opinions and causality and related issues in metaphysics. The style is rather mundane and accessible – this is not really the analysis of a deep scholar. There is no real attempt to bring in perspectives from other Indian philosophical traditions or indeed of European ones. Hardly any sources are cited. The approach to metaphysics in particular is both light and selective with a strong emphasis on a Pythagorean approach that considers different types of homologies between the animal world, the cosmos, and ultimately God, which may be the result of particular influences from his teachers (166–75). Similarly, he draws upon the Islamic tradition’s naturalisation of the Neoplatonic notion that erotic motion is the animating force of the cosmos (mediated by Avicenna in particular) (195–200). The final chapter on causality even included a nod to the illuminationist concept of the ‘world of archetypes’ (*‘ālam al-mithāl*) (203–8; cf. Corbin 1990: 126–30, 174–5). The one theme that one may expect – that is missing – is any sense of monism but then this is a work devoid of mysticism and any serious sustained metaphysics. It is a beginner’s study based on a rather

rudimentary understanding of Islamic philosophy as taught in the hybrid schools of the colonial period and quite a different expression of that from the work of Imām.

So much for the options of his time that ranged from the orientalising to the traditional rehearsal of ideas. Iqbal's relationship with German orientalism can help to elucidate the impact of his doctoral dissertation and locate its own orientalising tendencies. The first major historian of Islamic philosophy who covered the range of the tradition was Max Horten (1874–1945), whose approach to thought betrays the racial categories of the French Orientalist Ernest Renan (1823–92), the phenomenological insights of Franz Brentano, the transcendental idealism of the neo-Kantians such as Robert Reininger (1869–1955), and the egoism of Nietzsche (cf. Daiber 1999). Horten's own work lies at the culmination of a long history of German engagement with Islamic thought, in which Hegel's views in his *Lectures on Philosophy of History* were particularly influential (Almond 2010: 108–34; cf. Manjapra 2014). Islamic philosophy – including Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā – was praised as the product of the Persian – the Aryan – mind over the Semitic – 'Persia's role as bearer of Oriental civilization'. Horten's presentation is often clichéd and does not pay sufficient attention to the details of arguments and their contexts and is reminiscent of the approaches of Arthur de Gobineau (1816–82) and others (de Gobineau 1923). Like Iqbal, he tended to privilege the 'pantheism' of the Ibn 'Arabī school over the Avicennan tradition of 'light-monism' as he put it, influenced by Indian thought on 'Islamic civilisation' in his important history *Die Philosophie des Islam*, first published in 1924 and then serialised in English translation in the Pakistani journal *Islamic Studies* from 1972 to 1974 following its German reprint (Horten 1924). As we see with Iqbal, he devoted a large part of his studies to later Islamic philosophy and Sufism, including works on Suhrawardī (d. 1191), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī 'the sceptic' (d. 1210), Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274), Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240), and Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1635). He also correctly identified a 'school of Mullā Ṣadrā', culminating with Sabzawārī (d. 1873) and even the influence on the Shaykhīs albeit as an offshoot (141–2). Like others before him – and even Iqbal – he saw the culmination of the monist tendency in the Babi-Bahai movement (he did not differentiate between them) (Horten 1924: 144–53; de Gobineau 1923: 131–319). Horten's judgements have not

entirely disappeared from the history of Islamic philosophy and it is striking how far his assessments coincide with the views expressed in the *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*.

Iqbal's doctoral dissertation *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia was* (Iqbal 1908) published in 1908 followed shortly after by his *Bedil in the Light of Bergson* (Iqbal 1988). Mīrzā 'Abd al-Qādir Bēdil (1642–1720) was one of the great Indian poets of Persian and steeped in the intellectual traditions (Bēdil 1978, 1997; Aḥsanuzzafar 2009). His style and approach influenced major figures like Ghālīb and, of course, Iqbal. While Iqbal's prose works leave a lot to be desired when it comes to an analysis of the Islamic philosophical tradition, his poetry is far more subtle and informed and here is where the significance of Bēdil lies.

The latter in particular indicates the importance of Bēdil to his thought. He describes Bēdil as 'a speculative thinker of the highest order, perhaps the greatest poet-thinker of India', and remarks on the 'staggeringly polyphonic character of his mind which appears to pass through the spiritual experiences of nearly all the great thinkers of the world' (Iqbal 1988: 19–20). We find Iqbal deploying Bēdil in favour of both scepticism towards the ability of reason as well as an embrace of Sufi metaphysics and epistemology (of the school of Ibn 'Arabī) in favour of a sort of existentialism. Towards the end of this fascinating treatise, Iqbal sums up what we take from Bēdil (filtered through Bergsonian notions of duration and intuition) and reflects the attraction and frustration that he has with the intellectual tradition:

When we study Bēdil's poems carefully we cannot fail to recognise that although his love of imaginative expression makes him impatient of logical analysis, he is fully conscious of the seriousness of his philosophical task. Considering his view of the nature of intelligence and the revelations of intuitions, it is obvious that his poetry treasures the great philosophical truth regarding the ultimate nature of reality, the details of which he orients in the spirit of a poet rather than a philosopher. The truth that we live forward and think backward, that the two opposing movements of thought and extension are inseparable in the original becoming is sufficiently clear in his poetry, yet we find in it nothing of the great wealth of illustrative details, nothing of the practical attitude towards time-experience that character-

izes the philosophy of Bergson. In so far as the former point is concerned, I think, we cannot, in fairness, claim it for Bēdil, since he is essentially a poet, but we are surely entitled to claim for him the latter. Bēdil's poetry, however, falsified expectation. All conceptual handling of reality according to him is absolutely valueless. He counsels us not to fall victim to the concrete, since the beauty of the mirror of life does not consist in its reflection. (Iqbal 1988: 34–5)

It is clear to see here what we would now call the problem of reification that lies in the reduction of the ineffable into concepts as a process of cultural critique, a forgetting of reality and the confusion of concepts for the reality that they supposedly describe (Honneth 2012). De-reification involves setting aside the amnesia, and a return to recognition and acknowledgement. For Iqbal, it is precisely the skill of the poet to grasp reality, to de-reify and communicate it without recourse to the confines of conceptualisation by linking the fruits of his imagination to that of the reader's. From Avicenna to Mullā Ṣadrā, philosophers understood the limits of discourse and the significance of the human imagination to make the world that we inhabit.

His work on Bēdil through Bergson came at the end of his engagement with European thought that stemmed from his study at Cambridge (United Kingdom) and Heidelberg (Germany). He became an advanced student at Trinity College, University of Cambridge in 1905 and after examination was awarded in BA in Moral Sciences (the tripos was only renamed Philosophy in 1970) through a dissertation 'by special dispensation' in June 1907 (Durrānī 2003: 106f.). We cannot be sure what that dissertation is, but Durrānī suggests that it was the same one submitted for the PhD at Munich examined in November 1907. He cites the registration papers from Cambridge in which Iqbal was named as a student of James Ward and J. M. McTaggart (d. 1925) working on the topic of 'The Genesis and Development of Metaphysical Conceptions in Persia' (Durrānī 2003: 149). McTaggart's Hegelianism tinged with the intuitionism of Bergson had an important influence on Iqbal, including on his poetry (Majeed 1993). Within months, he was examined in Munich with his principal subject being Oriental philology – submitted in July and examined in November (Durrānī 2003: 174f.). It was published in Munich in the following year as *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*

but was already circulating in that name as attested by Iqbal's old mentor Thomas Arnold in October 1907 when he was Professor of Arabic at the University of London. Arnold praised it:

I have read Prof. Muhammad Iqbal's dissertation 'The Development of Metaphysics in Persia' with much interest. So far as I am aware, it is the first attempt that has been made to trace the continuous development of ancient Iranian speculations as they have survived in Muhammadan philosophy and so bring out the distinctively Persian character of many phases of Muslim thought. The writer has made use of much material hitherto unpublished and little known in Europe, and his dissertation is a valuable contribution to the history of Muhammadan philosophy. (cited in Durrānī 2003: 178)

His examiners in Munich were not entirely convinced by his mastery of the Zoroastrian and medieval material. But they passed it because they felt that it drew sufficiently upon manuscript research and because they trusted the judgement of experts such as Arnold (Durrānī 2003: 182–8). It was a dissertation in oriental philology and not philosophy because the committee was not satisfied with its quality in the latter area.

So what can we make of the *Development*? The first theme that is striking is the racial essentialisation of the Arab (or the Semitic) mind and the Persian mind with a strong sense that the decline of the former and the dominance of the latter has been detrimental to Islamic history. As he put it later in 1917 there is an urgent need for Muslims to '[c]ome out of the fogs of Persianism and walk into the brilliant desert sunshine of Arabia' (Iqbal cited in Harder 2011: 163). Arabia in this sense is a privileged anti-colonial and pristine space of identity, a rather protestantised and Nietzschean framework for the articulation of one's selfhood devoid of mystical fog. In two further letters in 1917 and 1919, he bemoaned the decadence of Persianised mysticism not only because of its pantheism and its other-worldiness but also its denial of human agency (Harder 2011: 167f.). The real question that faces us is to consider whether Iqbal begins with a passion for the monistic thought of the school of Ibn 'Arabī as articulated in India and 'championed' in the *Development* and later abandons it in favour of a more otherworldly, protestantised faith of the emergent and dynamic self, or whether he actually continued to embrace

a form of monism as seen in his poetry of later years identifying Bēdil in particular as the key exemplar of that 'Islamic intellectual tradition'. One can further see the possible influence of Bergson insofar as he rejects time as an oppressive structure that destines humans to their ends as we see him argue in the *Reconstruction* (Iqbal 1990, 49–54; cf. Diagne 2011: 91–115). He owes in this insight as much to the Leibnizian critique of fatalism as to Bergson's vitality of life.

A number of commentators have pointed out the mistakes in the *Development* while acknowledging his originality (being practically the first person writing in a European language to discuss Mullā Ṣadrā – Browne and de Gobineau having already done so) (Mir 2006: 78–80). Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to consider its study now as a mere exercise in antiquarianism. It indicates much about the development of Iqbal's own thought and his relationship to Sufi monism in particular, which constitutes the essence of 'metaphysics' for him. Much like Corbin, after him, he traces ideas from their pre-Islamic origins through the world of Islam into their culmination with the heterodoxies of the nineteenth century. In his very dedication to Arnold, he acknowledges what he owes to European thought. He begins with an interesting paradox:

The most remarkable feature of the character of the Persian people is their love of metaphysics speculation. Yet the inquirer who approaches the extant literature of Persian expecting to find any comprehensive systems of thought . . . will have to turn back disappointed. (Iqbal 1908: vii)

An odd judgement, since in the very introduction he cites the manuscripts that he consulted for his study that include a number of 'systematic' works of philosophy and philosophical theology, such as *Hikmat al-ʿayn* of Dabīrān Kātibī Qazwīnī (d. 1276) along with the commentaries on it by Mīrak Bukhārī and Mīr Ḥusayn Maybudī (d. 1502) and the 'collected works of Avicenna'. He consulted classic works of Sufism including *Mishkāt al-anwār* of al-Ghazālī, *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif* of ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī, *Kashf al-mahjūb* of ʿAlī Hujvīrī, as well as classic works of Persian Neoplatonism such as the translation of Aristotle's *De Anima* by Bābā Afzal Kāshānī and of the illuminationist tradition such as the *Anvārīya* of Hiravī, commenting on the *Hikmat al-ishraq* of Suhrawardī. More intriguing is his citation of the Ḥurūfī

classic the *Jāvidān-nāma*. Although he does not mention these in the manuscript list at the beginning, it is clear that his reading of the later school of Ibn ‘Arabī is dependent on Jīlī’s *al-Insān al-kāmil* (that was widely available in India as manuscripts and lithographs attest) and on Persian metaphysics the Sadrian text *Asrār-i ḥikam* of Hādi Sabzavārī (d. 1873) that had been lithographed in 1883. What is striking is the relative absence of any mark of the metaphysical curriculum of the *dars-e nizāmī*. The issue is that Iqbal seems to understand that the later Islamic philosophical tradition was somewhat bifurcated between the more mystically inclined monisms of Sufi thought and the rather more Aristotelianising philosophical and theological tradition – as he acknowledges in his aims to trace the ‘logical continuity of Persian thought . . . in the language of modern philosophy’ and discuss ‘the subject of Ṣūfiism in a more scientific manner’, in which the latter plays an important part in ‘awaken[ing] the slumbering soul to a higher ideal of life’ (Iqbal 1908: x–xi).

The work itself is divided into six chapters in two parts – the first on Persian dualism deals with Zoroaster and the second on ‘Greek dualism’ begins with the Avicennan (and Neoplatonic) tradition moving onto *kalām* (as Islamic rationalism) before shifting to Sufism and Sabzavārī and the Bāb as expressions of a return to Persian dualism (which is what he sees the Illuminationist tradition doing) and pantheism. The middle sections on ‘rationalism’ owe much to his teacher Shiblī Nu‘mānī’s study of the development of Islamic theology, as well as to Orientalist studies of *kalām*, including the Cureton edition of the doxographical *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal* of Shahrastānī that was published in British India two generations before Iqbal (Iqbal 1908: 33, 72). What is striking in the first part is his stress on dualism and the relative absence of pantheism in ancient Persian thought while emphasizing its metaphysical speculation (20f.). This absence is meant to express his critique.

With the advent of Islam, one saw the transition from the ‘objective attitude of pre-Islamic Persian philosophy to the subjective attitude of later thinkers’, and it is worth remembering that subjectivity in all senses are positive qualities for Iqbal (23). The section on Avicenna seems to draw primarily on Mehren’s edition of his ‘mystical works’, focusing on the treatise on love and the doctrine on the soul – but even here there is no reference to either of his major works that were studied in India, the *Shifā’* and the *Ishārāt*, nor to his major reconstruction of the Aristotelian tradition in his logic, his meta-

physics of radical contingency, and his proof for the immateriality of the soul. Given more recent research that has identified the prominence of the study of logical puzzles and problems in identifying major terms in syllogisms, the complete absence of logic and how it relates to metaphysics in 'Persian' thought as practised in India is remarkable and further demonstrates Iqbal's alienation from traditional modes of scholarship (Ahmed 2013, forthcoming). Similarly, his championing of Ghazālī and distancing him from the Ash'arī tradition owes much to both Shiblī and to the Orientalist scholarship on him. Similarly, while critical of reducing Sufism to a borrowing from Indian or Neoplatonic thought, he focuses upon its metaphysics of monism. A large part of this is identifying the Illuminationist tradition as Sufi because of its emphasis on reality as light (Iqbal 1908: 120–50). Noteworthy is his association of the identity thesis or the doctrine of immediate knowledge with Leibniz's law of identity. The section on Sufism ends with an exposition of Jīlī – but in rather Hegelian terms in which the 'pure undelimited being' of Sufi terminology becomes the Hegelian absolute, and the undifferentiated 'cloud' (*al-'amā'*) is described as the 'Unconsciousness' (151–74). One gets the impression that the defence of 'pantheism' in Sufism owes much to its respectability in Hegel for Iqbal. The final chapter on later Persian thought starts with Sabzavārī as heir to Mullā Ṣadrā's tempering of monism through what we would call the doctrine of modulation (*tashkīk al-wujūd*) and the recovery of Plato. The Bābī and later Bahā'ī developments take us back to the redefinition of the Hegelian Absolute as love and will. In conclusion, Iqbal states that the 'Persian mind' has struggled long with the dualism of the ancient Persians and of the Greeks and has often sided with the monism of the Sufi tradition. Nevertheless in his praise of the 'political reform' of the Bābīs one can discern a criticism of a mysticism that is excessively other-worldly (195).

His later career in India first as an academic and then as a barrister led to his political engagement (he was knighted in 1922 and later took part in the Roundtable conference in London in 1931 and 1932). His more radical Urdu poetry in the form of *Shikvā* and *Javāb-e shikvā* and his *Bāl-e Jibrīl* (Gabriel's Wing) and *Ẓarb-e kalīm* (Strike of Moses) in 1936 as well as his Persian trilogy of *Asrār-e khudī* (Secrets of the Self) in 1915, *Rumūz-e bekhudī* (Mysteries of Selflessness) in 1918, and *Payām-e mashriq* (Message of the



East) in 1922, a response to Goethe's *Westöstlicher Divan*, and *Jāvīdnāma* in 1932, his response to Dante taking Rūmī as his guide, took on a more independent, universal, and prophetic quality. Interestingly, the two names that come up the most in the Persian oeuvre are Nietzsche and Goethe (cf. Schimmel 1977). Hermann Hesse wrote in the introduction to the German verse translation of *Jāvīdnāma* in 1957:

Sir Muhammad Iqbal belongs to three kingdoms of the spirit: three kingdoms of the spirit are the sources of his extraordinary work: the world of India, the world of Islam, and that of Occidental thought. A Muslim of Indian decent, trained spiritually by the Koran, by the Vedanta and by Persian-Arabic mysticism, but also strongly touched by the problems of Western philosophy and conversant with Bergson and Nietzsche, leads us in ascending spirals through the provinces of his cosmos. (Schimmel 1977: 268)

But was there a return to the tradition? In his correspondence with Nicholson, who later translated *Asrār-e khudī*, he claimed that the philosophy of the work was based on the Sufi classics, so even if it seemed that he was drawing on Bergson and Nietzsche his sources were Rūmī, 'Irāqī, and Jīlī (Dar 1971: 26f.). Of course, there is an element of self-fashioning in this statement. The themes of his poetry – that reveal his philosophical positions and contrapuntal readings quite clearly – demonstrate both the mark of his study of the Islamic traditions, focusing on monism as well as the influences of British and German thought, the latter of which included romanticism, socialism, existentialism, and so forth. Perhaps one of the most common approaches to Iqbal is to consider him to be an existentialist. This is exemplified in the work of Latif Kazmi, the late critic, philosopher, and poet Syed Waheed Akhtar and most Urdu critics, and focusing upon the notion of the selfhood defined by human action and motion, in which personhood arises not from the substantiality of the human but from the conglomeration of her acts. Akhtar explicitly connects Iqbal to the Christian existentialism of Kierkegaard and the sense of despair that arose out of the rise in scientism and the predicament of modernity that seemed to diminish humans and their traditional anthropocentric approach to reality (1977). Although he does not explicitly mention him and almost all citations come from the European

tradition, Akhtar's reading of Iqbal seems to be filtered by the later Islamic philosophical tradition of Mullā Ṣadrā that privileges existence over essences, process over substance, the creative over the passive, and the monist over the pluralist and that dissolves the subject–object dichotomy recalling the doctrines of *aṣālat al-wujūd*, *ḥaraka jawharīya*, *ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wa-l-maʿqūl*, and *basīṭ al-ḥaqīqa kull al-ashyaʿ* (Akhtar 1977: 111; cf. Akhtar 1981). Kazmi extends the approach by carefully examining the poetry to bring out the basic features of existentialism that he locates in the emphasis on human agency, human free will and creativity, the revolt against the personal, and the desire to overcome alienation in the modern world (1997: 67–100).

Iqbal's existentialism is about the action and significance of human agency to make one's life and a complete rejection of fatalism – which is one of the reasons why he rejects the pantheism of *waḥdat al-wujūd* in *Development*. His use of al-Ḥallāj in *Jāvidnāma* is thus an appropriation of the idea of submission in God to effect human freedom and force the human to act (Diagne 2011: 22). Critical to this process is the desire to act freely and without fear as expressed in his *Rumūz* (31). This autonomy of the self then plays out in the political sphere with his famous 1930 speech (33–8).

Nevertheless, the self is poised between the godless, spiritless existentialism of the West and the monistic fatalism of the East. As he says in his poem the 'Death of Selfhood' in *Ẓarb-e kalīm*:

The death of the self lies in the darkened innards of the West  
 The death of the self lies in the leprous loss in the East.  
 The death of the self is shown in the lack of soul in the Arab, losing his  
 zeal  
 Possessing Iraq and Iran but without limbs or veins.  
 Indians have lost too their self,  
 Making the prison the norm and forbidding themselves freedom.  
 The true death of the self is the figure of the shaykh in Mecca  
 Who lives on the sale of the robes that pilgrims don. (Iqbal 1987a: 69)

But one of the issues is that many Muslim existentialists use Iqbal to deploy their own sense of an Islamic existentialism in which submission means freedom to be and in which the Qur'an is read as a 'hymn to liberty' and where a 'self-islam' emerges, not one which is individualistic and selfish but

the realisation of selfhood that produces a diverse community (cf. Bidar 2008).

In that sense, Iqbal's notion of selfhood, influenced as it was by Nietzsche, retained a spiritual core:

Man in whom egoism has reached its relative perfection, occupies a genuine place in the heart of divine creative energy and thus possesses a higher degree of reality than things around him. Of all the creations of God, he alone is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of the Maker. (Iqbal 1990: 82)

Selfhood in God is the key aspect of Iqbal's philosophy as initiated in his *Asrār-e khudī* in 1915 and *Rumūz-e bekhudī* in 1918. This self is directly related to the divine spirit that comes from God's command and his privileging the human through the provision of a free personhood that holds the vicegerency of God over the cosmos (Iqbal 1990: 95–8). That self is also, *contra* James, not reductive to the sum of its experiences, nor is it some mere duration as a framework for first-person perspectives (as Bergson may have put it). But this selfhood's assertion is not an arrogant vanity of self-centeredness as he put it in his introduction to *Asrār-e khudī*. *Khudī* is thus the ever-self-conscious ground for the agency of the human and its 'boundless energy'. Iqbal uses Bergson's notion of the self that endures even through change. In the opening to *Critical Evolution*, he writes:

I pass from state to state. I am warm or cold, I am merry or sad, I work or I do nothing. I look at what is around me or I think of something else. Sensations, feelings, volitions, ideas – such are the changes into which my existence is divided and which colours it in turns. I change, then, without ceasing. For I speak of my states as if it were a block . . . that it remains the same during all the time that it prevails. (Bergson 2007: 1)

This notion of the persistence of the self in change recalls the idea of motion in substance that lay at the heart of late NeoPlatonic psychology as well as the thought of Mullā Ṣadrā. Yet personhood lies in the act and not in the substance for Iqbal:

My experience is only a series of acts, mutually referring to each other and held together by the unity of a directive purpose. My whole personality lies in my directive attitude. (Iqbal 1990: 103)

The becoming of the person draws upon Rūmī and Jīlī in his work on the perfect human. This becoming sets aside the Graeco-Arabic notion of the immortality and eternity of the soul in favour of a selfhood that is earned through action and persists through one's effort refuting both determinism and teleology. In the *Reconstruction*, he states that 'personal immortality is not ours of right. It is to be achieved by personal effort' (Iqbal 1990: 119). And in *Asrār-e khudī*, addressing the self that is realised as God's vicegerent, he says:

Mankind are the cornfield and thou the harvest  
Thou art the goal of life's caravan. (Iqbal 1973b: 46; Nicholson 1920: 84)

Or in one of the most famous of his Urdu verses rejecting fatalism:

Raise up your selfhood so that before each fate is sealed  
God addresses his servant and asks him: what is your desire?

He also uses Rūmī to privilege love over reason as the human attribute imitating the divine (Khanum 1982: 51–56, 72f.). God, as goal, is the true NeoPlatonic beloved. Love motivates and 'pricks' the human to act in search of the beloved. As he puts the words in the mouth of al-Ḥallāj in *Jāvidnāma*:

Life without prickings is no true life  
One must live with a fire under one's feet. (Arberry cited in Khanum 1982: 52)

The archetypal journey to the beloved is the ascension of the Prophet (the *mi'rāj*), which is invoked in the *Bāl-e Jibrīl* and that transcends the epistemic duality of subject–object in the Prophet's monistic experience:

Beyond the sphere of knowledge, there is for the man of faith  
The bliss of longing, the blessing of the meeting. (Iqbal 1973b: 49)

The goal of love in unitive experience remains at the level of the ineffable or the inarticulate – as Iqbal says in *Reconstruction*: 'The incommunicability of

mystic experience is due to the fact that it is essentially a matter of inarticulate feeling, untouched by the discursive intellect' (1990: 21).

Yet at the same time in his verse and in his *Development*, we see a searing critique of *wahdat al-wujūd* sometimes defined in much of the secondary literature in South Asia as 'pantheism' (cf. Dar 1978). He plays on the traditional topos of the conflict between *eros* and *nomos* and the victory of the former in *Bāl-e Jibril*:

Breath, not heart, stirs in your body: no elation  
 Stirs the assembly at the words you fashion.  
 Leave reason behind for its light is the lamp  
 that shows the road, not marks the destination. (Kiernan 1946: 67)

Love wins the day in *Jāvidnāma*:

Love in the soul is like sight in the eye  
 Be it within the house or without the door;  
 Love is at once both ashes and spark.  
 Its work is loftier than religion and science.  
 Love is authority and manifest proof  
 Both worlds are subject to the seal-ring of love;  
 Timeless it is, and yesterday and tomorrow spring from it;  
 When it supplicates God for selfhood  
 All the world becomes a mount, itself a rider.  
 Through love the draw of this ancient inn becomes void;  
 Lovers yield themselves up to God,  
 Give interpretative reason as an offering.  
 Are you a lover? Proceed from direction to directionlessness;  
 Make death a thing prohibited to yourself. (Iqbal 1973a: 32–3; Arberry  
 1966: 32)

The resulting self realised being can ascend to the vicegerency of the divine.  
 As he says in *Asrār-e khudī*:

His genius abounds with life and desires to manifest itself  
 He will bring another world into existence  
 He bestows life by miraculous action,

He renovates old ways of life.  
 He gives a new explanation of life  
 A new interpretation of this dream. (Iqbal 1973b: 45; Nicholson 1920:  
 80)

In *Bāl-e Jibrīl* he puts it thus:

May be brick or stone or the harp or the letter or sound  
 The miracle of art is the result of the heart-blood (*khūn-e jigar*).  
 A drop of the heart-blood makes the stone a heart,  
 From heart-blood are sound and burning and joy and melody  
 What is originality of thought and action?  
 An urge to revolution!  
 What is originality of thought and action?  
 A renaissance of national life!  
 It is the source of life's miracles  
 Transforming granite into the purest pearls. (Schimmel 1963: 71)

In *Naqsh-e farang*, he prefers Rūmī to Goethe because the latter is not a prophet but a writer. Hegel's reason seems to be lofty but remains in matter and he fails to find love through reason. Nietzsche is superficially attractive but mired in egoism. There is a constant sense of negotiation between self, love, and the divine that brings to the fore his philosophical influences. What Iqbal does take from the tradition is the notion of the human inspired and enchanted by God, the individual who makes his destiny. Not for him is the mystical otherworldliness of much of the philosophical and mystical tradition that went before him.

*Reconstruction* is a modernist project, to revitalise the tradition and show it in conformity with science and the facts of modernity (cf. Sheikh 1978). Iqbal very explicitly sees himself as the heir to al-Afghani as expressed not only in the lectures but in his verse (Diagne 2011: 42f.). Part of this attitude is a rethinking of Plato away from the master of conformity and from enemy to friend of an open society (44–6). Unlike the *Development*, this text is far more concerned with the here and now, and the problem that individuals face in achieving the possibility of religion and of religious experience. The key problem that faces modern Islam is of thinking Muslims making sense

of themselves as religious beings in an intellectual world that has rejected the traditional Platonic metaphysics, politics, and ethics that were central to the tradition (Mir 2006: 80–117). *Development* dealt with theological dogmas, while *Reconstruction* addresses the realities and activities of faith. His fresh approach is to reconsider the Qur'an in the light of his training, divorced from the influence of Greek thought that he felt has led to a deterministic reading that stifles human freedom and creativity (Iqbal 1990: 3f.). Like Imām, as we saw above, he felt that the act of reconstruction was necessary due to the stagnation of Muslim thought since the medieval period (7). The monism of the Sufi tradition is set aside in favour of the affirmation of selfhood that arises from al-Ḥallāj's famous, 'I am the creative truth' (Iqbal 1990: 96). The possibility of religion relates to the need to assert the self as the recipient of revelation and to this end he cites an anonymous Sufi: 'no understanding of the Holy Book is possible until it is actually revealed to the believer just as it was revealed to the Prophet' (181). Pantheistic Sufism is as much criticised for its ethics and as its otherworldliness (90). But there remains much of a romantic attachment to the poetic vision of that tradition as evinced in his citations of Rūmī and indeed of his concluding with his own *Jāvīdnāma* (91, 199).

Many of the major metaphysical thinkers of the Islamic tradition are cited like they are in the *Development*. Perhaps one of the key ideas of the *Reconstruction* is about the human spirit being in motion, in the process of ever becoming creatively. This idea partly draws on Bergson but equally is predicated on the notion of the graded degrees of being that he cites as an idea stemming from Suhrawardī (and then from Mullā Ṣadrā) that implies the becoming and changing of the substance of the human, the concept of substantial motion in Mullā Ṣadrā (71). He even offers an original reading of Mīr Dāmād's concept of perpetual creation, an idea that was debated in India (cf. Rizvi 2011). Because the creation of the ego lies in the perpetual 'change without succession', it remains eternal, and eternally creative and becoming (Iqbal 1990: 77). Thus, he modifies a theory of the creation of the cosmos to suit his purposes of the possibilities of the human.

Iqbal remains a fascinating thinker, creatively engaging with the European intellectual traditions of his time, self-orientalising but even interpreting elements of the Islamic philosophical traditions in innovative ways. Ultimately,

the problem is that critics have insisted on reading Iqbal as philosopher and as poet separately, and even then as a programmatic poet with a clear didactic-pedagogical intent as dominating the art. As Shamsur Rahman Faruqi puts it:

[T]he problem arises when one is made to read Iqbāl not for pleasure, but for profit. For Iqbāl is also a politician's poet, a religious thinker's poet, and a philosopher's poet, and much more besides. Iqbāl has earned a lot of praise, and not a little blame as well, for being one or the other of these. (Faruqi 2005: 1)

He himself gave them good reason to do so in two well-known letters from 1919 to Sayyid Shaukat Ḥusain and Sayyid Sulaimān Nadvī feigning his skills as a poet and deeming it secondary (Barnī cited in Faruqi 2005: 7). However, poetry was known to have a major role in mobilisation – and the timing is quite revealing in the midst of the nationalist fervour of the Khilafat movement in which poetry played an essential role (Minault 1974). The myth of the person assumes a great philosopher, a great poet, and a great historian – and a consistency. But as one sees in his prose works, we have an insightful thinker who has not entirely reconciled his differing positions and influences, and a historian of thought whose judgements strike us as bizarrely essentialist if not just wrong. What survives in many ways is the poetry and that is where the engagement with the tradition is best seen not just because of his programmatic approach but because both the changing style, language, diction, metre, and even concerns reveal the development of a modernist deeply engaged by his intellectual tradition while resisting its charms in search of a political theology that works. We would be better served if we understand that poetry is a type of fiction, a working of the imagination, and at the very least reveals his philosophical and political imaginary in creative contrapuntal ways in which we cannot read the prose (Faruqi 2005: 12–15). And this was possible precisely because he composed poetry within traditions: ghazals recalling Ghālib, Bēdil, and Dāgh, and *masnavīs* that referenced and invoked Amīr Khusraw, Rūmī, Sauda, and Mīr Anīs (Kermode cited in Faruqi 2005: 15). Ultimately, the Islamic intellectual tradition for Iqbal is Bēdil whose emotion of wonder he extols (recovering the 'pantheistic tradition'):



There are fragilities contained in the illusion-house of wonder  
Do not blink lest the desire for show continue. (Iqbal 2012: 75)

And he sums him up in *Ẓarb-e kalīm*:

Is this the Reality, or the mischief wrought  
By my false-seeing eye?  
The earth, the wilderness, the mountain range,  
The dark-blue sky,  
Some say: It is; others, it is not,  
Who knows if this your world exists at all.  
How well Mirzā Bēdil unknotted this knot  
Whose unraveling has been  
So hard for the Philosopher:  
'If the heart had enough space, this garden  
Were sightless: the wine's hue chose to come out  
Because the wine-flask didn't have enough room.' (Iqbal 1973a: 103;  
Faruqi 2005: 26)

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