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Oscillating between 'East' and 'West':

Muhammad Iqbal and an Islamic Recasting of Modernity*

Siavash Saffari**

[ABSTRACT]

This article examines the writings of Muhammad Iqbal as the site of an encounter between Islamic and Western thoughts. It argues that the encounter takes place on two distinct levels. First, critical of what he deems to be the intellectual and material stagnation of Muslim societies, Iqbal draws on modern European philosophies to develop a theory of Islamic modernity and civilizational renewal. Second, alarmed by a supposed moral depletion of European modernity, Iqbal draws on the teachings of Islam's mystical tradition to negotiate an alternative epistemological and ontological foundation for his theory of modernity to that of European Enlightenment. Highlighting on the one hand the colonial context and on the other the cosmopolitan horizon within which Iqbal's

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** Assistant Professor, Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations, Seoul National University

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Muhammad Iqbal, Islam, Enlightenment, Modernity, Coloniality, East, West, India, South Asia

thinking takes shape, the article offers an account of Iqbal's creative oscillation between two traditions of knowledge production which he designates East and West.

1. Introduction

A towering intellectual figure in modern South Asian history, Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) continues to be revered by many for his poetry, his philosophical writings, and his contribution to the modernization of Islamic thought. His immense literary fame and unassailable status as a pioneering figure in modern Islamic thought notwithstanding, Iqbal's ample body of work may be described as the site of a colonially facilitated encounter between two traditions of knowledge and norm production, one codenamed 'Islamic' or 'Eastern', the other codenamed 'Western'. This encounter, I argue, takes place on two distinct levels. First, critical of what he regards to be the civilizational stagnation of Muslim societies, Iqbal draws on modern (Enlightenment) European philosophical thought to develop a theory of Islamic modernity as the intellectual prerequisite of a civilizational revival in Islamicate contexts. Second, alarmed by the violence of European colonial modernity, Iqbal draws on the teachings of Islam's mystical tradition (i.e. Sufism) to negotiate an alternative epistemological and ontological foundation for his theory of modernity to that of European Enlightenment. I analyze this two-track encounter in light of a dynamic of oscillation between seemingly opposite poles; a dynamic central to Iqbal's very mode of thinking. By identifying the dynamic of oscillation as the central feature of Iqbal's philosophical thought, this ar-

ticle differs from a number of previous studies which have designated Iqbal either as an essentially Eastern and/or Islamic thinker (Shafique 2007, 45), or as having been predominantly under Western influence and having reproduced Orientalist ideas (Azad 2014, 20).

The section that follows discusses what is meant by the dynamic of oscillation, and outlines with some detail the particular historical (colonial) context in which Iqbal's mode of thought takes shape. The article then examines Iqbal's modernist and critical rereading of traditional Islamic thought in light of the experiences and achievements of modern Europe. For Iqbal, as I explain, the rise of the West is the result of a transition from a medieval ethos in which humans are mere objects within a predetermined theistic scheme to a modern ethos in which humans are regarded as autonomous willful subjects. Iqbal's vision of an Islamic modernity, therefore, is ultimately a vision of Muslim subjectivity, albeit from the colonial periphery. Next, the article recounts Iqbal's critique of Western modernity. According to Iqbal, violence and moral decay in modern Europe are the outwardly manifestations of a deeper philosophical crisis caused by a separation between the spiritual and the temporal, and the rejection of religion as a valid source of knowledge and norms. Iqbal's remedy to this crisis, which is the focus of the ensuing section, is to bring human subjectivity within a theistic framework in which the spiritual and the temporal are reconciled and unified. I propose that while Iqbal's theory of Muslim subjectivity is inspired by and conceived in dialogue with modern European theories of subjectivity, his is a distinctly theistic subject in whose being seemingly opposite realms (i.e. spiritual and temporal, sacred and secular, public and private) are brought together. The final section, while briefly acknowledging the limitations of Iqbal's civilizational frame

of thought, hypothesizes that even as Iqbal assumes the position of the spokesperson of the East concerned with the fate and fortunes of his fellow Muslims, the intellectual horizon of his thinking is on the whole cosmopolitan. Within this cosmopolitan horizon, I argue, Iqbal freely oscillates between seemingly opposite poles, innovatively synthesizes modern European and traditional Islamic thoughts, and creatively produces new meanings including new ways of understanding the loaded and contested categories of East and West.

2. 'East' Meets 'West' in Colonial India

Like many other nineteenth and twentieth century Muslim thinkers, Iqbal articulates his ideas within a civilizational framework in which the categories of East and West are central. Serving as floating signifiers, the two categories are called upon to conjure up a host of meanings, with varying normative assumptions. While the former often signifies Islamicate societies in Asia and Africa, the latter refers to modern colonial Europe and its North American progeny. Within this imagined civilizational divide, Iqbal occasionally assumes the position of the spokesperson of the East. This is precisely how he positions himself in *A Message from the East* (*Payam-i-Mashriq*) (1923), written in response to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *West-Eastern Diwan* (*West-östlicher Divan*) (1819), or in *The Book of Eternity* (*Javid Nama*) (1932), in which Iqbal depicts himself as a river, representing the wisdom of the East and flowing through different spheres in the heavens coming in contact with such historical figures as Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi, Said Halim Pasha, Mansur al-Hallaj,

and Mirza Ghalib. In these and other works, Iqbal also assumes the position of an interpreter, taking in upon himself to convey to the West the message from the East, and to introduce in the East ideas of prominent Western thinkers.

The position of an Eastern spokesperson or interpreter allows Iqbal to firmly situate himself within what he considers to be Eastern traditions of knowledge and norm production, while engaging in a free and imaginative dialogue with the Western other, situated within a civilizationally distinct tradition of knowledge and norm production. In this regard, the designation of Iqbal as a bridge between the perceived civilizational poles of East and West may contain important insight for understanding Iqbal's thought (Bowering 1977). However, for the purpose of this article, I opt to use the term oscillation rather than bridge, although the two terms may capture closely related meanings. For one thing, oscillation, more accurately than bridging, reflects the principle in Iqbal's thought of constant movement between various poles. Moreover, whereas the metaphor of bridge might conjure up the image of linkage between two fixed and defined entities, the use of oscillation here is meant to highlight the hybridity of the entities in question, and to suggest that the process (of oscillation) impacts the way in which the oscillating subject conceives of each entity.

The idea of oscillation, moreover, is integral to Iqbal's very mode of thinking. For Iqbal, movement in between distinct (often contesting and opposing) poles is the very essence of life and the necessary condition for subjectivity. For example, in *A Message from the East*, he writes:

The secret of life, if you want
To know it, lies in restlessness.
It would be shameful for a stream
To go on resting in the sea (2000, 102).

The themes of departure, travel, journey, and alike feature heavily in Iqbal's writings. Indeed, some of Iqbal's works, including *The Book of Eternity*, are epic narratives of transformative temporal or spiritual journeys. Thus Majeed observes that in Iqbal's philosophical and poetic world "perpetual travel is both something to aim for and a necessary metaphysical and ontological condition" (Majeed 2007, 151). Iqbal's view of Islam as a religion situated in between two worlds — "the ancient and the modern world" — (2012 [1930], 100) is also consistent with this overall view; as is his belief (to be discussed at length further) that the attainment of self-consciousness and subjectivity necessitates oscillating between contrasting poles (i.e. self and other, affirmation and submission).

The metaphor of oscillation is further useful since the colonial condition itself forces constant movement between colonially manufactured and maintained poles: center and periphery, modernity and tradition, global and local. Iqbal's relatively privileged class status and family background doubtless expanded the sites of his oscillation between endogenous and exogenous sources of belonging and learning. By the time Iqbal was born, his hometown of Sialkot in Punjab had been thoroughly incorporated into British colonial designs; in fact, by mid 1800s the East India Company had already annexed most of Punjab. As Wagner reports, nearly a decade after its annexation, and in the aftermath of the 1857 rebellion, "Sialkot looked virtually identical to any number of such colonial stations through-

out the East India Company territories: a British cantonment with military barracks and expansive bungalows, built along wide, ruler-straight roads and then, quite separate, the old 'native' town with its medieval lay-out and crooked, narrow lanes" (2017, 12).

The school Iqbal attended, Scotch Mission High School, was one of several schools set up by Scottish churches in Sialkot in mid nineteenth century at the same time as the expansions of the East India Company in the subcontinent (Vander Werff 1977, 69). The primary objective of these schools was "to impart Western knowledge and produce an intellectual elite who would guide India with Western values" (Farooq 2014, 125). Iqbal's enrollment in this school, interestingly enough, had been at the advice of Maulana Syed Mir Hasan, a notable Islamic scholar who, in 1922, was awarded the title of Shams al-Ulama (Sun of Scholars) by the British Crown. Mir Hasan ran a private madrasa (traditional school), where Iqbal took Persian, Arabic, and Quranic lessons from an early age. A great admirer of the leading nineteenth century Indian Muslim modernist, Syed Ahmad Khan, Mir Hasan encouraged his students to learn foreign languages and "acquire Western knowledge" (Sevea 2012, 18). When Iqbal's father, Nur Muhammad, resolved that his son was to receive a Western education, Mir Hasan suggested Scotch Mission High School, where he himself was a teacher of Persian and Arabic. Iqbal continued to take private lessons from Mir Hasan for several more years and came to regard him as an important mentor and influence (Mir 2000, 19). It was also from Mir Hasan that Iqbal first learned the foundations of what he perceived as the Eastern or Islamic tradition of knowledge and norm production.

But it was from his next mentor, Thomas W. Arnold, a professor at the

Government College of Lahore, that Iqbal learned about European philosophical traditions. It was only fitting that Iqbal's guide in his encounter with Western thought was himself a young British Orientalist, who had befriended such prominent Indian Muslims as Syed Ahmad Khan, Syed Ameer Ali, and Maulana Shibli Nomani. While studying Classics at Magdalene College, Cambridge, Arnold had developed a keen interest in the history of Islam. In 1888, he had found work as a professor of philosophy first at the Muhammad Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh (later to be renamed Aligarh Muslim University) and then at the Government College, Lahore. It was during his time in India that Arnold published two books. The first of these, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (1896), was a monograph which he authored, reportedly at the advice of Syed Ahmad Khan. The second, titled *Al-Mu'tazilah* (1902), was an extract of a fifteenth century theological exposition about the influential Muslim rationalist movement of the same name. Having spent more than fifteen years in British India, Arnold returned to England in 1904, where he spent nearly two decades in governmental roles including in the Foreign Office. There, he published more works on Islam including *The Caliphate* (1924), *The Islamic Faith* (1928), and *Painting in Islam: A Study of the Place of Pictorial Art in Muslim Culture* (1928).

According to Katherine Watt, Arnold's sympathetic outlook toward Islam and Muslims is at odds with the generally hostile mainstream nineteenth century European Orientalism (2002, 22). Rather than reducing Islam to a static monolith, Arnold's particular brand of Orientalism highlights diversity within Islam and recognizes the multiplicity of "individual understanding and practice of faith" (21). Arnold saw Islam as an innately

rational religion (43), and believed that Islamic teachings were compatible with the principles of modern science (14). Arnold's ideas greatly impacted Iqbal's thought, particularly his conceptions of East and West. The mentee-mentor relationship with Arnold continued well after Iqbal graduated from the Government College, as Arnold helped Iqbal navigate his way through the major works in Western literature and philosophy. It was also at Arnold's recommendation that Iqbal decided to further his philosophical studies at European universities (68).

That Arnold goes from London first to Aligarh and then to Lahore to educate Britain's new colonial subjects about the philosophical traditions of East and West, and that Iqbal travels from Lahore to London, then Cambridge, Heidelberg, and Munich seeking to learn the philosophies of East and West are both reflections of and facilitated by a colonial condition marked on the one hand by the evident lopsidedness of the global regime of knowledge production, and on the other hand a constant movement between the center and the periphery. Iqbal's mentee-mentor relationship with Arnold - indeed it was to Arnold that Iqbal dedicated his doctoral dissertation in 1908 - marks an important moment in the historical encounter with European colonial modernity in Islamicate context. Iqbal belongs to the first generation of prominent Muslim thinkers whose learning about their local religious and cultural traditions takes place not only in local schools and/or through the passing down of familial and community traditions, but also at European schools, European universities, and under the tutelage of European (and soon American) Orientalists such as Arnold and his peers.

3. Islamic Modernity and the New Muslim Subject

While still in India, Iqbal had already established a reputation as an emerging young poet. His first book of poetry, however, was published in 1915, some years after returning home from his European sojourn. Written originally in Persian, the book, titled *The Secrets of the Self* (*Asrar-i-Khudi*), was soon translated into English by Reynold A. Nicholson, himself a foremost scholar in the field of Islamic literature and mysticism. Iqbal went on to publish eight other books of poetry in Persian and Urdu, all of which were swiftly translated to English and other European languages. His literary success earned him an honorary knighthood from the British Crown in 1922. In his poems, Iqbal mixed literary aesthetics with existential questions and dealt with topics that had been the subject of longstanding debate in both European and Islamic philosophy: the meaning of life; free will and determinism; permanence and change; individual and community; and the relationship between reason, emotion, intuition, and revelation. His ontological outlook can be described as one of religious humanism. He challenged the orthodox view of the relationship between deity and humans, positing that human life on earth marked not a fall from the grace of God but the beginning of a journey to become God's vicegerent on earth (*khalifatullah fil ardh*). Another important feature of Iqbal's poetry is the attempt to find a philosophical and dialogical common ground between East and West. His poems make frequent references to major European thinkers including Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Leo Tolstoy, and Henri Bergson, and draw on the insights of such Muslim thinkers as Abu

Hamid Al-Ghazali and Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi.

If his celebrated and sophisticated poetry established him as a poet-philosopher, Iqbal's reputation as a religious reformer and Muslim modernist is owed greatly to a 1930 English language book, a collection of seven lectures, titled *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Building on the efforts of earlier Muslim modernizers including Syed Ahmad Khan and Jamal al-Din Afghani, Iqbal seeks to reconcile Islam's core teachings with the modern notions of democracy, progress, and scientific reason. He posits, famously and controversially, that the immediate task before Muslim intellectuals is "to rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past" (2012 [1930], 78). For him, the project of rethinking Islamic religious thought is a necessary prerequisite for sustained social and cultural change in Muslim societies. He argues that modern developments around the world have created new cultural necessities, and, thus, Islamic jurisprudential reason, which the masses of people regard as the rule of Sharia, is in need of revision (140). Challenging the claims of the traditional Islamic ulama about the finality of the historical schools of jurisprudence, Iqbal insists that the historical contributions of earlier Muslim thinkers ought only to be seen in light of the modern circumstances. Appealing to the Quranic teaching that "life is a process of progressive creation," he reasons that each generation "should be permitted to solve its own problems" (134).

One of Iqbal's central preoccupations in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is an ostensible centuries-old intellectual stagnation in Muslim societies, a "dogmatic slumber," which, according to him, has engulfed nearly all Muslim nations who "are mechanically repeating old values" (2012 [1930], 129). The theme also occupies much of

Iqbal's poetic works. In *The Rod of Moses*, for instance, Iqbal describes the opiating impact of the intellectual stagnation of the East: "In fane and shrine the self in slumber deep is sunk / It seems that soul of East an opiate strong has drunk" (2000, 302). Similarly, in a preface to *A Message from the East*, he reiterates the postulation that for centuries "The East, especially the Islamic East," has been in a "perpetual sleep" (2012, 450). The book opens with a "Dedicatory Epistle to King Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan," in which Iqbal outlines the distraught state of affairs in Muslim-majority lands:

> The Arab in his desert gone astray;
> The way of godliness no more his way;
> The Egyptian in the whirlpool of the Nile;
> And the Turanian slow-pulsed and senile;
> The Turk a victim of the ancient feud
> Of East and West, both covered with his blood;
> No one left like that ardent soul, Salman;
> His creed of Love now alien to Iran,
> Which has lost all its fervour, all its zest,
> The old fire all cold ashes in its breast;
> The Indian Muslim unconcerned about
> All save his belly, sunk in listless doubt.
> The heroes have departed from the scene:
> All, all gone — Khalid, Umar, Saladin (2000, 67).

In an attempt to reverse the stagnation of Islamic thought, Iqbal makes a case for reviving the religious practice of *ijtihad*, which refers to the ap-

plication of individual reason to Islamic law independently of the views of traditional schools of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) (Hassan 2008, 168). In the early Islamic period, *ijtihad* was a commonly used legal practice but its usage and scope became increasingly restricted in the classical period as many Muslim jurists opted to theorize and promote another principle called *taqlid* (imitation), which requires conformity to traditionally established legal precedents. Iqbal's rejection of the principle of *taqlid*, and his revival of the historically neglected principle of *ijtihad* is indicative of his view that any progressive change in Muslim societies ought inevitably to begin with a renegotiation of Muslim subjectivity, and with the recognition of the right and capacity of individual Muslims to reinterpret religious teachings in light of modern developments. According to Iqbal, the Quran's designation of Muhammad as the Seal of the Prophets (*khatam an-nabiyyin*) suggests that in the worldview of Islam, "in order to achieve full self-consciousness man [*sic*] must finally be thrown back on his own resources" (2012 [1930], 101).

A perusal through Iqbal's works in poetry and prose reveals a life-long preoccupation with the idea of self-consciousness, as well as with the related notions of human subjectivity, autonomy, and agency. This preoccupation is manifest in Iqbal's concept of *khudi* (ego, selfhood, or selfness), which he first introduces in *The Secrets of the Self*. In offering a theistic narrative of the evolution of human subjectivity in his preface to the English translation of the book, Iqbal argues that while *khudi* is innate to human nature, individual humans have the capacity to either corrupt or cultivate their ego, and by doing the latter they can approximate divine characteristics. The cultivation of ego requires self-awareness, and it is through attaining complete self-consciousness that the ego reaches the

highest stage of human evolution on earth, that of "divine vicegerency" (*niyabat-i ilahi*) (1920, xxvii). In Iqbal's theistic worldview, then, the cultivation of the *khudi* elevates humans from passive and subservient objects in a pre-determined theistic scheme, to active and conscious participants in the very process of creation. Taking creation as an open-ended process, Iqbal posits that the Quran itself acknowledges "the possibility of other creators than God," concluding that the ultimate goal of human life is to rise to the level of God's collaborator in creation through the perfection of the self (xix).

Iqbal's *khudi* is unmistakably a Muslim subject, not only in its ontological construction, but too in the very fashion in which it is inserted into a particular historical context. The *khudi*, as Iqbal conceives of it, must attempt to overcome an immediate and monumental challenge facing the Muslim umma (community) at the dawn of the twentieth century: Western colonial domination, itself facilitated by a centuries-old intellectual slumber in the Islamic East. This point was not lost on Nicholson, who in his introduction to the English translation of *The Secrets of the Self*, wrote that in Iqbal's conception "only by self-affirmation, self-expression, and self-development can the Moslems once more become strong and free" (1920, xiii). What is more, within the particular context of colonial India, alarmed by what he saw as the rise of Hindu nationalism, and cognisant that Indian Muslims no longer enjoyed the protections and privileges once afforded to them by such mighty Muslim empires as the Mughals, Iqbal also envisions an empowered Muslim subject who resists the double bind of being a colonial subject and the member of an underprivileged religious minority community. Thus Majeed argues that Iqbal's theorization of a modern Islamic subject is an attempt to reconstruct, on behalf of Indian

Muslims in particular, "a counter agency to the systemic negation of the humanity of the colonised subject by European colonialism" (2009, 23). Vahdat too notes that Iqbal's concept of *khudi* was constructed in opposition "to an 'other,' i.e., the West, which [Iqbal] contended was the source of much of the misery among the Muslims" (2015, 28). Arriving at a similar interpretation, Azad argues that Iqbal instrumentalizes the *khudi* "for the sake of (re)producing Muslims as active agents of change in the world" (2014, 21) and as "a means of achieving the freedom, independence and self-creation that could only be achieved with the removal of colonial powers from Muslim lands" (23).

While the observations of Nicholson, Majeed, Vahdat, and Azad emphasize a collective conception of the *khudi* (i.e. the collective self of the Islamic umma; the collective self of Indian Muslims), it must be noted here that more often than not, in Iqbal's thought the term *khudi* connotes the individual, rather than collective, Muslim subject. Indeed, in explaining the reason for choosing the term to signify subjectivity, Iqbal writes: "there is ⋯ some evidence in the Persian language of the use of the word 'Khudi' in the simple sense of Self, i.e. to say the colourless fact of the 'I'. Thus metaphysically the word 'Khudi' is used in the sense of that indescribable feeling of 'I', which forms the basis of the uniqueness of each individual" (2003, 211). Furthermore, in discussing the evolution of the ego in *The Secrets of the Self*, Iqbal declares that: "All life is individual ⋯. God himself [*sic*] is an individual: He is the most unique individual." (Iqbal 1920, xviii).

For Iqbal, it is precisely the cultivation of the *khudi* and the realization of human subjectivity which has led to the rise of the West, just as the abandonment of selfhood has caused the decline of the East. Selfhood, in

Iqbal's description is the "inner light" of the modern West, while "The loss of self has made the East / A leper, for germs befitting feast" (2000, 317). The cultivation of the self, in turn, requires intellectual dynamism and a relentless pursuit of knowledge. According to Iqbal, it is through knowledge that individuals and societies overcome the forces of natural and historical determinism, bring their own designs to the world, and actualize their inner desires. At the individual level, gaining knowledge allows one to break the chains of imitation and achieve autonomy through the independent exercise of reason. At the collective and societal level too, knowledge production is the guarantor of civilization vivacity. Thus, in one poem in *A Message from the East*, Iqbal identifies the quest for knowledge as "the secret of the greatness of the West," and describes "learning" and "knowledge of things" as God's gifts to humanity (2000, 68). In another poem, titled "Knowledge and Religion," he writes:

> Learning whom God has made
> The mate of heart and sight,
> Like Friend of God can break
> With ease all idols bright (2000, 304).

As Vahdat insightfully observes, in Iqbal's thinking the pursuit of knowledge is also related to the exercise of power, itself a necessary condition for the realization of selfhood. Vahdat points out that in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal invokes the Quran to argue that in order for humans to preserve themselves they must seek "knowledge, self-multiplication and power" (2015, 8). Nicholson identifies a similar theme in *The Secrets of the Self*, where Iqbal brings together pur-

suit of knowledge, self consciousness, and the capacity to take action and cause change. For Iqbal, he suggests, the ultimate damage caused by the stagnation of thought in the Muslim world is the loss of "capacity for action, based on scientific observation and interpretation of phenomena" (1920, xii). Iqbal's turn to the *khudi*, as noted earlier, is a call on Muslims to develop a critical and action-inducting self-consciousness and in doing so to regain the capacity to exercise sovereignty and produce knowledge. However, as we shall see in the following sections, Iqbal does not wish to replicate Western modernity and its version of subjectivity in his local context. While he sees the modern West as one instance of the realization of ego, Iqbal nevertheless wants to avoid what he sees as the pitfalls and failures of Western modernity and as such he seeks to conceptualize his modern Muslim subjectivity within a religiously defined framework of ethical considerations.

4. Muslim Subject Narrates Western Modernity

By now, it has become evident that Iqbal has a complex engagement with the so-called 'West' and its modernity. As one commentator points out, there are "numerous versions of the West" (2009, xxvi) in Iqbal's thinking. It may be useful here to distinguish between at least three of these versions. In the first of these, the modern West is an example of the realization of selfhood through self-awareness, and of empowerment through the pursuit of knowledge. In assuming the position of a social and religious reformer, Iqbal often calls on Muslim nations to learn from the West's best attributes, and in doing so to revive their decaying civilization.

"The taverns of the West are open for all," he writes in one poem, "The ecstasy of the new learning is not a sin" (2000, 338). Still, learning from the West ought not be limited to the areas of science, technology, and philosophy. Thus, Iqbal posits that "the political experience of European nations" contain important lessons for negotiating a sustainable and balanced path to sociopolitical development in Muslim societies (2012 [1930], 138). What is more, Iqbal acknowledges his own intellectual debt to Western thinkers, writing:

> The teaching of the West's philosophers
> Increased my wisdom's fund (2000, 99).

Even though Iqbal encourages his fellow Muslims to take a page out of the transformative experiences of modern Europe, for him the subject of Western modernity is neither the only possible outcome of the realization of ego, nor one to be emulated and reproduced. Indeed, as I shall discuss later, Iqbal believes that with the secularization of public and private life the subject of Western modernity has effectively been taken out of a framework of ethical considerations. This in turn, has marked the beginning of the decline of Western civilization; thus Iqbal's warning that Europe itself is "at the grave's edge" (2000, 314). According to Iqbal, the steady rise of a violent streak in Western modernity, evidenced by Europe's colonial expansions as well as wars between rival European powers, is at once a consequence of the detachment of the human subject from theistic belongings, and a sign of the West's civilizational decline. Hence, in his preface to *A Message from the East*, Iqbal writes: "Europe has seen with her very own eyes the dreadful results of her own scientific,

moral and political vision and has heard the heartrending epic of The Decadence of Europe from Francesco Saverio Nitti (former prime minister of Italy)" (2012, 450). Iqbal blames Western colonial designs for creating divisions among humanity, and believes that Islam can provide an alternative vision of human unity. Thus, in a poem called "Makkah and Geneva," he writes:

> Western polity advocates division among the nations;
> Islam pleads but for unification of humanity (2000, 312).

In another poem, Iqbal suggests the League of Nations is an instrument of European colonialism, and he dreams about "An Eastern League of Nations" headquartered in Tehran (2000, 332).

That the second version of the West for Iqbal is as a violent colonizer undoubtedly has to do with his own particular encounter with European designs in colonial India. Indeed, Iqbal was born in a context where the vicious British reprisal for the great Indian uprising of 1857 had only recently concluded; a reprisal campaign that according to Amaresh Misra, caused the deaths of nearly ten million people and marked a holocaust moment in the history of British colonialism in the Indian subcontinent (2008). Not long after this, the outbreak of a devastating war in Europe with over seventeen million deaths, was yet another display of what Iqbal saw as the violent nature of West modernity. This view is captured clearly in a 1923 poem called "The Wisdom of the West," in which Iqbal describes the modern West as having gained unparalleled proficiency "in the fine art of killing," and bitterly jokes that God ought to send "the Angel of Death" to the West to learn "new skills" in killing and destruction

(2000, 94). In another poem still, Iqbal predicts the violence that the West has unleashed upon the world will lead to its own undoing:

> Your civilization will use its own dagger to take its life;
> The nest built on a delicate branch cannot last (as cited in Mustansir 2008, 48).

The violence of Western modernity, for Iqbal, also entails economic exploitation, both in the colonial core as well as in the periphery. Thus, in a March 1932 address at the annual meeting of the All-India Muslim Conference in Lahore, he asserts that Western civilization looks "upon man [*sic*] as a thing to be exploited and not as a personality to be developed and enlarged by purely cultural forces." He further warns that "the peoples of Asia are bound to rise against the acquisitive economy which the West has developed and imposed on the nations of the East" (1995, 44). Iqbal also derides the way in which European powers use civilizational claims and the trope of the non-European savage in order to sanctify colonial conquests. In a poem, titled "Civilization's Clutches," he reverses the colonial gaze in his description of modern Europe's moral bankruptcy and the contradiction between its promise of human liberation and its violent colonial conduct. Written nearly two decades after the notorious 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement, the poem refers to British and French colonial expansions in the Middle East following the Ottoman Empire's defeat in World War I. He writes:

> Iqbal has no doubt of Europe's humaneness: she
> Sheds tears for all peoples groaning beneath oppression;
> Her reverend churchmen furnish her liberally
> With wiring and bulbs for moral illumination.
> And yet, my heart burns for Syria and Palestine,
> And finds for this knotty puzzle no explanation—
> Enlarged from the 'savage grasp' of the Turk, they pine,
> Poor things, in the clutches now of 'civilization' (2000, 333).

Elsewhere, maintaining the reversed colonial gaze, Iqbal postulates it was indeed the East that introduced civilization in the West. According to him, while "This land of Syria gave the West a Prophet / Of purity and pity and innocence," the West has brought to the East little more than moral corruption in the form of "dice and drink and troops of prostitutes" (2000, 332).

In addition to the West as an example of self-realization and the West as the violent colonizer, another version of the West in Iqbal's thinking is the West as the civilizational other of the East. For Iqbal, East and West are civilizationally and essentially distinct categories. Thus, in the preface to *A Message from the East*, he distinguishes between a Western outlook represented by Goethe, and another, Eastern, outlook represented by Muslim mystics. Suggesting some level of epistemic incompatibility between East and West, Iqbal muses that Goethe's "Western nature" limited his understanding of "Eastern elemental truths [*haqa'iq*]" (2012, 448). Elsewhere, Iqbal posits that Eastern and Western minds "are elementally incapable of understanding each other" (1995, 44). Arguing that the East and West are typified by "two opposing types of world-consciousness," he

then explains that unlike the Western mind which is "chronological in character," Eastern mind is "non-historical" (1995, 43).

Setting aside differences in mindsets, for Iqbal the key factor accounting for the civilizational difference between East and West is that with its transition to modernity the latter has forced a separation between the spiritual and the temporal, rejecting religion as a valid source of knowledge and norms. According to Iqbal, the conclusion to which Europe has arrive in the course of its modernity is "that religion is a private affair of the individual and has nothing to do with what is called man's [*sic*] temporal life." The "mistaken separation of the spiritual and the temporal," he further adds, "has resulted practically in the total exclusion of Christianity from the life of European States" (1995, 5). For him, "the separation of Church and State," as it was conceived and as it occurred historically in Europe, is contrary to the very "structure of Islam as a religio-political system," since Islam's philosophy of "*Tauhid*" (divine unity) is a rejection of such false modern bifurcations as spiritual and temporal, sacred and secular, faith and reason, church and state, and public and private (2012 [1930], 122).

Though he rejects the modern European notion of the separation of church and state, Iqbal also explicitly opposes a theocratic state "headed by a representative of God on earth who can always screen his despotic will behind his supposed infallibility" (2012 [1930], 123). What Iqbal endorses, however, is a "republican form of government" (125) based on Islam's spiritual worldview; something to which he also refers as "spiritual democracy," which according to him, "is the ultimate aim of Islam" (142). Iqbal's political vision for Muslim societies of representative "legislative assemblies" with "the power of *ijtihad*" offers a creative synthesis of

Islamic teachings and modern democratic principles (196). Still, Iqbal believes that the separation of church of state in Europe has led effectively to the supremacy of the state and state interests, at the cost of the subservience of religion and its institutions:

> In my view statesmanship cut off from creed,
> Is Satan's slave, has no qualms, but low breed.
> By quitting Church, Europe has freedom gained:
> This statesmanship is like a giant unchained.
> When their eyes on some weak domain alight,
> Their Priests as vanguard act to wage the fight (2000, 333).

Iqbal is particularly fearful that the separation in modern Europe between the spiritual and the temporal has led to the erosion of ethics and the decline of moral conduct. In a quatrain titled "Dancing," he criticizes Europe for having abandoned the call of the prophets to the betterment of the soul, which he describes as the "spirit's dance," in favor of moral corruption, which he describes as "the dance of serpent limb." While the first dance breeds "the race of pilgrim and prince," the second "breeds the craving flesh, the sweating palm" (329). In another poem, he asserts that Europe has abandoned the moral "scales of the Jews and the Christians," opting instead to weigh "good and evil on another kind of scale" (120). Elsewhere, he suggests that by disavowing the epistemic resources of the monotheistic traditions the modern West has condemned itself to a cold, calculating, instrumental rationality:

> But O it has no Moses to
> Experience epiphanies,
> No Abraham to undergo
> Ordeals by fire.
> There Intellect with careless ease
> Robs Love of its entire
> Possessions, and there is no heat
> In its air of a fervent sigh (118).

Yet another consequence of the withdrawal of religion from modern European societies is the rise of racialized modes of oppression and exploitation. According to Iqbal, with the decline of religion, "ties of blood and race" have come back as the main markers of identity for "the white man":

> Through all the Western politeia
> Religion withers to the roots;
> For the white man, ties of blood and race
> Are all he knows of brotherhood — A Brahmin, in Britannia's sight,
> Ascends no higher in life's scale (313).

It is true that in Iqbal's thought civilizational West is innately distinct from (and at times indecipherable to) civilizational East. Unlike colonial West, however, civilizational West is regarded not as an enemy, but instead as "an interlocutor in a cross-cultural dialogue" (Majeed 2007, 158). Put differently, in Iqbal's civilizational view the East and West are conceived of not as hostile and totally incompatible, but instead as historically and fundamentally interconnected. For one thing, regarding East and West

not only as civilizational but also as existential and natural categories, Iqbal argues that the existence of East and West as two distinct civilizations is as natural as the existence of night and day:

> Don't shun the East, nor look on West with scorn,
> Since Nature yearns for change of night to morn (2000, 323)

Elsewhere, citing the Quranic verse (2: 115), "The East and West is God's," Iqbal once again asserts that East and West are part of the divine design, and suggests that neither have any supremacy over the other (2012 [1930], 74). In his view, as distinct civilizational poles East and West may not only coexist peacefully but may also engage in mutually advantageous dialogue and exchange, since each of them possesses something the other lacks; the East has the fire of "*ishq*" (love), while the West has the treasure of "intellect" (as cited in Ahmad 1960, 81).

Furthermore, Iqbal believes that East and West, though civilizationally distinct, were coconstituted in a dialogical relation with one another. That Islam was revealed as a further development of the Judeo-Christian tradition, or that medieval Islamic thought drew heavily on ancient Greek sources, or that the European Renaissance and Enlightenment were influenced by the works of Muslim scientists and rationalist thinkers are regarded as evidence of such a coconstitution. Thus, in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal argues that since the era of the European Renaissance, while the Muslim world has fallen into an "intellectual stupor," Europe has taken inspiration from and expanded upon the works of earlier Muslim thinkers, and European intellectuals have engaged seriously with "the great problems in which the philosophers

and scientists of Islam were so keenly interested" (2012 [1930], 6).

5. Theistic Subject and the Limits of Secular Reason

In the early twentieth century, when Iqbal attended university in Heidelberg and Munich, a particularly influential approach in German philosophy to the relation between modernity and religion was that articulated by Young Hegelians such as Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx. The former of the two believed that the omnipotent deity of monotheistic religions is the antithesis of human subjectivity, asserting that "Man [*sic*] [in relation to God] gives up his personality; but in return, God, the Almighty, infinite, unlimited being ... denies human dignity, the human ego" (1881, 27). The latter famously described religion as "the opium of the people," and wrote: "The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is a demand for their true happiness" (1970, 131). In their radical critiques of historical religion, both Feuerbach and Marx were indeed building on Hegel's contention in his 1832 book, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, that religion belongs to an earlier and lower stage in the dialectical evolution of human reason.

Iqbal is undoubtedly familiar with these debates. Nevertheless, wary of the consequences of a separation between the spiritual and the temporal, he blames the moral and material crisis of the modern West on the secularization of public and private life. Subsequently, what he articulates as an alternative to the self-centered, violent, and dominating subject of the European Enlightenment is a markedly religious subject. His chief preoccupation with the agency and empowerment of his fellow Muslims

aside, the very mode of subjectivity that Iqbal has in mind is conceived of within a consciously religious (Islamic) paradigm of vicegerency. Yet, it is not only the negotiation and exercise of subjectivity, but also the determination of its limitations that takes place within a religious frame of meaning. If subjectivity is discussed in relation to vicegerency, its limits are understood in relation to Islam's most fundamental concept, submission. Thus, unlike the self-constituting and self-affirming Cartesian *ego cogito*, Iqbal's conception of subjectivity is negotiated in oscillation between the affirmation of *khudi* (selfness) and the embrace of *bi-khudi* (selflessness) through submission to the ultimate ego (God). It is for this very reason that within mere three years of the publication of *The Secrets of the Self*, in 1918 Iqbal publishes his second book of poetry under the title of *The Secrets of Selflessness* (*Rumuz-e-Bekhudi*). Moreover, in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal discusses praying as the symbolic representation in Islam of this dynamic of the affirmation and negation of the self. He describes the act of prayer as the religious expression of an "inner yearning for a response in the awful silence of the universe," and as "a unique process of discovery whereby the searching ego affirms itself in the very moment of self-negation, and thus discovers its own worth and justification as a dynamic factor in the life of the universe" (2012 [1930], 74).

By defining it as being in constant oscillation between affirmation and negation, assertion and submission, Iqbal seeks to impose religious-ethical constraints on his modern Muslim subject in order to avoid the pitfalls and malaises of Western modernity. Thus, Hassan observes that although Iqbal promotes cultivating the Ego, he does not identify "the self with selfishness" and empowerment with oppression (1976, 2). For other commen-

tators, the implications of Iqbal's religious-ethical constraints on his modern Muslim subject go beyond providing a vision for the peaceful coexistence of varied and infinite (human) selfhoods. Hence, Özdemir argues that Iqbal's spiritual conception of subjectivity is consistent with an ecological ethics of "care for nature and non-humans." Whereas the calls of such Enlightenment philosophers as Francis Bacon for human dominion over nature are understood to have justified the exploitation and degradation of the natural world, Özdemir contends that Iqbal opposes "the modern and dominant perception of nature ⋯ as a lifeless, meaningless, and mechanical entity totally indifferent and hostile to human beings," and instead endorses "a new pattern of human-nature relationship based on the idea of sustainability" (2017, 106).

While oscillation between opposing poles (selfness and selflessness, affirmation and negation, assertion and submission) has the consequence of imposing a set of religious-ethical constraints on Iqbal's Muslim subject, it must be noted that in Iqbal's overall thought self-negation does not amount to the denial of subjectivity and submission to God does not amount to the annihilation of the self. Nicholson, therefore, comments that despite Iqbal's fascination with Persian mystics such as Rumi, he ultimately "rejects the doctrine of self-abandonment taught by the great Persian mystic and does not accompany [Rumi] in his pantheistic flights" (1920, xv). Likewise, Majeed, believes that in Iqbal's thought selflessness "does not imply an absence of self-consciousness" (2009, 51), and argues that while the interplay between selfness and selflessness is central to Iqbal's conception of human subjectivity, it is ultimately selfness, and not selflessness, "that has political and aesthetic priority in Iqbal's work" (54). Iqbal himself, in his introduction to the English translation of *The Secrets*

of the Self, writes: "The moral and religious ideal of man [*sic*] is not self-negation but self-affirmation, and he attains to this ideal by becoming more and more individual, more and more unique" (1920, xix). Rather than annihilating the individual before God, in Iqbal's philosophy "the individualities of God and man [*sic*] exist in a dynamic and creative tension" (Azad 2014, 18). References to this "creative tension" can be found in poems such as "A Dialogue Between God and Man [*sic*]," where first God criticizes "Man" for creating wars, divisions, and destruction on earth, only to then hear "Man" respond:

> You made the night, I made the lamp;
> You made the earthen bowl, I made the goblet.
> You made deserts, mountains and valleys;
> I made gardens, meadows and parks.
> I am one who makes a mirror out of stone,
> And turns poison into sweet, delicious drink (2000, 90).

It should be evident then that for Iqbal, religious mediation of subjectivity is meant not to reject individual autonomy and its affiliated values (freedom, rights, etc.) but instead to reconcile the modern subject with its others (community, nature, existence, etc.). Equally integral to this reconciliation is Iqbal's bringing together of reason with its others (revelation, intuition, emotion, etc.), which, as aptly noted by Rahman, bears the unmistakable mark of Sufi teachings about the relationship between *aql* (reason) and *kashf* (discovery through intuition) (Rahman 1963, 442). Indeed, in rejecting and constructing an alternative to what he calls the "pure reason" of Western modernity, Iqbal draws on the teachings of the

medieval Persian Sufi philosopher Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi. In *The Development of Metaphysics in Persian: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy* (1908), Iqbal proposes that already in twelfth century, Suhrawardi was aware of and "endeavored to substantiate the helplessness of pure reason" (123). According to Iqbal, in his magnum opus, entitled *Philosophy of Illumination* (*Hikmat al-Ishraq*), Suhrawardi posited that "unaided reason is unworthy" and that intellect ought to be aided by *dhauq* (intuition), defined as "the mysterious perception of the essence of things which brings knowledge and peace to the restless soul, and disarms Scepticism forever" (127).

In Iqbal's Sufism-inspired reconciliation of reason and its others, *ishq* (love) is identified as the key ingredient for bringing reason back to a framework of moral considerations. In *The Secrets of the Self*, Iqbal defines *ishq* as "the desire to assimilate, to absorb." Love, for Iqbal, is the force that facilitates self-affirmation at the very moment of self-negation. He thus hypothesizes: "Love individualises the lover as well as the beloved. The effort to realise the most unique individuality individualises the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker ⋯ Thus, in order to fortify the Ego we should cultivate love, i.e., the power of assimilative action" (1920, xxv). In Iqbal's thought, love is of such fundamental importance that the very existence of the Self may only be confirmed by love rather than by reason. Iqbal's designation of love, rather than sovereignty or reason, as a primordial, transcendental, and self-referential value is consistent with and integral to his attempt to put forth an alternative to the ontologically self-referential Cartesian subject. Instead of declaring *Cogito, ergo sum*, the Iqbalian subject confirms its existence through the embrace of love:

About my being or non-being
Thought was in doubt.
But Love made manifest
The fact that I exist (2000, 102).

Likewise, the participation of Iqbal's religiously mediated subject in life's creative processes is motivated, not by a desire to impose one's will onto others but by love and its logic of affirmation-negation:

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.
From Love proceeds the radiance of its being.
And the development of its unknown possibilities.
Its nature gathers fire from Love,
Love instructs it to illumine the world (2000, 11).

For Iqbal, reason detached from and defined in juxtaposition against love and faith is misguided and hence dangerous. In *A Message from the East*, he cautions against the "deceitfulness" of Western "intellect" which is disjointed from "Love."

The intellect's deceitfulness
Is worthy of remark:
It is the leader of the caravan,
Yet fond of highway robbery.
Do not seek guidance from
That jack-of-all-trades, intellect.

Apply to Love, for it is perfect in
The only art it practises.
Although the West converses with the stars,
Beware,
There is in all it does
A taint of sorcery (2000, 114).

Similarly, in *The Rod of Moses*, scientific reason divorced from faith is likened to poison:

Art, insight, intellect and science,
Are carried along like straw and reed.
Divorced from faith, a poison strong,
When propped by faith and true belief,
'Gainst poison works with speed,
And proves a source of much relief (2000, 305).

Whereas "pure reason" is deceitful and poisonous, the synthesis of reason and love can uncover the secrets of the universe and elevate humans to the level of God's collaborators in creation. Nowhere is Iqbal's idea of a reason-reconciled-with-love expressed more clearly than in a poem titled "Conversation between Knowledge and Love." The poem begins with Knowledge boasting that it has "captured the world" and unveiled its secrets. "Why," Knowledge then asks with hubris, "should I bother about the other side of the heavens?" Love, in response, blames Knowledge detached of its divine origins for unleashing destruction upon nature: "Because of the spell you have cast the sea is in flames / The air spews fire and is filled with poison." The poem arrives at its moral lesson when

Love calls on Knowledge to set aside their differences, join forces, and build the world anew together:

> When you and I were friends, you were a light;
> But you broke with me, and your light became a fire.
> You were born in the innermost sanctum of the Divinity,
> But then fell into Satan's trap.
> Come — turn this earthly world into a garden,
> And make the old world young again.
> Come -take just a little of my heart's solicitude,
> And build, under the heavens, an everlasting paradise.
> We have been on intimate terms since the day of creation,
> And are the high and low notes of the same song (2000, 85).

6. Cosmopolitan Horizon, Civilizational Dialogue

As the twentieth century came to a close, the civilizational frame of analysis within which both European Orientalists and Muslim thinkers constructed their self-image in relation to the (Eastern or Western) other became the subject of critique. Edward Said, among others, argued that European colonialism in Asia and Africa had always worked through a discourse of power that drew a civilizational line between a superior Europe with its universal values and modes of thought, and an inferior East that only became comprehensible when studied and articulated by Europe itself (1977, 170). In Said's view, the line which separated the East from the West in this colonially manufactured civilizational discourse was less a fact of nature than of "human production" and "imaginative geography" (1985, 90). Said posited that as categories of representation East

and West inevitably perpetuate a kind of determinism that reduces multi-faceted human dynamics to simplistic and fixed categories. In his celebrated 1978 book, *Orientalism*, he showed how throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a range of European Orientalists advanced a view of an inherent "ontological difference between Eastern and Western" religious, social, and economic "mentalities" (1994 [1978], 330). While the Western mind was defined as rational and entrepreneurial, the Eastern mind was regarded as anti-modern and incapable of "economic rationality (259)."

Said was well aware that non-Westerners too, including a number of pioneering anticolonial thinkers, had adopted the civilizational frame of analysis. He argued, however, that the re-appropriation of colonially constructed civilizational identities in the course of anticolonial struggles had given rise to cultural nativism in the formerly colonized regions of the world. For Said, these nativist tendencies characterized a range of responses to colonialism, from the discourse of négritude in Africa to the call for return to a pre-colonial Islamic essence in Muslim societies. Eurocentrism and non-European nativism were, for Said, binary forces that "feed off each other" (1993, xxiv). While the latter had emerged in response to the former, it nevertheless accepted and assumed "the consequences of imperialism, the racial, religious, and political divisions imposed by imperialism itself" (228). Furthermore, Said's analysis demonstrated that in nativist re-appropriations of colonially constructed categories, the West, as a monolithic category, remained the singular reference point and interlocutor in relation to which the self-image of the (formerly) colonized people was always constructed.

While Iqbal develops his concept of the Muslim *khudi* within a civilizational framework in which categories of East and West are central, the in-

tellectual horizon in which his thought takes shape is much more cosmopolitan than nativist. In Rahman's judgment, though his point of entry is a deep concern with the plight of his fellow Muslims, Iqbal's vision is ultimately one for a common humanity and not for Muslims alone (1963, 444). This cosmopolitan and universalist outlook is evident not only in Iqbal's free and creative engagement with a wide range of canonical Muslim and European thinkers, but also in his insistence that East and West ought to learn from one another and that a modern reconstruction of Islamic thought in dialogue with non-Islamic traditions of knowledge production offers capacities which may help to curb the crisis of modernity in the West. While Said's analysis remains today a salient reminder of the innate limitations of the civilization analysis and the inevitably reductionist representations of the categories of East and West within it, Iqbal's view of essential epistemological and ontological differences between East and West does not *ipso facto* preclude humanist ethics. On the contrary, the recognition of difference in Iqbal's thought facilitates a dialogical engagement between various traditions of knowledge production as a necessary step toward addressing and overcoming the shared challenges of a common humanity. Thus in a quatrain titled "The East and the West," Iqbal writes that diseases of heart and mind have plagued "Man's [*sic*] whole world, sparing neither East nor West" (2000, 334), and in another quatrain titled "Revolution" he warns that the West's spiritual depletion and the East's material and intellectual stagnation are indications that "our old world is nearing death." The latter quatrain's declaration that "In men's [*sic*] hearts stirs a revolution's torrent," reveals a cautious optimism that the death of the "old world" may facilitate the advent of a new world and a new civilization (330).

In Iqbal's thought, the critical reconstruction of the dominant religious and cultural traditions of the Islamic East in light of both the successes as well as failures of the modern West would not only empower Muslims living under the condition of colonial domination, it would also contribute to the emancipation of humanity from all manners of oppression and alienation. In one instance, he postulates that within the Indian subcontinent the reformation of Islam may harbinger a critical reassessment of the prevailing caste system and the creation of a society "where the social rank of man [*sic*] is not determined by his caste or color, ⋯ where an untouchable can marry the daughter of a king" (1995, 44). In another instance, he contends that a modern rethinking of Islamic traditions may fulfill three pressing needs of a common humanity: "a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual, and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis." "Modern Europe," Iqbal believes, set out to emancipate and elevate humanity but her desire was inhibited by the shortcomings of "pure thought" (2012 [1930], 142). Iqbal's diagnosis of contradictions between the promises and the consequences of Western modernity and his optimism that emancipatory reform in the East may have a progressive impact in the West find affinity with the postcolonial utopianism of Frantz Fanon, who argued, some decades later, that while "the elements for a solution to the major problems of humanity existed at one time or another in European thought," today it is only the Third World that may put forth a new vision and path to save itself, Europe, and humanity (2004 [1963], 237).

7. Conclusion

Within the particular context of British colonial rule in India, Iqbal positions himself as a philosophical spokesperson of the Islamic East concerned with the fate and fortunes of his fellow Muslims. Still, this article argued that in advancing his discourse of religious and cultural renewal, Iqbal freely engages with and borrows from modern European philosophies, at times even arriving at similar conclusions to ones prescribed by the same European philosophers he sets out to critique. In the above sections, I have described this seeming tension as a function of a constant oscillation in Iqbal's thought between two traditions of knowledge production which he designates East and West. I have also suggested that thinking in oscillation occurs within a particular historical context in which Iqbal's account of Islamic modernity is articulated as a challenge not only to the prevailing local traditions and structures, but also the persistent and ominous presence of European colonial designs. In this regard, Iqbal may not be unique. Indeed, since the initial encounter in Islamicate contexts with European colonial modernity, the West has remained the main interlocutor in much of what has been produced by leading Muslim thinkers, including religious reformers. What distinguishes Iqbal's contribution from those of his peers is, perhaps, the way in which his work facilitates a dialogical (rather than hegemonic and exclusionary) encounter between distinct traditions of knowledge production, the hybrid and open-ended conception of modernity that emerges from this encounter, and the cosmopolitan horizon within which the encounter takes place. Iqbal's thought, hence, may be described as the harbinger of a current in contemporary Islamic thought that works to carve out counterhegemonic spaces between

totalizing calls either for a full embrace of Western modernity or else a total return to local religious and cultural foundations; between Eurocentric universalism and Islamic nativism.

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초 록

‘동양’과 ‘서양’ 사이를 오가다

— 무함마드 이끄발과 근대성의 이슬람적 재구성

시아바시 사파리*

이 논문은 이슬람 사상과 서구 사상의 조우의 장으로서 무함마드 이끄발의 저작들을 살펴보는 것이다. 여기서 핵심 주장은 이 조우가 두 가지 서로 다른 차원에서 일어난다는 것이다. 첫째, 무슬림 사회에서 지적, 물질적 침체라고 생각되는 것을 비판하면서 이끄발은 근대 유럽 사상에 바탕을 두고 이슬람 근대성과 문명 부흥의 이론을 발전시키고자 하였다. 둘째, 유럽 근대성의 도덕적 파탄에 경악한 그는 자기 이론에 대해 유럽의 계몽사상 대신 인식론적, 존재론적 바탕이 될 만한 대안을 얻어내고자 이슬람의 신비주의 전통을 끌어들였다. 이끄발의 사상이 형성되는 장으로서 한편으로는 식민지적 맥락을 다른 한편으로는 세계시민적 지평을 강조하며, 이 논문은 이끄발이 동양과 서양이라고 규정하는 두 개의 지식생산 전통 사이를 창조적으로 오간 것에 대한 설명을 제공한다.

* 서울대학교 인문대학 아시아언어문명학부 조교수