From Self to Self-ness:
A Reading of Muhammad Iqbal's *Khudī* as a Moral-Ontological Vision

A Dissertation presented to
the Faculty of the University of Virginia
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Religious Studies
University of Virginia

by

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Charlottesville, August 2020

Acknowledgements

biʾsmⁱ llāhⁱ l-raḥmānⁱ l-raḥīm. In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. I am grateful to God for bringing me this far, and pray to Him alone, to carry me forward.

I am grateful to everyone who has made this dissertation possible, and also those who have cherished me along the way.

I am so grateful to everyone on my committee, in particular, my adviser, Prof. Charles Mathewes, whose fairness and patience with someone like me has been a blessing. Thank you for being gracious and capacious, and giving me the tools, and reading, thinking, and writing habits, to be able to bring to light, such important aspects of Iqbal, in a novel way. I am grateful to Prof. Peter Ochs for providing me with nurturing insights that aided me, before and in my project. I am grateful to Profs. Shankar Nair and Mehr Faruqi, for their patience, time and valuable comments.

I cannot be thankful enough to my parents, Drs. Iram Bashir and Adalat Khan, who made the luxury of reading and writing, a possibility for me. To parents, one tries to be thankful in constant actions, rather than words. I am also totally indebted to my loving aunt, Kanwal Bashir, whose strength, reliability, and intense care, made my time in Virginia feel like home. I pray for my departed grandfather, Muhammad Bashir, who always made education a family priority. I pray for my dear grandmother, Amina Bibi, who was a woman of sheer power and joy, whose stubbornness I inherited, and who was among those who are blessed to go to God, smiling.

I am very grateful to an extraordinary person, Liz Smith, who had no reason to be so kind, and so genuinely invested, in me. Without her frank and unabashed concern to make sure that I always met every deadline, I would not have reached this stage. I am also thankful to Dennis, for the many feasts, and to Liz Smith's wonderful mom.

I cherish my teacher, and now, someone extremely close to me, and someone who considers me a "colleague" and "co-inquirer", Dr. Basit Koshul, more than words can convey. Such words sound clumsily out of place in an academic dissertation, but, rarely, academic environments can indeed generate relationships which are of the entire person. God can do what He wills.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) is well-known as an influential modern Muslim poet, philosopher and political icon. This significance of Iqbal can be deduced from a list of various appreciative claims about him, which have been pointed out by the Pakistani-American scholar, Basit Koshul, in the Stanford edition's preface to Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.[1] To scholars not engaged in Iqbal Studies, Iqbal is perhaps best described as a thinker who truly was multifaceted. For example, he was a well-lauded poet in the modern days of the Classical Urdū and Persian poetic traditions;[2] a politically significant voice in the religious nation-(re)building efforts, during the events leading up to the withdrawal of the British Rāj from India; and a philosophical mind who delivered the conversation-stirring *Reconstruction* lecture series in England and India, which was published together in 1930. Born in Sialkot (in what is modern-day Pakistan) and having undergone an itinerant intellectual and spiritual formation in India, Cambridge and Munich, Iqbal then returned to his homeland in 1908, and spent the rest of his life working and contributing here. Other modern Islamic scholars have attested, of Iqbal: "his work is, from first to last, the work of a *muslim*"[3] and Western philosophers too, have noted how he is "deeply anchored in the Qurʾānic Revelation."[4] In short, we might note that to speak of Iqbal is to speak of a dynamic and socially impactful religious mind, which contributed discernibly to the shaping of political communities and aesthetic imaginations in Indian Muslim communities and beyond.

Given all of this, it should come as no surprise that urgings to read Iqbal have come from a variety of intellectual locations, from his land(s) of birth,[5] to Anglophone academic articles like those written by Charles Taylor[6] and Peter Ochs,[7] to the passionate Persian admirations of ʿAlī Sharīʿatī and ʿAlī Ḥusaynī Khāminiʾī (b. 1939),[8] and to Liu Shuxiong's enthusiastic embrace of

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[1] See Basit B. Koshul, "Preface to the American Edition", in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Ed. M. Saeed Sheikh. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012, pp. vii-x.

[2] Koshul, "Preface", p. vii.

[3] Muhammad Rafiuddin, quoted in Roger Whittermore, "The Process Philosophy of Sir Muhammad Iqbal", in *Studies in Process Philosophy.* II, ed. R. C. Whittermore. New Orleans, The Hague. 1975 (= *Tulane Studies in Philosophy*. 24): p. 125.

[4] Charles Taylor, "Preface" in S. B. Diagne, *Islam and Open Society: Fidelity and Movement in the Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal,* xi-xii; Translated from the French by Melissa McMahon (Dakar, Senegal: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2010), xii.

[5] See Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr's neat paragraph which summarizes the "larger than life" and "repository of wisdom" nature of Iqbal's social reception in Pakistan and India, but also, correctly notes Iqbal's own distance from such a social image, which sometimes gets too close to "infallibility" in parts of contemporary Pakistan (although Nasr paints "Pakistan" with a homogeneous brush, as if geographical location automatically blocks critical capacity). Cf. Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdūdī and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 36.

[6] Charles Taylor, "Preface", Islam and Open Society (2010).

[7] Peter Ochs, "Iqbal, Peirce and Modernity" in *Muhammad Iqbal, A Contemporary*, eds. Muhammad Suheyl Umar and Basit Bilal Koshul (Lahore, Pakistan: Iqbal Academy, 2010) pp. 79-94.

[8] ʿAlī Ḥusaynī Khāminiʾī and 'Alī Sharī'atī, *Iqbal: Manifestation of the Islamic Spirit, Two Contemporary Muslim Views* (Albuquerque, NM: Book Designers and Builders, 1991).

Iqbal from Peking University in China,[9] to name just a few, quite distinct, examples. Yet, the study of Iqbal is still in its early stages. Although the person and persona of Iqbal have received a large amount of attention, nevertheless, in terms of the detailed reading and exposition of his writings and their multiple dimensions, there is a lot of scholarly work still to be done.[10]

To say succinctly what this introduction will expand upon: this dissertation puts forth one contribution towards a hitherto unexplored dimension of Iqbal, i.e. Iqbal as a religious moral thinker. More specifically, I focus on what has been called "Iqbal's big idea",[11] i.e. *khudī,* a term which literally translates to "self-ness" or "selfhood".[12]

As I will argue in this dissertation, *khudī* is not a single "term" or a "concept" in Iqbal, but what can be called a *moral-ontological vision,* for those who are unfamiliar with Iqbal qua moral thinker (and this may include some regular readers of Iqbal as well). Below, I describe what I mean by "moral-ontological vision". Then, I will introduce the ongoing conversations (and in some ways, lack thereof) in Religious Ethics and Iqbal Studies, to which my dissertation contributes. Finally, I will offer an overview of the structure of the dissertation and the flow of its chapters.

The key insight from this way of reading Iqbal, is as follows: for Iqbal, "selfhood" is not a marker for the individual person, in contrast to social world/natural universe. Nor is it seen as a homogeneously distributed "force" which permeates everything like ether. Rather, for Iqbal, what it means to be a self, for both individuals and social collectives, is to be given "selfhood" (*khudī*) only by God. Therefore, "selfhood" refers not only to the singular person, but to a more ontologically significant quality, which is given by God to persons and collectives, and which is the reason for the existence of the natural universe. "Selfhood" is construed by Iqbal in a dynamically God-relational way, such that there is not an either/or of cultivating one's person, or participating in the dynamics of nature or society.

This extremely condensed description is grossly insufficient, and one of my arguments in Ch.1 is that attempting to encapsulate *khudī* in this way without parsing its layers is unhelpful. However,

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[9] Liu Shuxiong, "Iqbal and His Asrar-i Khudi," Speech delivered at UC Berkeley, n.d. Accessed at https://vdocuments.mx/iqbal-and-his-asrar-i-khudi-institute-for-south-asia-iqbal-and-his-asrar-i-khudi.html

[10] In addition to the excellent work which is currently being done, which I discuss shortly.

[11] Ebrahim Moosa, "The Human Person in Iqbal's Thought", in *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought,* eds. Chad Hillier and Basit Koshul (Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 12-32.

[12] Rightly so, scholars in Iqbal Studies generally do not argue that Iqbal "invented" this term out of the blue, or that he has been the first to use it in a "philosophical" sense, i.e. as referring to more than the selfhood of persons. In fact, scholars have often argued that Iqbal's contribution "subverts" a long legacy of the use of the word *khudī* in the Persian poetic traditions (e.g. Moosa, 2015). I am aware of this important legacy, and I respect more historically contextualizing contributions, but it is not my central focus here. I focus, rather, on introducing Iqbal as a moral-ontological thinker to the field of Religious Ethics. In doing so, I also hope to provide Iqbal Studies with some more complex ways to articulate Iqbal's moral dimensions. Still, for a good contextualization of Iqbal within this (internally diverse) "Persian legacy" of *khudī,* one might consult the following: Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), pp. 98-102; 316-387. For a contextualization of Iqbal within a discussion of literature as capable of "synthesizing" various religious and historical streams of thought, see Mehr Afshan Farooqi, "Literary Paradigms in the Conception of South Asian Muslim Identity: Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Hasan Askari", in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* (2012) 32 (1): 183–194.

I feel the need to forefront these insights for the reader, so that there is at least some indication of what is to come. Bearing in mind this distillation of the central argument and insights of the dissertation, we turn to explain some of its key terms, and ways of reading.

I- "Moral-ontological vision"

The category of "moral-ontological vision" is a conceptual tool that helps us to understand the kind of intellectual "thing" Iqbal's *khudī*-talk is, for an audience interested in a variety of religious intellectual reflections on morality.

Islamic scholar Samira Hajj has argued that instead of viewing the intellectual contributions of modern Muslim thinkers through Western binaries like "liberal" or "conservative", the time has come for scholars of religion to understand such thinkers on their own terms. In her reading, this move towards focusing on her "subjects", involves re-articulating "a socially embodied set of arguments that have their own internal standard of rational coherence".[13] For Hajj, this does not mean, simplistically, that no Western thinker can ever be useful in helping us to understand the understudied contributions of a given modern Islamic thinker. Indeed, in making her argument, Hajj centrally employs the category of "tradition" as famously defined by Alasdair MacIntyre, in order to precisely and transparently clarify her own way of reading Muslim thinkers.[14] Furthermore, and crucially, in arguing for a changed interpretive paradigm which focuses on "internal standards of coherence" of modern Muslim thinkers, Hajj forefronts the importance of what she calls "informing premises", i.e. what "conceptions", "beliefs", or "practices" (in her interpretive case), make certain ways of construing and performing morality, possible in the first place.[15]

Hajj's work is insightful because it reminds us that modern Muslim thinkers are not devoid of their own "informing premises"; that there is no poverty of "frames" which might need to be superimposed onto a number of influential Muslim thinkers, in order to make them make sense. Simultaneously, her work is generous and subtle because it is aware of the need to converse intelligibly with a range of audiences. If the whole point is to enable those who are unacquainted with "internal standards of coherence" of Muslim thinkers, to become aware of these, then, the tools selected to read together and clarify these internal standards, cannot be non-intelligible to the yet-unaware. Such is the paradoxical-yet-urgent nature of bringing to light, new information of this kind.

I think that Hajj gets the complexity right, i.e. the need to balance the need of the hour, with a certain degree of intelligibility that does not oversimplify or impose upon her understudied "subjects". My reason for outlining her work and its central argument, is to introduce that, i) I, too, argue for a sharply increased attention to Iqbal's own words, ideas, and patterns of thought. Below, I uncover where in the dissertation, and how and why, I argue for this increased attention. And, ii) I also recall Hajj's work to introduce what *function* the category of "moral-ontological

[13] Samira Hajj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Rationality, Reform, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 21.
[14] Ibid., pp. 19-20.
[15] Ibid., 44.

vision" serves within my reading of Iqbal, and in my dissertation. It responds to the consideration of the need to balance "new knowledge" with "intelligibility".

Thus, becoming more definitional now, we ask, what is "moral ontology" for our purposes? In order to give our own definition, we rely upon the descriptions of this term, and some of its conceptual underpinnings, which have been provided by the moral philosophers Charles Taylor and Peter Railton, respectively.

i) "Moral-Ontological"...

At its core, a "moral ontology" can be described as a way of thinking about morality, which greatly broadens its scope. "Broadens" out from what? On this pre-moral-ontology level, Railton is helpful, and writes:

> So common has it become in secular intellectual culture to treat morality as subjective or conventional that most of us now have difficulty imagining what it might be like for there to be facts to which moral judgments answer.[16]

Railton is not a religious thinker, and his evaluative criterion for what is "real" assumes the paradigm of "scientific fact" as the benchmark. E.g. one of the ways in which he desires to see a broader scope for morality, is to have ethicists ask (questions like) how certain developments in evolutionary history allowed us to be "creatures" with not just ingrained "instincts" but purposive "wants" which also became altruistic, and how this makes biological fact and moral capacity deeply interwoven.[17]

However, Railton's larger point is what I am trying to get at, i.e. it is often assumed that morality has no meaningful relationship to reality. It is frequently assumed that the enterprise of human morality is necessary, beneficial, worth keeping, and it holds constant misery and bloodshed at bay, but, even such admirations of morality might not grant that it has any un-constructed or given connection to the universe, or, to what is held to be most real.[18]

By contrast, any moral ontology asserts that what is real and what is moral are interrelated. Not all moral-ontological theories are alike, and each one makes this core assertion with more or less thickness. Thus, Railton has what might be called a minimalist moral realism; he wishes to keep scientific inquiry and moral normativity, two distinct realms of knowledge. For example, he is embarrassed by the view of some fellow moral realists that "the universe cares what we do" and thinks this view should be cast aside.[19] However, he also yokes together human moral life with a much larger picture of the cosmos that he sees as empirically verifiable fact. Thus, also on Railton's view, every time I make a complex moral decision e.g. not to be cruel to those who have hurt me, this kind of judgment presupposes and includes eons of the evolutionary history of

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[16] Peter Railton, "Moral Realism", in *Moral Discourse and Practice: Some Philosophical Approaches* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 137.

[17] It should be noted, however, that the appearance of the word "creature" here, might also be seen as a reliance on a religiously imbued concept. Ibid., pp. 144-145.

[18] Ibid., pp. 137-163.

[19] Ibid., 155.

my species and others, without which my amazing moral capacities would not have been possible in the first place.

Alternatively, the moral philosopher Charles Taylor provides a picture of what might be called a thicker or more maximalist, moral ontology. Taylor is a thinker who is very much interested in the theological and religious dimensions of moral thought, and has written elsewhere about the embeddedness of religious modes of being even within what is normally seen as "secular" culture.[20] However, right now, we are interested in Taylor's more general sense of the word "moral ontology".

Taylor defines "moral ontology" both functionally and substantively. Functionally, akin to Railton's view, Taylor sees a moral ontology as that which "enlarges the range of legitimate moral descriptions" out from "a cramped and truncated view of morality."[21] On Taylor's view, this "cramped view of morality", challenged by moral ontologies, is one which perceives human morality as largely reducible to "reactions", or "instincts" to immediate stimuli, like "a love of sweet things" or nausea at certain smells. However, this construal is insufficient for Taylor, because it "hives off" an entire dimension of human moral life, which Taylor believes is a deceptive omission. [22]

This "hived off" aspect of morality which Taylor seeks to re-integrate into the intellectual picture, is the connection between morality and reality. Substantively, this "connection" revolves around idea that human morality is not just a web of reactions which is limited to the nexus of agents, but that it is "an assent to, and affirmation of, a given ontology of the human", which *is* regardless of how the moral agent behaves.[23] Taylor acknowledges that in this vein, there are "various ontological accounts",[24] but he takes Plato's moral ontology, which he names the "ontic logos vision",[25] to be the paradigmatic moral ontology, because it offers "a very close relation between scientific explanation and moral vision".[26] For Taylor, a noteworthy aspect of such a classic moral-ontological account is that, that which is the ultimate source of nature and the material world, is also that to which a human being is properly oriented (, i.e., the Ideas) if she is to be morally good and virtuous. The Ideas, towards which morally attuned human beings "turn", are also the basis for the "cosmic order" of which the material world is an aspect. [27] Hence, the Venn diagram of "real" and "moral" has a far larger overlap, which is why this kind of moral ontology might be seen as more robust or "maximalist".

Despite being at different ends of the interpretive spectrum, both Taylor and Railton provide us with materials for a definition of moral ontology, and display what it means to be thinking moral-ontologically. A moral ontology asserts that there is a necessary and inseparable

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[20] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).
[21] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3.
[22] Ibid., 5.
[23] Ibid., 5.
[24] Ibid., 7.
[25] This term becomes an important conceptual tool to understand the natural dimensions of Iqbal's vision of *khudī.* This is explained in the next chapter. For now, we are describing what moral ontology is, for us.
[26] Ibid., 144.
[27] Ibid., 143-144.

relationship between what is real and what is morally desirable (e.g. between natural evolution and altruistic moral judgment, or, between the Ideas and the virtues). Furthermore, as demonstrated by both thinkers, those who think moral-ontologically, often wish to preserve both the ineradicable connection of the moral agent to reality, and the independent integrity of reality, even with or despite the (mis-) behaviors of the moral agent.

It could also be argued that, in different ways, both Taylor and Railton also have moral-ontological *theories*. As we all know, one of the central functions of a theory is that it seeks to *explain* some event, pattern or mechanism. Railton's seeks primarily to explain moral judgment, or moral decision-making, in contradistinction to biological instincts. Likewise, Taylor's description of Plato's moral ontology has a substantial explanatory dimension, i.e. attempting to explain the emphasis of modern cultures on "inwardness" and "interior" realizations of meaning.[28]

I point out this theoretical dimension of both thinkers, to move towards the next aspect of "what kind of intellectual thing Iqbal's *khudī* is". Iqbal's articulation of *khudī* is moral-ontological; it sees morality, and reality, as intimately related and inseparable. I give an overview of how it does so, when we get into chapter overview. However, first we observe that while Iqbal's "conception" of *khudī* can be justifiably described as "moral-ontological", to call it a "theory" which seeks primarily to explain some thing or mechanism, would be to misunderstand its nature.

ii) …"Vision"

If the genre of "moral-ontological" introduces us to the type of moral content in (Iqbal's "conception" of) *khudī,* then the function of the word "vision", as I employ it here, is to introduce the internal structure of this conception.

We can move towards our usage of the word "vision" by noting that while Hajj rightly speaks of emphasizing "internal standards of rational coherence", there is also more than one way of being internally coherent. One well-known way is described elegantly by Iqbal himself, i.e. that "the test of reality is freedom from contradiction". On such a view, maximum purity from logical contradiction is equivalent to maximum internal coherence. Iqbal rejects this standard of evaluation with respect to human attempts at understanding "the nature of the self", which include his own.[29] Another way of being coherent is akin to the formidable "self-containment" of a great poem or scriptural passage; a syllable out of place, a word replaced, and its entire internal structure is no longer what it was.

It is true that Iqbal can be logically self-consistent, and poetically self-contained.[30] Yet, when we are studying Iqbal's vision of *khudī* as thinkers interested in religious moral thought, we are fortunate to observe yet another kind of internal coherence, which is neither purity from logical

[28] Ibid., 111-199.
[29] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), pp. 78-79.
[30] For a window into these highly sensitive dimensions of some of Iqbal's poetry, Cf. Mustansir Mir, "Wordplay And Irony In Iqbal's Poetry," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (1992): 72-93.

contradiction nor aesthetic self-containment, but keeps occurring in and across his vision of *khudī*. This is a mode of coherence which Iqbal pithily calls "relational thought", and then says is especially well-suited to understanding the self,[31] and which he then performs repeatedly across his *khudī*-talk.

This is a mode of coherence that *en-visions* conceptual "objects" *as related*. To give an example: as we will see, Iqbal sees nature, the human person, and society, as intimately interrelated. Contrasting accounts could be offered that "the universe has no relationship to human individuals", or, that "every person is fundamentally insulated from society", but Iqbal imagines and (conceptually) interweaves these three facets of existence (individual, collective, nature), as deeply related.

Thus, we might say that this type of internal coherence is a performed assertion of a thinker's capacity for ontological "imagination". I use the word "imagination" with the caveat that, in en-visioning "things" as related, Iqbal's vision is also attempting to say something about what is true; to describe a complex reality, which activity is undergirded by particular theological commitments. In other words, "imagination" is not to be taken as synonym for "fictional", but as a capacity to envision as related, in lieu of certain (in the case of Iqbal) theological commitments.

The above is my less embedded, and more bird's-eye, clarification of what I mean by "vision". In the next and first chapter, I embed this observation with respect to Religious Ethics. Here, I show how Iqbal's internal coherence qua moral thinker (for which my word "vision" is shorthand), has affinities with certain contemporary currents in Religious Ethics, especially those which push back against the view that moral thought is largely or only about action-determination or systematization. Within this stream of affinities, we will find that the definition of the term "narrative" which has been provided by the philosophers Richard Kearney and James Williams,[32] is another useful inroad to understanding the kind of internal coherence displayed by Iqbal's *khudī*-articulations.

As we elaborate all of the above in the first chapter, there is no need to detail it here. We end this section by foreshadowing our argument that Iqbal's "concept" of *khudī* is, in fact, not one idea or concept, but what might be described as a moral-ontological vision. It is a vision that envisions as related, various aspects of existence, in a way that is informed by certain theological commitments. We will also see that it envisions morality as inseparably related to what is, and sees the maturing moral agent as a bettering participant in "the way things are" ontologically (i.e. Divine Creativity).

With this in mind, let us turn to introduce the ways in which this project contributes to ongoing conversations (or perhaps, lack thereof).

II. Conversations and Contributions

[31] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 78-79.

[32] Richard Kearney and James Williams, "Narrative and Ethics." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 70 (1996): 29-61.

i) A Note on the Prevalence of "Exposition" in this Project

There can be two ways of contributing to ongoing scholarly conversations. The first is adding, or bringing to light, information that was not as widely known before. The second is providing insights that might allow these conversations to reconsider some of their prevalent assumptions or paradigms. There are a number of excellent projects in which the latter model weighs very heavily, and that is wonderful. This project does reference *potential* avenues of reconsideration of paradigms, and explicitly articulates some of these in the final chapter.

However, the general thrust of my contribution is "additive". In fact, the word "additive" is misleading, because it over-implies that a certain "base level" already exists, but like Hajj, I also attempt to be honest about the "new-ness" of what I am trying to articulate to a larger Religious Ethics audience which is aware of categories like "moral ontology" and "narrative vision", but not necessarily of Iqbal-qua-moral-thinker.

Thus, I use the word "expository" to describe the tenor of my contribution, i.e. bringing to light, information about Iqbal's thought that is not currently well-known, or well-studied.[33] I am transparent about my way of reading Iqbal, and I acknowledge that there is no "pure" or "neutral" reading. Moreover, footnotes in this project are largely expository and evidential in the aforementioned sense, as is the body of the chapters. In certain places, the footnotes will reference where a particular insight, enabled by my method of reading Iqbal qua moral-ontological thinker, might be bolstered by pre-existing scholarship, or provide repair to certain assumptions or lacunae. Yet, what I just said, also largely stands as a general description of the tenor of the project.

Fortunately, I am not alone in sensing the need for what I call "exposition"; neither in Religious Ethics, nor in Iqbal Studies. Let us turn to outlining some of the heartening conversations in both fields, to which my project contributes.

ii) Religious Ethics

The kinds of conversations within which I am embedding my project vis-à-vis Religious Ethics, are described elaborately in the first and last chapters (Chs. 1 and 6). Hence, this overview of such conversations will be brief, because they are returned to all across the project, and at its two ends.

All of us know that religious ethics are not a modern invention. Speaking even of the Abrahamic faiths, they are ancient, (at least) millennia-old, attempts of the human being at a "faithful relation" with God. [34] In the modern milieu, there have been more ways of construing the relation between religion and ethics than could be compiled in a lifetime. For example, some have argued

[33] This word "illuminating" sounds too flashy, and I know that "expository" is often marred with the journalistic sense of "exposing" or "unmasking", but it should be noted that is not what I mean here. Another way to describe it would be: "putting information on the table", enabled by my way of reading Iqbal as moral-ontological thinker.
[34] Charles T. Mathewes, *Understanding Religious Ethics* (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 37; 252-253.

that ethics came before religion, but ethics are now imbibed with religious frames;[35] some, that morality should extricate itself from standpoints which are religiously evaluative, e.g. in the Anglophone academy, in the period since the 1950s, it has been argued that "scientific objectivity" should be the new paradigm for moral discourses and practices.[36]

There have also been powerful counter-arguments to the above, i.e. the ways in which we imagine ethical concepts, e.g. "virtue", are often informed inescapably by "a sufficiently rich shared cosmology or theology".[37] Alongside this genre of argument, the contemporary field of Religious Ethics in the Anglophone academy has emerged and developed. As this field has gotten more "globalized", i.e. expanded its interest beyond a range of texts and thinkers that would fit squarely within Western and European canons, scholars have begun to become more self-conscious about their various fallible iterations of "global-ness". Thus, it has been argued by contemporary Religious Ethicists Liz Bucar and Aaron Stalnaker, that we are currently experiencing a "third global-ness" within the discipline, which is distinct from the earlier "waves" of philosophical "formalism", which sought systematic rational foundations for universal moral norms, and anthropological and historical contextualization, which sought to largely center the contexts and particularities of moral meanings. Currently, the field of Religious Ethics has begun to articulate a "third global-ness" within which it is assumed that intellectual grappling with morality is a shared human enterprise, and also, that the thick particularities of texts and thinkers can never be ignored without unjust distortion. Scholars who see themselves as part of this emergent "third wave", argue for an "expansion of the range of the field", regarding what "ethics" could mean or involve, because they seek to understand moral voices on their own terms, rather than excluding them from the sphere of moral reflection because they do not "fit" familiar taxonomies, or because they disturb definitional consensus.[38]

I see my project as enabled by, and part of, this younger "wave" of "third global-ness" within Religious Ethics, which understands the significance of relating breadth to particularity. As a contributor to this new wave of studies of moral thought, I read Iqbal as a moral-ontological thinker whose work does not allow itself to be categorized firmly within familiar typologies. In the next chapter, I locate the affordances and limitations of my project in comparison to Stalnaker and Bucar. In doing so, I show how and why I need to rely on a range of conceptual tools which are suited to understanding Iqbal's articulations on *khudī.* Like most people in our "third global-ness", and like Hajj, I build a path to negotiate familiarity with unfamiliarity, in order to bring to light what was unknown. Thus, I open (in Ch.1) with usefully precise reflections on selfhood, from thinkers whose works are familiar to virtually everyone in Religious Ethics, but not always "classifiable".[39] The precision of these atypical reflections is

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[35] Irene Oh, "Decolonizing Religion: The Future of Comparative Religious Ethics" in *Contending Modernities* (University of Notre Dame). Accessed online at https://contendingmodernities.nd.edu/theorizing-modernities/decolonizing-cre/?fbclid=IwAR1_KPTkqGYyoFZcizHGlHT9ahxr62V7jcVY9Yi0RPXTI6WLzQXcR6lZMNI.
[36] Stephen L. Darwall, Allan Gibbard and Peter Albert Railton, *Moral Discourse and Practice: Some Philosophical Approaches* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 7-31.
[37] Ibid., 31.
[38] Bucar, Elizabeth M and Aaron Stalnaker, *Religious Ethics In a Time of Globalism: Shaping a Third Wave of Comparative Analysis* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 1-6.
[39] I mean Saba Mahmood, Talal Asad, and Charles Taylor.

very useful in progressively understanding Iqbal's moral-ontological vision, as the dissertation proceeds. Then, as we come to the end of the project (in Ch. 6), I condense the ways in which Iqbal's moral-ontological vision might be "located", in the sense of becoming better understood as a whole, with respect to some more broadly field-familiar taxonomies. Here, I also highlight that this activity of situating must necessarily be de-situating, because Iqbal's vision of *khudī* cannot be mapped neatly onto familiar taxonomies. This provides our field a distinctive picture of what the activity of human morality is about.

In addition to these ongoing conversations in Religious Ethics, my project also provides something potentially beneficial to Iqbal Studies, and it is to those emerging conversations that we now turn.

iii) Iqbal Studies

Iqbal died in 1938, which is but a moment ago in the span of human moral thought. As one can imagine, Iqbal Studies is a young and emerging field. This youth is also what makes it intellectually attractive, as a crossroads for a large variety of (oft-contested) scholarly interpretations. Whatever Iqbal Studies "is", it is alive; no one could argue that it has the semblance of being "finished", "settled", or "jaded".

In recent years, scholars in Iqbal Studies have not only offered much-needed insights about Iqbal's works, but also, freely voiced their observations about some of the patterns of reading Iqbal. One good example of such observations is to be found in two recent dissertations. Thus, both Nauman Faizi (2016) and Muhammad Faruque (2018) have observed that there can often be "problematic" approaches to reading Iqbal. Faizi organizes these patterns of Iqbal-reading along the lines of: i) "heroic", which prioritize the lionization and glorification of Iqbal; ii) "dismissive", which reject Iqbal's contributions because they do not "fit" familiar epistemologies.[40] Likewise, Faruque organizes such patterns which "impede a serious academic study" into two registers: "adulatory", or those which assume and "overstate the novelty and brilliance of Iqbal's thought", and "nativist", or those which assume, from a religio-political stance, that Iqbal must be defended at all costs, "because of his political importance in shaping the Muslim identity in the subcontinent."[41] Faizi and Faruque are looking at real patterns, and they provide ample evidence for their classifications.[42]

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[40] Faizi, Mian Muhammad Nauman. *From Representationalism to Pragmatism: Muhammad Iqbal's Reading of Religion In Modernity*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, Religious Studies - Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, PHD (Doctor of Philosophy), 2016, 2016, doi.org/10.18130/V3WP6J, pp. 8-10. Here, Faizi also identifies a less problematic and "more sophisticated…critical-constructive approach"; which finds something worthwhile in Iqbal's works, and then attempts to carry it forward or repair it, with respect to a more "established" scholarly paradigm.

[41] Muhammad Faruque, *The Labyrinth of Subjectivity: Constructions of the Self from Mullā Ṣadrā to Muḥammad Iqbāl,* at digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu (Accessed online on 10 Mar 2019), pp. 209-210. Unlike Faizi, Faruque does not have a balanced sense of the contrasting, problematically "dismissive", mode of reading. Faruque's larger interest vis-à-vis Iqbal is in historical hermeneutics, and assessing whether Iqbal was right in particular claims about particular Islamic thinkers.

[42] Some of the examples given are: Henry E. Allen, "Signs of a Renaissance in Islam", *The Journal of Religion* 15: no. 1 (1935); 88-90 ("heroic"); A. S. Tritton, review of *Review of The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, by

My contribution enters this organizational conversation as follows, and this constitutes my first way of contributing to Iqbal Studies. We might notice that both Faizi and Faruque, while pointing to real, existent texts which evidence their organizations,[43] are heavily basing their classification on a characterization of the Iqbal-*reader,* whose method of reading can then be described according to an attitudinal spectrum from antagonism to blind devotion. Both of these attitudes of reading *are* present in Iqbal Studies, as parts of my Ch.2 show. However, I also submit that we need a richer articulation of modes of reading Iqbal, which is more fine-grained than the antagonistic/devoted binary.

This instinct to organize patterns of reading Iqbal is desirable, not least because, in the much-contested and emergent field, such an activity becomes almost a necessity, in order to signal to the reader of one's own project where it stands, even if one's project is largely expository, because no one can pretend that they are a "neutral" reader. Thus, like Faruque and Faizi, I also give my own organization of patterns of reading Iqbal. However, instead of very briefly characterizing patterns of reading Iqbal according to the attitudinal orientations of the reader, I offer an organization which more heavily includes the exposition and understanding of Iqbal himself. Therefore, in Ch.2, I offer a rarely detailed description of its kind, i.e. of Iqbal's own self-construal. I give one evidenced and thorough answer to the question: what kinds of functions did Iqbal see himself as performing, with respect to his religious tradition? The answer is more complex and internally non-homogeneous than we might think, if we were just reading Iqbal readers. Here, I show that patterns of reading Iqbal can also be organized by how they approach the non-homogeneous self-construal of Iqbal, and/or its facets. Whether we adopt a hermeneutics of suspicion, constructive criticism, or exposition and understanding, such an articulation helps all of us to get some of the basic aspects of Iqbal's own self-construal, on the table, or at least to begin such a conversation.

This offering of my project is concentrated to Ch.2., where I make transparent, how I am reading Iqbal vis-à-vis my organization of patterns of reading in Iqbal Studies. Another potential contribution is more strictly content-focused, and spread across the dissertation. Hence, in footnotes across the project, I refer or "index" some of the useful observations of those scholars in Iqbal Studies, to whom I see my own project as familiar, in terms of the careful attention they pay to Iqbal's own works.[44] Additionally, I also point out where my reading reveals new insights

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Mohammad Iqbal, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 7, no. 3 (1934): 694 ("dismissive"); Hamilton A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), ix-x ("adulatory"); Muḥammad Rafī al-Dīn, *Ḥikmat-i Iqbāl: Kalām-i Iqbāl kī rawshanī mayn Iqbāl kī falsafa-yi khūdī kī mufaṣṣal awr munaẓẓam tashrīḥ* (Lahore: ʿIlmī Kutub Khāna, 1968), 1-2; translated by S. D. Mahmud, *The Philosophy of Iqbāl*, (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2016), 15-16 ("nativist").

[43] Ibid.

[44] The gist of these points which are spread across the project, is essentially the same as the previous section, but now, indexed to some words on Iqbal qua moral thinker in Iqbal Studies. I use the word "indexed" because any one project only has so many words to inflict. Thus, in such moments, I point out those areas where the conceptual tools and distinctions provided by Religious Ethics, might help us to think more precisely about Iqbal qua moral thinker, in Iqbal Studies. However, I make the choice to limit the number of such footnotes and largely focus on much-needed exposition.

about Iqbal's normativity, and more complex and precise ways of writing about this normativity, than is often the case. In this respect, we are helped by vocabularies in Religious Ethics.

With this very broad summary of the kinds of conversations into which I embed my project, let us turn to a broad overview of the dissertation and its chapters.

III. Overview of the Dissertation

i) A Note on Central Texts

It is useful to point out those texts of Iqbal's on which this project will be centrally focused. Any one of these texts could engender many dissertations, but my own objective is to cover as wide a range of languages and genres (thereby not over-focusing on any one text and making sure to garner a range of *khudī*-talk) without compromising on my goal of intelligibility. In other words, like a "third wave" contributor to Religious Ethics, I attempt to balance the desire for thick description and minimal distortion, with a desire to keep the focus on the "big picture" (in my case, of reading Iqbal as moral-ontological thinker, vis-à-vis his vision of *khudī*).

Naturally, the *khudī*-centered works of Iqbal are most relevant to my reading. By this I do not simply mean wherever the word *khudī* appears, e.g. as the result of an advanced computer search, but more humanly, also those texts in which the concerns, commitments, and ideas are laid out, which are central to the intricate tapestry that forms Iqbal's vision of *khudī.* In this sense, the following are those texts to which we keep returning: the English *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* delivered as a series of philosophical lectures; the long Persian poetic works, the *Asrār-i Khudī* ("Secrets of Self-ness"), and its sequel, the *Rumūz-i Bēkhudī* ("Mysteries of Self-less-ness"), which are obviously germane; various Urdu poems of shorter lengths, in which *khudī* and its underpinnings are central (to list all of these poems now, would be tedious for the reader), and Iqbal's compiled *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* which provide a view of some of his shorter, essay-genre insights about morality, which were articulated for both the public and intelligentsia.[45] These are the works which are more or less referenced all throughout, but that does not mean they are exhaustive. Parts of other Persian poems, for example, are cited in specific chapters, where they bolster or add insights about Iqbal's vision of *khudī* as moral-ontological vision.

A very common abbreviated citation in this project will be *The Reconstruction* (it is fairly clear, to what this refers), "Fārsī Kullīyāt", and "Urdū Kullīyāt". "*Kull"* means all or everything; and as the reader can probably guess, these refer to compilations of the complete poetic works of Iqbal in Persian and Urdū (which are quite hefty tomes, beautifully printed by the Pakistani Iqbal Academy in Lahore). All other citations are pretty straightforward, and my list of texts is manageable enough that I do not need to abbreviate longer titles entirely (e.g. some authors abbreviate "*AK"* for *Asrār-i Khudī*). Rather, if and where I do shorten titles, I refer to these works discernibly, as *Asrār* or *Rumūz.*

[45] Mustansar Mir has given a quick overview of Iqbal's oeuvre, which was written specifically for an Anglophone reader who has no familiarity with Iqbal. Cf. Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own. To a large extent, I give my own Urdū and Persian translations, especially of the *Asrār* and *Rumūz,* whose very titles have frequently been not just roughly translated, as we all do, but mis-translated (more on this in the first chapter). I am grateful for the contributions of other translators, but I believe that, in a number of places, more than enough of the nuances of Iqbal's language are significant for my reading, as to merit learning the languages and translating oneself, if one is blessed to be able to do so. In this exercise, one relies, as ever, on consulting dictionaries, (in the case of Urdū) native fluency, and reading other translations, to make sure one is not too insanely off the mark.

With this note in mind, let us turn to understand the structure and flow of the dissertation chapters.

ii) Structure and Chapters

Chapter 1 maps a terrain in Religious Ethics, within which my reading of Iqbal's vision of *khudī* as moral-ontological vision, can be seen as contributing. The chapter does so in two ways. First, I describe why "intelligibility" or "understanding" is a key methodological impetus for my project, specifically because of: the inter-connected nature of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* aforementioned trends of a "third wave" in Religious Ethics, and the "unitive" or "narrative" capacity of Iqbal's moral thought. All of these elements, unique to my chosen subject of study, make intelligibility a key concern for my project. Second, the chapter provides a faithful representation of some well-known articulations about the category of "self", for Religious Ethics. Specifically, I rely on the words of Saba Mahmood, Charles Taylor, and Talal Asad, to anchor the semantic range of "selfhood" at the beginning of the project, in ways that will then be useful for gradually unfolding exposition of Iqbal's vision.

Chapter 2 provides an account of the ways in which Iqbal saw himself as relating to his religious tradition, and gives an organization of patterns of reading Iqbal according to his "tradition-directed functions". I use the shorthands canon-centered devotee, critical student, disciple, and socially rousing voice, to give a picture of Iqbal's tradition-relationality. Based on these functions which are evidenced in Iqbal's own words, I provide my organization of problematic Iqbal-readings. In addition, I mention some of those projects/ ways of reading, to which I see my own as similar. Despite differing methods and conclusions, my project is similar to certain others, insofar as it takes the multi-dimensionality of Iqbal's functions seriously, and has a well-defined and transparent mode of reading Iqbal's works.

Chapters 3-5 enter the "thick description" of Iqbal's vision of *khudī.* Rather than beginning from a succinct "definition" of what *khudī* means, we take the opposite route (for reasons which will become clear in Ch.1). Thus, we carefully parse out the three layers of Iqbal's moral-ontological vision of *khudī,* i.e. nature/the universe, the individual person, and society, in Chs. 3, 4, and 5, respectively. This enables us to see resonances and interconnections in and across Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* in a fine-grained and progressive manner.

Thus, Chapter 3 begins by describing some of Iqbal's theological concerns, and his distinctive vision of "Divine Creativity", both of which inform Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* and then lead into his vision of the natural universe. Specifically, I show, with some assistance from Taylor's term

"ontic logos", how Iqbal's natural vision has two persistent threads: "ontic dynamism", and "ontic esteem". These are not terms occurring in Iqbal, but my shorter phrases for what I describe in more detail. Ch. 3 provides an integral component of Iqbal's moral-ontological vision, because it will become clear in the succeeding chapters, how these two "threads" then set the stage for, and pervade, Iqbal's vision of what might conventionally be called "morality proper".

Chapter 4 describes Iqbal's normative vision vis-à-vis the individual person, which is a central part of his vision of *khudī.* Establishing a pattern which bleeds over into Ch.5, this chapter describes Iqbal's vision of personal normativity with respect to "moral anthropology", i.e. what the human being is that enables certain moral directions and capacities, and, "moral formation", i.e. what these desirable directions are, and how the human person moves towards them, in which I take the assistance of Mahmood's account of moral formation. As we shall see, Iqbal's view of personal normativity has resonances with his vision of Divine Creativity, and the ceaseless dynamism of the universe, which were described in Ch.3.

In a similar fashion, Chapter 5 describes the societal dimensions of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* first by articulating what kind of creature "society" is, in Iqbal's view, and how this makes certain moral affordances possible. Then, the chapter describes Iqbal's vision of what are desirable moral directions for societies, and here we see how deeply significant the inter-relation of individual and society is, in Iqbal's vision. Iqbal's account of societal moral formation, to use his own term, "mirrors" his account of individual moral formation. In addition to these weighty elements, an added dimension in Iqbal's societal vision is his view of a theologically significant historical periodization, which revolves around the finality of the prophethood of Muḥammad. In articulating these dimensions of Iqbal's societal vision, we learn, with assistance from Asad's theorization, how deeply significant it is for Iqbal that societies be seen as kinds of selves, and not as spaces. In other words, Ch.5 provides a non-negligible layer to our exposition of Iqbal's vision of *khudī.*

Finally, Chapter 6 condenses all of these expository insights, and some implications opened up by a reading of Iqbal's vision of *khudī* in this manner. Here, I provide a nuanced distillation of "what *khudī* means", after which I describe how the concerns and conceptualizations within Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* constitute a way of thinking about ethics that does not "fit" squarely within known taxonomies like teleological/deontological, and centers self-to-self relationship, within which responsivity to God is central as the basis of ethics. Based on this insight, the final part of Ch.6 then lays out some of the implications of this relational construal of ethics, for those interested in a range of intellectual reflections on religious moral thought.

All in all, this dissertation argues that Iqbal's *khudī*-talk provides an account of human morality which is intricately woven, full of cross-resonances, and sees the activity of personal and societal ethical growth, as an activity of simultaneously relating to other creatures and responding to God. Iqbal's vision of *khudī* moves us, from seeing morality only as a process of betterment of the individual self, or a collective, towards a participation in a God-given "self-ness", which it is the work of morality to cultivate. As such, Iqbal adds a hitherto unrecognized contribution, to a larger body of moral thought which argues that our moral directions and our participation in the

deeper structures and realities of the all that is, are inseparable. In other words, I argue that Iqbal's *khudī*-talk can be read as a substantive contribution to moral-ontological reflections.

With this structural overview of the dissertation in mind, we can now turn to a terrain-setting for Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* in Ch.1.

Chapter 1

Sources of Selfhood: Paths to Understanding Iqbal's Vision of "*Khudī*"

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to map a conceptual terrain within which Iqbal's multifaceted vision of *khudī* can be intelligible within Religious Ethics and, by extension, in Religious Studies more broadly. Selfhood is a category that is perennial to ethical deliberation, but what it means in the work of a modern Islamic thinker like Iqbal, is effectively unknown to "self"-centered conversations in the above fields. While the category of "self" has been reflected upon from various perspectives that might be considered more "mainstream", a thinker like Iqbal, in whose work the category of "selfhood" itself is paramount, is largely neglected, and even unknown, in these conversations. This chapters begins addressing and repairing that gap, by locating Iqbal's contributions towards conceptions of selfhood, in the following broad ways.

In Part I, I explain why "intelligibility" or "understanding" of Iqbal is a key concern in/for my project, and in lieu of this, I place Iqbal's vision of *khudī* with respect to: i) some contemporary discussions about the "third global-ness" of Religious Ethics, ii) the "hermeneutical circle"-like, intertwined nature of the conception of *khudī* itself, and, iii) the existence of a powerful "unitive" or "narrative" capacity in Iqbal's moral vision. All three of these dynamics challenge us as readers, and simultaneously, invite us towards learning something new, and deepening our understanding of a hitherto understudied moral thinker.

In Part II, and now more in terms of straightforward "content" than "genre", the chapter takes the aid of usefully explicit delineations of the category of "self", as anchors of intelligibility throughout the project. In doing so, we draw upon the works of the moral philosopher Charles Taylor and the cultural anthropologists Talal Asad and Saba Mahmood. With the help of these three thinkers, this chapter anchors some reference to what is meant by the term "self", with respect to the personal, the societal, and the ontological. Given this broad chapter overview, we now turn to delineate opportunities for intelligibility, in Part I.

I. Why Intelligibility?

In each of the following three sections, we clarify why and how our method of reading of Iqbal is so focused on understanding him. Here, we explain why we make the effort to read Iqbal in a manner that is intelligible to an audience that is unfamiliar with Iqbal. As we will see below, there are certain new currents within Religious Ethics which are opportune for the study of Iqbal qua moral thinker. Moreover, certain aspects of Iqbal's own *khudī*-talk make it a fitting contribution to these new currents.

i) *Reasons related to Religious Ethics*

This section describes how there are certain spaces opened up within contemporary Religious Ethics, particularly by thinkers who are concerned with including a variety of religious moral reflections. These openings allow for a way of reading a less well-known moral thinker like Iqbal, which is focused on intelligibility. This is because, in these new articulations of "global-ness", neither universalizing frames, nor historical contextualization, are centrally desired, but a "thick description" of a less familiar moral account, such that it can still be understood by those who are unfamiliar with an understudied moral thinker.

When some Western academic scholars were looking for trends in moral discourse and practice in the period after the 1950s, they argued that thinkers of this milieu might be centrally concerned with whether morality has an "objectivity" to it, akin to scientific "fact".[46] Even so, this framing of "problems of placement" vis-à-vis "science", admitted to struggling with a larger problem of lacking "a sufficiently rich shared cosmology or theology", since, inevitably, the question any *relationship* of a human being's moral growth to that world and universe which they inhabit, kept rearing its head.[47] Other thinkers offered alternative, constructive accounts in favor of the indispensable necessity of such "richness", perhaps most notably, Alasdair MacIntyre's seminal work *After Virtue*.[48] In the midst of these kinds of conversations, the contemporary field of Religious Ethics has developed, as an attempt to open itself, at least in part, to the broadly religious claims of many moral articulations, as well as the particularity and irreducibility of each of these accounts.[49]

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[46] See Stephen L. Darwall, Allan Gibbard and Peter Albert Railton, *Moral Discourse and Practice: Some Philosophical Approaches* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 7-9. Cf. also; Richard B. Brandt, *A Theory of the Good and the Right*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); Bernard Harrison, "Meaning and Mental Images," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, 63 (1962): 237-50; Andrew Wright, "Dispositions, Anti-Realism and Empiricism," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, 91 (1990): 39-59; Michael Smith, David Lewis, and Mark Johnston, "Dispositional Theories of Value," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 63 (1989): 89-174; Simon Blackburn, "Errors and the Phenomenology of Value," in *Morality and Objectivity,* ed. Ted Honderich (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).

[47] Cf. Darwall et. al., pp. 30-31.

[48] Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study In Moral Theory* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), pp. 1-2; 221-222. Although it is certainly not the only contemporary argument for "a sufficiently rich" moral ontology. See, e.g., Adi Ophir, *The Order of Evils: Toward an Ontology of Morals* (New York: Zone Books, 2005); Christopher Steck, "Re-Embedding Moral Agency: Linking Theology and Ethics in Blake," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 41, no. 2 (2013): 332-53.

[49] One might think, for example, of the founding volume of the *Journal of Religious Ethics* (established 1973), which simultaneously recognizes the "parochialism and Western bias" of the field, committing itself to not furthering cross-imposing frames, and, also, aspires positively to "be more conversant" within and between rigidly defined "boundaries" of moral discourse, in a way that can understand the universal claims of moral accounts. Cf. "Editorial." *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 1 (1973): 3-4.

A key feature of the field of Religious Ethics has been its various, moving iterations of "global-ness" and "comparison".[50] At present, the contemporary Religious Ethicists Liz Bucar and Aaron Stalnaker argue for a new, third "wave" within Religious Ethics that can be called "global" in the following sense: i) it begins from the embracing premise that "we all [humans] have" conceptions of more or less desirable moral directions, and ""Ethics" is intellectual reflection on this morality."[51] ii) Unlike prior trends which actively sought to "bring" varieties of human ethical reflection "under" the canopy of "Western moral theory",[52] this current wave prioritizes the necessity of intelligible "thick description", by paying close attention to text(s), material artifacts, persons and/or societies, and letting these "do the talking". The reader must not take this method for what it is not; there is a "self-consciousness" to this type of "thick-descriptive" method; it does not presume that the scholar practicing it has some way of taking themselves entirely out of the equation, but it does assume, and then display, that sustained, well-evidenced and careful attention to an "ethical voice" (e.g. a person, group, or a range of texts) can uncover patterns of thought in ways that can be seen as reliable and justifiable representations of that voice itself, even if imperfect.[53] To say this more briefly: prominent Religious Ethicists today argue that, despite our shared scholarly commitment to morality as a human enterprise, it is also true that there is no way to say something converse-worthy about any ethical vision or reflection, without getting into "thick details" that might have been considered distracting, or even hindering, in earlier "waves" of scholarly reflection. At the same time, to shirk the very activity of understanding discernible patterns of ethical reflection in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, would be unhelpful as well.[54]

It is a happy historical circumstance that Liz Bucar and Aaron Stalnaker have co-authored that introduction which pioneers a "third wave" definition of the study of global Religious Ethics, because some concerns and goals of this current dissertation can now be delineated with

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[50] In Religious Ethics, the word "comparison" takes on a heavier role, perhaps, than other fields. Conversations around this term, are not simply about comparing/contrasting, but often involve what other scholars might think of as "global" conversations, i.e. understanding a range of moral thought beyond Christian and Western approaches, and frequently challenge the hyper-focus on these latter paradigms. Cf. Charles Mathewes, Ed. "Introduction," Vol. I, *Comparative religious ethics: critical concepts in religious studies* (New York : Routledge, 2015), pp.1-9.

[51] Bucar, Elizabeth M and Aaron Stalnaker, *Religious Ethics in a Time of Globalism: Shaping a Third Wave of Comparative Analysis* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.1.

[52] The two "stages" or "waves" largely revolve around a shift from "formalism" to "context" (Ibid., pp. 3-6). The first set of approaches centers on "philosophical theories of religion", especially providing systematic foundations for universal moral norms. Seminal texts for these approaches are: David Little and Sumner B Twiss, *Comparative Religious Ethics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), and Ronald Michael Green, *Religious Reason: The Rational and Moral Basis of Religious Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). The second stage, largely championed by historians and anthropologists, seeks to emphasize context and particularity of religious moral visions. A seminal text for such approaches is the collection: Robin W. Lovin, Frank Reynolds and University of Chicago Divinity School, *Cosmogony and Ethical Order: New Studies in Comparative Ethics* (University of Chicago Press, 1985).

[53] Bucar and Stalnaker (2012), 2.

[54] For a further articulation of this argument, see Elizabeth M Bucar and Aaron Stalnaker, "On Comparative Religious Ethics As a Field of Study," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 42, no. 2 (2014): 358-384.

reference to Stalnaker and Bucar's other, individual projects.[55] Both scholars are simultaneously limited and enabled by what they have chosen to study, like my project.

Stalnaker and Bucar's projects are similar insofar as they attempt to extend scholarly understanding of the range of human moral reflections. Thus, Stalnaker's work *Overcoming Our Evil,*[56] offers what might be called a more classic, comparative analysis between two thinkers. Choosing to read together the Confucian philosopher of the 3rd century BCE, Xunzi, and the prominent Christian theologian, Augustine, about both of whose works "we [in the field] know a relatively large amount" but who have never been read together,[57] Stalnaker constructs one or two "bridge concepts" which enable a constant "moving back and forth",[58] first, "a of X", then, "a of Y", articulation of both thinkers on a particular topic (i.e. "human nature" and "evil"). The yield, then, is a rich description of the category of "human nature", that might be suited to a pluralistic and multi-religious context, in which many countries find themselves today.[59]

By contrast, Bucar's *Pious Fashion,*[60] which is a groundbreaking study of Muslim women's sartorial and moral agency, relies on a variety of conceptual tools rather than employing one or two "bridge concepts" for the sake a more classically comparative endeavor.[61] More substantively, the goal of her work is also different, i.e. to "describe accurately" the largely invisible (to the Anglophone academy) reality of Muslim women's moral agency in their sartorial constructions. [62] As such, she does not establish a "counterpart" to her subject, but lets a variety of more familiar languages and articulations in the field, enable the central topic of study to be understood more fully and richly. While the methodological structure of Stalnaker's project could be described as more bi-focal, yet aided by one or two core "bridge concepts", Bucar's method might be described as more uni-focal, yet aided by multiple voices.

Stalnaker and Bucar's methodological choices are both instructive for us, because they show us that not only do scholarly contributions not happen in a vacuum, but they are vastly more useful when they respond to pre-existing lacunae and affordances. In this vein, at the outset of this project it is helpful to admit that Iqbal is virtually unknown as a moral thinker to our field, and,

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[55] I have also had the pleasure to comment on Bucar's book, *Pious Fashion,* before it was published, and to critically converse with Stalnaker regarding his works, (at that time) both published and upcoming. These conversations have been very generative for my own work.

[56] Aaron Stalnaker, *Overcoming Our Evil: Human Nature and Spiritual Exercises In Xunzi and Augustine* (Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2006).

[57] Ibid., 30.

[58] Ibid., 33.

[59] Ibid., pp. 291-302.

[60] Liz Bucar, *Pious Fashion: How Muslim Women Dress* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017).

[61] Although, given the capacity of the word "comparison" in Religious Ethics, Bucar correctly argues that projects like hers can be included under this umbrella, insofar as they introduce less well known forms of moral reflection. Bucar and Stalnaker (2012), pp. 1-2.

[62] Bucar (2017), 14.

as scholars of Iqbal have noted, already "there is a veritable industry of monographs titled "Iqbal and X"".[63]

With this knowledge in mind, we can understand the first reason why "intelligibility" or "exposition", is a key methodological impetus for my project. My goal is more akin to Bucar's, i.e. "describing accurately" what is less well-known, and in doing so, I rely on a range of conceptual aids and articulations, rather than one or two overarching frames. At this point within Religious Ethics, the category of "comparison" is a fairly non-homogeneous and inclusive one,[64] and so well-digested and exegeted to a point, that I am not centrally concerned with "proving" if my project is strictly "comparative" or not, but I argue that, in describing Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* my project adds to an ongoing expansion of range of field, regarding what morality can be seen to involve.[65]

ii) Reasons related to Iqbal's vision of khudī

In addition to conditions and opportunities within contemporary Religious Ethics, there is something about Iqbal's *khudī*-talk that makes it especially necessary to focus on its intelligibility. This aspect might be called the "intertwined nature" of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* and is explained here with reference to the concept of a "hermeneutical circle". As we know, the idea of a "hermeneutical circle" has often been compared to a grammatical "knot":[66] in order to understand the sentence, we must know the words and the order of their relative placements. However, somewhat paradoxically, we cannot make sense of words without the context of full sentences, or at least, semantic clusters. A similarly "circular" interpretive problem confronts anyone trying to access what "*khudī*" means within Iqbal's works. This is because, when one tries to understand facets of the "concept" of *khudī*, one faces an inevitable (conceptual) intra-referentiality to the broader vision of *khudī* itself. If the following sentence makes one dizzy, that is point: so much of Iqbal's theological concerns are presumed in his articulation of the individual person's selfhood; likewise, so much of Iqbal's conception of "*khudī*" as a societal vision, presupposes a certain view of God's Selfhood ("*khudī*") as Creative of the universe and the individual person's selfhood ("*khudī*"). In many of these cases, the same multi-layered vision

[63] Mian Muhammad Nauman Faizi, *From Representationalism to Pragmatism: Muhammad Iqbal's Reading of Religion In Modernity*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, Religious Studies - Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, PHD (Doctor of Philosophy), 2016, p. 18.

[64] So much so, that some have argued that one of the distinctive features of "comparative" Religious Ethics is that it has difficulty cementing a "unifying rationale". What comparative Religious Ethics is often seen to uniquely offer, is not just an ability for content-diversity, but methodological diversity on what counts as "ethics" and "comparison". For an overview of just some of this self-reflective variety, Cf. Sumner Twiss and Bruce Grelle, ed., *Explorations in Global Ethics: Comparative Religious Ethics and Interreligious Dialogue* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), esp. pp.1-3. Scholars like Bucar and Stalnaker, however, do not see this lack of definitional consensus as an ill, but as a good that enables learning (2012).

[65] Bucar and Stalnaker (2012), pp. 1-15.

[66] See Richard Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969), pp. 44-48.

(*khudī*) is being signified by the same word, but how this is so, cannot be understood if one does not attempt first to reconstruct a careful picture of these various layers.

For Religious Ethics scholars, this intricately intertwined nature of Iqbal's vision of *khudī*, is evidenced by the fact that it is difficult to understand not only for those outside of Iqbal Studies (and thus, not familiar with the languages of Iqbal's work), but also, for some of the best scholars within Iqbal Studies. Even exceptional scholars in this field underestimate the need to carefully tease out the layers of this vision (*khudī*) before attempting to encapsulate its contents in one succinct definition or phrase. Moving too hastily towards the later can lead to quite basic conceptual confusions and blunders. For example, the great scholar and translator of Persian literature, R.A. Nicholson, who was a teacher of Iqbal's during his time in Cambridge, still wrongly translates the title of Iqbal's Persian poetic magnum opus *Asrār-i Khudī* as "Secrets of the Self", which is linguistically equivalent to (mis-) translating the word "goodness" as "good".[67]

Khud is the Persian word for "self"; the "*–i"* at the end of "*khud-ī"* is akin to the English "–ness", as it converts a more concrete noun into a general quality. In Nicholson's introduction to his translation, we begin to understand *why*, on Nicholson's reading, it would indeed not make much of a difference if a singular human self were conflated with "selfhood" as a quality. The Iqbalian theological concerns inherent in *khudī*, which enable it to be seen as a quality both Divinely given, and aspirational for, human creatures, are reduced by Nicholson to a kind of self-help literature for the Muslim individual, i.e. for "the full development of the individual" which ultimately "presupposes a society".[68] Remarkably, Nicholson had also asked for, and successfully provided, an auto-commentary from Iqbal in this same introduction. Here Iqbal himself clarifies, against the grain of Nicholson's translatorial vision, that in writing about *khudī*, he (Iqbal) is writing about "individuality", but an "individuality" which involves relating the human and Divine. "God himself is an individual: He is the most unique Individual."[69]

Nicholson's translatorial choice[70] is, in some ways, emblematic of the pressing need to first carefully parse out the layers of the "concept" of *khudī*, before attempting to describe "what it

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[67] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i-Khudī),* trans. By R.A. Nicholson. London: MacMillan & Co, 1920.

[68] Ibid., 17.

[69] Ibid., 21.

[70] I acknowledge that translation always involves personal choices and commitments, and I am no different in this respect. My attitude towards translations of Iqbal's Urdu and Persian words is effectively the same as the attitude of both Stalnaker and Bucar towards their sources; "judgments" made "in particular cases rather than by general accounts or methods that can then be mechanically applied" (Stalnaker, 10). Like Bucar and Stalnaker, in my case there is attested competency in these languages, and, a consultation with linguistic sources (e.g. Steingass' Persian dictionary), where need be, which are cited whenever this need arises. I make a case-based judgment, which prioritizes intelligibility; sometimes Iqbal uses the counterpart of a straightforward word like "fish", or "child", in a rather unambiguous way, whereas sometimes, it is highly relevant to give the original word, and add a footnote on what else it could mean, and why I have translated it in a particular way.

means". There are other examples of too-quick encapsulation of *khudī,* e.g. the fine literary scholar Yaseen Noorani, taken aback by Iqbal's constant emphases on this elusive quality of "selfhood"/*khudī* (especially in comparison to a more classical Persian poet of self-effacing love like Ḥāfiẓ), concludes that Iqbal is a talented "narcissist", who playfully subverts the lover's traditional humility, a frequent feature of the *ghazal* poetic form,[71] with a new style of the self-assured, self-assertive, amorous seeker.[72] And another example comes from the scholar Mustansar Mir, who has otherwise rendered great services to public understandings of Iqbal Studies by summarizing some of the major contours of the South Asian thinker's thought for non-expert readers. Mir, while sensitive to the vast scale of Iqbal's vision of *khudī*, also, in one fell swoop, represents it both as a Divine Selfhood that "sows-other-than-itself", gesturing in the direction of what Iqbal had condemned as "metaphysical dualism",[73] and also, as a "hierarchy of being",[74] which view Iqbal had condemned as a "dead metaphysics".[75] Correctly and rarely recognizing the breadth of Iqbal's words on *khudī,* if done too quickly, is insufficient to appreciate the nuances of this vision. In order to conceive of what is contained in Iqbal's usage of *khudī*, a slower appreciation of its layers and their interconnections, teased out layer by layer, cannot be avoided.

At this juncture, we can now introduce that throughout this dissertation, in order to avoid a confusion between layers and larger vision, we will be translating the term *khud-ī* somewhat literally and colorlessly, as "self-ness", and adding flesh to what it means through our (much longer) descriptive and expository words. The advantage of this, is that we do not over-determine to what this term refers, e.g. if we are translating the title of Iqbal's aforementioned work *"Asrār-i Khudī",* which contains insights about the individual self, alongside concerns about the created universe, then, in calling it "Secrets of Self-ness", we are conveying a durable plain sense and do not have to pin this term down one way or another, but can represent it more accurately, as inclusive of various layers.

In other words, I am sensitive to the mediating role of translation, but this is not my central concern in this project. Thus I welcome comments about translation, and see it as an activity that can never be improved upon enough, but that is not our main focus here.

[71] A *ghazal* is a short (usually around 7-15 verses) poetic form, of great cultural, erotic, and religious significance in Islamic culture. It has roots in classical Arabic poetry, and later expressions in Persian and Indic Islamic lands (among others). For a brief overview of this form, see Blachère, R. and Bausani, A., "Ghazal", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

[72] Yaseen Noorani, "Islamic Modernity and the Desiring Self: Muhammad Iqbal and the Poetics of Narcissism," *Iran*, vol. 38, 2000, pp. 123 - 135. Naturally, if one imagines the scale of the concept of *khudī* to be the individual person and, at most, the individual person within a society, then any emphases on this "selfhood" will appear like a curious poetic narcissism. However, again, this critique fails to grasp the multi-layered nature of this Iqbalian concept.

[73] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy* (Lahore: Bazm-[i]-Iqbal, 1964), 165.

[74] Mustansar Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 28.

[75] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam (*Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), pp. 72-78.

We can see how Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* is intertwined, and requires a careful parsing. However, there is one more reason why understanding it should be a dominant methodological concern for us. We now turn to explain this third reason, with reference to some more trends which are present within, but not limited to, Religious Ethics. To put it briefly, we can say that Iqbal has what might be called a distinctly "unitive" or "narrative" capacity, which has not been highlighted very often, but is felt by readers encountering his writings on *khudī*.[76]

iii) Reasons related to Iqbal's "narrative capacity"

As I said in the Introduction to this dissertation, Iqbal's *khudī*-talk has a form of internal coherence that is *not* mainly about purity from logical non-contradiction, or about building a systematic framework. Rather, Iqbal has a powerful capacity to envision conceptual "objects" as related. For some cogent thinkers within Ethics and Religious Ethics, the word "narrative" has come to be used for such a capacity. Such uses of the word "narrative" as "capacity", provide a breathing space for the coherence of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* which deserves to be understood on its own terms.

Since storytelling appears to be as old as human communication and signification, the word "narrative" also appears to have illimitable usages.[77] When we say that Iqbal has a "narrative capacity" qua moral-ontological thinker, this is distinct from the idea that, in some of his memorable writings for both adults and children, he was a storyteller.[78] Scholars are also aware,

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[76] See Charles Taylor, "Preface", in S.B. Diagne, Islam and Open Society: *Fidelity and Movement in the Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, xi-xii; translated from the French by Melissa McMahon (Dakar, Senegal: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2010), xi.
Nauman Faizi has also noted that Iqbal's "*khudī"* is not a description of one thing or event, but a "framework" wherein different facets of reality "could cohere". Faizi, Mian Muhammad Nauman. *From Representationalism to Pragmatism* (2016), p. 98. Although, I find the notion of a "framework" to be a bit over-determined, because Iqbal does not present his thought as a system or frame for generating results. There are many usefully anxious and vague moments, as well, and a resistance to prediction.

[77] M. Aubert, Lebe, R., Oktaviana, A.A. *et al.* "Earliest hunting scene in prehistoric art," *Nature* 576 (Dec. 2019)**,** 442–445.

[78] As many Urdu speakers will know, Iqbal's didactic poetry for children often takes the form of fables with a clear lesson at the end. Some of his most recitable poems, are those which have animal characters (e.g. "beware the indulging flatterer (*khushamdī*)" via the story of "the spider and the fly"; "help others" through the "firefly and bird" story; "nothing is lowly in God's creation (*khalq*) through the "squirrel and mountain" story, etc.) See Iqbal, *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl, Urdū:* The Complete Works of Iqbal in Urdu, ed. Ahmad Raza (Lahore: Sa'ādat Press, 2005) pp. 59-69. Also of great interest for those reading Iqbal as storyteller, would be (arguably) Iqbal's last "big poem", the *Javīd Nāmeh,* where he journeys through the planets, and heaven and hell, with his guide, Rūmī. This poem is a narrative story with two central characters, interactions with multiple other major and minor characters, and a progression or discernible plot from start to finish. For an overview, Cf. David Matthews, "JĀVID-NĀMA", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica.* Accessed online: https://iranicaonline.org/articles/javid-nama. Originally Published: December 15, 2008; Last Updated: April 13, 2012. Matthews notes the continuity between the contents of this work and Iqbal's prior works: "When Iqbal began to compose the *Jāvid-nāma*, he had already formulated the philosophy and doctrines that are commonly associated with him. The wide canvas he chose for this work gave

that "narrative" can be an adjective describing a capacity, in addition to a textual form, and these two usages are not mutually exclusive. Our term "narrative capacity", draws upon ongoing conversations in Religious Ethics and Ethics, which are especially suited to understanding Iqbal's *khudī*-talk. However, I do not claim that this shared usage which we now turn to describe, is *all* that the word "narrative" can or should ever mean. [79]

Within Religious Ethics, there has recently been a push against exclusively centering action-determination or systematization within moral reflection. Even as these processes are recognized as indispensable, nevertheless, it is argued that determining precisely what to do, or, constructing a systematic framework, is not the be-all and end-all of human moral discourse. Counter-voices of this kind, which use terms like "narrative" and "narrative account" for their contributions, have come in the shape of both broad-ranging and particular studies. E.g., Charles Taylor has critically observed that in studying ethics, it has so often been the case that "the focus is on the principles, or injunctions, or standards which guide *action*, while visions of the good are altogether neglected." He suggests that "moral thought should concern itself with different *visions* of the qualitatively higher", i.e. why particular kinds of moral agents and moral formations are seen as "desirable" in the first place, i.e. by envisioning or conceiving what about the moral agent and the universe.[80] Likewise, from a more "in-the-field" perspective, i.e. Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu's focused study of a Catholic religious art exhibition in London in 2000, it has been remarked that ethics is not just about definite answers to cases, but about "seeing what is wrong and then imagining something better…as it activates ethical action" by generating "a loving wakefulness" to certain kinds of moral attitudes in the world.[81]

These counter-currents within Religious Ethics are extremely fruitful for the study of Iqbal because in addition to their critical observations, they also, more constructively, center what has elsewhere been described as "narrative capacity" within Ethics. Thus, this term has been defined cogently as: a mode of moral thought that has "*the capacity to redescribe reality by combining*

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him, as it were, a final opportunity to repeat and reinforce the ideas that were first put forward in his early Persian *maṯnawi*s, such as *Asrār-e ḵodi* "The Secrets of the Self" (1915), and *Romuz-e biḵodi* "The Mysteries of selflessness" (1918)." However, one project cannot justifiably cover both this sense of "narrative", and the one I intend. I expand on unexplored Iqbal-dimensions, in my project's conclusion.

[79] There are obviously multiple ways of construing "narrative", and the study of narrative genre, within Religious Ethics. Adam Zachary Newton, for example, has a construal that might be more "straightforward" for many readers. His project mainly seeks to show the "organic" links between *stories* and ethics, while reveling in the fact that stories are not "objects" but inter-subjective relations. Cf. Adam Zachary Newton, *Narrative Ethics* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995) esp. pp. 1-31. Cf. also, *Why Narrative?* Eds. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (Grand Rapids, Mich. : W.B. Eerdmans, 1989).

[80] Taylor, *Sources of the Self,* pp. 83-84.

[81] My emphases. Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu, *Bridge to Wonder: Art as a Gospel of Beauty* (Baylor University Press, 2012), pp. 41-41. It might be the case that authors like Taylor and Gonzalez-Andrieu, who like to emphasize "moral visions" and "narrative accounts", have a certain temperamental affinity towards sitting with art, and reflections on beauty, and making these of importance in their personal lives, even as they might specify, like Gonzalez-Andrieu, "this book is not about art" (pp. 11-24).

elements dispersed in time and space into some kind of coherent pattern".[82] To expand upon this purposely broad definition: i) "*reality*": such an ethics is not "imaginative" or "narrative" in the sense of aspiring to an escape from reality. Rather, it conceives of itself as describing, even in some limited sense, what is real. Moreover, ii) "*combining elements*": this kind of ethical thought need not be "narrative" in the sense of, say, a children's fable, possessing a chronological beginning, middle, end, and one clear didactic lesson. Instead, the descriptor "narrative" here describes a broader *unitive* capacity (displayed also by many a children's fable) i.e. to envision or imagine as related, what might otherwise be seen as disparate elements (in Iqbal's case, these are the individual person, nature, and society). Finally, iii) narrative ethics tend to be "*re-descriptive*"; they usually see themselves as part of some tradition,[83] or community of inquirers, or seekers, which has already, even if in ways that invite criticism, attempted to hold to the same reality which the narrative ethicist now feels a pressing need to describe afresh, instead of presenting themselves as wholly novel or isolated from the world.

I suggest that for Religious Ethics, Iqbal's vision of *khudī* can be approached better, not as one single concept, but a "narrative" vision, in the aforementioned ways. [84] As we will see: first, Iqbal's vision of *khudī* conceives of itself as an account of reality, i.e. as conveying the truth about "self-ness" or *khudī,* which is "given" by God in a "Unique" way. Second, Iqbal's vision has a "unitive" capacity, which asserts that the natural universe, the human person, and human societies, are interrelated creatures of God, as Chs. 3-5 describe. Third, Iqbal does not see this tri-partite organization as his own invention, but as his reception of a Qurʾānic verse which, in his view, declares all three (person, nature, society) to be "sources of knowledge", and which, to him, commands that these are the "three things humanity needs" to "re-evaluate" and appreciate for what they really are, i.e. as creatures of God, in order for human moral betterment. [85]

Thus far in the chapter, I have pointed out ongoing conversations and currents within Religious Ethics, to which Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* read as a moral-ontological vision, can be seen as contributing. The "third wave" of global-ness which has been opened up by Bucar and Stalnaker, creates a space for Iqbal to be read as a contributor to reflections on morality, and both scholars provide helpful models in delineating my own methodological concerns. Then, we have seen

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[82] Richard Kearney and James Williams, "Narrative and Ethics." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 70 (1996): 29-61. My emphasis.

[83] Questions about Iqbal's relationship to the term "tradition" are the subject of the next chapter.

[84] While I use Kearney and Williams' definition for its admirable compactness, such a definition is not limited to studies of Christian and Jewish ethics. In fact, in recent years, there has been an interest in methods which define "narrative" as unitive capacity, for the study of other modern Islamic thinkers. Cf. Ibrahim Halil Yenigun, *The Political Ontology of Islamic Democracy: An Ontological Narrative of Contemporary Muslim Political Thought*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, Government - Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, PHD (Doctor of Philosophy), 2013, 2013, doi.org/10.18130/V31V4R.

[85] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 77; 101; 142. The verse in reference is Q. 41: 53: "We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in themselves, until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness over everything?" Cf. *The Qurʾān,* translated by Alan Jones (Exeter: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007), p. 442.

how the intricately intertwined nature of "*khudī",* cautions against a too-hasty encapsulation. This is useful to know at the outset, because, we build up our understanding of Iqbal's vision progressively, rather than giving a succinct description now. Then, in Ch.6, we give a more bird's-eye view of "what *khudī* means", presupposing the nuances of prior chapters. Moreover, we have seen how there are openings within Religious Ethics to consider more "narrative" moral contributions as worthwhile contributions to moral reflection. Instead of ignoring a contribution like Iqbal's because it is not an action-generating system or "pure" of unanswered questions, we can read him as a contributor to an emergent set of voices in Religious Ethics, which is interested in the informing imaginations of moral directions.

With the above summary of Part I in mind, we now turn, in Part II, to describing some helpful reflections on "self" as moral concept, which will aid us in understanding the personal, natural, and societal dimensions of Iqbal's moral vision. We rely on insights from Saba Mahmood, Charles Taylor, and Talal Asad, three well-read and well-known voices for Religious Ethics, in order to have some anchoring on what an ubiquitous term like "self" can mean, for moral thought. This assists us in being attentive to the complexity of Iqbal's thought, as the dissertation progresses.

II. Helpful Articulations about the "Self" as Moral Concept

We begin by laying out what is probably the most obvious connotation of the term "self" i.e. "the individual person", with help from Saba Mahmood. While Mahmood's analysis in her major work *Politics of Piety* is grounded in ethnographic particularity, it is also consciously and usefully self-abstracting, for our purposes.

i) Mahmood and the Individual Person

Mahmood provides a way of thinking about the individual person as moral agent, that helpfully approaches and contrasts with Iqbal. Mahmood's seminal study, *Politics of Piety,* is drawing upon the experiences of the female "*da'wa* or piety movement", which she studied in specific Egyptian urban centers, and her project explicitly seeks to move beyond a particular conception of the individual self, i.e. the "character of the rationalist, self-authorizing, transcendental subject presupposed by the Enlightenment thought in general, and the liberal tradition in particular". [86] By this, Mahmood means that "post-Enlightenment" interpretive frames often narrowly fix in advance "the meaning and sense of agency" in a manner that sees it exclusively through the binary of *subjugation versus resistance*. Thus, even well-meaning feminist allies to Mahmood (e.g. Judith Butler) and not simply blatant Orientalists, will often construe any expression of power (especially on the part of a Muslim female subject) as a form of "resistance" and counter-

[86] Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005) 13.

positioning, rather than as a form of participation within a worldly tradition. [87] As Mahmood's richly detailed fieldwork shows, for many of the women that she studied, while their piety movement did bring them into conflict with multiple structures of authority, the exercise of their agency was enabled by their continuous *formation through* these very power structures.

In order to break out of this dualistic "subjugation vs. resistance" frame, Mahmood highlights what she sees as more appropriate conceptual structures to interpret Muslims women's agency. In doing so, she sketches a very brief but saturated picture of what "ethics" is, and of what provides the impetus for ethical behavior and ethical self-cultivation within human beings. Here, her analysis moves back and forth between the specific and the general. Mahmood points out that a less explicit binary of "action" vs. "motivation" nurtures the more obvious "subjugation vs. resistance" binary, which she sees as operant in prevalent interpretations of Muslim women's agency.[88] Reading the more theoretical sections of Mahmood's study shows that for her, this difference boils down to the difference between Aristotle and Kant, specifically regarding the primacy(/non-primacy) of observable "action" in an agent's moral formation. For Mahmood, Kant emphasized "change of heart" over "change of mores", i.e. interior assent to a "guiding maxim", over bodily praxis. Bodily praxis, or to be "legally good", is still one step below being "morally good", or being "a product of the critical faculty of reason" rather than of "habituated virtue". This Kantian "telescoping of moral action down to the movements of the will" makes ethics primarily an "interiorized" activity, on Mahmood's reading. No matter how perfect the mores or habits of an agent are, they will ultimately be lent a "moral character" only by the degree to which the agent gives assent to a rationalized guiding maxim.[89]

By contrast, for Mahmood, Aristotle saw ethics as a process of visible moral *formation* for which bodily habituation *is* primary. This Aristotelian tradition was one "in which morality was both realized through, and manifest in, outward behavioral forms".[90] Therefore, "assent" is not something given independently from bodily performativity, but rather shaped by it. Thus Mahmood states that

> bodily behavior does not simply stand in a relationship of meaning to self and society, but it also endows the self with certain kinds of capacities that provide the substance from which the world is acted upon.[91]

On Mahmood's account, while interior "assent", and questions of "motivation, deliberation and choice" are important, they come *after* the initial processes of formation, and then manifest as visible, regularly exercised, performativity. Thus, she summarizes the main proposal of her

[87] Ibid., 14-15.
[88] Ibid., 23-27.
[89] Ibid., 24-25.
[90] Ibid., 25.
[91] Ibid., 27.

project in this way, i.e. as "my proposal that we think about agency in terms of moral formation" and not primarily moral assent.[92] What is also significant here is that Mahmood's response to the aforementioned "subjugation vs. resistance" binary is to posit a different interpretive duality ("interiority"/ "exteriority") from the one she sees as predominant.

Mahmood offers many rich, worthwhile, and illuminating ethnographic vignettes, in the service of her argument that moral agency be seen as inseparably related to a course of moral formation in which exteriority is primary. For example, there is the moving anecdote of a gentle and mild-mannered woman named Umm Amal, who speaks about what Mahmood calls "the economy of fear and love undergirding virtuous action".[93] Mahmood expects that this lady will reject a more fire-and-brimstone religious speaker due to her personality, and takes her aside after the sermon. Umm Amal's response to Mahmood emphasizes the need to begin her ethical growth by exercising fear, no matter how uncomfortable or irrational this process might seem. Instead of seeing such exercises as an impediment to morality, Mahmood's interlocutor teaches her that such difficult exercises might be the very beginnings of moral formation.[94]

Receptive to her environment as an astute anthropologist, Mahmood constructs her aforementioned picture of Aristotelian habitus,[95] in order to reflect and provide intellectual support for, such surprising moments. In doing so, she also provides more general insights for those reflecting on what it means to be an individual person who is acting morally. In this respect, one of the ways in which Mahmood opens us up to understanding a vision like Iqbal's, is that she voices the robustness and coherence of those moral lives, in which persons start becoming moral, not by solely "self-authorizing", but by a visible performative process in which certain behaviors, and emotional associations with those behaviors, are solidified and made durable.[96] This will help us to understand Iqbal's vision of individual moral formation in Ch.4, within which "obedience" is the primary, necessary, and unavoidable, step of a person's moral growth.

Moreover, Mahmood provides a helpful account of the individual person as a self that performs activities upon themselves, throughout their arc of moral formation. On her view, the individual self is not conceived of as a "unit" that is re-orienting or re-adjusting itself within a larger unit such as the world. Rather, the path to moral betterment and growth for this individual self, is both non-insular and self-focused. In order to commence moral growth, the person must "do

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[92] Ibid., 32.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., pp. 142-145.
[95] In mentioning that Mahmood builds up her own Aristotelian picture of habitus, I am not suggesting that Mahmood's reading of Aristotle is creative or stretched. In fact, it is probably uncontroversial. See a reading of Aristotle which is similar to Mahmood's in, for example, M.F. Burnyeat's essay "Aristotle on Learning to be Good" in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (Edited by Amelie O. Rorty, University of California Press, 1996), pp. 69-92.
[96] Ibid., 144-145.

things" to and with *their* self, but always shaped by disciplines, in order to be able to relate properly to the world. Thus, Mahmood provides a vivid picture of the *performative dimensions* of morality, which are sometimes overlooked, and which help us to describe Iqbal's ideas about the individual person as "doing things" to their selves vis-à-vis *khudī.*

Finally on Mahmood, but no less crucially; what is most interesting for her, about the individual self, is the malleability and plasticity of the self. On such an account, it is completely understandable that visible, regularly exercised durability, would be seen as such a prized outcome for the individual self. Hence, Mahmood repeatedly sees not just "behavior", but "exteriority" as the key element in moral formation, and as a "means to interiority". [97] For her individual agent, the beginnings of moral formation have to be assiduously exercised through the visible and exterior dimensions of the self, and if this is properly done, then, a more desirable "interiority" eventually follows. This exterior/interior binary of Mahmood, will be helpful in clarifying Iqbal's open rejection of such a distinction, with respect even to the beginnings of moral formation. Thus, in a certain sense Iqbal has a more holistic imagination of how moral formation begins, because he challenges a division of "inner/outer", as improperly understanding what it means to be an individual self.

Thus, Mahmood's conception of the self as moral agent, which emphasizes moral formation, performative processes, and interiority/exteriority, helps us to better understand Iqbal's vision of *khudī* on the personal level. Now we turn to understand how Charles Taylor, an ardent if brief admirer of Iqbal,[98] opens up a way to see the category of "selfhood" as what might be called an ontologically saturated category.

ii) Taylor, and "Self" within the Universe

Taylor aids us in delineating some important aspects of Iqbal's natural vision, within his larger vision of *khudī.* Taylor's masterful work, *Sources of the Self*, weaves together innumerable strands of thought and cultural influence, and like Mahmood, contains both deeply embedded as well as general insights. One particular thread within Taylor's work, is the history that he provides of a shift in conceptions of the self, from Plato to Descartes. Although this is, on one level, a highly specific cultural account, Taylor also abstracts from this account to give the reader some larger insights about what it can mean "to be a human agent, a person or a self" within the context of "moral ontologies".[99] In a certain sense, he is able to provide general insights, more

[97] Ibid, 147-148; 134; 157-158.
[98] See Charles Taylor, "Preface", in S.B. Diagne, Islam and Open Society: *Fidelity and Movement in the Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, xi-xii; translated from the French by Melissa McMahon (Dakar, Senegal: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2010), xi.
[99] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 3-8.

regularly, because he is not weaving together a large number of context-specific and self-contained ethnographic vignettes.

For our purposes, an extremely useful concept articulated by Taylor is what he calls "ontic logos visions". He builds this concept as a contrast to what he sees as more culturally prevalent notions of the human self in the cosmos; that it is the duty of the human being to instrumentalize and master the disordered natural world as far as possible and, in doing so, to create a patterned order which cannot be found naturally in the cosmos, i.e. to *construct* "orders in science and in life".[100] He sees Descartes as emblematic of such "instrumental mastery" accounts, in which the material world is a chaotic and "violent" realm[101] which is essentially "unknowable"[102] by the inwardness of the human mind and soul. Thus, not only does order need to be constructed, but this has to happen at an arm's length, so to speak, so as not to let the corrupting influences of a fundamentally disordered realm, infect one's worthwhile inwardness. On such a view, the successful persons, or "les grandes ames" ("the great souls"), are those who

> …do everything in their power to make fortune favour them in this life, but nevertheless they think so little of it [this life], in relation to eternity, that they view the events of this world as we do those of a play.[103]

Thus, Taylor argues, as per this kind of account, the ideal of moral betterment as *participation* in the patterns of natural universe, becomes inconceivable. However, Taylor reminds us, there have been alternative accounts of the relationship between human persons and nature, in which a notion of participation is central to a person's ethical growth. [104]

These contrasting accounts are described as "ontic logos visions". In a more embedded sense, for Taylor, the paradigmatic ontic logos theory is Plato's theory of the Ideas, because of its capacity to unify "moral vision and scientific explanation". Taylor means this in the following, very precise, way: that which is the ultimate source of nature and the material world, is also that to which a human being is properly oriented (in this case, the Ideas) if she is to be morally good and virtuous. These very Ideas towards which morally attuned human beings "turn", are also the basis for the "cosmic order" of which the material world is an aspect. [105]

More generally, Taylor explains, while his usage of the term *ontic* conveys an idea of deep unity and interconnectedness between all that exists, *logos* describes how these various aspects are also *levels* "in a hierarchical order of being",[106] with the desirable direction being away from the

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[100] Ibid., 146-147; 155-156.
[101] Ibid., 150-153.
[102] Ibid., 144.
[103] Descartes, quoted in Taylor, *Sources of the Self,* 151.
[104] Ibid., 143-144.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., 16.

"senses" and material life, towards "reason" and contemplation.[107] Therefore, for Taylor, an "ontic logos" in the paradigmatic sense is characterized not only by a unity between all that is, but also by a fixed, hierarchical ordering within this unity, in which some activities and capacities are unidirectionally privileged over others i.e. moving away from materiality and towards rational contemplation.

Taylor stresses this unbroken, but fundamentally hierarchical, continuity between the "outer" cosmic order and "inner" morality of the individual, with a specificity that is best quoted:

> We saw that the language of inner/outer doesn't figure in Plato or indeed in other ancient moralists…The locus of our sources of moral strength resides outside. To have access to the higher is to be turned towards and in tune with this cosmic order, which is shaped by the Good.[108]

In terms of aiding us to understand Iqbal, Taylor's articulation of "ontic logos" is very helpful. In Ch.3, where we describe Iqbal's natural vision and its relationship to the larger vision of *khudī,* we will refer back to Taylor's usage of the words "ontic", and "logos", in order to more precisely delineate some of the key patterns of Iqbal's natural vision. More specifically, the Taylorian use of the word "ontic" gives us an inroad into the idea that there is a pre-given, ineradicable, relationship between the human person and the cosmos, and the activity of the moral betterment of a self, must involve greater participation in this relationship. This sensitizes us to the views of Iqbal, who also sees the human-universe relation as pre-given. However, additionally, Taylor's usage of the word "logos" and, more importantly, his articulation of a shift from material to "supra-sensible" as the proper direction of moral betterment, is usefully different from Iqbal. As we will see, Iqbal's natural vision, while centering the human-to-God relationship, has a pervasive sense of what can be called the "ontic esteem" and "ontic dynamism" of nature. Iqbal's account of nature has a recurrent sense of the inherent esteem of materiality, and the ceaseless restlessness undergirding existence, which is understood well with reference to Taylor.

Having before us, some helpful articulations of the personal and universal/natural dimensions of selfhood, we can now turn to some of Asad's useful insights regarding social groups.

iii) Asad and the Societal "Self" as "Space"

In this section, we describe some of insights of the cultural anthropologist Talal Asad. These insights will help us to better understand Iqbal, not only because they approach some key points of Iqbal's social vision, but also because Iqbal's social normativity, particularly with respect to *khudī,* is different and distinctive in important ways.

[107] Ibid., 143.
[108] Ibid., 143.

Asad is similar to Taylor insofar as he contends that it *is* possible to see the material universe and the individual person as intimately connected. Asad also recognizes the alternative view, which he challenges, i.e. it is possible to see the material world as "de-ontologized";[109] as removed from connection or relationship to the sources of truth and goodness, which individuals can access. Asad is also similar to Mahmood, insofar as he recognizes that there are lived experiences of morality, in which the agent does not "solely own" their own self; in which, a cross-historical tradition can make claims upon the individual, and move them towards an "acquisition of appropriate agency".[110]

Here is the major thread of Asad's work that is significant for us, in terms of understanding Iqbal: Asad sees a particular conception of "society" as perpetuated by "de-ontologized" views of the natural world and materiality. Furthermore, Asad sees these visions of society as incapable of approaching or understanding what he calls "the Islamic *umma* in the classical theological view."[111]

Asad does not make this counterclaim in a vacuum; he first arrives at his distinctive conception of "de-ontologized" nature, from a quite original point, i.e. a genealogy of the category of Greek "mythic word" and its historical permutations. He observes that initially, in the works of classical writers like Hesiod and Homer, the category of *mythos/muthos* signified not a fictional fabrication but instead, divinely inspired word, and also a category invoked by the poets, to *warrant* the truthfulness of their claims.[112] In his account, there were alternative strands in Greek thought which sought to cleave the integrated contents of this notion of *mythos*, e.g. "the Sophists" for whom the "point" of myth's embeddedness and particularity was not that it spoke truths about/ from the gods, but that it could impact humans emotionally, and thereby shape their wayward habits and behaviors. Moreover, the "other [veracious] side" of mythic discourse, i.e. the earlier vision of its being inspired by the gods, was now ultimately reducible to "a lie". This new attitude imagined that, rather than conveying reliable and truthful information about the gods, myths distorted and misrepresented the divine, despite their "morally improving effect on the audience". [113] In presenting this picture, Asad argues that it was this differentiated and bifurcated construal of *mythos* which eventually "won the day".[114]

To say this in a less embedded way: for Asad, the de-ontologization of language and the de-ontologization of nature, go hand in hand. When language is seen as "an abstraction that stands

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[109] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 57.
[110] Ibid., pp. 90-92.
[111] Ibid., 197.
[112]Ibid., 27.
[113] Ibid., 28.
[114] Ibid., pp. 27-57.

apart from the real",[115] only an instrument to be used for access, then, this has affinities with the ways that materiality itself is being envisioned. In order to de-emphasize the connection of language to reality, a move has to be made which downplays the significance of the senses, the body, and the natural universe, as "things" which have no necessary relationship to reality.[116]

Making this point is at the heart of Asad's powerful argument for the distinctiveness of "classical Islamic views of an *umma".* Hence, on his view, de-ontologizing conceptions are not capable of being mapped onto "classical Islamic views of an *umma*." He presents two major reasons for this; one historically actualized, and one aspirational. The more historically embodied reason is that many Muslim communities (among other communities which center scripture in their daily lives), do not construe language as "apart from the real",[117] but instead experience the materiality of language as something that continuously forms, and reforms, their collective moral characters. Asad is rightly enthralled by the materiality of word, as embodied for him, in the aural, oral, tactile, and visual elements of scripture. He uncovers that many traditional conceptions of Muslim community, experience language as worthy of Divine reformation of community. In this sense, Asad contends that it is difficult to envision language, and by extension materiality, as completely "de-ontologized", if one looks at the way many Muslim communities, for example, interact with all the physical facets of scripture in their daily lives.[118]

In addition, for Asad, the more aspirational reason for the discontinuity between "mythic" social visions and "the Islamic notion of an *umma",* is that "it can and eventually should embrace all of humanity", because

> The Islamic *umma* in the classical theological view is …a theologically defined space enabling Muslims to practice disciplines of *dīn* in the world...The fact that the expression *umma 'arabiyya* is used today to denote "Arab nation" represents a major conceptual transformation by which it is cut off from the theological predicates that gave it its universalizing power...The *umma*...is ideologically not "a society" onto which state, economy or religion can be mapped.[119]

In making this second, aspirational point, Asad's argument takes a turn that makes him different from a thinker like Iqbal. However, before mentioning this difference, it is important to point out that, based on what we have said thus far, Asad positively sensitizes anyone approaching Iqbal's social vision. Asad desires to highlight neglected experiences of nature and scriptural language, in which materiality is seen to have a relationship to God. This makes him quite a good pre-reading to understanding Iqbal, because Iqbal also sees the material universe as non-negligibly

[115] Ibid., 65.
[116] Ibid., pp. 67-85.
[117] Ibid., 65.
[118] Ibid., pp. 37-38.
[119] Ibid., 197.

related to God. Moreover, like Asad, Mahmood, and Taylor, Iqbal does not imagine moral agents who are insulated from being shaped by others, by collectives, or, by nature.

At the same time, as we shall see most fully in Ch.5, Iqbal has a construal of "society" not as a collective space, but as a creaturely self. This seems like a difference only of terms (after all, both sound like distinct names for "group") but it is quite significant.

We appreciate this, by returning to Asad's observation, i.e. the aspirational dimension of Islamic views of an *umma*. It is understandable and rational that Asad, who is concerned with showing the connection between language, materiality, and reality, focuses on the powerful materiality of scripture, (aural, oral, tactile, recitative elements) as the way to show how many Muslim accounts of society are not easily de-ontologized. Asad then makes his second point, about the Muslim *umma'*s aspired universality, in the same vein as this earlier point. Thus, he articulates a concept of "Muslim community" as a space which is defined by God, and reformed by God's word. For this space, its "universalizing power", its aspiration to "include all of humanity", is a result of "theological predicates" which are conveyed by the powerful scripture, to this collective space. The collective of Muslims, is seen as a "within which", for individuals to keep being reformed.[120]

As we shall see in Ch.5, Iqbal has a different construal of human societies as kinds of creatures, who, as selves, have responsive attitudes to God. For Iqbal, the moral betterment of societies is not primarily about the rational entailment of predicates, no matter how theologically rich and universal these predicates might be. Rather, in Iqbal, there is a much deeper similarity between the way that individual selves and collective selves (societies) undergo moral formation. Even though, like Asad, Iqbal does not imagine individual persons to be insulated from transformation by their society, nevertheless, Iqbal also envisions a dynamic relationship between individual, society, and God, in which the former two are creatures relating and responding to God. Society is envisioned by Iqbal not as a "space", even a "theologically defined" one, but as a creature, which is better seen as theo-related.

To summarize the yield of this section: Asad's insights move us towards conceptions like Iqbal's in which nature, collective formation, and reality, are not separated, and also, help us to see how Iqbal's social normativity is different, insofar as for Iqbal, self-ness is a far more intensively real and embedded feature of society, as well as individuals.

To conclude Part II: now that we have before us the helpfully anchoring articulations of Mahmood, Taylor, and Asad, we can put a name to two dynamics that will become evident throughout Chs. 3-5, but, for the sake of priming the reader, it is helpful to name them now. These are my terms for two dynamics occurring frequently, but not homogeneously, in Iqbal's

[120] Ibid., pp. 197-198.

vision of *khudī.* The first dynamic is "relationality", by which I mean that Iqbal's vision does not compromise the irreducibility of individual-to-God relation, and the society-to-God relation. Even in the enviable echelons of moral growth, the individual or societal self *never* becomes erased or effaced. The second dynamic is "responsivity", by which I mean that for Iqbal, morality always involves a *response* to God, who has already done quite a lot, even before the individual or social creature enters the picture. To say this more colloquially, God is always "one step ahead", and calling, inviting, asking, fallible creatures to respond properly to Him. Thus, as we shall see, there is also an irreducible responsivity to God, significant within Iqbal's vision of *khudī.*

Chapter Conclusion

Towards our end of reading Iqbal as moral-ontological thinker, we have begun by embedding our contribution, with respect to those conversations into which such a reading can be seen as contributing. Moreover, the terrain-setting offered in this chapter is conscious of the variety of tools that are needed, in order to provide a reading of Iqbal's moral-ontological vision of *khudī,* that is suited to particular elements, and not distortive, or reducing the focus on Iqbal's own words. Thus, first, this chapter has begun by describing the reasons for focusing on intelligibility and understanding, i.e. the shape and opportunities of a third global-ness in Religious Ethics, the intricately interconnected nature of Iqbal' vision of *khudī* itself, and Iqbal's distinctive capacity for a "unitive" or "narrative" vision, which is displayed prominently in his *khudī*-words. Having in mind these "reasons for intelligibility", helps us to understand the way in which exposition of Iqbal takes place, in the forthcoming chapters.

Then, this chapter has provided an overview of the relevant articulations of some prominent thinkers in/for Religious Ethics, regarding what could be meant by "selfhood". Mahmood is useful for her clear, precise, and explicit delineation of moral formation. In opening up the significance of moral formation for the moral agent, Mahmood will help us to understand Iqbal's "three stages of ethical growth", and Iqbal's general view of desirable moral directions for the human person. Taylor, then, provides a usefully precise account of a moral ontology, in which situation and orientation is the way to connect with the "way things are". The moral agent has to participate in this hierarchically ordered, and situational, ontological arrangement, in order to become a better person. Taylor's description will be very helpful in understanding what I call Iqbal's vision of "ontic dynamism", which pervades Iqbal's entire moral-ontological vision. Finally, Asad provides a helpful reminder of the ways in which social units and groups also consolidate as selves. Asad provides a reading of the Islamic concept of an *umma* which focuses heavily on the notion of a "theologically defined space". Asad's words will be very helpful in uncovering how Iqbal's social vision of *khudī* centers the God-society relationship, rather than envisioning society as an arena or a space for the material entailment of "theological predicates".

Before turning to substantively describe Iqbal's vision of *khudī* on these levels of nature, individual, and society, first, this project outlines some fresh ways in which patterns of reading in Iqbal Studies could be organized, and in doing so, offers a location of its own way of reading and contributing.

Chapter 2

Iqbal's Self-described Functions within his Tradition

Chapter Overview

There are the contents of what Iqbal said and wrote, and what he saw himself as doing, or what might be called the functions that he was performing through these sayings and writings. Although the main purpose of this dissertation is to focus on the contents of Iqbal's "*khudī* /self-ness" as a moral-ontological vision within Religious Ethics, between terrain-setting and thick description, it is necessary to address how Iqbal can be said to be involved with/in his own religious tradition. To put the same issue in the form of a broader question: what does Iqbal's "reaching back" or "into" his tradition look like?

This chapter offers a response to address this line of questioning. The central insight of this chapter (and how I see Iqbal as "tradition-related") is that Iqbal saw four distinct roles or functions for himself, which were directed at four distinct aspects of the Islamic religious tradition. The first part of this chapter will expand upon these functions, which show that Iqbal's attitude towards aspects of his tradition was not a uniform homogeneity, captured under any one heading. Rather, it matters towards which aspects of his faith and faith community, Iqbal saw himself in certain functional roles. Being inattentive towards these functions and/or towards the specific "objects" at which they were directed, leads to problematic conflations and omissions in Iqbal Studies, which I illustrate in the second part of this chapter.

It is worth noting that in the case of Iqbal, questions about tradition-relation arise for what I believe are two specific reasons. First, Iqbal's work does not fit squarely within any classically attested form of religious knowledge. This point is put more pointedly by Iqbal scholar I. S. Sevea: "Muhammad Iqbal wrote neither a *tafsir* nor a *tarjuman* (interpretation) of the Quran."[1] Iqbal was unlike a Mawdūdī writing in an exegetical genre of *tafsīr* that would still have unmistakable continuity with classical forms of Qurʾānic interpretation. Instead, Iqbal categorized his own written words regarding Qurʾān as his "*zatī rai*" (personal opinions)[2] and as copious "notes",[3] both of which are difficult to place within any classical epistemology. Similarly, while Iqbal has a rich theological imagination, the thickness of which is not parsed out often enough, he was not a *mutakallim/* theologian in the classical sense of dialectical argumentation within a trained community of *mutakallimūn*.[4] Nor was he a trained *faqīh* (a

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[1] Iqbal Singh Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism In Late Colonial India*. Cambridge (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 88.

[2] Ibid.

[3] See Ghulam Mustafa Khan, *Iqbāl Aur Qurʾān* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1988), pp. 16-17. As Khan's survey of Iqbal's letters shows, even in Urdu, Iqbal modestly termed his Qurʾānic interpretations "notes", which he lamented that he could not compile due to ill health. There is no indication that this category of "notes" is, for Iqbal, part of (for example) a wider genre of "notes".

[4] For an excellent overview of this traditional sense of the term "mutakkalim", see Gardet, L., "ʿIlm al-Kalām", in: *Encyclopaedia of* Islam*, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 05 April 2019 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0366. However, it would be remiss not to mention the opposing view, outside of Anglophone Islamic Studies, that "Iqbal was a *mutakallim* despite his lack of training, because his thoughts "began from premises that were

practitioner of *fiqh*, the scholarly discipline of interpreting Islamic law) who could dispense context-specific legal guidelines.[5] In other words, there is a genuine ambiguity about where to "place" Iqbal with respect to well-known Islamic epistemologies.

Second, Iqbal considers European and non-Islamic thinkers to be valuable sources of knowledge for Muslims, although the thinkers consulted *are* specific to certain topics. Even though scholars are not appreciative enough of the fact that Iqbal clearly believes Islam is complete, needing no crutch from Western philosophy to be saved or reformed,[6] it is true that Iqbal admires many Western philosophers and thinks that his proximate religious community (twentieth century Muslims) can derive great benefit from them. Even as Iqbal is quite critical of the materialism and imperialism of the West, he is no purist when it comes to reading and learning from Western authors.

At the outset, it is also fitting to say a few words on why we are taking Iqbal's own self-description as a preferable starting point from which to understand his tradition-relationality. It is useful to spell this out because it could be argued that Iqbal, like any number of thinkers, can be inconsistent. And, that Iqbal brings to his functions towards his tradition, a vast variety of formations, which would include an array of thinkers and texts who might not have been explicitly named or signaled as significant by Iqbal himself. With regard to both of these avenues of criticism, I would first acknowledge that they do not begin from nowhere, and that indeed it is possible to develop a robust hermeneutics of suspicion with respect to the self-descriptions of Iqbal about his tradition-relationality. It is also possible to develop such a hermeneutical approach towards Iqbal's formations as thinker; such an approach might build on detailed biographical and historical criticism and intend to "unmask" both the explicit and implicit formations which might be possible in Iqbal's self-presentations.

My response to these two avenues of inquiry is twofold, and was hinted in my Introduction: first, I acknowledge both the possibility and the potential of such approaches towards Iqbal's self-description, and do not exclude their contributions to the field. I understand that often times, it can be frustrating to read Iqbal, e.g. when he gives us little exegetical clues and/or virtually no Persian commentary upon Rūmī's verses, from which we might learn why he receives Rūmī especially devotedly as his "master" and "teacher", and not other, equally illustrious "big names" of the Islamic tradition (this attitude to Rūmī is described later in this chapter). It is, therefore, understandable that scholars would be drawn to ask questions about whether and how well Iqbal

unquestionably Islamic (belief in God's Oneness, Muhammad's final prophecy)" and he took these as the grounds for his philosophical reflections. For a forceful articulation of this view, see Ali Abbas Jalalpuri, *Iqbāl kā ʿIlm-i Kalām* ("Iqbal's Knowledge of Kalam") (Lahore, Takhleeqat Publishers, n.d.), especially pp. 9-17.

[5] See Kingshuk Chatterjee's footnote on Iqbal's lack of traditional Islamic legal training in "Explorations of the Self: From Iqbal to Shariati" in *Between Tradition and Modernity: Aspects of Islam in South Asia* (Kolkata, K.P. Baghcy and Company, 2011), p. 27, footnote 8.

[6] See Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal: Compiled by Latif Ahmed Sherwani (*Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2015), p.221. The whole essay titled "Islam and Ahmadism" (pp. 214-223) is an argument in favor of the completeness of Islam, but consider especially this statement: "Theologically…"Islam" is perfect and eternal" (221).

received persons and texts, and such scholarship is a valuable contribution to our shared knowledge in Iqbal Studies.[7]

However, secondly, we should also bear in mind that within the field of Iqbal Studies, there have, as of yet, not been many clear, well-evidenced and layered descriptions of Iqbal's own self-description. We cannot and should not exclude the hermeneutics of suspicion, but, even before those of us who choose to adopt the above methods can be critical in this manner, collectively, we might also want to do a better job of articulating and putting on the table, what Iqbal says about himself. This is the methodological intervention of this current project, for Iqbal Studies. Reading Iqbal's many words about himself, and doubtless with the help of scholars in the field, I provide a layered and detailed description of how Iqbal saw what he was doing, which can hopefully be useful to a variety of hermeneutical approaches in the future. Bearing this in mind, for the purposes of the rest of this dissertation, it will be more or less axiomatic that we are taking Iqbal's self-descriptions seriously.

Thus, this chapter has two components: i) Part I; a positive description of how Iqbal saw himself as relating to various elements of the Islamic religious tradition (evidenced by my own research and that of other Iqbal Studies scholars); and ii) Part II; a sketch of three generalizing and obfuscating patterns in Iqbal Studies surrounding Iqbal's "tradition-engagement", which are unhelpful in understanding him.

I. "Tradition": four elements and roles, as per Iqbal

The central constructive insight of this chapter (and how I am interested in seeing Iqbal as "tradition-related")[8] is that Iqbal saw four distinct roles or functions for himself which were directed at four distinct aspects of the Islamic religious tradition, as he saw it. Being inattentive towards these functions and/or towards the specific "objects" at which they were directed, leads to conflations and omissions.

To state succinctly what the rest of this section will then expand upon: with respect to what can be called "canon" (the components of which I describe below), Iqbal saw himself as an ordinary, pious and uncritical devotee. In addition, with respect to what can be called "hierarchies of interpretation", i.e. the well-attested epistemologies and authorities within the tradition, Iqbal considered himself to be playing the role of a "critical student".[9] Furthermore, with respect to

[7] For example, a project in this vein is Muhammad Faruque's dissertation which (quite different from my current project but valuably in the field) is primarily historical-critical, and regularly focuses on "how well" Iqbal read a certain thinker or text, based on other, available historical commentaries and knowledge, about said thinker or text. See *The Labyrinth of Subjectivity: Constructions of the Self from Mullā Ṣadrā to Muḥammad Iqbāl,* at digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu. Accessed online on 10 Mar 2019.

[8] We realize that with any human being, there is often a distance between their self-description and their performed and visible modes of being. For reasons made clear in the Introduction, Ch.1, and the overview of this chapter, I am more interested in Iqbal's self-description, because I am interested in understanding him on his own terms, and looking for internal standards of coherence. In this respect, I am similar to a Hajj, Bucar, or Stalnaker.

[9] As I show below, on this specific level, there was no difference in the way that Iqbal related to a Ghazzālī or a Kant. Iqbal readers sometime equates this "critical student" role with the entirety of Iqbal's relationship either to the Islamic tradition or to Western thought. In the information yielded by my inquiry, there is only one genuine exception to this distinction: Rūmī, who is still a figure firmly placed within the classical "hierarchies of

what can be called the "proximate community", i.e. the actual bodies and embodied practices of the Muslims around him, Iqbal saw himself as a socially rousing/energizing voice responding to an enervated socio-political condition.[10] In addition, an attitude of "master-disciple relation" was directed from Iqbal not towards any group or text, but towards the famous Islamic figure, Rūmī.

In other words, Iqbal's attitudes towards aspects of his religious tradition can be arranged by distinguishing between the various attitudinal objects listed above. We now turn to understand each of these functions in detail.

i) Iqbal's Uncritical Obedience Towards "Canon"

Coming to the first of Iqbal's tradition-directed functions: let us begin with what I, for brevity's sake, call "canon": under this are the Qurʾān,[11] the "creed", and the "ritual practices" or what can be more accurately called, per a more classical Islamic register, the *ʿibādāt*.[12] Let us unpack these categories and show how Iqbal had an attitude of uncritical devotion towards each of them. This means that Iqbal's desired attitude towards all three of these "objects" was one of asymmetrical obedience and receptivity. With respect to them, not only did he consider himself an undistinguished and ordinary believer, but additionally, he allowed them to work upon him

interpretation", but whom Iqbal treats wholly uncritically, more similar to the way that he treats canon. I come back to this point later in this chapter.

[10] These are my shorthands, purely for the sake of brevity. In expanding upon these terms, I use Iqbal's own, more detailed words about himself.

[11] One could make a case that *ḥadīth* literature also falls within this "canon". However there is nowhere near as much mention of *ḥadīth* as the Qur'ān within Iqbal's work. Some glimpses of Iqbal's devotional attitude to hadīth may be found in: i) His essay "Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry" (Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 157-159) where Iqbal simply quotes two *ḥadīth* without comment on their authenticity, and structures his classification of poetry in accordance with these *aḥadīth* which are assumed to provide a "literary ideal". More examples of this kind appear in *The Reconstruction,* esp. ii) pp. 135-137 (Iqbal's criticism of modern "historical criticism" approaches to *ḥadīth*); iii) pp. 122-123 (Iqbal's quotation of *a ḥadīth* without giving commentary, but it is obvious that his subsequent thoughts are shaped by these *aḥadīth*). Ultimately the reason I have not included *ḥadīth* as a separate category within "canon" is that they are spoken about a lot more sparsely, but where they are, Iqbal's attitude is still within this devotional ethos (see all of the above examples). In addition, Iqbal's uncritical devotion towards the *person* of Prophet Muhammad is already contained within his devotional attitude towards creed, many examples of which are given below in this chapter. For yet another example of how greatly Iqbal esteemed the Prophet as part and parcel of his religious devotion, the reader may consult Iqbal's famous Urdu poem, *Jawāb-i Shikwā* ("Answer to the Complaint"). This poem comes as God's rejoinder to Iqbal's other poem *Shikwā* ("Complaint") which is, as the title suggests, a human complaint before God for His perceived injustices towards Muslims. Iqbal's God repeatedly exhorts Muslims to be loyal to Muhammad. Indeed the capstone of God's answer is (in my translation from the Urdu): "If you are loyal to Muhammad, I am yours/ What is this world? The Divine Decree is yours". See *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl, Urdū:* The Complete Works of Iqbal in Urdu, ed. Ahmad Raza (Lahore: Sa'ādat Press, 2005), pp. 227-237.

[12] I use this term in the sense that much traditional Islamic discourse uses it, i.e. as one side of a distinction between *ʿibādāt* and *muʿāmalāt.* As *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* notes, the former refers to "acts of ritual worship such as prayer or fasting", or a person's duties towards God as distinct from the latter which involves various kinds of intercourse among people. See "Muamalat." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. , edited by John L. Esposito. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1564 (accessed 22-Aug-2019).

and change him (often in painful ways) without allowing himself the same privilege in the opposite direction.

Coming first to the Qurʾān, we should recall that, on a personal level, Iqbal performed regular devotional practices towards the Holy Book. Biographers and hagiographers have noted his daily ritual of sitting with the Qurʾān before and after the *fajr*. This kind of supra-obligatory "reading", was probably shaped in relation to unique events from Iqbal's youth. His father Nur Muhammad was an "illiterate" tailor but a pious and charismatic individual,[13] who had impressed upon his son the paramount importance of maintaining an intimate personal relationship with the Qurʾān, and told him: "read the Qurʾān as if it is being revealed to you yourself; as if God Himself is speaking to you", which left an impression on Iqbal till his death. [14]

Exhibiting this devotional ethos publicly, Iqbal drew the line at letting a historical-critical academic method encroach upon his uncritical devotion towards the Qurʾān. Ghulam Mustafa Khan highlights a telling episode in this regard. At an annual symposium of the prestigious Forman Christian College in Lahore, Iqbal was asked how a "lettered man" like himself could "really believe" in the plausibility of the view that the Qurʾānic revelation had come down, syllable for syllable, to Muhammad.

Iqbal retorted: "Dr. Lochs, "belief"? This is experience. If entire lines of poetry can come even to a lowly person like me as they are, then to the Prophet himself, peace and blessings be upon him, why can the verses of the Glorious Qurʾān not come as they are?"[15] Wahiduddin then elaborates, that Iqbal was often distressed and irritated by attempts to systematize or even to translate the Qurʾān. On one occasion, Iqbal explicitly stated that the illiterate believer who did not know Arabic but recited the Qurʾān faithfully and tried to live up to its moral exhortations, was more worthy of respect than a scholar who was trying to rationalize an "exceedingly delicate and subtle affair" into a systematic "philosophical or theological composition".[16] As I discuss below, Iqbal did not see his relationship with the Qurʾān as a systematization or interpretation of Qurʾānic words, themes or motifs but as a devotee's attempt to make himself accord with the Qurʾān to the best of his limited ability.[17]

While these biographical "details" do indicate a general attitude of devotion towards the Qurʾān, fortunately we also have Iqbal's words from his texts, reaffirming the above impressions. One good example is the concluding prayer of his Persian poetic work *Rumūz-i Bēkhudī* ("The Mysteries of Selflessness"). The thrust of this work is social, but Iqbal ends this work with a return to the deeply personal: a prayer to God and an attached request to the Prophet Muḥammad

[13] Sevea, pp. 15-17.
[14] Khan, *Iqbāl Aur Qurʾān,* pp. 6-8.
[15] Ibid., pp. 18-19.
[16] Ibid., 18-19; 20.
[17] Notice, in *the Reconstruction,* the persistence of the language of conformity and accordance when it comes to the Qurʾān, rather than an attempt to analyze the Qurʾān or systematize the meanings of verses. For example: Plato's instrumentalization of the senses/materiality is judged as "how unlike the spirit of the Qurʾān!" (3-4); it is assumed that Iqbal's analysis of modern theories of religious experience will be "following the clue furnished by the Qurʾān" (25); similarly the idea of a fixed universe begins to be criticized by Iqbal because it is "alien to the Qurʾānic outlook" (44).

that his own existence be annihilated before "a single utterance of mine contains anything *ghayr-i Qurʾān*" (lit.: "other than/of the Qurʾān").[18] He further recommends a list of tortures to be administered by the Prophet to him, if he were to even hide in his heart, anything "other than the Qurʾān". [19]

This deep fear of straying from the Qurʾān is more than rhetorical flourish, and it manifests in other places. For example, in one polemical essay, Iqbal's ire towards his intellectual and political opponent centers on a difference of attitudes towards the Qurʾān.[20] Hence Iqbal observes that Maulana Husain Ahmad (who was a critic of the two-nation theory that facilitated the creation of Pakistan) has attempted to justify his political views on the bases of a fine-grained "philological and verbal distinction between [the words] *qawm* and *millat*"[21] as they occur in the Qurʾān, and from the vantage point of a "learned Arabic litterateur".[22] Iqbal then suggests and models what he thinks is a better approach, i.e. to "consult" and "obey" the Qurʾān rather than attempting to analyze it or determine its meanings.[23] What Iqbal then garners is that the Qurʾān commands that the communal binding force for Muslims qua Muslims, be the unity of God Himself and the final prophethood of Muhammad, and no other force. Iqbal then sketches out what he thinks are the implications of this Qurʾānic command in a modern sociopolitical context, but criticizes Husain Ahmad's approach. Moreover, Iqbal highlights his personal fallibility as a reader repeatedly, and admits that he is not a "master of Arabic" like his opponent. However, a laymanʾs reception of the Qurʾān based on personal encounter with the scripture, which he believes is the fallible best that he can do, is to him clearly still a better approach than linguistic analysis or in his sharper words, "philological quibbling."[24]

Reiterating this same sentiment in areas of his Urdū poetry, Iqbal criticizes those legalistic scholars who would attempt to bring themselves to bear over the Qurʾān or Qurʾānic words without allowing the Qurʾān to act upon them, as in the following verse [below is my translation from the Urdū]:

> They do not change themselves, but they would change the Qurʾān;
> Ah! How futile are these legal scholars [*faqīhān*] of the sacred! [25]

In the same vein, yet another example of Iqbal's attitude towards the Qurʾān appears in *The Reconstruction*, over a verse which becomes important for Iqbal's vision of Divine Creativity, which in turn is important for his vision of *khudī*. I explain the concerns of this vision of Divine

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[18] For the full prayer, see Iqbal, *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl, Fārsi:* The Complete Works of Iqbal in Persian (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1994), pp. 211-217. For this particular statement, see p. 213.
[19] Ibid., 214.
[20] In Chapter 4, I discuss Iqbal's views on society. Here, I simply wish to point out Iqbal's attitude towards the Qurʾān.
[21] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* p. 304.
[22] Ibid, 306.
[23] Ibid., pp. 306-7.
[24] Ibid., 304.
[25] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 534. The ethos of the whole poem is that an inability to submit completely to God's word, i.e. the Qurʾān, leads to a degrading slavishness before the world.

Creativity in the next chapter, but here I simply wish to finish our sketch of Iqbal's attitude towards the Qurʾān.

Thus, additionally, reading carefully those moments in *The Reconstruction* where Iqbal is discussing Divine Creativity, we cannot miss that a peculiar relation of concepts seems to be moulding Iqbal's vision of Divine Creativity. In the most transparent of these moments, Iqbal quotes the Qurʾān, 17: 85, and reminds us that the relation drawn in this verse between two words, *amr* and *khalq*, is impossible to translate, as are the words themselves. Iqbal is deeply impressed by the fact that the Qurʾān brings together two aspects of Divine Creativity, i.e. what can be called "creation" (the fact of being made) and "direction" (the guiding of what is made), which are ordinarily seen as separate "events".[26] When we look at other places in *The Reconstruction* where Iqbal discusses Divine Creativity even without quoting this verse, it is difficult to miss its implicit presence. The longest such deliberation comes in Chapter III.[27] To anyone who has missed Iqbal's awe at the Qurʾānic *amr* and *khalq* vision, the way that Iqbal is organizing his thoughts on Divine Creativity in this chapter will be purely eclectic. Continuously repeated here, is that a separation between "manufactured article" and "maker" is erroneous when discussing God's "Creative Activity",[28] and furthermore, that such separation is a product of the "narrow vision of our finite minds".[29] Then, Iqbal admires and challenges various historical iterations of this conceptual cleft between "manufactured" and "maker". Simultaneously, he keeps repeating the assertion that God's "Creativeness" cannot be cleaved in such a way.[30] Why does Iqbal mould his thoughts on Divine Creativity in this manner? It is as impossible for me to get into Iqbal's mind as anyone else, but given Iqbal's statements about his Qurʾān fidelity which I have quoted above, and Iqbal's reception of the above verse, it is likely that Iqbal is trying to remain close to what he receives as a uniquely, untranslatably Qurʾānic vision of this Creativity. It is also worth noting that Iqbal is more interested in the untranslatability and novelty of this Qurʾānic *amr-khalq* vision than (to borrow his own words) "philological quibbling". He does not share with his readers exactly how his personal reception of this verse informs his articulation of Divine Creativity. However, what is likely is that he is trying to make his thoughts and words accord with a vision of Divine Creativity that he has received from this verse. If there is any other reason for Iqbal's choice to describe Divine Creativity as an inseparable relation between "manufactured article" and "maker", I have not been able to see it.

This range of Iqbalian statements, verses, and biographical episodes/practices give us a snapshot of the uncritical and devotional attitude that Iqbal had towards the Qurʾān. Iqbal was not a *mufassir* (exegete) or even an analytical student when it came to the Qurʾān, and he even openly declared as much.[31] His attitude towards it was uncritically devotional and he himself considered

[26] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 82-3.
[27] Ibid., pp. 52-62.
[28] Ibid., esp. p. 52 where he first makes this distinction.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., pp. 54-60.
[31] Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 534.

it to be borne out of intimate personal experience.[32] Again, this should not be mistakenly seen as a devaluation by Iqbal of the personal relationship between any ordinary believer and the Qurʾān. In fact, as conveyed by all of Iqbal's words above, it is far from certain that Iqbal assigned a scholarly or analytical function (directed towards the Qurʾān) any more weight than the sincere devotional struggles of the ordinary and failure-prone devotee.[33] In fact, for Iqbal, the scholarly-analytic reader might be as prone to errors and failure in approaching the Qurʾān properly, if not more so.

Another attitudinal object of Iqbal's uncritical devotion was what we may call the "creed". By this we mean creedal beliefs which would be part of Sunni Islamic traditions. Unfortunately no more precise specification can be given, for reasons particular to the way that creedal formulae were shaped in Islamic history; "[n]o credal statement has been accepted even by all Sunnī Muslims as the standard account of Islamic dogma".[34] Notwithstanding the stable-but-fluid nature of Islamic creedal formulae, the point here is that there were some "objects" of belief other than the Qurʾān, to which Iqbal was similarly, uncritically devoted. Different scholars try to capture this aspect of Iqbal, differently. For example, Annemarie Schimmel has made the case that Iqbal's devotional relationship to the Islamic creed can be represented by gathering Iqbal's religious articulations according to the *īmān-i mufaṣṣal* formula.[35] This is a creedal formula upheld by many Muslims, [36] specifically an attestation that one believes in: God, His angels, His revealed books, His messengers, the Day of Judgment, and in the determination of what is good and evil by God, and in life after death.

A prominent Islamicist, Ira Lapidus, has made a similar observation about Iqbal's devotion to creed, albeit more minimalistically describing this layer of belief as an instance of the "allegiance of Muslims to the symbols of Islam".[37] In the same volume (edited by Lapidus), David Gilmartin then expands on this idea by describing it as Iqbal's devotion to the Muslim "inheritance" and the "simple confession of faith", "not tied to the overlordship of monarch of

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[32] For a useful discussion of the category of the "personal" in Iqbal's relationship to the Qurʾān, see Ahmad Afzaal, "Iqbal's Approach to the Qur'ān" in *Muhammad Iqbal: A Contemporary,* Eds. Muhammad Suheyl Umar and Basit Bilal Koshul (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2010), pp. 7-24. The central point of Afzaal's inquiry is that Iqbal's preferred mode of engaging with the Qurʾān, not just for himself but for other ordinary Muslims, was to "take the initiative by aligning themselves as much as possible with the demands and imperatives of the Qur'ān" rather than attempting to "fix" or "excavate" meanings (Afzaal, 15).

[33] See Khan, *Iqbāl Aur Qurʾān,* pp. 18-19; 20.

[34] Watt, W. Montgomery, "ʿAḳīda", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 01 May 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0037>

[35] Schimmel's *Gabriel's Wing* (Leiden: Brill, 1963) models this framework by organizing the dogmatic aspects of Iqbal's thought according to the *imān-i mufaṣṣal* formula, rather than suggesting her own scheme. See Schimmel, pp. 202-306, for a detailed overview of Iqbal's creedal fidelity as organized by this Islamic creedal formula.

[36] As L. Gardet notes, this combination of belief-objects varies slightly by legal school, region and author. However, its contents overlap significantly and have been upheld by Muslims over the centuries. See L. Gardet, "Īmān" (see esp. subheading II. "The contents of faith"), in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 01 May 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0370>

[37] Ira Lapidus, "Islamic Political Movements: Patterns of Historical Change", in *Islam, Politics and Social Movements*, Eds. Burke and Lapidus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 9.

priest, of politician or ‘alim, but to the awareness by individual Muslims of their own special heritage and identity”.[38] Both Lapidus and Gilmartin’s statements on Iqbal cite Riffat Burki’s article “Iqbal and Tauhid”, which also highlights Iqbal’s irritation over “the ritualists and theologians who have made the word ‘Tauhid’ the subject of scholastic hairsplitting”.[39]

Scholars like Schimmel, Lapidus, Gilmartin and Burki provide well-evidenced overviews of Iqbal’s creedal devotion. If we are to take Iqbal’s explicit words defining what he constitutes as creed, this would be the belief in the Oneness of God and the Finality of Muhammad’s Prophethood. Thus Iqbal writes:

> As long as person is loyal to the two basic principles of Islam, i.e. the Unity of God and Finality of the Holy Prophet, not even the strictest *mullah* can turn him outside the pale of Islam, even though his interpretations of the Law or of the text of the Quran are believed to be erroneous.[40]

An example of Iqbal’s creedal-devotional intensity comes in the form of Iqbal’s own words locating himself against the Ahmadis of his time.[41] Here Iqbal displays a more expanded pushback of the kind that he had had against Dr. Lochs over the Qurʾān. For Iqbal, his back-and-forth with Ahmadi thinkers is not a question of critically analyzing, interpreting or even proving the finality of Muhammad’s prophethood. It is a question of beginning from the presupposition that this finality *is*, and then building a polemic upon, and in support of, this settled premise. Hence Iqbal clarifies that “the Finality of Prophethood” is a “proposition” of “simple faith”,[42] which is upheld by any “orthodox Muslim”,[43] and crossing which “line of demarcation” is outside the bounds of this faith.[44] Hence Iqbal’s long and explicit statement that “freedom of interpretation” is only possible within certain “frontiers” which are to be “jealously guarded”.[45]

In addition to Qurʾān and creed, one more attitudinal “object” to which Iqbal emphasized an uncritical devotion are what can be called, in a classical Islamic register, the *ʿibādāt.* These are the ritualistic and bodily practices which must be performed by any ordinary believer. Iqbal most explicitly describes this aspect of his faith in two ways: as his being *sharīʿat pāband* or “sharīʿat-fettered”[46] and as his adherence to the “five practices” of his faith in addition to the creedal

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[38] David Gilmartin, “The Shahidganj Mosque Incident: A Prelude to Pakistan”, Ibid., pp. 153-154.

[39] Riffat Burki, “Iqbal and Tauhid”, *Iqbal Review* vol. 14, no.3 (1973). Consulted online on 01 May 2019 <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct73/2.htm#_edn1>

[40] Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings of Iqbal,* Edited and compiled by Latif Ahmad Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2015), 116; 233.

[41] See “Part III: Iqbal and Qadianism” in Ibid., pp. 197-240.

[42] Ibid., 219.

[43] Ibid., 223.

[44] Ibid., 210.

[45] Ibid., 220.

[46] See the poem “Asceticism and Drunkenness” (*Zuhd Aur Rindī)* in Iqbal, Urdu Kullīyāt, pp. 91-92, where Iqbal describes a religious scholar as being irritated with Iqbal because he is so “*sharīʿat-pāband*” and “drowned in the *rāg-i-ʿibādāt* (the tune of ritual worship)” and yet, not averse to “disbelievers” and “body-sellers”. Iqbal accepts this charge and thanks the gentleman for reminding him to abide by the path of the *sharīʿat*. Iqbal does not challenge the assertion that he is “*sharīʿat* -fettered” but reaffirms it in his response to his co-religionist.

propositions of unity of God and Finality of Muhammad's Prophethood.[47] For readers interested in a detailed overview of Iqbal's many statements on this issue: Annemarie Schimmel has described this aspect of Iqbal as "his being deeply faithful to the obligations of religious law" and as his devotion to the "five pillars" of Islam[48], and that Iqbal uncompromisingly emphasized the performance of the five-time daily prayer, fasting, paying the alms-tax, and the pilgrimage.[49]

Some examples of Iqbal's own words sharply convey his attitude towards these ritualistic and practical acts of worship. Iqbal does not seek to interrogate, rationalize or reinterpret these practices, even in cases where he suffers their "harshness". For example, in some Urdū poems referencing his time in Europe, he laments his own difficulty with maintaining modesty of gaze around "Western beauties" (women). However, he does not question or seek to redefine the tough ritual constraints imposed upon him by his tradition. Instead, he focuses on his personal weaknesses and vulnerabilities as a striving devotee, who can barely "keep afloat my ship of heart" amidst such temptations.[50] Similarly, while commenting upon the obligatory prayers in *The Reconstruction,* Iqbal says that these prayers are a constant interruption of everyday life and of the necessities of "sleep and business", but does not suggest any reevaluation of their obligation. In fact, beginning from the assumption that they *must* be performed, Iqbal then focuses on explaining why such interruption of everyday life is actually beneficial for a human being.[51]

We have sketched Iqbal's devotional attitude towards the aforementioned elements of tradition that I call "canon" (i.e. the Qurʾān, creed and ritual practices). This is distinct from a second function that Iqbal identified for himself. We now turn to understand this function which Iqbal identified as his "critical student" role.

ii) The "Critical Student" Function

Iqbal's own words carve out the space for this function by distinguishing himself from both a "teacher" and an "expounder"; i.e. from an exemplar who actualizes "in his own life the ideals which he places before others", and from an "expounder" whose function is to "explain all the various aspects of the principles he expounds and works with certain presuppositions, the truth of which he never questions". According to Iqbal, Iqbal qua critical student is none of the above. Instead, his critical student function is described by Iqbal as that of an "observer"[52] whose basic role is "to understand how the various elements in a given structure fit in with one another".[53] It is an attempt to assess how coherent a unit of thought[54] is, "how each factor [within it] functions

[47] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* p. 238.
[48] Schimmel, 76.
[49] Ibid., pp. 86-191.
[50] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 371.
[51] Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* p. 87.
[52] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* p. 98. Iqbal's analogy here is of a biologist looking at one specific "form of life" or a "geologist" at "a piece of mineral".
[53] Ibid., pp. 98-99.
[54] It is not a systematic representation of a particular thinker's work in its entirety. Hence, I use the phrase "a unit of thought". It is an attempt to judge a very specific part of an idea, or a scheme of ideas, which serves Iqbal's own broader inquiry at any given moment.

individually, and how their relation with one another determines the functional value of the whole"[55] and to learn from a particular thinker or text's successes or shortcomings in this regard. In the essay that Iqbal explicitly identifies this role for himself, he is trying to glean two or three "basic propositions" about what "Islam as a moral and political ideal" might look like,[56] by relying on segments of various sources, ranging from classical legal minds like Ṭurṭūshī[57] to some statements of modern Afghani political leaders e.g. the "late Amir Abdur Rahman of Afghanistan".[58]

While this is the place that Iqbal is most transparent about his "critical student" function, he performs this function in the way that he has described it above, in other places and especially throughout *The Reconstruction*. In fact, the preface of this work echoes Iqbal's "critical student" self-description, ending with a call to "watch the progress of human thought, and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it".[59] Examples are too numerous to elaborate fully, and appear every couple of pages in this work. One instance very early on is where Iqbal is trying to understand the nature of religious experience and asking about the limits of human rationality. In doing so, he tries to learn from Ghazzālī and Kant. While the contents of Iqbal's findings are not relevant here, what is significant is *how* he speaks of both thinkers. If we were to cut out the names "Ghazzālī" and "Kant" from this passage, it would be difficult to tell from Iqbal's treatment, which one is being discussed. Hence Kant is described as having had an "almost apostolic" intellectual contribution, exactly as is Ghazzālī. Simultaneously, both Kant and Ghazzālī are described as "failing" in their (perceived) endeavor to "draw a line of cleavage between thought and intuition".[60] The point is that no special deference or even epistemological weight is extended to the great Islamic thinker in Iqbal's "critical student" role, whereby he tries to assess the merits and demerits of a small "structure" of thought on a given question. In a similar vein, consider also the structure of the following assessment from Iqbal, in which he has no trouble grouping together otherwise quite different thinkers from different eras: "The alternative concept of Divine knowledge…is how Jalaluddin Dawwani, Iraqi and in our own time Professor Royce conceived of God's knowledge".[61] This kind of assessment appears every couple of pages, if not every page, of *The Reconstruction.*

On this level of a "critical student", there is no difference in the way Iqbal treats a classical Islamic thinker or a modern Western philosopher. Here Iqbal is not concerned with "loyalty" to the "object" of his intellectual energies, but with deriving benefit for his inquiry. He is not concerned with accurately representing the entirety of a given thinker's thought, but with learning from them what he can in the service of his own questions at any given moment. This "critical student" role does not obfuscate the aforementioned fact that there *are* aspects of

[55] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings*, p. 98.
[56] Ibid., 115.
[57] Ibid., 113.
[58] Ibid., 106.
[59] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* "Preface", p. xlvi.
[60] Ibid., pp. 4-5.
[61] Ibid., 63.

tradition to which Iqbal *was* uncritically devoted (i.e. Qurʾān, creed and ritual ʿ*ibādāt*), that he refused to instrumentalize, and which have been demarcated by him.

We now turn to understand one important and singular exception to the above functions, which cannot be neatly placed either within the uncritical obedience to canon, or within the function of a critical student.

iii) Rūmī as "Master": Between Canon and Critical Student?

This section briefly[62] sketches Iqbal's "disciple" function, which he directed towards Rūmī. The famous persona of Jalāluddīn Rūmī is an "object" of Iqbal's energies who is unique because he does not sit either within the canonical devotion function or the critical student function, but seems to fall somewhere in between. I make this claim because while there is no evidence, biographical or textual, to suggest that Iqbal deified Rūmī or equated Rūmī's commands to scripture, creed or ritual worship, simultaneously, Iqbal clearly does *not* treat Rūmī with the "critical student" gaze that he treats other (equally illustrious) "big names" of classical Islamic thought (e.g. Ghazzālī). Iqbal never criticizes Rūmī or uses words like "error" or "failure" with respect to him. Iqbal offers up his own unwavering obedience and loyalty to Rūmī in a way that he does not extend to any other classical Islamic thinker of equally grand stature. There are many examples of Iqbal's unwavering obedience before Rūmī which need not be detailed for our purposes but the most explicit of which are: i) Iqbal's famous bilingual poem *Pīr-o-Murīd* in which Iqbal clearly identifies himself as disciple (*murīd)* and Rūmī as master (*pīr),* from whom Iqbal seeks guidance on pressing ethical and existential dilemmas and whose guidance Iqbal does not question or interrogate;[63] ii) Iqbal's long statement in his central poetic work *Asrār-i Khudī* explaining how "the Master of Rūm transmuted my earth to gold";[64] iii) throughout Iqbal's long dramatic-narrative poem, the *Javīd Nāmeh,* where Rūmī is not only identified, again, as the master but also as one who is now guiding Iqbal's journeys through various celestial spheres, whereby Iqbal's many inadequacies reveal the patience of the master.[65] These moments all display the attitude of uncritical obedience and receptivity that Iqbal had towards Rūmī.

Yet it is also worth remembering that Iqbal does not give us anything resembling a textual exegesis of Rūmī's works, despite being fluent in Persian. We do not have access to the relationship between Iqbal and Rūmī's texts, or, why Rūmī in particular is selected by Iqbal to be his master. However, we cannot ignore the obvious fact that the master-disciple relationship that Iqbal envisions between himself and Rūmī is different from his relationship with any other classical authority. At the same time, it would be an unwarranted conclusion that Rūmī is

[62] This section (Rūmī) and the previous one ("Critical Student") are brief, because the contents of Iqbal's self-descriptions here are largely the same, even though copiously set forth. Longer sections, are longer, because more ideas which are different from each other, are being conveyed.

[63] Iqbal, "*Pīr-o-Murīd*", in Urdū Kullīyāt (2005); pp 462-472.

[64] Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i-Khudī),* trans. By R.A. Nicholson; pp. 8-9.

[65] See Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt pp. 601-832 but esp. p. 632 for this statement. In fact the contrast that Iqbal presents here between his inadequacy and Rumi's graceful patience is even sharper, because Iqbal calls Rumi a constant "martyr" and a "witness" (*shahīd*) to his own multiple inadequacies.

accorded something like Divine status in Iqbal's thought, especially given Iqbal's fidelity to creed which has been noted by multiple scholars and attested to by Iqbal's own words, as I have discussed above. Thus, while we cannot justifiably place Rūmī on the same level of Iqbalian devotion as the Qurʾān, creed, or ritual practices, we cannot place Rūmī on the level of any other classical authority, or within the "critical student" role, either. Iqbal's own words locating himself as a disciple or *murīd* of Rūmī are the most appropriate here, because they carve out a unique niche for the Persian master within the more general patterns of Iqbal's tradition-relationality.

Finally, a fourth function that Iqbal identified for himself was directed at the bodies and embodied practices of the living Muslims around him (these are neither canon, nor master, nor any classical or historical authority). This role can be succinctly described as that of a rousing or energizing voice who was responding to the enervated socio-political condition of his religious community. Forgive the clumsy shorthand "rousing voice", because Iqbal does not use one but many (Urdū /Persian) variants of "voice" to describe this aspect of himself, which I will list below. Also recall that while Iqbal's devotee function comes to the fore roughly equally in both his poetry and prose (as conveyed in the examples above), and his critical student function comes to the fore most evidently in his prose (mainly in his essays and in *The Reconstruction*, as seen above),[66] the "rousing voice" function comes to the fore most evidently in Iqbal's poetry, some examples of which are shared below.[67] Now we turn to understand this final, socially rousing function.

iv) Iqbal's Function as a Socially Rousing Voice

In coming to an understanding of this fourth function, it is important to know that Iqbal states clearly that there are not one but two major types of poetry which are differentiated by their functions and effects within the poet's social group. The short English essay where this is stated is very much worth perusing in entirety,[68] but its main claim is that poetry, and also art in general, is to be classified by its communal or social effects.[69] Thus, for Iqbal there is a kind of

[66] Although there are (less frequent) places in his poetry where he is, in the same breath, simultaneously critical and appreciative of Western thinkers (e.g. see his poem *Nietzsche* in Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 405-406, where he calls the German thinker both a "believer at heart and a disbeliever in mind"; and a tyrannical Nimrod, whose fire is nevertheless purifying for those who are like Abraham).

[67] Likewise, Iqbal's "rousing voice" function does express itself, albeit less frequently, in his spoken prose. Consider for example his famous Allahabad Presidential Address of 1930 which was delivered to the 25th session of the All-India Muslim League (See *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 3-29). While clearly delivered for a select group of the political elite, and as such containing "academic discussion" over political theorists like Rousseau, this address still frames itself as benefitting "the Muslims of India" at large and at "bringing clearly to [the] consciousness" of the political elite what "should determine the general character" of their "decision-making" (p.3). Tropes of the political enervation of Muslims and the potential for communal revitalization permeate this address in a way that will be recognizable to readers of Iqbal's socio-political poetry.

[68] See Iqbal, "Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry", in *Speeches, Statements and Writings* (2015).

[69] The vague terms "communal" and "social" are being used here deliberately, because Iqbal's answer to the question: "What is a social group?" is quite complex and requires an entire Chapter (Ch. 5 of this dissertation) to detail satisfactorily. For now, the reader should bracket the question of how social groups are defined and

poetry which is "enervating" and another kind which is "vitalising". The "enervating" type is described as containing "heart-rending moans" over "wine and love" which "appeals more to imagination than to will, and on the whole acts as a narcotic on the mind of the reader". On the other hand, the "healthful and vitalizing" type of poetry is described as "that which awakens" and "nerves us to face the trials of life" rather than "bringing drowsiness". Such poetry, rather than "shutting our eyes to the reality around", even has the capacity to "idealize the pain of honorable labor", struggle and toil in this world. Iqbal then ends this essay with his famous statement that "there should be no opium-eating in Art. The dogma of Art for the sake of Art is a clever invention of decadence to cheat us out of life and power". Hence Iqbal finally gives his own normative assessment and declares that "art is subordinate to life, not superior to it".[70]

This statement about two major kinds of poetry is not a one-time occurrence or anomaly in Iqbal's work. He reiterates this distinction between two kinds of poetry, for example, in his assessment of two great Persian poets, Ḥāfiẓ andʿUrfī. It is not for our purposes here to perform a literary-critical analysis of how justified Iqbal is in his assessments. What is worth noting is that the *criteria* upon which he differentiates between the two is consistent with the essay quoted above: Ḥāfiẓ is not just criticized but declared "harmful" because he is so beautifully and powerfully enervating, that he could even "lull the chaos of the Day of Judgment",[71] whereas ʿUrfī is praised by Iqbal for his perceived capacity to highlight and beautify struggle.[72] And one of Iqbal's Urdū quatrains expresses quite compactly, that "to the dwellers of the streets" he recites poetry which is "exhilarating, joy-inducing and full of burning" and that he does not "sit like a flower, waiting for the morning breeze".[73]

It is noteworthy that despite being a poet lauded for his artistic and literary merits, the way that Iqbal himself chooses to categorize poetry is distinctive, and as referred above. As it turns out, with reference to himself as a poet, Iqbal sees his work as cast within the socially "vitalising" mould. This is helpful, because it aids us in seeing how Iqbal's third function within "tradition-relation" is distinct. For him, it is a separate kind of activity, in which one individual possessing poetic talent has a particular effect on his community, and not a kind of activity in which the individual submits to an authority, or briefly interrogates a source of knowledge on a particular question.

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demarcated for Iqbal. However a social unit or group may be defined for the reader, for Iqbal, the poet falls into one of two broad categories with respect to what he does within that group.

[70] Iqbal, "Our Prophet's Criticism", pp. 158-159.

[71] For a condensed overview of Iqbal's opinions on Ḥāfiẓ andʿUrfī, see Yusuf Husain Khan, *Ḥāfiẓ aur Iqbāl* (Na'ī Dihlī: Ghālib Akaidmī, 1976), pp. 12-16; 24-25. Khan usefully uncovers a series of Iqbal's opinions on Hāfiz by quoting both Iqbal's epistolary correspondences and controversial (for that time) Iqbalian criticisms of Hāfiz from the first edition of Iqbal's work *Asrār-i Khudī* (these criticisms of Ḥāfiẓ were omitted in later editions, and even in Nicholson's introduction to the translation of his student's work, which both confirmed the reality of these Iqbalian criticisms and attempted to protect Iqbal's reputation among the Ḥāfiẓ-adoring litterateurs). The gist of these Iqbalian assessments has been described above, but readers may consult Khan's work for more substantive detail on this Ḥāfiẓ /ʿUrfī contrast. The quote about Ḥāfiẓ having a weakening effect so great that it could lull the Judgment Day, is from these (later) omitted verses of the *Asrār-i Khudī.*

[72] Yusuf Husain Khan, pp. 14-15.

[73] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 415.

Thus, Iqbal gives himself and his "rousing voice" activity many names: he calls himself a *nālā* ("complaint"),[74] *navā* ("tune"/ "song"),[75] *ghalghalā* ("uproar"),[76] *fughān* ("shout"/ "cry"),[77] *ṣadā* ("call"),[78] *tarānā* ("melody"/ "chant"),[79] and *valvalā* ("ringing"/ "reverberation")[80]. The social "we" to which his "rousing voice-ness" is directed is not fixed and keeps expanding and contracting (the reasons for which are not arbitrary and which become clear in Ch. 5). However what is important here is that Iqbal's proximate co-religionists of flesh and blood are always included in this permeable "we", and for our purposes in this chapter it is relevant *how* Iqbal's "rousing voice" function applies itself to these co-religionists. This is now illustrated with a cross-range of most relevant examples from both Iqbal's early poetic works (before 1905) and his later works (after 1908).[81]

An early poem titled *Zuhd Aur Rindī* ("Asceticism and Drunkenness")[82] is a symbol of Iqbal's "rousing voice" function, because it aptly illustrates a posture of simultaneous self-assertion and self-deprecation that marks this role; we see an unabashed confidence in his own power as a poet alongside a frank acknowledgment of his own moral failings. A well-respected "*maulvī ṣāhab*" (a highly religious man) who lives in Iqbal's street complains that his neighbor is "well-acquainted with the religious law" and appears to possess a "youth devoid of any stains" and yet a philosopher, unwilling to condemn non-Muslims and prostitutes as disbelievers (*kāfir*). Iqbal's response is meaningful for its sense of both physical and tradition-specific location. Not only is the religious man a literal neighbor who has the right to "complain by way of love", but this neighbor's advice to abide strictly by the religious law "is your right by way of closeness of location" (*haqq zi rāh-i qurb-i makānī*). Yet simultaneously, Iqbal does not shy away from

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[74] Ibid., p. 453 for example where Iqbal calls himself a "*nālā-yi nīm shab"* (a moaning complaint of the half-passed night).

[75] See Ibid., p. 345, the highly self-descriptive *ghazal* starting with *merī navā…* ("My tune…") which also contains the next two descriptors.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.,

[79] Ibid., 186.

[80] Ibid., pp. 534-535, see the poem starting *mai banda-i nādān hūn* ("I am a foolish man (of God)…")

[81] In general, post-1908 is seen as Iqbal's "European return period" or "later period" insofar as "From 1908 onwards, Iḳbāl lived in Lahore". Cf. Annemarie Schimmel, "Iḳbāl", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 07 August 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3511>
First published online: 2012

[82] *Rind* and *rindī* are notoriously difficult terms to translate. More generally in Urdu and Persian literature, this term can also mean a kind of subversively skeptical knave or rogue who is able to reveal truths that the "pious" overlook. In the poem, Iqbal has a sense of himself as morally unformed, and unsuccessful in his attempt to always be attentive to the religious law, which his co-religionist takes as an opportunity for correction. There is a subversive sense in the poem, but it is also true that Iqbal allows the pious man to correct him and accepts his own lapses in *sharīʿat-pābandī* as a genuine failing. Cf. J.T.P. de Bruijn, "Rind", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 07 August 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6300>
First published online: 2012

voicing his own complaint to his neighbor/ co-religionist that the latter's selfish "purpose is to increase the quantity of disciples", although he is famous for his purported piety. [83]

This example illustrates (on a smaller scale) Iqbal's dynamic posture of mutual correction with his co-religionist, which is a hallmark of his "rousing voice" function. It is neither submission nor utilization, but an intercourse in which both parties continue to have a transformative effect upon each other. While this is the *posture* of the socially rousing function, its desired "objects" and its *impetus* come to the fore in other areas of Iqbal's poetry. In these examples below, we see that Iqbal's voice is not an energizing or rousing for its own sake, but an attempt to strengthen a culturally and politically weakened religious community.

For example in an Urdū *ghazal*[84] where Iqbal contemplates his role as a poetic voice, he states that "Iqbal gave the Indian Muslim his own burning" although he was just a "lazy, self-indulgent man" (*mard-i tan-āsān*), but after all, only a lazy man could be of use to like people. Although this description echoes the playful, here we also see an "object" of this dynamism, i.e. the Indian Muslim. Moreover, these words in a poem with political (and even martial) imagery of a hue and cry beckoning to Iqbal in a dark night, asking him to "come to this battlefield like an unsheathed spear" and "awaken the gathering".[85] In yet another place, he remarks that he knows he is a mere "soldier of words" (*guftār kā ghāzī*) and not a "soldier in character" (*kirdār kā ghāzī*), displaying the same lack of pretentions about his own finitude, but simultaneously criticizing the purported "folk of faith" (*īmān wālay*) for their insufficiencies.[86]

In a similar vein in his Persian poetry, we see Iqbal expressing much the same ethos of vitalization directed towards a religious community. For example, in his introduction to his famous Persian work *Payām-i Mashriq* ("Message of the East"), Iqbal articulates that the social context towards which his poetry is framed is that "the East and especially the Islamic East has been in a stupor for centuries" out of which his words are an attempt at revitalization.[87] Iqbal also sees this attempt at "awakening" as grounded in a desire to abide by a verse of the Qurʾān, [88] which states that "God does not change the condition of a people unless they change it themselves".[89] Similarly, when we read Iqbal's Persian quatrains placed at the beginning of the same work, we see him describing himself as that *ṣadā* (call) and that *naghma* (song) because of which, "Persia found fire in its breast" and "the disordered mass became a caravan again."[90]

From this cross-section of examples we know that the "object" of Iqbal's "rousing voice" function, i.e. the proximate religious community consists not only of those who are geographically proximate (like his neighbors or even his countrymen) but also those who possess proximity to Iqbal by virtue of being his living co-religionists. This broadest scale of Iqbal's

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[83] Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 91-93.
[84] Ibid., 386. The poem begins "*mujhe āh-o fughān-i nīm shab, kā phir paighām āyā"* ("The hue and cry of a half-passed night, beckons me again")
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., p. 324, (*"masjid to banā dī…")*
[87] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 221-233.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Q. 13:11.
[90] Ibid., 278.

rousing voice function is then expressed most clearly in two more of his poems: the first with a negative emotional valence, and the second overwhelmingly positive. It is in these poems that the impetus of the rousing voice function can be felt and observed.

The first poem (*ay bād-i ṣabā*) opens by asking the morning breeze to convey Iqbal's message to the Prophet Muhammad that the Muslim *ummat* at present has lost its grasp of both this world and the next. Various poetic metaphors of enervation are then offered: a struggling wave in a tumultuous ocean; a raided caravan site; and a fragile drop that could have been hardened into a gem. After describing this depressing state of affairs, Iqbal offers his own salutary contribution, i.e. to be a *ṣadā* (call). The poet himself is taken aback that "this *ṣadā*, it is coming from Iqbal's lips" and yet, it has enough power to "make the gathering restless again" of whose listlessness and enervation he had initially complained. In this process of lamenting before the Prophet Muhammad, Iqbal also receives the reply that he should stay steadfast and not complain of the time that it will take to achieve the revitalizing effect which he desires.[91]

The second example (*tarānā-yi millī)* presents almost a mirror image of the above poem. Instead of a complaint about the Muslim community[92] being enervated both in terms of worldly and religious attainments, Iqbal presents an inspiring ideal of what this community *should* look like. The opening cry is that "we are Muslims, ours is the entire world", and various iterations of this sentiment are then offered; that the earth belongs to Muslims, whether in China or India or the West; that our enemies cannot contain us; that the trusteeship of *tawhīd* (Divine Oneness) resides in our breasts and that the leader of our caravan is none less than Muhammad, and hence we (Muslims) can be assured that we will never be eradicated from this world. Similar to the structure of the previous poem, Iqbal ends by offering his own contribution, i.e. his melody or *tarānā,* which "makes the caravan road-traversing again" and brings it out of a present state of stupor.[93]

Thus not only does Iqbal's rousing voice function apply itself to more than a geographically proximate group, it is also indexed to a purpose which is grounded in a theological and prophetic relationship. This is further illustrated in another poem titled "In the Presence of the Prophet*"* (*Huḍūr-i Risālat Maʾāb Mai*), where Iqbal has a vision of the Prophet Muhammad and himself in heaven, with the former voicing both a compliment and a question to Iqbal. The Prophet speaks about Iqbal's *navā* (tune/song) judging it so powerful that it can "burn down every petal"; it is called "sweeter than Arabian honey" and seen as "having learned the power of soaring flight from the angels". However, after this series of appreciations of Iqbal's voice, comes a strange question: "What gift have you brought along for us?" Among other things, here Iqbal shows his reader that the Prophet wants more out of him than to be a successfully "vitalizing" poet; he also

[91] Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 309-310 (*ay bād-i ṣabā…*). A compact poetic expression of the same can be found in another poem where Iqbal directly implores the Prophet Muhammad to help Iqbal "unravel the tempest in my breast" for the sake of "your deadened community" (*millat-i marḥūm).* See Ibid., p. 561.

[92] For now, I am using the words "community" and "ummat" interchangeably because the way in which Iqbal conceives of human social organization is not simple (to say the least) and requires an entire chapter to explain (Ch. 5). The point is that Iqbal's rousing voice function on its broadest scale is organized with reference to a community that is defined in religious terms but the boundaries of which are fluid.

[93] Urdū Kullīyāt*,* p. 186.

wants this vitalization to contain a "gift" for him. There is also a meaningful ambiguity as to whether the "us" refers to the formal singular "we" or to a collective of people. Iqbal responds to his beloved Prophet that it is difficult, but he has brought something along. Iqbal says that in the world, he keeps searching for a life/vitality (*zindagī*) which he cannot find, but the offering of his voice is nevertheless like "a fine crystalware containing that which is not found even in heaven" i.e. "the honor of your *ummat"* and "the blood of martyrs". This is Iqbal's gift.

Thus here we see, again, that Iqbal envisions his rousing voice function as a "vitalizing" poetic voice, which is rousing within a community's relationship with a Prophet and God.[94]

To sum up the overarching point of Part I of this chapter: Iqbal's functionality towards his tradition *as he saw it* was not a homogeneity that can be captured under the umbrella of any one attitude or approach. If we perform a close and patient reading of Iqbal's many words about what he was doing, then it emerges that certain attitudes were directed by Iqbal towards or before certain aspects of his tradition, and being inattentive to these attitudes and their specific "objects" is not a trivial oversight. This is because, as we now turn to see, this kind of oversight can make Iqbal into a worshipper of that which he does not worship ("Muslim community" or "Western thought") and miss some of the most significant aspects of his tradition-relationality.

II. Some Trends in Iqbal Studies: Minimization, Omission and Conflation

In this part of the chapter, I provide a sketch of problematic ways of reading Iqbal, and then end by locating what I see as more generative ways of reading. There could be many ways of organizing readings within Iqbal Studies; e.g. literary and philosophical; traditionalist and secularist, "adulatory" and "opposed", and so forth. This kind of mapping, while often describing a real state of affairs, often gets so mired in the ideological underpinnings of the readers, that the activity of mapping itself starts to look like a reactionary move. The focus on Iqbal and his ideas gets lost.

My point is that too often, scholarship in Iqbal Studies has paid insufficient attention to Iqbal's own multi-faceted self-construal. The following should not be taken as an exhaustive literature review of all of Iqbal Studies, but an organization of Iqbal-readings by how they approach the layered nature of Iqbal's self-construal. One type of interpretive approach is what I call "minimization"; to not only treat Iqbal's self-construal reductively, but to argue that the reality or the significance of this self-construal is inconsequential in understanding him. A second type of interpretive approach is what I call "omission"; such works focus very heavily on certain aspects of Iqbal's tradition-relationality, while carefully leaving out others that might complicate those which *are* being focused on. A third interpretive approach is what I call "conflation"; such works *do* take the fact of Iqbal's multidimensionality seriously, but misplace the directionality of distinct Iqbalian functions. They conflate the "objects" towards which these Iqbalian functions are directed. Finally, I end this section of the chapter by describing a range of prominent exceptions to the above approaches. Such scholarship is aware both of the multidimensionality of Iqbal's self-construal and of the importance of distinguishing between the various attitudinal objects of Iqbal's tradition-relation. Now we turn to describe each of the above interpretive

[94] Ibid., pp. 224-225.

approaches, with examples. My objective in naming particular books or authors is not to belittle their excellent contributions, but to ground the point that Iqbal's own self-construal is more layered and multidimensional than certain patterns of reading him would assume.

i) Minimization of Iqbal's Self-Construal

Within this interpretive mode, one type of reading is that which sees Iqbal's thought as purely a product of contingent historical or biographical factors, of which V.G. Kiernan's scholarship is one example.[95] Kiernan attempts to explain (or explain away) Iqbal's relationship to his tradition with reference to Iqbal's purported "anti-social personality" which was supposedly a result of an innate "isolation" and "depression". Hence, for Kiernan, "Iqbal's poems have strikingly little to say about relationships among human beings…It is because Iqbal's private world was so empty that he spoke often through the voices of the dead, making famous men (European philosophers as a rule- Hegel, Tolstoy, Nietszsche, Marx) his poetic mouthpieces". It is no exaggeration to say that the argument here is essentially that Iqbal romanticizes the idea of selfhood because he had no living friends.[96] Minimizing Iqbal's own volition or capacity for creative thought, Keirnan also argues that Iqbal's rousing poetry was a reactionary byproduct of his travels through Europe. The modest, Sialkot-born young man could not help but be impressed by the marvels of Western civilization, and then return to India "in search of a man of destiny to take the helm; a superman he never found, either abroad or in India", as a result of which he developed a "cult of the Self".[97]

Another type of reading minimizes Iqbal's self-construal for honestly stated ideological purposes. For example Asghar Ali Engineer, when writing on Iqbal's socially rousing voice, asserts that Iqbal's "Islamic fundamentalism" can and should not only be omitted, but "pushed to the back" when attempting to discern Iqbal's reception by subsequent "revolutionary" Urdū poets in Pakistan, e.g. Faiz. Thus Engineer's clearly articulated purpose is to *replace* this religious "fundamentalism" (that he perceives in Iqbal) with what he sees as more valuable "components like humanism, revolutionary ideals, ethical values, etc."[98]

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[95] Another, longer example is M.A. Raschid's book *Iqbal's Concept of God* (Oxford University Press, 2010), which has as its main interpretive frame, the attempt to see whom Iqbal diverges from (Qur'ān, Ghazzālī, "traditional Islam") and with whom he has affinities (Bergson, Nietzsche, etc). We do not learn very much about Iqbal himself, which might be unimpressed by these comparisons. More charitable readers of this book might put it under the heading of what I have called "conflationary reading", i.e. it attempts consistently to give weightage to Iqbal's multi-dimensionality, but imagines Iqbal had some kind of spiritually devotional posture towards Western thinkers. I elaborate on this type of reading, below.

[96] V.G. Kiernan, "Iqbal as Prophet of Change: The Message of the East", in *Iqbal: Commemorative Volume* (New Delhi: Marwah Publications, n.d.), pp. 49-50.

[97] V.G. Kiernan, "Iqbal and Wordsworth", in *Iqbal: Commemorative Volume* (New Delhi: Marwah Publications, n.d.), 258-259.

[98] Asghar Ali Engineer, "Some Socio-Political Motivations of Iqbal's Tradition and its Contemporary Literary Relevance", *Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Iqbal* (New Delhi, Ratnadeep Press, n.d.). Another reading like Engineer's is to be found in M. Ikram Chaghatai's "comparative" work *Iqbal and Tagore* (Lahore: Sang-i-Meel, 2001). Thus, he admits that he wishes "Iqbal's sedentary habits and lifestyle" had been more like Tagore (p.19), who received numerous Western accolades. Therefore, Iqbal "must have" had an "Award Complex" (pp. 19-20).

Not all instances of minimization of Iqbal's self-construal are as antagonistic as Kiernan or as transparent as Engineer. There are many less obvious examples of this mode of reading, two of which are briefly described below. Instead of conflating one function of Iqbal with the entirety of Iqbal's work or ignoring/omitting certain functions, this mode of reading introduces elements into and onto Iqbal which have an undiscernible basis. Some readings might overstate and/or muddle two functions of Iqbal, but there is a "there there"; e.g. Iqbal's positive assessments of Nietzsche or Iqbal's restless "not-yet-ness" as a thinker. By contrast, certain readings introduce elements into their reading of Iqbal, such that it deflects attention from the reality of Iqbal's self-construal.

One example comes in an otherwise well-researched work on the contents of Iqbal's Islamic theology by Jamila Khatoon.[99] While the contents of Khatoon's overview of Iqbal's theology are meticulously researched and well-cited, she frames the "why should we read Iqbal" portion in terms that are, for lack of a better phrase, based in blood lineage. Khatoon makes a causal connection between Iqbal's religious sensibility and "penetrating intelligence", and his coming from "a Kashmiri Brahmin stock", i.e. that Iqbal's "sensitive soul" was a product of being born into "a family surcharged with the Islamic spirit" and of a "noble stock".[100] The author's lineal emphasis is unnecessary given that Khatoon's actual research on Iqbal's theology is a useful contribution for anyone interested in Iqbal's multiple instances of God-talk across his poetry and prose, and does not mention Hindu castes thereafter. This perceived esoteric connection between the Brahmin bloodline of Iqbal and his theological pursuits is not clarified, let alone substantiated, for the reader.

Another example of this kind of needless minimization of Iqbal's own self-construal comes in Rafiq Zakaria's work *Iqbal: The Poet and the Politician* (New Delhi: Viking, 1993). The stated purpose of the work is to give "an un-biased perspective with regard to his [Iqbal's] relationship with India" which is not mired in nationalism.[101] Alongside this understandable method of reading Iqbal, there is also a strange, tangential thread in this work which attempts to show that Iqbal's purported sexual interests played a significant role in his politics.[102] The inaccessible move here is that on the subject of politics, Zakaria so much weight to his own assumptions about Iqbal's romantic relationships, than to Iqbal's own political words.[103]

The overarching trend in the above interpretive moments is to bypass the reality or significance of Iqbal's own words about what he was doing. Distinct from this kind of minimization of Iqbal's self-construal, is an omission-oriented reading of Iqbal.

ii) Omitting the Elements of Iqbal's Self-Construal

This mode of reading sometimes tends to omit important functions of Iqbal's self-construal in such a way that the functions that *are* focused on are distorted. Such readings often tend to show

[99] Jamila Khatoon, *The Place of God, Man and Universe in the Philosophic System of Iqbal* (Karachi: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1963).
[100] Ibid., "Introduction", esp. pp. xiii-xv.
[101] Zakaria, p. xix.
[102] Ibid., ix-x; pp. 17-21.
[103] Ibid., 19.

Iqbal as devoted entirely and uncritically towards his geographically proximate religious community, as if this community demanded an uncritical obedience akin to what Iqbal offered to the Qurʾān. On such a reading, an aforementioned poem of Iqbal's like *Zuhd Aur Rindī,* where he exchanges playful jibes with a strict co-religionist, or even Iqbal's later verses calling both himself and Indian Muslims "lazy", would be impossible.

For example, Ayub Sabir in his tellingly titled work "Iqbal-Animosity: A Study" (*Iqbal Dushmanī: Ik Mutālaʿa*) argues that criticism of Iqbal and criticism of Pakistan are "but two sides of the same coin."[104] The book is a fascinating "exposé" of a list of Iqbal-critical works (primarily those written by Indian and British authors).[105] The stated purpose[106] is to highlight how these Iqbal-critical works are generally also, on some level, critical of the Pakistani nation state and attempting to "weaken" it.[107] While Sabir is not wrong that Iqbal's voice was (and still is) powerful for Pakistani nation-consolidation, the partiality of this reading is difficult to ignore, as it makes no discernment between Iqbal as socially rousing voice and devotee.

Likewise, in a similar reading, Anwar Ruman argues that Iqbal was wholly critical of "the West", rather than also being a critically appreciative and critical student of Western thinkers.[108] Ruman characterizes Iqbal's works entirely as a "jihad against Western culture and politics" and ignores the critical student role that Iqbal had carved out for himself, instead taking Iqbal's rousing voice as the entirety of his thought.[109] Again, this reading is not entirely wrong as much as it is misleadingly partial, if the reader looks carefully at the distinction (offered by Iqbal himself) between Iqbal as a socially rousing voice and Iqbal as an uncritical devotee of canon.

Furthermore, there is also a subgenre of reading which is probably best described as "Iqbalian pious literature". Such works attempt to inculcate an Islamic devotional ethos in the reader by taking Iqbal as a moral exemplar. A good example is Muhammad Munawwar's book *Burhān-i Iqbāl* ("Proof of Iqbal").[110] Munawwar's work is a sincere attempt to reform the reader ethically, by drawing upon examples of Iqbal's intense piety towards the Qurʾān.[111] Likewise in his English work *Iqbal and Qurʾānic Wisdom*,[112] Munawwar provides another instantiation of the same attempt. He begins by stating the basic creedal propositions of Islam, like the Oneness of God and the Finality of Muhammad's prophethood[113] and then takes Iqbal as an exemplary

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[104] Ayub Sabir, *Iqbal Dushmanī: Ik Mutālaʿa* (Lahore: Jang Publishers, 1993), pp. 15-16; 22.
[105] For Sabir's listing of these works, see pp. 22-23.
[106] Ibid., pp. 25-26.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Anwar Ruman, *Iqbal Aur Maghribi Istiʿmār* ("Iqbal and Western Colonialism"; Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1989).
[109] Ibid., 9.
[110] Muhammad Munawwar, *Burhān-i-Iqbāl* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1982).
[111] Ibid., pp. 27-66 and esp. pp. 32-33. By recounting Iqbal's words and practices towards the Qurʾān, Munawwar attempts to show how Iqbal was a man of "unwavering faith and certainty…whose station of faith never saw any ups and downs…and whose constancy of action was always undeterred" (32-33). The entire book then attempts to stimulate the reader towards moral betterment via the Iqbalian example, by presuming a shared Islamic sense of fidelity and piety towards the Holy Book.
[112] Muhammad Munawwar, *Iqbal and Qurʾānic Wisdom* (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1983).
[113] Ibid., pp. 19-21 (Oneness of God); pp. 22-24 (Finality of Prophethood).

personality who modelled perfect fidelity towards these beliefs.[114] Similarly Tahir Faruqi in his book *Iqbāl Aur Muḥabbat-i Rasūl* ("Iqbal and Love of the Prophet") takes Iqbal as an examplar for the pious Muslim seeking to perfect their devotional love of Muhammad. Consider, for example, that the opening sentence of this work boldly claims Iqbal had "conducted an unrivalled investigation into the life of the Prophet Muhammad and mastered the meanings of the Qurʾān".[115]

While these works are truthful in taking seriously Iqbal's function as a sincere devotee who was fiercely obedient towards canonical aspects of his religious tradition, they tend to emphasize this function to the extent that valuable aspects of it are diminished. They omit Iqbal's crucial attitude of self-critical humility in front of canon, whereby Iqbal did not see himself as anything more than a vulnerable and anxious devotee easily swayed by "Western beauties" (i.e. Western women who appeared attractive to him); as not above any other believer who still felt the "interruptions" of obligatory prayer, and as one who was not a "master of Arabic" unlike many of his learned interlocutors. In other words, to give weight to Iqbal's devotional attitude, some acknowledgment must also be made of the fact that Iqbal actively distanced himself from the role of a perfect moral exemplar, or a learned religious authority. Simply ignoring the rootedness of his humility (perhaps by seeing it as an obvious sign of Iqbal's moral perfection) while surely indicative of a deep admiration for Iqbal, does not consider the possibility that Iqbal was not, in fact, a pristine moral exemplar. In other words, it fails to take holistically, or omits, Iqbal's own words about his fallibility as a devotee, which were a part and parcel of his submission before the canon.

In some ways running counter to the omitting tendency of the above interpretive approaches, are those readings which might be called "conflationary". Such readings do attempt to give weight to various elements of Iqbal's self-construed religious functions, but in doing so, they conflate one part of Iqbal's self-construal with others, which also has a distortive effect.

iii) Conflating the Elements of Iqbal's Self-Construal

Within this mode of reading, one type consists of those works which see a devotional ethos directed from Iqbal towards Western thinkers or (even less complicatedly) towards "the West". To put this more abstractly: such works, despite their generative insights, fail to distinguish between Iqbal as canon-centered devotee and Iqbal as critical student. Where they notice Iqbal's admiration of a Western thinker, they conflate it with something like the canonical devotion that Iqbal had reserved for certain aspects of his religious tradition (see the previous section). In other words, the attitudinal object of Iqbal's devotion (i.e. religious canon) is conflated with the category of "the West".

[114] Ibid., pp. 16-24 (Iqbal as a great thinker "in harmony" with the Divine); pp. 124-175 (Iqbal's idea of "the realization of the self" as an expression of this spiritual harmony).
[115] Tahir Faruqi, *Iqbāl Aur Muḥabbat-i-Rasūl* (Lahore: Idārā-i-Saqāfat-i-Islāmīyah, 1977), pp. 5-18.

A compact example of this kind of reading is S. Alam Khundmiri's article on "Iqbal's political philosophy",[116] which is really a discussion of Iqbal's distinctive "restlessness" as a thinker, and does not discuss political philosophy. Khundmiri begins and ends this article by noting that Iqbal is fixated on the idea of continual "transformation"; there is always a "not-yet" in Iqbal's conception of both the individual person and the social unit.[117] This is a profound, generative observation. However, legitimately intrigued by this aspect of Iqbal and seeking to explain it, Khundmiri jumps to an unsubstantiated claim that Nietzsche must have been the wellspring for this Iqbalian dynamism. Hence for Khundmiri it is "needless to say that he [Iqbal] was influenced by Nietzsche" and that Nietzsche was among Iqbal's spiritual "masters" of whom Iqbal's dynamism was a creative appropriation.[118] What makes this leap difficult to follow is that no citations/textual evidence from Iqbal or even from his purported German "master" are given for this conclusion.

There are many larger works in a similar vein, all of which cannot be mentioned.[119] One of them is T.C. Rastogi's book *Western Influence in Iqbal*, which usefully and correctly notes that Iqbal's appreciation of thinkers like Nietszche, Kant, Wordsworth (and others) cannot be sidelined if one is trying to garner a holistic introductory picture of the South Asian thinker's influences.[120] Beginning from this airtight observation, Rastogi then begins using the word "influence" very loosely and often without textual or historical support. Take the example of his essay on Iqbal and Nietzsche. Four or five verses of Iqbal's on Nietzsche are quoted, all of which are both admiring and critical in tone. In these verses which have been quoted by Rastogi himself, Iqbal calls Nietzsche the "German Seer" but also "a lunatic in a glass shop"; a "visionary" but also an "unconsummated" one.[121] While such quotes *do* convey a sense of admiration, they do not even partially establish Rastogi's conclusion that Iqbal's poetry is "the mouthpiece of the Nietzschean doctrine".[122] This conflation of instances of admiration (i.e. admiration by Iqbal, of Western thinkers) for Iqbal-in-toto persists throughout the work. By the time we get to the Whitehead section, the author openly claims: "Iqbal as a matter of fact falls for every philosopher whose writings have a metaphysical vein running through them".[123]

In the same vein as Rastogi but with a different inflection, Sachchidananda Sinha writes that "the chief difficulty with Iqbal" is "the tremendous influence exerted over him" by "Nietzsche's

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[116] S. Alam Khundmiri, "A Study of the Concepts of Transformation, Leadership and Freedom in the Political Philosophy of Iqbal" in *Iqbal: Commemorative Volume*, Eds. Ali Sardar Jafri and K.S. Dugal (New Delhi: All India Iqbal Centenary Celebrations Committee, n.d.), pp. 93-102.
[117] Ibid., 95.
[118] Ibid., pp. 95-97.
[119] I am thinking of a number of works. The most accessible for those outside of Iqbal Studies is probably Richard Wheeler's article "Individual and Action in the Thought of Iqbal", which contends that Iqbal indiscriminately "blended" various texts with a homogeneous devotion. *The Muslim World*, vol. 52, no. 3, 1962, p. 197. For a longer work with the same patterns of reading, one might look at compilation of articles from Urdū-speaking academics, titled *Iqbal: The New Shaping of Islamic Thought/ Iqbal: Fikr-i Islāmī kī Tashkīl-i Jadīd* (Karachi: Pakistan Study Center, 1987).
[120] T.C. Rastogi, *Western Influence in Iqbal* (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1987), pp. vii-ix.
[121] Ibid., pp. 61-63.
[122] Ibid., 66.
[123] Ibid., 123.

philosophy", which Iqbal was attempting to "reconcile" with Islam.[124] Strikingly, this claim is unsupported by any textual evidence, and then followed up by a tangential anecdote "from Buddhist scripture", from Sinha's memory.[125] Similarly M. Abdul Haq Ansari admits in theory that Iqbal has a non-negligible relationship to the Islamic tradition. However, Ansari then claims that Iqbal's distinctive emphasis on selfhood is fuelled "by the vitalistic philosophies of his age and the new understanding of religion initiated by Schleiermacher" which were circulating in Iqbal's time. Unfortunately, this claim is also not supported by any textual evidence from the author's research.[126]

A more subtle example of this kind of conflationary reading is Luce-Claude Maitre's broad introduction to Iqbal,[127] which admirably grapples with the multi-dimensionality of functions that Iqbal had performed. However, absent a close reading of Iqbal's self-construal, the author is led to characterize Iqbal as (for lack of a better word) bi-canonical. Thus, initially Maitre states that "the influences of the Quran and Rumi are the only ones which count" within Iqbal's work.[128] However, thereafter, noticing the deep appreciation that Iqbal had expressed for Western thinkers, Maitre is led to conclude that "the West brought about a complete change in his [Iqbal's] thought."[129] It was this influence of "the West" that led Iqbal towards "a taste for effort and strife; he renounced such passivity as had crushed all spirit in him" prior to his encounters with "the West" (Maitre's terms).[130] Even though Maitre is openly critical of scholarship which makes Iqbal into "a servile disciple of Nietzsche",[131] she is also trying to understand why Iqbal is appreciative of Western thinkers. Perhaps unaware of Iqbal's functional distinction between devotee and critical student, Maitre concludes that Iqbal "could not fail to be influenced--even unbeknown to him…by great Western thinkers".[132] In arguing that Iqbal was not a "servile disciple", Maitre unfortunately reduces him to an unconscious disciple.[133] This reductionism could perhaps be avoided if the author had paid attention to the fact that, for Iqbal, not all "appreciations" are alike. The way in which Iqbal was uncritically devoted to the Qurʾān, for example, was not comparable to his admiration of Western authors.

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[124] I have paraphrased Sinha's rather long and elaborate statement, the essential claim of which is as above. The reader can verify its content. See Sachchidananda Sinha, *Iqbal: The Poet and His Message* (Allahabad: Ram Narain Lal Publishers, 1947), esp. p. 322.

[125] Ibid.

[126] M. Abdul Haq Ansari, "Iqbal's Reconstruction of Islamic Ideas" in *Iqbal: Essays and Studies* (Aligarh: Ghalib Academy, 1978), pp. 40-41.

[127] Luce-Claude Maitre, *Introduction to the Thought of Iqbal,* translated by M.A. Dar (Karachi: 1960).

[128] Ibid., pp. 27-30.

[129] Ibid., 31.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid., pp. 33-35.

[132] Ibid., 32.

[133] I am not arguing that this is all that Maitre is doing, albeit this conflation is part of her reading. Maitre's hermeneutic, aside from the above instances in which she has not accounted for Iqbal's own relevant words about himself, could also be seen as a hermeneutic of unmasking in which she is trying to uncover parallels between Iqbal's tradition-relationality and the conceptual frames of certain European authors towards Islam.

Finally in the conflationary mode of reading Iqbal, there are also those works which place so heavy an emphasis on Iqbal's "critical student" role towards Western thinkers, that they conflate this role with Iqbal's entire ouevre. On such readings, Iqbal's critical and appreciative attitude towards multiple Islamic and Western authorities is seen to "cancel out" or overweigh Iqbal's devotional attitude towards (what I have in shorthand called) the "canon" (for Iqbal: Qurʾān, creed, and ritual worship). For example, Mulk Raj Anand, impressed by Iqbal's simultaneous appreciation of Western and Islamic authors and by his capacity to be critical even of the "big names" of Islamic intellectual history, infers that Iqbal must have seen nothing but "abjectness" in the very idea of "resignation to the will of God".[134] Thus Iqbal's works are described in one stroke as a "humanist" resistance against the "traditionalist" emphasis on "ritualization of everyday life".[135] In order to make this claim, the author dismisses any patently devotional ethos on the part of Iqbal as an uncharacteristic "sentimentalism".[136] A similar reading is Sulayman Athar Javed's aptly titled Urdū work *Iqbāl: Māvrā-i Dayr-o-Ḥaram ("Iqbal: Transcending Monastery and Mosque").* Javed argues, in much the same vein as Anand, that Iqbal's thought was permeated by a "literary critical consciousness" (*adabī tanqīdī shuʿūr*)[137] which enabled him to "transcend" the ritualistic fetters binding his co-religionists. Thus Iqbal "was not inclined towards those prayers, supplications and rosaries which are nestled within an earthly abode".[138] Notwithstanding the almost deifying nature of such praise, Iqbal's own, explicitly-stated emphases on abiding by the bodily and "earthly" practices of religious law, negate this picture of Iqbal's "ritual-transcendence". In any case, there is more to Iqbal than his critical student function, and this function does not swallow his canon-centered devotion.

The trend in the above examples of Iqbal-reading is to misplace the attitudinal "objects" of Iqbal's functions within his tradition. As seen above, a particularly misleading conflation occurs when both the devotional and critical functions of Iqbal are acknowledged, but the specific objects towards which these attitudes are directed, are neither clarified nor evidenced.

iv) Seminal Exceptions

Let us conclude this part of the chapter by briefly mentioning a range of exceptions to the above patterns of reading. In doing so, some qualifications should be made: nobody is perfect, the mentions here are not exhaustive, and, I find some of those whom I find exceptional, to also miss certain aspects of Iqbal (as I am sure, they do I, and this offers opportunities for generative and reparative critiques, which I hope will ensue after this dissertation). However, the strength of all of the following works is that they are sensitive to the reality, multi-dimensionality and multi-directionality of Iqbal's self-construal, and they attempt to discern and evidence patterns in Iqbal's own words; with careful attention to what Iqbal said and wrote.

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[134] Mulk Raj Anand, "The Humanism of Mohd. Iqbal", in *Multidisciplinary Approach to Iqbal* (New Delhi: Iqbal Centenary Symposium), pp. 12-13.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid., 15.
[137] Sulayman Athar Javed, *Iqbāl: Māvrā-i Dayr-o-Ḥaram* (New Delhi: Modern Publishing House, 1992), pp. 9-31.
[138] Ibid., pp. 152-153.

As a largely reliable "holistic picture" or "primer" to Iqbal, Annemarie Schimmel provides an excellent reading. Her work details the devotional aspects of Iqbal's thought and correctly identifies its "objects", i.e. acts of ritual worship and creed (which she organizes according to the five pillars of Islam and the well-known *imān-i mufaṣṣal* formula).[139] She also highlights what I have called the "socially rousing voice" function of Iqbal,[140] and although she does not pick up on Iqbal's explicit description of himself as a "critical student", she does appreciate this aspect of Iqbal's thought.[141] We see this layered understanding of Iqbal's self-construal reflecting in Schimmel's discussion of (Iqbal's vision of) *khudī;* that is not just an emphasis on individual or communal identity but also an ontological vision.[142] This breadth of comprehension is not the case for many authors writing on Iqbal, who have not fully appreciated the complexity of functions that Iqbal took on.[143]

Then, there are a number of works which focus on delineated aspects of Iqbal's work, and do so in a way that is disciplined about the defined nature of their own inquiries, reading tools, and audiences. Some of the most exciting works of this kind are yet unpublished/ forthcoming, e.g. Basit Bilal Koshul's *American Pragmatism and Modern Islamic Thought: A Case Study* (forthcoming: Edinburgh University Press, February 2021), which is generative because it reads together, passages from Iqbal's *Reconstruction* and defined aspects of American pragmatism, and brings these in conversation on precise questions, in a rigorous way which does not cross-impose or "conflate". Muhammad Faruque's dissertation (2018) on Iqbal has a similar attention to detail and textual evidence, but with an intra-Islam conversation between Iqbal and other thinkers, specifically on what might constitute "inter-subjectivity", and from a lens of "historical hermeneutics", i.e. whether Iqbal "got X right".[144] Nauman Faizi's dissertation (2016) on Iqbal is useful in a way that might be called more "mathematical", or we might say, helps us to "diagram", formal-logical features of Iqbal's thought in addition to content.[145] Despite such a range of methodological diversity, these kinds of works are all highly appreciable for their demarcated and evidenced readings of Iqbal.

Within published but slightly older works, Mustansar Mir and Suheyl Umar are two generative Iqbal scholars who are clearly delineated and text-focused in their own ways. Umar, for example, tends to focus mainly on Iqbal's poetics, often (usefully) limiting himself to the aesthetics of the

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[139] This is a creedal formula professing faith in God and His angels, books, prophets, the Day of Judgment, the determination of what is good and evil by God, and in life after death.

[140] See Schimmel, pp. 63-93. She identifies that Iqbal saw himself as a "life-giving" voice for the ummat, which was consistent with his own views on poetry in general.

[141] Schimmel pp. 75-76; 143-144.

[142] Ibid., pp. 96-101.

[143] Although, I do think Schimmel gets wrong the scope of Iqbal's three stages of moral formation, particularly as she equates the first stage (obedience) with "interiority" and "seclusion". This is incorrect, and at least there should be some distinction between these two terms. This point becomes clear in Chs. 4-6, with help from Mahmood's distinctions.

[144] Muhammad Faruque, *The Labyrinth of Subjectivity: Constructions of the Self from Mullā Ṣadrā to Muḥammad Iqbāl,* at digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu. 2018 (Accessed online on 10 Mar 2019), esp. pp. 18-19.

[145] Mian Muhammad Nauman Faizi, *From Representationalism to Pragmatism: Muhammad Iqbal's Reading of Religion In Modernity*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, Religious Studies - Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, PHD (Doctor of Philosophy), 2016, 2016, doi.org/10.18130/V3WP6J.

socially rousing function which has been delineated above. [146] By contrast, Mir tends to focus on what he calls "principal contours", e.g. transparently describing his major work on Iqbal as an insufficient, quick primer for the educated, English-speaking layperson who is still interested in an "expository and analytical approach".[147] Both kinds of inquiry serve truly valuable, and clear, purposes within Iqbal Studies. Another demarcated and fertile inquiry into Iqbal, is Ghulam Mustafa Khan's less celebrated (in the Anglophone academy) and outstanding Urdū tome *Iqbal Aur Qurʾān* ("Iqbal and the Qurʾān"). Drawing upon biography, poetry and prose, Khan paints a meticulously researched and well-written picture of one aspect of Iqbal (i.e. his pious Qurʾān-devotion) that deserves to be translated into other languages in the future. Another exception who moves towards appreciating the complexity of Iqbal's "tradition-relation", is Kingshuk Chatterjee. Writing on Iqbal as an "architect of the [idea of the] Islamic self in the modern age", Chatterjee recognizes that Iqbal was a socio-political voice who possessed a sense of "belonging with the people" but was also a "dialectic critic" who provided reparative insights to his community. In making such observations, Chatterjee is moving in a fruitful direction, notwithstanding a vague distinction between Iqbalian "belonging" vs. Iqbalian "critique". [148] However, it is highly appreciable that Chatterjee sees Iqbal's relationship to his tradition as complex and multidimensional. [149]

In concluding Part II of this chapter, the location and aspiration of this current project, with respect to the aforementioned organization, can also be pinpointed as follows. First, it takes Iqbal's self-construal to be real and significant, and does not see this self-construal as reducible to historical, psychological or contextual factors but as a product of a creative mind in a relationship with his tradition. Second, this project does not think that any one of Iqbal's functions can be conflated with the entirety of Iqbal's oeuvre, but that the multi-dimensionality of these functions is irreducible as well. Third, in realizing the many dimensions of Iqbal's works, this project is *not* a comprehensive introduction or primer to the entirety of Iqbal's thought. In terms of its structure and its goals, this project is closest to the approaches of a Koshul, Umar, or Mir, because it closely reads Iqbal as a valuable contributor to a demarcated field of inquiry, rather than an "all of Iqbal" encapsulation (in which genre, Schimmel is excellent). Obviously, my one project cannot be compared to, say, Koshul/Mir/ Umar's lifetimes of work, but, it is comparable in the very specific sense that it opens up an avenue for Iqbal Studies to converse with the field of Religious Ethics, in which specific realm of inquiry Iqbal has not been studied before (let alone in detail) and, in doing so, does not neglect the "thick

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[146] For a demonstrative overview of Umar's subgenre of Iqbal Studies, see his article "Significance of Iqbal's Wisdom Poetry" in *Intellectual Discourse*, 10: 2 (2002), pp. 125-138. Here the reader gets a good overview of the various streams of "higher poetry" within which Umar reads Iqbal and for whom he sees Iqbal as a valuable interlocutor, from the "sapiental poetry" conceived by Frithjof Schuon (p. 134) to what Umar sees as "contemplative" Sufi poetry (p. 128).

[147] Mustansir Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2006), p. vii.

[148] Kingshuk Chatterjee, "Explorations of the Self: From Iqbal to Shariati" in *Between Tradition and Modernity: Aspects of Islam in South Asia* (Kolkata, K.P. Baghcy and Company, 2011), pp. 26-27.

[149] A work similar in attempt is Riffat Hassan's *An Iqbal Primer: An Introduction to Iqbal's Philosophy* (Lahore: Aziz Publishers, 1979). This work is useful for what it compiles; what could be considered some of Iqbal's most significant moments across his works. Although it attempts too much (a review of all of Iqbal's works with a few paragraphs to each), there is a sense that Iqbal had more than one dimension.

description" of important aspects of Iqbal's own works, or the need to evidence my observations across a sufficient range of Iqbal's writings.

Chapter Conclusion

While the rest of this dissertation focuses on the actual contents of Iqbal's vision of self-ness (*khudī*), here I have tried to map out an answer to the question of what Iqbal was doing. According to Iqbal, Iqbal was a canon-centered devotee, a critical student of interpretive authorities and "big names", a disciple of Rūmī, and a "rouser" of his enervated coreligionists. In articulating all of this, the key offering that I have provided in this chapter is that all of these characterizations of Iqbal are not my own, but his. Hopefully, we in Iqbal Studies can begin moving towards an articulation of Iqbal's relationship to his religious tradition which takes Iqbal himself seriously.

Chapter 3

Iqbal's Vision of *Khudī*, and Nature[1]

Chapter Overview

Having laid out the methodological and interpretive groundwork in the previous chapters, we now turn to the thick description of Iqbal's vision of *khudī.* As stated in Ch.1, the word *khud-ī* literally means "self-ness". Knowing this much, we might be led to prefer a "first description" of Iqbal's vision which is apropos of the individual person. Given the intertwined nature of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* any "starting point" will be inadequate. However, starting from somewhere is also an insurmountable necessity, if we are to parse out Iqbal's vision with any degree of attentiveness and care.

However, there is yet another reason why it is helpful to start with Iqbal's natural vision, i.e. we are able to see how, for Iqbal, "self-ness" is a more intensively real and expanded quality, which relates to all that is, as opposed to connoting an oppositional contrast between person/world, or person/universe. As we shall see, for Iqbal, not only is *khudī* the reason for the natural universe, but also, the dynamics or patterns of this universe, are envisioned as being deeply continuous with human morality. The activity of morality, as it turns out, is the activity of increasingly inculcating *khudī,* which is explained in Chs. 4 and 5. In simpler words: Iqbal's natural vision is integral to understanding the breadth and centrality of *khudī,* in his moral-ontological vision.

This chapter begins by highlighting some of the elements of Iqbal's theological vision, without knowing which, any understanding of his vision of *khudī* is rather murky, if not impossible.[2] Part I of the chapter describes how Iqbal, grappling with what he sees as a false conceptual-theological bifurcation, conceives of a theological counter-emphasis which centers Divine Creativity and Self-ness (*khudī*). What these two terms mean in Iqbal is particular, and should not be immediately assumed. Thus, for example, we shall see that Iqbal's vision of Divine Creativity emphasizes God's Creative "ceaselessness" and His "limitations", but ones that are, and can only ever be, "Self-imposed". Likewise, Iqbal's vision of God as Self, emphasizes both "Self-revelation" and "secretiveness".

Part II of the chapter then takes us from these ineluctable theological aspects, to Iqbal's view of the natural universe, in which vision *khudī* is central. Here, we take help from Taylor's concept of "ontic logos", in order to more precisely delineate Iqbal's own natural vision. Then, in Part III, the chapter begins moving towards the moral dimensions of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* by highlighting some ways in which Iqbal's natural vision "sets the stage" for the activities of

[1] I use the terms "nature", "natural world" and "universe" interchangeably, simply to mean the totality of physical and material reality.

[2] As Annemarie Schimmel says of Iqbal: "his revaluation of man is not that of man qua man, but of man in relation to God, and Iqbal's anthropology, the whole concept of *khudī,* of development of Self is understandable only in the larger context of his theology." Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 382.

human moral formation.[3] With this in mind, let us turn to understand some of the theological underpinnings of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* which will keep being bolstered in the coming chapters.

I. Key Theological Concerns for Understanding Khudī

Readers in Religious Ethics know that the Islamic tradition has historically engaged the relationship/tension between what can be termed Divine "transcendence"/*tanzīh* and Divine "immanence"/*tashbīh*[4] with enduring vitality, profundity, and gravity.[5] Iqbal, being creedally and theologically committed to the core Islamic tenet of Divine Oneness/ *tawhīd,* cannot avoid coming to terms with this "tension" or "interplay" (depending on one's view about it). However, as we are primarily interested in presenting Iqbal's own, self-construed, theological vision, let us begin by noting that he does not center words like "transcendence vs. immanence", but has his own language for what we might say approaches these two theological "pulls".[6] The first significant point is that Iqbal does not see these as competing "pulls" in mutual tension, but mainly develops his own theological vision alongside a negative portrayal of any frame which would divorce anything like these two aspects of God or envision them as mutually "tense".

Thus, broadly speaking, we note at the outset that, despite his well-known capacity to be enriched by multiple thinkers,[7] Iqbal had maintained throughout his incipient and mature works, that there is a false conceptual bifurcation of God's Oneness into two different types of

[3] When we are reading Iqbal as moral-ontological thinker, naturally, of central relevance for us are those articulations which relate nature to human morality within a moral-ontological vision. For a quick, cross-sectional picture of Iqbal's nature-talk, Mustansar Mir is helpful. Cf. *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006). Thus, Iqbal has poems which are his expressions of delighting in nature, or admiring nature (p.36). He also has thousands of words which take nature as "source of poetic imagery", and in which natural beings are used to symbolize ideas and motifs to the reader (p. 68). Given the broadly moral-ontological nature of my inquiry, if I were to pause at every step of exposition and make it correspond to one natural symbol in Iqbal's poetry, this alone would fill many more dissertations. Thus, we focus on the larger contours, which we evidence and detail. One image that is interesting for anyone being introduced to Iqbal, is of the eagle. Iqbal "endows the bird" (as Mir says) with many associations, e.g. un-nesting restlessness and strength. Some of these eagle-associations, like "not making a nest" (biologically true of hawks, I believe, but it doesn't matter) can be seen as imagistic representations of aspects of Iqbal's vision of *khudī.* Cf. Mir, *Tulip in the Desert: A Selection of the Poetry of Muhammad Iqbal* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 1999), pp. 110-111. Cf. also Zahida Zaidi, "Nature in Iqbal's Poetry", in Ali Sardar Jafir and K.S. Dugal, Eds. *Iqbal: Commemorative Volume*. New Delhi: All India Iqbal Centenary Celebrations Committee, n.d., pp. 150-166.

[4] E.g. Toshihiko Iztusu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 48-64.

[5] See a more general overview of this point, in Ibrahim Kalin's helpful piece "Will, necessity and creation as monistic theophany in the Islamic philosophical tradition", in David B Burrell et al, *Creation and the God of Abraham* (Cambridge, UK, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), esp. pp. 116-7.

[6] I think that making this interpretive move, i.e. trying to look at Iqbal's own construal, even as we acknowledge the value of transcendence/immanence languages, is a helpful one for Iqbal Studies as well. I am thinking, for example, of M. A. Raschid's book, *Iqbal's Concept of God* (Oxford University Press, 2010), which is, more than anything, not performing its title. The author is overwhelmingly concerned with "reconciling" and "distinguishing" Iqbal from: the Qurʾān, Martin Lings, Hegel, "Science", Nietzsche (…and a longer list).

[7] E.g. He wrote one of the most beloved nationalistic songs of India, but is also considered the poet-philosopher and spiritual father of the Pakistan. He admired Wordsworth and Nietzsche, but called Rūmī his master or *pīr.*

theological visions;[8] both of which are flawed in their own way, and both of which hinder a "genuine appreciation of *tawhīd"* (Divine Oneness).[9]

i) "Static" and "Anti-Individualistic" Theologies

The first kind of theological vision critiqued by Iqbal is what he describes in one word as "static", and in longer prose as "fixed". On Iqbal's view, this kind of theology places Divine Reality at an ontological elevation above all other beings, but then rebuilds some "bridge"; a mediating or emanating mechanism between this Reality and (until) the lowest "rung" of being. Such an ontological and theological imagination is inadequate for Iqbal, primarily because even though it might conceive of God as an Individual, it also makes God a fixed, "changeless" Being, incapable of any "dynamism", "life", or further "unfolding".[10] Poetically, Iqbal presents this view as equivalent to seeing God as a dead, stonelike idol or *but*;[11] what Mustansar Mir has pithily called "an object of mindless worship" in his reading of Iqbal.[12] Iqbal argues more prosaically, that to conceive of God as "changeless" in the sense of coming to a point of having nothing new to reveal about His Self, is to consider Him an objectified and "stagnant neutrality", and not God. Thus, for Iqbal, any ideal of Divine perfection as stasis, is a theological imagination very unworthy of a dynamic and Living God.[13]

In this vein, Iqbal further disapproves of (what he calls) this "static" theology because it is self-obfuscating and has a deceptive quality; it does not esteem God as greatly as might appear. Indeed it does "elevate" God, but this is only because (in Iqbal's view) whatever may be perceived as the "lower" planes/realms of being (e.g. the universe/matter) can still "be regarded as an independent reality standing in opposition to Him [God]", no matter how inferior, debased or derivative such a lower realm is seen to be. [14] In his earlier work, Iqbal uses much the same language as the *Reconstruction*, to identify such a hierarchical metaphysics, broadly and vaguely, as the "Greek" mode of "Dualism".[15] In his mature works like *The Reconstruction* and the poetic-philosophical *Asrār-i Khudī* ("Secrets of Self-ness"), Iqbal is a bit more specific and, if

[8] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia: A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy* (Lahore: Bazm-[i]-Iqbal, 1964), 165.
[9] Ibid. See also See Basit B. Koshul, *Semiotics as a Resource for Theology: Philosophical Warrants and Illustrations* (Abu Dhabi, UAE: Kalam Research and Media, 2017), 53.
[10] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Stanford University Press, 2012), pp. 47-49.
[11] For a poetic articulation by Iqbal, of the difference between worshipping an idol and God, see Muhammad Iqbal, *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl, Urdū* (The Complete Works of Iqbal in Urdu), ed. Ahmad Raza (Lahore: Sa'ādat Press, 2005), p. 133.
[12] Mustansar Mir, *Tulip in the Desert*, p. 9.
[13] See Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* pp. 48-49. In order to develop his distinctive view of God as "Living", Iqbal relies especially on his experience of reading the well-known Qurʾānic verse, *āyat ul-kursī* or "Verse of the Throne" [Q. 2:225], which opens by proclaiming the Oneness of God, and God as "Living".
[14] Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* pp. 52-53. This same theological concern is expressed in his *Discourses of Iqbal,* Edited and Compiled by Shahid Hussain Razzaqi (Lahore : Sh. Ghulam Ali & Sons, 1979), pp. 177-179.
[15] Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia,* pp. 164-165.

and when he names this vision, he names Plato's relegation of matter to a subordinate ontological status to be the paradigmatic embodiment of this first kind of metaphysics.[16]

The second kind of theological vision which Iqbal criticizes as false and "worn-out", is one which (we can say) fully "naturalizes" God. In Iqbal's own language, this kind of theology either elevates the evil and/or randomness of the world such that these become "Others" to a good/ well-ordered God,[17] or, it conceives of God as a "formless cosmic element" which pervades all of existence.[18] This style of theological imagination is flawed, for Iqbal, mainly because it deprives God of both "Personality" and "Uniqueness". Although the Divine Reality can now be seen as ever-present, immanent and immediate, the distinctive "I"-ness of this Reality has been greatly dissipated as a result of these conceptual achievements, in Iqbal's view.[19]

In this vein, Iqbal had continually expressed his dissatisfaction with these other type of theological imaginations which were, in his view, attempts to "escape from an individualistic conception of God". For example, Iqbal had criticized "pantheistic"-leaning interpreters of Qurʾānic verses which describe "God as light".[20] More generally, Iqbal's critique of "anti-personal" conceptions of God also comes forth in his assertions that the unity of Divine "Ultimate Reality" cannot be reduced to "a process" but must be conceived of as "the unity of a self--- an all-embracing, concrete self".[21] This assertion also comes to the fore in Iqbal's earliest work, where he identifies this kind of ontology (what might ordinarily be called Divine immanentism), with what he sees as "Magian" and un-Islamic theologies.[22]

We have learned that Iqbal's own words present a contrast between "static/fixed" and "anti-individualistic" theological visions, both of which he criticizes as false.[23] To put this another way, Iqbal is centrally concerned with maintaining both the "Self-ness"/ "Personality" of God, and Divine "dynamism" and non-stasis, and this is where Iqbal's vision of Divine Creativity enters the thicket. At this juncture, it is worth remembering that, even as Iqbal feels the falsity of what he sees as these decrepit theological bifurcations, his counter-vision does not prioritize systematization or see itself as an attempt to smooth out "logical paradoxes" by addressing

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[16] See Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 1-5; see also relevant passages from Iqbal's *Asrār-i Khudī* ("Secrets/Mysteries of Selfhood") in *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl, Fārsī:* The Complete Works of Iqbal in Persian (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan 1994) pp. 52-54. For the standard English translation of these passages on Plato, see Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i Khudī),* trans. By R.A. Nicholson (London: MacMillan & Co, 1920), pp. 56-59.

[17] Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia,* pp. 20-27.

[18] Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* 51.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 44.

[22] Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia,* 164.

[23] Sometimes it can be difficult for readers to admit both of these theological concerns of Iqbal's, especially among those who seek to place Iqbal in the terms of "systematic philosophy". E.g. Roger Whittermore gives a very helpful and correct articulation of Iqbal's concern about "static" theological visions. However, in the absence of attention to the other concern about maintaining God's "Individuality" and "freedom", Whittermore ends up imagining the natural universe, not as a creation of God's, but as partially co-identical with God (esp. pp. 687-688). Cf. Robert Whittemore, "Iqbal's Panentheism," *The Review of Metaphysics* 9, no. 4 (1956): 681-99.

questions regarding, for example, God's "essence" and "attributes", which have historically emerged with respect to Divine Creativity.[24] In fact, Iqbal openly looks down upon debates of this genre, declaring them corrosive for "character". [25] When writing on Divine Creativity, Iqbal is often, self-consciously, at the limits of descriptive language. Yet, knowing what we have delineated thus far, it is also clear that Iqbal's words on Divine Creativity *do* perform a significant function within/for his conception of *khudī*. In fact, we will keep returning to this vision of Divine Creativity as a key part of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* throughout this project.

ii) Divine Creativity

In approaching Iqbal's self-consciously inadequate words on Divine Creativity, readers in Religious Ethics are nudged in the right direction by recalling the ample literature in the field which emphasizes relationality. In fact, many authors, e.g. David Burrell, have noted that when a number of Abrahamic thinkers speak of God's Creating, they are often not thinking narrowly of one single, primordial event, but rather of a "founding relation" between God and all that is, which always shapes our views of "any further interactions" with God. [26]

In Iqbal's construal, Divine Creativity is not a "specific past event",[27] but a continuous relationship between the Creator and that which is created, and one which simultaneously forefronts or highlights the utter "Uniqueness" of God.[28] Hence, based upon his reception of a Qurʾānic verse (which he says is untranslatable),[29] Iqbal envisions three elements of Divine Creativity: creation (*khalq*), the One who is creating/Creator (*khāliq*), and, the Divine guiding directive, or *amr* (Iqbal translates this word variously as "directive function",[30] "directive

[24] For an overview of the nature of some of these debates, which emerge due to the "logical paradoxes of creation", see Ibrahim Kalim, "Will, necessity and creation", in *Creation and the God of Abraham* (2012), pp. 107-132. In pointing out Iqbal's self-conscious distancing from "theological paradox" debates, I problematize the view of some Iqbal scholars, that Iqbal's theological vision was "systematized wisdom" or "very much like the systems of other philosophers". Cf. Muhammad Rafiuddin, *Ḥikmat-i Iqbāl* (Islamabad, Pakistan: Idara Tehkikaat Islami, 1992), p. 9. By contrast, I am sympathetic to the route taken by Basit Koshul, i.e. to more subtly interrogate what the word "logic" can mean, and then do the work of articulating a "triadic logic" which is capable of taking more than logical non-contradiction as sign of truthfulness. This seems to me, the more generative and forward-looking route with respect to Iqbal, and far better than the attempts of some readers to "purify" Iqbal from logical non-contradiction, or, to reject Iqbal's thoughts purely on this basis. Cf. Koshul, *Semiotics as a Resource for Theology: Philosophical Warrants and Illustrations* (Abu Dhabi, UAE: Kalam Research and Media, 2017).

[25] See (my translation of) his Urdu verse:
"The goods/valuables (*matāʿ*) of character (*kirdār*), slip from a people's hands,
Once they start discussing the philosophy of "essence" and "attributes" (*falsafā-i dẖāt-o-ṣiffāt*)"
Iqbal, *Kullīyāt-i-Iqbāl, Urdū* (The Complete Works of Iqbal in Urdu), ed. Ahmad Raza (Lahore: Sa'ādat Press, 2005), p. 590.

[26] David Burrell, "The act of creation with its theological consequences", in *Creation and the God of Abraham* (2010), pp. 41-51.

[27] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 52.

[28] Basit Koshul has also outlined this relational construal of Divine Creativity in Iqbal, in *Semiotics as a Resource for Theology*, pp. 42-54. Koshul does so from a perspective that is focused on logic, helping us to understand Iqbal's vision using the pragmaticist definition of "triadic logic" provided by Charles Peirce.

[29] *The Reconstruction*, 82. The verse is Q. 7:54.

[30] Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* 82.

energy"[31], "Creative directive", and "direction", while highlighting its untranslatability).[32] Iqbal further emphasizes what he calls the "Uniqueness" of God, by arguing that: "how Divine *amr* functions", is unknowable,[33] and that unlike human aspirations, God's Creative will is "unfailing":

> To the Creative [Divine] Self change cannot mean imperfection…God's life is self-revelation, not the pursuit of an ideal to be reached. The "not yet" of man does mean pursuit and may mean failure; the "not yet" of God means unfailing realization of the infinite creative possibilities of His being which retains its wholeness throughout the entire process. [34]

However, in Iqbal's view, God's "Uniqueness" is not restricted to His unknowability and "unfailing realization". Rather, it also includes His Unique "intimacy" with or "embrace of" creation.[35] Hence, after Iqbal contrasts human forms of making (which he calls the "contriving" and "artificing" of "mechanicians")[36] with Divine Creativity, [37] Iqbal argues that the latter is unfathomably "intensive".

When Iqbal calls Divine Creativity an "intensive infinity", he means, first of all, that when God creates, He does not Create an "other" at all, which could then become a separate "manufactured article"; possessing "no organic relation to the life of its maker, and of which the maker is nothing more than a mere spectator". In fact, what is created never "stands as an independent reality in opposition to Him". Instead, the more that this Divine Creative activity "unfolds", the more intimate the created/the *khalq* gets with the Divine Creative Directive/*amr*. The direction of Creativity is reversed, so to speak, from what we humans ordinarily imagine as "making", i.e. to make something which becomes "independent" from our creative contribution. Instead, Divine Creativity is an ever-deepening relationship of the creat*ed* with the Creator's "Creative will". [38] In the next chapter on the human individual, I will elaborate how Iqbal envisions the human individual as endowed with the potential to "participate in the Creative life" of God.[39] However, even there, Iqbal is mainly concerned with a course of moral-ontological betterment and growth, by which a human being could actually deepen their "participation", and not an analysis of the

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[31] Ibid., 153.
[32] Ibid., 84.
[33] Ibid., 82.
[34] Ibid., 48.
[35] Ibid., 88.
[36] For anyone interested in exploring the implications of such distinctions more generally, Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959) would be an extremely helpful guide. Arendt, whose work is not concerned with Divine Creativity, has still thought very precisely about the various ways in which humans "make". She provides an articulation of the distinction between cyclical and metabolic "labor", and posterity-seeking and linear "work". Her account of the tenuousness of human forms of making, all of which are responses to death, might give a more religiously inclined reader a sense of how distinct our ways of "creating" can be from God. Cf. Arendt, pp. 7-9; 38-39; 167; 299-304.
[37] Ibid., 24.
[38] Ibid., pp. 51-53.
[39] Ibid., 64.

"hows" or inner workings of Divine Creativity. As he says: "Unfortunately, language does not help us here. We possess no word to express the kind of knowledge which is also creative of its object."[40]

Furthermore, with respect to his use of the word "infinity"; Iqbal has a distinctive vision of Divine Creativity as an activity which is "ceaseless", *and* simultaneously, not restricted to repetition or predictability. This is displayed particularly sharply by his conception of nature, as we see below, and also in his view of the potentially "endless career" of the human individual, as in the next chapter. Here it is quite significant that, explicitly undergirding Iqbal's view of Divine Creative "ceaselessness", is his view that God's "Self-revelation" cannot be limited, barring where God wants to limit Himself, in which case, none can stop Him. Therefore, the "ceaseless" nature of Divine Creativity as Iqbal envisions it, is about maintaining Divine "freedom", but a freedom that itself should not be over-determined, in Iqbal's view, such that it would constrict God's "Self-revelation" to "repetition", "cyclicality" or "mechanism".[41] In this vein i.e. not wanting to conceptually constrict God, Iqbal writes that "the universe is [only] a partial expression" of the "infinite Creative Activity" of God, which we cannot entirely know, as finite creatures.[42] However, concurrently, Iqbal believes that God is Unique in yet another way, i.e. He is totally free not to Self-limit, yet He still does so, without any "external" constraints akin to ours. Thus, in Iqbal's own words, "the word 'limitation' [when speaking of God] needs not frighten us", because it actually heightens our appreciation of Divine "Uniqueness".[43] As we see Iqbal's words on the human person and society, we will add flesh to his view of Divine Self-limitations.

For now, to put the above succinctly, for Iqbal, "terminus" and "failure" are both grossly unsuited concepts when we are attempting to speak about Divine Creativity, and this particular point has profound implications for his vision of *khudī*. For Iqbal, God's Creativity is always "unfailing realization", but the wealth of what God creates is, also, neither exhausted nor pattern-constricted. Iqbal's vision of Divine Creativity can be seen, in his own words, as an attempt to maintain the "Individual"-ness of a God who is free to do or not do as He wills, to be (Self-) limited, or not, *and* also, the "dynamism" of a God who is not a "spectator", but is deeply involved in the life of His creation.[44]

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[40] Ibid., 62.
[41] Ibid., pp. 40-41; 62-63; 113.
[42] Ibid., 52.
[43] Ibid., pp. 67-68.
[44] Different aspects of what this paragraph states, have been highlighted well by different thinkers. For a portrayal of Iqbal's aversion to the notion of "completion" vis-à-vis Divine Creativity, Cf. S.B. Diagne, *Islam and Open Society: Fidelity and Movement in the Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, trans. by Melissa McMahon (Dakar, Senegal: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2010), pp. 19-38; 51-56. Mustansar Mir captures Iqbal's aversion to a "stonelike idol" or spectatorial God, quite well. Cf. Mir, *Tulip in the Desert*, pp. 9-10. And the inexorable view of Divine Creativity in Iqbal, has been outlined by Basit Koshul in "Muhammad Iqbal's

Furthermore, as seen in his words above, what Iqbal means by "Self-revelation" is not an idea that God can be fully "known". Instead, it is a vision of God "showing" his "Unique" God-ness, in myriad ways that are described from this chapter onwards. Therefore, a key point, and the first primer towards our understanding of *khudī* is that it in Iqbal's usage, "*khudī"* is not just a signifier that God is an Individual Self (and hence, simply possesses Self-ness), but also, that this Divine Self-ness has a tendency to "show" itself, in addition to never being "adequately conceivable" by creatures.[45] The Creative Activity of this simultaneously "self-showing" and deeply "secretive" Self-ness,[46] this *khudī,* is the reason for the existence of all that exists, as we now turn to understand.

II. The "Structure" of Iqbal's Natural Vision

As said previously, Iqbal's vision of *khudī* has three "facets" or "layers", i.e. the universe, the human individual, and human society. When we get into the human dimensions of this vision, i.e. individual and society, Iqbal's words on *khudī* begin to perform an intensely aspirational function. With the natural universe, however, the function of *khudī* is more as a continuous ontological "source", i.e. the reason why the universe, and all that is, exists.[47] Appreciating this point, also helps us to ground something said in the Introduction, i.e. while *khudī* is used in an ontologically broad sense, it is not used homogeneously.

With this knowledge in mind, in Part II, we will now describe the two major threads running through Iqbal's natural vision; first, a pervasive esteem of the entirety of the natural universe, including parts of nature that might otherwise be seen as insignificant in the "grand scheme of things", e.g. insects, plants, sensory faculties, etc. My shorthand for this thread is Iqbal's "ontic esteem" of nature. Second, a consistent emphasis on the "dynamism" and "restlessness" of the

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Reconstruction of the Philosophical Argument for the Existence of God", in *Muhammad Iqbal: A Contemporary,* Eds. Muhammad Suheyl Umar and Basit Bilal Koshul (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2010), pp. 95-128.

[45] E.g. Iqbal writes in *The Reconstruction*: "His [God's] "I-amness" is independent, elemental, absolute. Of such a self it is impossible for us to form an adequate conception" (p. 45).

[46] This simultaneity comes to the fore in what can be called his most *khudī*-centric work, i.e. the Persian poetic magnum opus, the *Asrār-i Khudī* ("Secrets of Self-ness"). The opening section, for example, emphasizes both the "secretive" nature of this *khudī* and also its tendency to "show" itself. Cf. Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 30-33. Two especially illustrative verses here, are:
"The shape/form (*paykar*) of existence (*hastī*), is by the effects/works (*athār*) of *khudī,*
All that you see, is from the secrets of *khudī*" [Hence, a sense of both "seeing"/visibility, and of "secrets"] (p.30)
Likewise:
"The showing of itself (*vā-numūdan-ī khīsh*), is the habit/character (*khū*) of *khudī,*
Concealed in every particle, is the power (*nīrū*) of *khudī"* (p.32)
Again, a sense of hidden-ness as well as a tendency to "show". The verb used in this verse, *vā-numūdan,* is stronger than simply "showing"; it usually means to confirm, to show again/repeatedly, and even, to "show off" (Cf. Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary (*Routledge, 1998), p. 1454.

[47] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 30-31.

universe, whether it be in the form of the "growing universe", the countless "variety of life-forms" which keep developing to "suit new environments", or the "reality" of random events, or "absolutely novel and unforeseeable events", alongside natural patterns. My shorthand for this second thread within Iqbal's natural vision is "ontic dynamism".[48]

As we now turn to delineate each of these threads, we will find that Taylor's description of an "ontic logos" helps us to understand Iqbal. Thus, in Taylor's words, "ontic" denotes a pre-given relationship between the human being, the universe, and the source of all that exists. Although there is room for this relationship to deepen, and indeed that *is* the hard work of moral formation, ultimately that which is the source of the human's moral growth and capacity for excellence, is the exact same as the source of the ordering patterns of the universe, and this ontological continuity simply *is*, regardless of whether any human being becomes formed or malformed. Taylor takes Plato as the paradigmatic theorist of an ontic logos because Plato envisioned that to be a more excellent human being necessarily means to "to be turned towards and in tune with this cosmic order" of the universe, "which is shaped by the Good", as is the morally well-oriented person.[49] Not to get into the weeds again, but the point here is that on this conception, the human being does not have to *construct* a path to participating in the universe and its ontological source, but rather to *find* this path as part of seeking of a deeper relationship with the source of existence.[50] The very fact that the human being and the universe both exist, makes them connected to, and participating in, the same ontological frame.[51]

The "logos" part of "ontic logos" as Taylor describes it,[52] refers to a particular kind of ordering, and also to the possible, and logically permissible, movements within this order. According to (Taylor's description of) such ontic logos views, both the universe and the human being "are attuned to" the same order, *but additionally*, this idea of logos is also very precisely of "a hierarchical order of being."[53] This means: i) that all things and persons do not participate equally and/or uniformly in that which orders all that is, *and also that* ii) to increase one's degree of participation in this order is to move unidirectionally from "the material and the bodily," which is "the changing", towards the "suprasensible and eternal".[54] The direction of betterment

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[48] A sort of precursor to my observation of "ontic dynamism", is Mustansar Mir's article "Poet as Aetiologist: Two Poems by Iqbal". Although the title might convey focus on two poems, and potentially escape the research of those interested in Iqbal's broader thought-patterns, Mir in fact conveys a larger truth about Iqbal's vision of the natural world, i.e. "his dissatisfaction with the notion of static perfection". *Iqbal Review,* vol. 41, no. 3 (2000). http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct00/03.htm

[49] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989)*,* 143.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., 144.

[52] We are not interested here in debates over what the term "logos" can mean. We recognize its significance as structuring concept within Western philosophy. We mean it in the fixed, anchoring sense that Taylor is using it here.

[53] Taylor, 16.

[54] Ibid., 143.

is unidirectional, and it must move from, and beyond, one lower realm to another, higher realm. The point here is that Taylor's description of ontic logos theories uses the word "hierarchical" in a deep sense. It does not simply mean that moral agents have differing levels of excellence, but that the very structure of such ontologically unified visions is tiered and, for the genuinely improving moral agent, unidirectionally tiered. To be a good human being one must, by definition, pass through this structure of "acceding" from a lower realm (the material, changing one) to a higher realm (which is immaterial, eternal).[55]

Bearing in mind the pre-given-ness of a human-nature ontological relation, conveyed by the word "ontic", and the transcendence-oriented hierarchy conveyed by the Taylorian usage of "logos", let us now turn to understand Iqbal's vision of (what I call, in shorthand) nature's "ontic esteem".

i) Ontic Esteem of the Universe

In his pithiest formulation of this point, Iqbal says that the entirety of the material universe, "all that is in the universe", excluding nothing, "is a reality".[56] Reading passages from *The Reconstruction,* the *Asrār-i Khudī,* and parts of his Urdū and Persian poetry, we begin to understand what this condensed statement means. E.g. there are the opening pages of the *Asrār,* which declare that "the source of the system of the universe (*aṣl-i-niẓām-iʿālam*) is from *khudī";* that "the shape/body of existence (*paykar-i hastī*) is by the effects/works (*athār*) of *khudī",* and, "all that you see, is from the secrets (*asrār*) of *khudī.*" These opening words, which center this mysterious *khudī* within the existence of the universe, then lead us into images of similar events, both natural and human, e.g. flowers decaying, and humans suffering.[57] These events are poetically similized to each other, but also, grouped together as variants of the "showing" of *khudī.*[58] As we progress deeper into the hefty poetic work, we see Iqbal re-inscribing this sense of "all-ness". Thus, Iqbal continuously includes the material universe as an ineluctable expression of the manifestation of Divine *khudī,* and as a key element of *khalq* (creation).[59]

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[55] Ibid., pp. 115-119; 123.

[56] Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings of Iqbal.* Ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2015), 99-101.

[57] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 31. For example, flowers decaying, animals being preyed upon, deer being captured for musk, etc. are woven into the same continuity as human existence, with both its suffering and potential grandeur. Iqbal writes that "the excuse for this wastefulness and stone-hearted cruelty (*sangīn dilī*)/ is the creation (*khalq*) and excellence (*takmīl*) of spiritual beauty (*jamāl-i maʿnavī*)". The last formulation, *jamāl-i maʿnavī,* is especially pregnant because *maʿnavī* is also attached to the name of Rūmī's most famous work, the *mathnawī-yi maʿnavī,* and can also be used in the sense of "meaningful", "true", or "significant". We also see Rūmī mentioned as an inspiration for this work, in these pages. However, this term is not used again, with the Creative/ *khalq*-oriented, and the *khudī*-focused, dimensions taking the center stage for the rest of the work.

[58] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 30-33. He attaches a variety of verbs to these events, all of which, while different from each other, also have a continuity insofar as they connote a sense of *khudī* "becoming more manifest". Thus, he uses *āgāh shudan* (to become acquainted with/aware of), *numūdan* (to become apparent), *vā-numūdan* (to confirm; to show off); *āshkār shudan* (to become manifest), etc.

[59] There are many instances of this, but two of the most extended are as follows: i) the section which warns Muslims against the "sheepish" Plato, declaring him weak, "having no taste for action (*dhawq-iʿamal*)", a "denier (*munkar*) of this universe", "unable to endure the noise of this world (*ghawghā-yi īnʿālam*)", and "having no

Moreover, in Iqbal's view, there are certain normative entailments of these two starting points, i.e. that the entirety of the universe is an expression of Divine Creativity, and that the universe exists because of Divine *khudī.* Most significantly, contrary to the Taylorian description of a "logos" in which hierarchy in one "supra-sensible" direction is desirable, in Iqbal's view, the material universe should not seek to be "transcended" or overcome by supra-sensible "flight". Rather, this universe should be treated, in and of itself, as an aspect of God's Creative "showing" of His *khudī.* As such, the natural universe cannot be "run away from", to use Iqbal's language, without responding improperly to God.[60]

To begin with, for Iqbal this means that any act of human interaction with nature, or any participation of the human being in the material world (e.g. being endowed with the five senses, a material body, and so forth) is always an act of the human being relating, and responding, to God. Iqbal's theo-relational framing of human engagement and participation in the universe is pervasive. Thus, the activity of the "scientific observer of nature" is described as "seeking a kind of intimacy with God", but in the intensely focused manner of a hunter following deer tracks, or like someone who is praying in privacy, to God.[61] Likewise, the ordinary person, who is exhorted by the Qurʾān to reflect upon the manifold signs of God in nature, is envisioned by Iqbal not as a spectator asked to gaze upon an inert but useful object, but as an individual responsible to God, who has "a duty…to reflect on these signs and not to pass by them", because of the continuity of these natural signs with Divine revelation.[62] In the same vein, the bodily senses with which humans are endowed, are seen not simply as faculties, but as "Divine gifts", for which we are going to be held "accountable to God for their activity in this world" on the Day of Judgment.[63]

In addition to this inescapable relationality with God, the other normative entailment of Iqbal's centering of Divine *khudī* within his natural vision, is a conferral of dignity upon seemingly "lowly" or "insignificant" elements of nature. His Urdū and Persian poetry is filled with such expressions, calling us to "come down from the lofty summits of the stars, and mingle with the disturbed waves of the ocean."[64] One also sees this attitude reflected in his treatment of insects and animals. Indeed, in *The Reconstruction* he unifies "the world of plants, insects, and stars" as

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recourse except running away" from it (Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 52-54); and, ii) the section which explains that the material senses and organs ("nose, hands, teeth, brain, eyes, ears"), are as important as "reflection (*fikr*), imagination (*takhkhayyul*), awareness (*shuʿūr*), memory (*yād)*", etc. (Ibid., pp. 34-35.)

[60] Ibid.

[61] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 73.

[62] Ibid., pp. 2-3; 102. Iqbal considers the "signs" of God in nature (crop cycles, stellar orbits, insects, etc.) to be continuous with the revelation that is God's Word, i.e. the Quʿrān. He uses the verb "revealed" and "revelation" for both the Quʿrānic scripture and these natural phenomenon. For an excellent overview of the implications of this continuity, and one which relies on Iqbal as well as semiotic theory that interrogates what "sign" means, Cf. Basit Bilal Koshul, *Semiotics as a Resource for Theology: Philosophical Warrants and Illustrations* (Abu Dhabi: Kalam Research and Media, 2017).

[63] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 2-3.

[64] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt (Persian complete works), p. 320.

the same "natural world", and as comprising equally significant parts of nature.[65] Hence, Iqbal has a remarkable Persian quatrain, the gist of which is that the buzzing of a mosquito (*ṭanīn-i pashsheh*) is as worthy of listening (*gūshish*) as the majestic song of eagles (*ṣafīr-i shahbāzān*).[66] This unusual pairing of an eagle with a mosquito also appears elsewhere,[67] where both are described as possessing a "taste for flying" (*dhawq-i parvāzī*).[68] In the same vein, but now envisioning even more (apparently) discontinuous entities as continuous, Iqbal writes about the luminosity of the firefly (*kirmak-i shabtāb*)[69] and the Sun (*āftāb*), envisioning both as a sign of Divine light or "*Nūr*", because they are not reliant on other entities to be illuminated. [70] Displaying the same unitive or narrative capacity yet again, Iqbal also crafts a poetic dialogue between a baby eagle, a baby fish, and a firefly, in which all three are presented as grand in their own right; the puny fish describing its amazing capacity to traverse the fathomless oceanic depths; the baby eagle proudly countering depths with heights, and describing sights unreachable by the fish; and the firefly boasting of its capacity to produce light in darkness as equally marvelous and distinctive. [71] The point conveyed by these various articulations is that in Iqbal's vision, the universe is not divided into hierarchical tiers such that, for example, celestial entities are more ontologically significant than common insects or vegetation. As he says; "the humble bee" is "a recipient of Divine inspiration", as much as the "grander" parts of the universe.[72]

In other words, Iqbal has a vision of what can be called "ontic esteem" for the entirety of the natural universe, which is based in his centering of Divine *khudī* within this natural vision. As he says, "all that you see, is from the secrets of *khudī",* and this sense of "all-ness" is then re-inscribed through a variety of his nature-words. Recalling the Taylorian sense of the word "ontic", we can understand that for Iqbal, the relationship between humanity and nature is pre-given; it is simply a fact for Iqbal, that "man is related to nature" by virtue of being a fellow creation of God.[73] This relation between the human being and the cosmos *is,* because both are (Divine) Creative expressions, or manifestations of the Divine *khudī.*

However, as is clear from the above, even though Iqbal does not believe that a relation has to be constructed "ex nihilo" (by us) between humanity and the universe, Iqbal's articulation of this human-universe relation is not in terms of "discovery" or "finding" of an attuned pattern, but

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[65] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 2-3.
[66] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, 948.
[67] In a large politico-poetic project, *Pas Cheh Bāyad Kard, Ay Aqwām-i Sharq* ("Hence what must be done, oh nations of the East").
[68] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, 888.
[69] The English translation, "firefly", does not capture the simultaneity of earthiness and grandeur that is already inherent in the Persian phrase *kirmak-i shabtāb. Kirmak* is the word for "worm", whereas the adjective, *shab-tāb,* means "night-glowing" or "night-burning". Cf. Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (1998)*,* p. 272; p. 1025.
[70] Ibid., pp. 308-309.
[71] Ibid., pp. 318-319.
[72] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 3.
[73] Ibid., 12.

rather, in terms of actively responding to God.[74] Thus, as Iqbal states in the *Asrār-i Khudī,* not just the existence of the universe, but its "shape"/ "body" (*paykar*), or its "system" (*niẓām*), too, is "by/from *khudī*". This leads us to begin understanding the second dimension of Iqbal's natural vision, i.e. what can be called a sense of "ontic dynamism".

ii) Ontic Dynamism of the Universe

This section describes the second "thread" of Iqbal's natural vision, which has to do less with his valuation of nature, and more with its "ordering patterns". This is important, because the dynamism of Iqbal's natural vision is continuous with his positive emphasis on the restlessness of morality. In understanding this thread of Iqbal's natural vision, it is helpful to recall Taylor's particular usage of the word "logos" in his descriptions of "ontic logos", which conveys appreciation for a sense of fixed placement, and of a proper orientation within this placement. On such a view, the morally mature human being is rightly *situated* and *turned*, well-oriented, towards that which is "higher", even as there is a deeply affective and loving realization of this good situation. The structure of this cosmic order is such that everything else is properly placed, and properly turned and attuned to that which is higher-than. Movement does have its place, e.g. often painful and difficult re-orientation is crucial to participate increasingly properly in this ontic placement (i.e. to become rightly "turned"). However, motion itself is not the overarching and underlying structure of things. The overarching "way things are", in an ontological sense, is fixed, and, to be morally good is to be well-ordered within this scheme.

As I evidence below, Iqbal's natural vision has a very different taste for dynamism and ceaselessness, and not for terminally "arriving at" a proportionate and ordered orientation. As Iqbal says pithily in *The Reconstruction*, he prefers an ideal of "enjoyment of the infinite", and not an "ideal of proportion" and "well-defined limits".[75] Thus, for Iqbal, it is not primarily mis-situation or ill-turning which makes one against the ontic grain, so to speak, but a stubborn *fixity* and *rest.* As we now turn to see, it is as if Iqbal's natural vision tells everything that exists: "You are an expression of Divine Creativity, which is ceaseless."[76]

[74] Mir, for example, approaches something like this observation when he discusses "nature as foil" in Iqbal, but leaves out the essential theo-relational element. If it is not first observed that the activity of engagement with/participation in the material world, is also a form of relating to God, then, one cannot but conclude that the central function of this engagement is "conquest" for its own sake. Cf. Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker,* 36.
[75] *Reconstruction,* pp. 101-102. The reason for this preference is that he believes the Qurʾān, and by extension even "Muslim culture", despite its imperfections, tend towards an appreciation for "infinity", as opposed to the "ideal of proportion" and "limits", which Iqbal believes had characterized (Qurʾān-contrary) "Greek thought".
[76] Iqbal conveys this idea more poetically and succinctly in Urdu: "Life is nothing except a taste of/for travelling" (*hayāt, zauq-i safar kai sivā kuch aur nahī*). Cf. Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 378. And also, his verse, chiding us: "do not be content upon the world of color and scent"/ "*qanāʿat nā kar, ʿālam-i rang-o-bū par".* Ibid., pp. 389-390.

Two Urdū poems in particular, i.e. *chānd aur tāray* ("moon and stars"),[77] and *koshish-i nātamām* ("incomplete effort")[78] are artistic masterpieces which embody this Iqbalian ethos of ontic dynamism especially well. It is beyond the scope of our current project to extol their literary merits, of which there are many, but we can certainly notice what they convey so powerfully about Iqbal's natural vision. Thus, let us look at the first one, "moon and stars", which crafts a dialogue between the titular entities, with the stars venting about their un-pausing orbits. Their words arrive at this juncture (which loses its beauty, in my translation):

> It is our work to keep going,[79] day and night;
> To keep going, keep going, and continuously keep going.
> Everything in this universe is restless,[80] and,
> What is called "rest", [81] is not.
> Everyone stays tortured[82] in travel,[83]
> The stars, the human being, the trees and stones; all.
> Will this travelling ever end?
> Will a destination[84] ever appear, or not?

The moon sympathizes with his eloquent "companions", or "those who sit with me",[85] and then replies,

> From motion[86] is the life of the universe.
> This is the ancient custom[87] here.
> The ashy steed of time[88] runs

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[77] Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 144-145.

[78] Ibid., 150.

[79] The Urdu verb I have translated as "going", is *chalnā*. It means "to walk", and more generally, to "go" or "proceed", which seems appropriate given the speakers are stars. Iqbal's verse has a sense of continuousness, which I have also tried to convey.

[80] "*bētāb";* restless; often, also used as "impatient".

[81] "*sukūn";* the word conveys rest, but also, stillness in the sense of "tranquility" or "peace".

[82] *"sitam-kash";* literally, "torture-experiencing" or "torture-bearing" (*sitam* = injury, violence or oppression; Cf. Steingass, p. 635, and the suffix *–kash* being from the verb *–kashīdan*; Cf. Steingass, p. 1035). It is usually used in the sense of "tortured", or "oppressed", in Urdu.

[83] *"safar";* travel.

[84] "*manzil";* destination, but usually in the sense of a resting place (like an inn for a caravan), an "alighting place", or an accommodation for (weary) travelers. For a quick overview of the many legacies carried by this poetically significant word, see Rekhta's accessible online Urdu dictionary. Cf. *Rekhta.org* s.v. "manzil", accessed online on 28 May 2020. https://www.rekhta.org/urdudictionary/?keyword=manzil

[85] "*ham-nashīno";* plural of *ham-nashīn,* i.e. a companion or one who "sits next to" someone else.

[86] "*jumbish";* I have tried to retain the widest possible sense of this word, while staying near to the plain sense. It can also be translated as "agitation" and "work", in addition to simpler "movement". Cf. Steingass, p. 373.

[87] *"rasm-i qadīm". Rasm* = "custom", *qadīm* = "ancient, very old".

[88] "*ashhab-i zamānā".* i) *ashhab* usually means a "greyish white or ashy color" in Persian, and even, often, in Urdu, which might be puzzling, given the clear imagery of an animal being whipped to motion. Yet, also in Urdu, as the dictionary *Lughāt-i Kishorī,* notes, the word begins to refer to a variety of animals who have this coloration, including horses, goats, and even, astoundingly, a "jungle lion" (!). Alternatively, one might translate: "the ashy animal of time". Cf. Tassadduq Hussain, *Lughāt-i Kishorī* (1952), p. 26. ii) *zamānā* = time, and also "era", but also

By catching, and then catching,[89] the whip of seeking/desire.[90]
On this path, a station is out of place;[91]
And hidden, in restful satisfaction,[92] is death.[93]
Those who keep going, go on;
And those who stop a bit, are trampled.

As can be felt even in the translation, this poem is embodiment and statement of the dynamism of Iqbal's natural vision. [94] Existence itself, and bettering one's participation in the structure of the universe, is not by arriving at a fixed situation, "station" or "destination", but by "keeping going", moving, and embracing that ceaseless motion itself, is the "way things are".[95] Such a poetic moment is not alone in Iqbal's work, but we cannot translate all of its counterparts.[96] However, it can noted that there is another poem titled "incomplete effort" (*koshish*[97]*-i nātamām*),[98] which is (in my estimation) second only to the above in its encapsulation of the dynamism of Iqbal's natural vision. When one reads a title like "incomplete effort" or "incomplete endeavor", one is accustomed to think of a human whose aspirations have fallen short. Iqbal bypasses this negative paradigm of incompleteness; indeed, the poem is positively natural and theological; it conveys a sense of thrill about the universe and its ongoing manifestation of Divine creative ceaselessness. Its overall structure can be described as performative of its own title. Thus, it is "constantly moving" and "not sitting"; taking us from the morning, then on to the ray of sunshine, then the stars, then the ravines and rivers, then the dewdrop, then the ocean…and so on. Most significantly: it too, ends with a word lending a

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often means "the world" in Urdu. For example, someone complaining of the unjust world, might use the word "*zamānā",* akin to "fate".

[89] The verb is *khāna* ("eating") but, compounded with *tāzyānā* ("whip"), it means to "catch" the whip-blows.

[90] The word I have translated as "seeking", *ṭalab,* carries both a cognitive and affective sense, simultaneously. Steingass' dictionary entry notes that this word can be used in the sense of "inquiring", of "seeking", and of "anything sought after; a woman sought after", in the more affective and passionate sense (p. 817).

[91] *"maqām"* = station. *"be-mahal"* = out of place.

[92] The word translated as "restful satisfaction" is one word, *qarār.* It is yet another word for "rest", but this time carries an additional valence of a need, pain, or discontentment which is finally being put to ease.

[93] He uses the word "*ajal*", which conveys, more specifically within "death", "the appointed term of something", which is its demise. The *Lughāt-i Kishorī* (1952), for example, defines *ajal* broadly as "the appointed time of death" (p.8).

[94] It is probably difficult to overstate the extent to which a "taste for dynamism" rather than "fixed limits" is desired by Iqbal. In this respect, Iqbal's words (quoted above) from *The Reconstruction* are self-perceptive. In fact, Urdu literary scholar Shamsur Rahman Faruqi has noted that "*ravānī"* or "flowing-ness" is one of the most distinctive and attractive *formal* features of Iqbal's poetry. In other words, it is not just the content, but the form itself, which embodies and conveys a sense of dynamism. Shamsurraḥmān Faruqi, and Muḥammad Suhail 'Umar (Ed.). *How To Read Iqbal?: Essays On Iqbal, Urdu Poetry And Literary Theory.* Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2007, pp.3-4.

[95] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 144-145.

[96] Some of these counterparts are compiled and translated by Shakoor Ahsan, "Iqbal and Nature," *Iqbal Review* vol. 13, no. 3 (1972). http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct72/4.htm

[97] "Trying", but also "striving/exerting". Both senses are used in Urdū.

[98] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, 150.

positive valence to unending motion and "not-yet-ness", i.e. "Every single thing is alive, by incomplete effort."[99]

Alongside such masterful poetic instantiations of dynamism, Iqbal's more prosaic words about the natural universe can also be seen as flowing from his vision of the ceaselessness of Divine Creativity. In *The Reconstruction,* three distinct threads of "ontic dynamism" with respect to the universe, can be discerned by a patient reader. The first is "dynamism" in the sense of expansion and growth, i.e. continuously stretching out prior limits. Iqbal uses such language to describe the universe as a whole, based upon his theological commitment that God does not "operate from without" upon the universe, in the manner of a human maker whose "created" thing eventually "stands in opposition to him". Hence, "the universe is not a thing but an act" (of God); it cannot be (what he calls) "a block universe, a finished product, immobile and incapable of change."[100] Rather, it must be "liable to increase" and "a growing universe and not an already completed product", because for Iqbal, to postulate the "finished-universe" view would be to put an end on Divine Creativity and render it "dead".[101] We also see that, as Iqbal gets into the descriptive limits of what he believes can be presently known about the universe, he maintains his view of its continuous growth, even after the event of the Day of Judgment. Thus, Iqbal's few sentences on a (proto-) material eschatology, while admitting a lack of knowledge and repeating, "we do not know", also construe whatever the universe will undergo on the Day of Judgment, not as an annihilation, but as "reconstitution", "transformation", new "growing", and "unfolding"; although, he adds, "what this "reconstituted" or "other way" will be, "we do not know".[102] The more important consideration for him, seems to be to maintain the vision of Divine Creativity.

In addition, the second sense of nature's ontic dynamism in *The Reconstruction* is of motion as constant tussle or struggle. However, Iqbal does not mean this as a battle between two opposing cosmic forces. Rather, he writes of ongoing biological tussle between "an infinite variety of life-forms" in nature, all of which compete for survival in a finite space. The fact that species go extinct, and others emerge, and that biological adaptations emerge to "suit new environments", are all envisioned by Iqbal, in one narrative thread, as the activity of the "infinite wealth of His Being", which keeps creating newer forms of creation. Relatedly, the "world-pain" which is entailed by this variety of "life-forms", i.e. the "awful struggle" for competitive survival, is envisioned by Iqbal as a further manifestation of the "infinite wealth" of Divine Creativity, which is now making itself known even in this very limited context. Thus, to return to Iqbal's earlier idea which was explained above, i.e. of God as Self-limiting in His Creativity, one sees glimpses of this idea in Iqbal's descriptions of what he calls the "world-pain" of the "variety of the life-forms". For Iqbal, the Creative capacity of God is limitless (except by Him), such that He

[99] Ibid; *"Zinda, har ik chīz hai, koshish-i nā-tamām sē".*
[100] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 8.
[101] Ibid., 44.
[102] Ibid., 98.

alone could cause to "emerge" and "multiply", such stunning biological variety, even within a finite environment which does lead to great bloodshed. Iqbal is distressed by this "tragedy" in nature, but leaves its more theodical aspects with the comment that God must have a "specific purpose" which "the driving power of pain brings", especially with respect to "the evolution of selfhood" in the human being. However, we are limited in our knowledge of this purpose, except that it disciplines us and makes our participation in "selfhood" stronger.[103]

We will turn to the human person in the next chapter, but for now, let us note that, the third sense of the universe's ontic dynamism in *The Reconstruction* is of "non-cyclicality". Iqbal writes that Divine Creativity is Unique and unlike "mechanistic repetition" or "human artifice". As he says: "Creation is opposed to repetition which is a characteristic of mechanical action".[104] Hence, for Iqbal, "the universe is a free creative movement"[105] of God, Who, while exhorting humanity to look upon observable natural patterns is, also, free to do as He wills. Thus, there will always be "absolutely novel and unforeseeable", "absolutely free and original" events in the universe.[106] What this means with respect to God's Creation of the universe is unspecified, except that "the universe is not the temporal working out of a preconceived plan", because to do so would be to constrict God's Creative freedom. Rather, the gist is that some non-pattern-constricted natural events, must be, because otherwise, God's Creativity would be "externally limited" or constrained. It is suggested that these events are not ones which can be comprehended by historically prevalent scientific methods, which seek patterns and regularities. [107] However, additionally, from the vantage point of the human being, who can potentially "participate in the Creative life" of God, these "unforeseeable" natural events are seen as what are commonly called "miracles", although Iqbal largely does not use this word. As I explain towards the end of the next chapter, Iqbal has a vision of human moral formation, within which the third stage ("Divine representation") is one inhabited by prophets, who have matured to become direct agents of Divine *amr* (Creative Directive). In Iqbal's presentation of the "miraculous" acts of prophets like Muhammad, Moses, and Jesus, it is not abnormal *for nature* to obey God's command/ the Divine representative's command, but, it is also true that such events are, nevertheless, unprecedented by us humans within familiar natural patterns. Thus, Iqbal presents these shocking natural events, largely as "commanded"-but-novel events, rather than "miraculous" events.[108]

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[103] Ibid., pp. 69-71; 100. He finds comfort in the Qurʾān, especially 12:21, which reassures that God is not purposeless.

[104] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 40.

[105] Ibid., 41.

[106] Ibid., 40.

[107] Ibid., 44.

[108] Hence, we might notice the range of language that Iqbal uses in the *Asrār-i Khudī* when describing "miraculous" acts of prophets, e.g. Moses splitting the sea, Jesus reviving the dead, etc. (Cf. Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 66-69). This language is: "being in command over the elements" (*bar unāṣir ḥukmrān būdan*); "bringing another world into being" (*ʿālamī dīgar bīyā(va)rad dar wujūd)*; "making ripe, the nature of every raw" (*pukhteh sāzad, fiṭrat-i har khām*); "imposing presence/awe" *(haybat),* yet another variant of "strong/strengthened" (*moḥkam),* "the miracle of action" (*i ʿjāz-i ʻamal*), "kingship" (*sultānī*), "riding" (*shahsavārī*) and "the style (or manner) of action" (*andāz-i*

We have described the contours of Iqbal's vision of nature's ontic dynamism. We shall see in the coming chapters, how Iqbal's emphasis on ceaseless dynamism, is also an important feature of his vision of human morality. However, before turning to these human dimensions, in Part III of this chapter, we now describe what might be called some "pre-moral" dimensions of Iqbal's vision of *khudī.* These are certain elements of Iqbal's natural vision, as informed by his theological concerns, which are indispensable to understanding his words on morality.

III. Moving towards Moral Dimensions

Nature is important within Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* not only because it is an estimable expression of Divine Creativity, and of the ceaseless dynamism of this Creativity, but also, because it exemplifies a responsive attitude to God, i.e. obedience, which is a model for the beginnings of human moral formation.

i) Natural Obedience and Exemplarity

Iqbal has some thoughts on the pre-moral-formation state of the human being, in which nature is an important contributor. These are in addition to his aforementioned view that the materiality of the human being is not a base or substratum upon which the "higher" processes of moral reasoning or emoting can occur.[109] The first significant point here is that nature is not exemplary because it is moral. In Iqbal's view, neither "wrongdoing" nor "goodness" are possible for any (non-human) part of the natural universe, because "the freedom" to "disobey" is "a condition of goodness". Moral normativity and culpability are, thus, categories inapplicable to natural actors, and any suffering and pain in nature is already by complete obedience to God's commands. Iqbal recognizes the difficult theodical implications of this view, because "the fact of pain is almost universal" in nature, and "excruciating" to contend with, but nevertheless, maintains his position. Hence, relying here on the finitude of the human creature, Iqbal remarks that "we cannot understand the full import" of the fact that, "at the same time", the destructive and bloody elements of nature "work havoc" and also "sustain and amplify life".[110] Nevertheless, it is clear to him that nature does not have the capacity to disobey God. He bases this clarity in his

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ʿ*amal*). We can observe that the larger import all of these is on the prophetic individual's authority and action over nature, and there is no sense of nature as departing from its normal behavior of obedience to Divine command. Even the phrase which is closest to "miracle", i.e.*iʿjāz-i* ʿ*amal,* translates as "the miracle of action", with the focus still on the prophet's commanding action over nature. Moreover, this relative absence of "miracle-talk" in Iqbal is also illustrated, perhaps more accessibly, with reference to an interesting feature of Nauman Faizi's project, which compares Iqbal with another modern Islamic thinker (Sir Syed Ahmed Khan). While explicit theorizations about miracles abound in Faizi's reading of the other thinker's words, and cover several pages, there is little to no comparison with Iqbal on this respect, which is completely understandable, given what I have just pointed out. There isn't enough "miracle-material" in Iqbal to make such a comparison, at least not in any explicit sense revolving around the word "miracle".

[109] Rather, as said before, the material-ness of the human being is, in and of itself, conferred with an ontic dignity. It is a responsive-to-God element of the human creature, whether it be the use of our basic, bodily faculties, or the tightly focused and highly sophisticated investigation into nature that is scientific observation. There is, therefore, a theo-responsive and moral element to this multi-faceted human participation in materiality, in and of itself.

[110] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 64-68.

reception of the Qurʾānic verse (33: 72) wherein God says that He Himself offered "the trust" (*amānah*) to the heavens and the earth, who refused it, but it was accepted by the human with painful consequences.[111] For Iqbal, this verse speaks about "the trust of personality, with all its attendant ills", which is characteristic of the human creature and absent in (non-human) nature. Only in humanity does "individuality deepen into personality", such that "possibilities of wrongdoing" or disobeying God, are "opened up" for the creature.[112]

Rather, in Iqbal's view, this incorruptible obedience of nature, while making nature itself a-moral, also sets the stage for the activity of human morality. Iqbal builds up to this point in the first chapter of *The Reconstruction*, and says it most robustly in the *Asrār-i Khudī.*

In *The Reconstruction*, when asking about the significance of the universe, Iqbal asks: "what is the nature of man whom it [the universe] confronts on all sides?" This question is answered by admitting that the human being is a remarkable material life-form, "endowed" with multiple interconnected "faculties", but even so, who "discovers himself…surrounded on all sides by the forces of obstruction", i.e. those which threaten his very material existence.[113] If the human being does not embrace that he, too, is an expression of "the Creative activity" of God, and does not keep cultivating this "richness of his being", then "he is reduced to the level of dead matter".[114]

The human creature can avoid this stagnation by undergoing the stages of moral maturation (described in the next chapter), the beginning of which is obedience. [115] This moral maturation process is not something that every human individual will undergo, but it is open to them, and makes them contingently and *potentially* greater than the universe/nature, but also deeply vulnerable to it.[116]

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[111] Ibid., 70. Iqbal is not new in construing this verse in terms of the burden of moral culpability. At least some classical *tafāsīr* (pl. of *tafsīr* or Qur'ānic exegesis) do the same. E.g. the classical Sunni *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* describes "the trust" as "the obligation to prayer and other matters which, when performed, result in reward and, when neglected, result in punishment" (trans. Feras Hamza). Cf. *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn,* chapter 33, verse 72 (Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, Amman, Jordan). Consulted online on May 21 2020, at https://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?tMadhNo=0&tTafsirNo=74&tSoraNo=33&tAyahNo=72&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=2.

[112] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 70.

[113] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* p.9.

[114] Ibid., 10.

[115] Ibid., see especially p. 143.

[116] Some direct quotes from *The Reconstruction* amply illustrate this point of potential superiority to nature, contingent on the individual's embrace of self-growth qua expression of Divine Creativity. For example:
"With all his failings he [the human being] is superior to Nature, *inasmuch as* [my emphasis] he carries within him a great trust which, in the words of the Qur' an, the heavens and the earth and the mountains refused to carry: *Verily* We *proposed to the Heavens and to the earth and to the mountains to receive the trust, but they refused the burden and they feared to receive it. Man alone undertook to bear it, but hath proved unjust, senseless!* (Q. 33: 72)." (p. 9)
"It is the lot of man to share in the deeper aspirations of the universe around him and to shape his own destiny as well as that of the universe, now by adjusting himself to its forces, now by putting the whole of his energy to mould its forces to his own ends and purposes. And in this process of progressive change God becomes a co-worker with him, *provided* man takes the initiative [my emphasis again]." (p. 10)

Keeping in mind Iqbal's sense of the material vulnerability of the human being, we then find Iqbal asking the morally incipient human to be more like nature, in the *Asrār-i Khudī,* where a section exhorting the human person to begin on their moral journey, is remarkable for its overwhelming preponderance of "nature words". In fact, there are more words in this section which are about nature, than are about the human being. It opens with a long description of the camel, e.g. "service and toil" are its "marks"; "patience and constancy" are its "works"; and, "in travelling, it is more patient than the load it bears".[117] One expects an impending contrast between the submissive beast of burden and the human subject of this passage, but Iqbal's words take a different normative and hortatory turn:

> You, too, do not turn your head away from the burdens of obligatory acts (*farāiḍ*);[118]
> Touch/knock upon (*bar khurī*)[119] "with Him is the best/beautiful resort".[120]
> Strive in obedience, oh neglectful one!
> From compulsion (*jabr*), control/will (*ikhtiyār*) is born.
> A nobody becomes a somebody by obeying commands (*farmān*),
> And rebellion reduces a fire to mere ashes.
> Whoever wants to subjugate the sun and moon,
> First chain yourself in the fetters of the law (*ā'īn*).[121]

Following the above, it becomes clear in the passage, that the imagery of the camel is not just an isolated and symbolic reference to nature, because Iqbal then calls the stars, "bowed down before

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[117] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 62-63.

[118] This resonates with what I have described in the previous chapter, i.e. Iqbal's submitted approach to the "canon" (my shorthand for Qur'ān, creed and ritual worship). Here too, the obligatory ethico-legal acts, which are known in Islamic law as *farāiḍ/ farāiz* (pl. of *farḍ*) are described as unavoidable and absolutely necessary. The *Brill Encyclopedia of Islam (Second Edition)* defines *farḍ* as "literally "something which has been apportioned, or made obligatory", and as a technical term, a religious duty or obligation, the omission of which will be punished and the performance of which will be rewarded." Cf. Juynboll, Th.W., "Farḍ", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 03 June 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2277>

[119] This is an imperative form of the compound Persian verb "*bar khurdan".* It might be noted that Steingass, for example, makes a subtle distinction between the verb *bar khurdan,* which is in imperative form here, and which translates as: "to touch, to knock upon or dash against", and between *bar ham khurdan,* which translates as "to collide against each other" (Steingass, p. 484). Given what we know about Iqbal's attitude of submission to the Qur'ān, I believe it is highly unlikely that Iqbal meant the secondary, confrontational sense of "dashing against" the Qur'ān, let alone colliding with it. Steingass' primary sense of the verb, i.e. to touch, or come into contact with, is more apt here. The verb "touch" or "knock upon" also implies the command: "consult!" (with respect to a verse of the Qur'ān; see next footnote). The imagery of knocking can often be a prelude to asking for something, which also opens up this interpretation of "knock upon" = "consult".

[120] It is a clear reference to the last three words of the Qur'ānic verse, Q. 3: 14. Different translators translate this verse differently. Alan Jones, often admired by scholars for his lack of embellishment, translates it as "with God is fair resort (implied "God", the part quoted in the poem simply has *Hū* or "He"). See *The Qur'ān,* trans. Alan Jones (Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007), p. 66. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, for example, translates it as "to God is the best of goals". See https://quranyusufali.com/3/ For our purposes, the least tangential approach here is probably to retain the implicitness of "His" and treat the rest of the verse in Alan Jones' plain sense. I have chosen the somewhat clunky but loyal translation, i.e. "best/beautiful", to convey the inherent sense of beauty but also the indication in the verse that God is the most preferable recourse for the human being.

[121] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 62-64.

the law (*āʾīn*)"; he then describes the vegetation that sprouts up from the earth, and the flowers that bloom, as similarly obedient;[122] the flowing of droplets, and the movement of atoms, also as part of this obedience,[123] until eventually saying more directly: "every thing (*har shay*) is strengthened by the law (*āʾīn)*". This culminates in the question to the fellow human being: "why are you, then, running away from this burden (*bār*)?"[124]

Thus, we see that in Iqbal, whether it is the stars in their orbits, the camel trailing in the desert, or the vegetation sprouting up from the earth -- all of this in nature, happens only by God's commands, and in obedience to Divine law (*āʾīn*). Furthermore, this obedience of nature is of morally exemplary value for the human being. The human being cannot begin their moral formation without, "you, too", striving to become "nature-like" in their obedience.

At this juncture, we might also notice the recurrence of a word, *āʾīn*, in Iqbal's descriptions of nature's obedience. This word itself means "law" and "regulation", and, as we shall see, Iqbal uses it when describing what should be the "object" of human individual and collective submission. In the passage which I have translated above, Iqbal uses the word *āʾīn* repeatedly, to describe that to which, "bent in submission, the vegetation rises up from the earth"; that as per which the stars orbit, and, as Iqbal also makes clear, in the case of the human being, this *āʾīn* takes the shape of the revealed law which is transmitted by a prophet. Thus, in the same unitive flow, he tells the reader: "do not complain of the hardness of the *āʾīn/* do not step outside the bounds (*ḥudūd*)[125] of Muḥammad*"*. Likewise, Iqbal says generally, to a more unspecified reader: "Oh you, who are freed (*āzād*) from the ancient law (*dastūr*)[126] / Once again, fetter yourself in that beautifying chain!"[127]

We begin to see that, even though the human being's form of submission to this *āʾīn* is human-specific (insofar as the human must receive a prophetically revealed law) nevertheless, obedience

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[122] Ibid., 63.
[123] Ibid., 64.
[124] Ibid., 64.
[125] This is the plural of the word *ḥadd,* which literally means "limit", "frontier", or "boundary" in Arabic, but has multiple, discipline-specific usages in the Islamic tradition. While, in classical theology and philosophy, it has often been used as a technical term, e.g. *ḥadd* sometimes being used to define "the essence of a thing", the sense in which Iqbal uses it here, seems closer to the ethico-legal usage, in which *ḥadd* refers to the setting out of punishments for "limits crossed", which are generally acts forbidden in the Qur'ān, e.g. fornication. Alternatively, it is possible that Iqbal simply means the more literal, "bounds" or "limits", but of the revealed law in its entirety, without specifying what these limits are. In any case, the ethico-legal import is there, since "stepping outside the bounds of Muḥammad", as used in the verse above, comes in a larger passage which continuously exhorts the reader to obey the law/ *āʾīn*.
Cf. Carra de Vaux, B., Schacht, J. and Goichon,A.-M., "Ḥadd", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 03 June 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2586>
[126] "*dastūr"* also means a model, rule, or regulation. As we will see in Ch.5, Iqbal envisions Muhammad as bringing a revealed law which is continuous with the prior prophetic revelations. Thus, it makes sense that this "ancient model" should be mentioned in the verse proximate to the one about the Muhammad-given limits.
[127] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 63-64.

to this law brings the human being in greater participation within the dynamics of the universe. Indeed, Iqbal's language here reminds us of his aforementioned Urdū poem (i.e. "moon and stars"), in which the lunar speaker tells the stars venting about their restlessness that, "this is the ancient custom here". In a similar vein, in these passages in the Persian *Asrār-i Khudī,* we see a reference to that "custom" and "law" which the universe obeys, which is now interwoven with the revealed law for humans. Hence, Iqbal's usage of the word *āʾīn* contains a sense of both "laws of the universe" and "rules revealed to humans", but clearly, the overarching and unitive sense is of receiving Divine commands, whether the recipient be nature or human. In this respect, humanity and nature are similar and related.

One final point to be highlighted about Iqbal's views on nature's total obedience, is that human beings are, albeit related to nature, also non-identical to it in important ways.[128] For Iqbal qua moral thinker, nature's perfect obedience heightens our recognition of human distinctiveness within the universe. This humanity is a distinctiveness which involves the restless suffering and restless enjoyment of the capacity for disobedience. For example, Iqbal imagines a dialogue between "humanity and the assembly of nature" (*insān aur bazm-i qudrat*), in an Urdū poem of the same title. The human speaker admires the unwavering patterns of nature, complaining of his own difficulty in maintaining obedience and good works. Nature responds by frankly admitting that, yes, the human is disobedient and wayward, but has the potential to become a cause of its own admiration. [129] This sense of distinction from nature, then reaches tender poignancy in another poem titled, "(The) Human" (*Insān*). Here, Iqbal emotes how nature itself blissfully follows certain patterns, whether it be the rising sun, or the crop and water cycles, but out of all of these, "No one sympathizes with (*ghamgusār*) the human being/ How hard and bitter are the days of the human being!" [130]

Yet, this painful distinctiveness or "solitude" in the cosmos,[131] which is a result of the human creature being so uniquely capable of disobedience, also has the potential to develop into an impressive distinction which might inspire the admiration of nature itself. The question of how such a vulnerable human creature can improve morally, is answered in the next chapter. Here, we have seen how nature is an integral part of the human-God relation, and how nature's perfect obedience makes it both a-moral and exemplary for human morality. With this knowledge, we can describe one more aspect of Iqbal's vision, which is developed in the coming chapters, but a part of his natural vision as well.

ii) Divine Love

[128] For a literary-critical appreciation of some poetry which expresses this, Cf. Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker*, pp. 23-24.
[129] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 87.
[130] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 153. "*Ghamgusār"* literally translates to "someone who eats pain with another", but is taken to mean "empathetic" or "sympathetic" in Urdu.
[131] Mir, *Tulip in the Desert,* pp. 43-45; 49-50.

"The history of the concept of love in Islam is long and complicated."[132] Bearing this important intellectual-historical fact in mind, here, we stick to our main goal of exposition of Iqbal. The first key point is that in Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* the core "function" of the concept of love, broadly conceived, is to relate God and the human being.[133] This observation is significant, as it makes Iqbal's vision of Divine love, (theocentrically) anthropocentric, and not ecocentric.[134] As Schimmel also notes, there is an extent to which Iqbal's conception of Divine love could be called a "conative force", i.e. a sort of "force" that permeates or imbues the natural universe. This extent, is the irreducible "personal tinge" of Iqbal's conception of love, or the fact that the God-human relationship is never sidelined.[135]

Before we move to the human person, here we introduce some features of Iqbal's conception of Divine love which set the stage for human morality. Just as Iqbal asserts that "the word limitation needs not frighten us" theologically, Iqbal also has an unabashed vision of God as "needing", "desirous", and "diligently seeking". As with Iqbal's words on Divine "limitation", here too, Iqbal invites an appreciation of these Divine traits, in such a way that would alert us to the "Uniqueness" of God. Moreover, while the function of Iqbal's concept of love is theo-relational, the natural universe plays an ineluctable part in this relationship between God and humanity.

Let us begin by observing that Iqbal's conception of Divine love is closely tied to his vision of Divine Creativity. One sees this most plainly in the structure of Iqbal's *Asrār-i Khudī;* the opening section grounds the ontological centrality of Divine *khudī,* and its habit of "showiness" as well as "secretiveness"; the second section articulates that Divine Creation, or *takhlīq,* is the activity of this Divine *khudī;* and then, the third section describes "love" (*ʿishq/maḥabbat* being used interchangeably) as that which "strengthens" the participation of the human person in the Divine gift of *khudī*.[136]

While I come to the "given-ness" of *khudī* to the human person in Ch.4, here, we are observing the interconnectedness of Divine Creativity and Divine love, in Iqbal. Iqbal's word describe

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[132] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* pp. 129-130. A central feature of this complexity, as Schimmel nicely outlines it, is the negotiation between the "unknowability" or "transcendence" of God, and the desire for intimacy with God. Various thinkers and schools of thought navigate this complexity in their own ways.

[133] Thus Schimmel defines Iqbal's conception of love as "that which brings man nigh to God and consolidates the ego." Ibid., 128.

[134] It might be argued that this makes nature "instrumental", but then, the reader would have to add substantial qualification to the category of "instrument", or redefine this term as inclusive of those "objects" which one needs to emulate or see as exemplary, in order to begin moving towards the process of "mastering" them. The whole arc of this dynamic, i.e. from nature's exemplarity to its potential "use", is captured beautifully in a smallish Persian poem by Iqbal titled "*ṭayyāra*" ("Flier"), where the human speaker initially bows his head before a rather endearing and haughty little bird (who calls humans "grounded simpletons"), but by the end of the poem, the human is telling his interlocutor of the human technological capacity to learn from birds and "outfly the flier". This produces a hard-won exclamation of admiration, from the bird. Cf. Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 341-342.

[135] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* pp. 129-130.

[136] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i Khudī),* trans. By R.A. Nicholson. London: MacMillan & Co, 1920, pp. 1-27.

nature as the "message of/from the Self" *(payām-i khīsh*), of God. In this untitled Persian *ghazal*, we see Iqbal describing parts of nature e.g. the leaves, vegetation, flowers, and birdsongs, all as examples of the personal "message" of the Divine Self, to humans. The reason for this "messaging" is that "we are strayed from God, and He is in diligent search (*justujū*) / For, He is full of need (*niyāzmand*), and embroiled in desire (*giriftār-i ārzū*)".[137] Likewise, in another Persian quatrain, Iqbal pithily describes "Adam" as the "object" or "purport" (*hāṣil*) of love in diligent search (*ʿishq dar justujū*)".[138] These poetic words, more affectively echo Iqbal's theo-relational framing of nature and materiality from the *Reconstruction,* which we have already seen.

In a similar vein in an Urdū *ghazal*, Iqbal describes the entire natural universe as an expression of Divine desire for humans. Thus, Iqbal tells his human reader that: "Neither are you for the lands, nor for the skies/ This universe is for you, you are not for this universe". This bold assertion is then deepened, as the reader is reminded that this universe is neither a casual "walk amongst the roses" (*sayr-i gul*), nor a permanent "nest/abode" (*āshiyān*), but rather, "a place for the nurturance (*parvarish*) of [our] sighs and moans" (*maqām-i-parvarīsh-i-āh-o-nālā*), because "your boat is for a shoreless ocean" (*bahr-i bēkirān*).[139]

The point here being, that one sees in Iqbal's words on Divine love, the same sense of ontic dynamism and ceaselessness as in his natural vision (which is permeated by his vision of Divine Creativity). The added knowledge here, is that God is desiring, messaging, needing, and searching diligently for us, via this Creative ontic dynamism.[140] However, there is also a Divine "Uniqueness", as Iqbal describes it, to this needing and desiring of God. God's desiring is incomparably inexhaustible/ untiring, as well as incomparably trusting. Thus, Iqbal describes God as *already* having shown "His immense faith in man", by creating a disobedience-prone creature whom He knows will disobey His commands, and, "it is *for man now* to justify this faith".[141] Similarly, the aforementioned *ghazal* which describes nature as message of the Divine Self, does not simply list the various elements of nature which partially constitute this message, but in doing so, repeats the refrain, "Sometimes, He…".[142] The effect, is a highlighting of just how active God's desire is; a pattern of this, now this, now this, now this…etc.[143]

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[137] "Number 29" from Part II of the *Zabūr-i ʿAjam* collection. See Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 508-509.
[138] Ibid., p. 522. "Number 41".
[139] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 379-380.
[140] As will become clear, this connection is significant because moral formation in Iqbal involves a loving human responsivity to God. In this vein, the *Asrār-i Khudī* urges the reader to recognize that "there is a beloved hidden in your heart", and that the task of moral cultivation and nurturing begins by recognizing this beloved-that-you-are, but from which you have strayed. Iqbal, Farsī Kullīyāt, p. 37.
[141] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 68. My emphasis.
[142] "*gāhī, ū…".* Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 508-509.
[143] This linking of the ceaselessness of Divine Creativity with the inexhaustibility of Divine love, is also noticeable in Iqbal's auto-commentary to the English translation of his *Asrār-i Khudī,* by Nicholson (MacMillan, 1920). Here Iqbal sees as related, that "the process of creation is still going on" (pp. xviii-xix), and, that the "continual" and "unfailing realization" of "desires", is the activity of Divine "*Khudī*" (pp. xx-xxvi). One might also look at S.B. Diagne's

From the above, we can glean a non-negligible observation which becomes important for human moral formation. In Iqbal's view of Divine love, the Unique nature of Divine love is such that it actively invites response. God is needing, desirous, and diligently seeking, but His love is such that it is supremely trusting and untiring. This always entails an "it is for man now", and this is what I mean by the word *responsivity,* as stated in Ch.1. While these features of Divine love shed light on what has been said before, e.g. imbuing the ontic dynamism of the universe with an even deeper theo-relational import, they *will* also shed light on what is to come, i.e. Iqbal's envisioning of "fear" and "love" as the ingredients of human moral struggle.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has begun to read Iqbal's vision of *khudī* as a moral-ontological vision. In doing so, it has provided a picture of Iqbal's natural vision in which the God-to-human relationship is significant. Yet, there are some distinctive features of the ways that Iqbal imagines this relationship, which cannot be neglected by anyone looking for a serious inroad to Iqbal's natural vision vis-à-vis *khudī*. First, we have observed that Iqbal was concerned with maintaining a set of theological commitments, i.e. to God as an "Individual", who is not constrain-able by His creatures, and simultaneously, to God as dynamic and living, and not a "stonelike idol" (to use Mir's phrase); hence free to "Self-limit" Himself, when He wants. To say this more shortly: there is a desire in Iqbal to maintain a Divine freedom, which is itself not over-constrained.

Second, we have seen how Iqbal's vision of Divine Creativity responds to his theological concerns, and that this becomes important within Iqbal's natural vision. On Iqbal's view, Divine Creativity is an incomparably Unique "making" because it does not divorce the "made" from the "Creative directive" of the "Maker", and also because, its ceaselessness and incompleteness always mean "unfailizing realization" and never failure. If we appreciate these concerns and commitments, it is understandable that for Iqbal, the universe, which is seen as ongoing creation of God, would also want to be seen as ceaseless, growing, full of struggle, and non-repetitive/non-mechanical. It is also possible to see how, on this view of Iqbal's, these aspects of the universe and the "lowly" parts of the universe like insects, vegetation, and sensory faculties and organs, would have a significance in what is often called "the scheme of things". If a predilection for fixed hierarchy or stasis is not predominant, then it makes sense that the changing, flux-"ridden" universe and its constituents, are not seen as debased for these very traits, or as a situation to be transcended.

Third, and finally, these two threads of nature's ontic dynamism and ontic esteem, become integral in moving towards Iqbal's vision of "morality proper", or human moral anthropology and moral formation. Indeed, Iqbal does not sketch the God-to-nature dynamic outside of the

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observation that the Iqbalian "ethos", or the "two key Iqbalian concepts", are "the cosmological concept of the incompletion of the world", and "the ethical concept of human responsibility" (*Islam and Open Society,* trans. Melissa McMahon, p. 54) Yet, I use the words "responsivity" and "relationship" because for Iqbal, the moral agent's increasing participation in *khudī* is not just an impersonal obligation, but a more personal and intimate "doing for" God, as a self in relationship.

purview of the God-to-human relation. Nature provides an exemplary ideal of obedience to the incipient moral agent, and, an insight to this moral agent about "the way things are", ontologically, i.e. a restless-yet-purposive dynamism.

Therefore, when we are reading Iqbal as a moral-ontological thinker, i.e. someone who sees morality as related to reality, we can now appreciate how Iqbal's natural vision plays a significant role within his larger *khudī*-vision. In the coming chapter, we shall see how the human agent can also be a participant in in the larger creaturely currents of God-obedience and ontic dynamism, which are displayed by the natural universe.

Chapter 4

Khudī, and the Human Individual

Chapter Overview

Building upon the previous chapter, here we enter Iqbal's vision of *khudī* as it relates to the human individual. Although the individual and the social are not separable, for the purposes of understanding, we deal with *khudī* as societal vision in the next chapter. In order to further organize our exposition, we divide this chapter into two Parts, along the lines of the central ethical questions: "What is the human being?" and "What should the human being do?", with respect to Iqbal's vision. Hence, Part I lays out what can be called, in a more recognizable Religious Ethics register, Iqbal's "moral anthropology".[1] Then, Part II of the chapter lays out what Iqbal calls the three "stages" of moral formation in this world, but to which, the activity of an individual's deepening participation in *khudī* is not, and cannot, be confined. Here, we will see how Iqbal envisions the "moral growth" of an agent, as a relational and responsive (to God) activity, which participates increasingly in "the creative life of [their] Maker", but which activity has no terminus.

With this chapter overview in mind, we now turn to understand the major contours of Iqbal's moral anthropology.

I: Iqbal's Moral Anthropology

> Seek "self-ness" (*khudī*), from/by God (*khudā*);
> And seek God (*khudā*), from/by "self-ness" (*khudī*). [2]

At the heart of Iqbal's vision of the human person, is his view of God as generously giving to His human creature. The most fundamental gift that God gives to this creature, is "self-ness" (*khudī*). However, the Divine gift of *khudī* is "Unique" (to use Iqbal's theological term) because God "gives" *khudī* so freely that human beings can continuously "fortify" and "inculcate" this gift (as we see below), and nevertheless, it is a kind of given which can never be fully "possessed" by the human person. As Annemarie Schimmel says about *khudī:* "it is a given thing and yet a task

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[1] By this we mean narratively moral "visions of the human", i.e. what those "peculiar characteristics" of human beings are that, if envisioned, entail and enable a variety of transformations. Cf. Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. pp. 2-5; and Michelle Nicole Meyer, *Finitude, Transcendence, and Ethics: Sartrean-Niebuhrian Resources for Understanding Difference and Dominance*. Charlottesville, VA: 2003, 2003. Thesis (Ph. D.)--University of Virginia, 2003, esp. pp. iii-iv. We do not mean "anthropology of ethics". Cf. Didier Fassin and Samuel Leze, Eds., *Moral Anthropology: a critical reader*, (London: Routledge, 2014) pp. 2-3.

[2] Muhammad Iqbal, *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl, Fārsi: The Complete Works of Iqbal in Persian* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1994), p. 538. I have translated the words (here transliterated): *ham zi khudā khudī ṭalab, ham zi khudī khudā ṭalab.* It is also worth noting that the word which I have translated as "seek", i.e. *ṭalab,* has a meaning which is pregnant with both the affective and the conceptual, in one word. It can be translated as "desire" or "seeking after", in addition to the sense of "inquiring" or "seeking". Cf. Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary (*Routledge, 1998), p. 817. Here, Iqbal is using an elliptical imperative form of the longer verb, *ṭalab kardan* (to seek), which would normally take the form *ṭalab kun.*

before man."[3] And, Iqbal explicitly defines moral growth not in terms of "good" or "evil", but as the ever-increasing "fortification" of this "given"-and-"aspired" *khudī.*[4]

However, there is another, equally significant way in which the given-ness of *khudī* is "Unique"; it never loses what Schimmel calls its "personal tinge",[5] or what I call its theo-relational nature. Thus, Iqbal continually exhorts the cultivation of *khudī* "for Him" (i.e. God); because God is endlessly loving, desiring and needing, and has "shown His faith" in his human creatures.[6] Therefore, the cultivation of *khudī*, which is the work of moral formation, is never envisioned as an activity which I am performing in isolation upon a pre-gifted "object". It is, rather, always seen as a responding in a desirable manner, *to* the God who is desiring and trusting me, and in doing so, my becoming more intimately close with Him. Thus, "he who is nearest to God", is one who best cultivates his self, which is his participation in *khudī*.[7]

These two ideas, i.e. the simultaneous given-ness and aspirationality of *khudī*, and, that *khudī*-cultivation is one's responsivity to a desiring God, are worth knowing at the outset, as they permeate Iqbal's vision of human morality. With them in mind, we now turn to an integral interplay within Iqbal's moral anthropology.

i) Fear and Love

We have seen that Iqbal uses words like "Self-limited" and "embroiled in desire" with respect to God, but one descriptor which we find Iqbal using exclusively for the human being and never (even in qualified form) for God, is "fear"/*khawf.* The mixture of "fear" and "love" is a distinctively anthropological admixture, which has been "poured" by God. Hence Iqbal tells us:

> The manner of your construction was poured out through clay
> Fear was thus mixed together with love.
> Fear of the world, fear of the afterlife, and fear of life itself;
> Fear of all the grief of the heavens and the earth. [8]

As these verses from the *Asrār* indicate, various aspects of creation can engender fear in the human person.[9] Iqbal does not consider this to be unwarranted, either; he understands that the

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[3] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing (*Leiden: Brill, 1963), 102. In other writings, a similar sentiment has been expressed by cultural critic Julian Hartt: "Of everything distinctively human, it can be said that one participates in it rather than possesses it." Julian N Hartt, *A Christian Critique of American Culture: An Essay in Practical Theology (*New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 188.

[4] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i Khudī),* translated by R.A. Nicholson (London: MacMillan & Co, 1920), pp. xxii-xxiii.

[5] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* pp. 129-130.

[6] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 68; Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings of Iqbal,* Ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2015), pp. 187-188.

[7] Iqbal, *Secrets of the Self,* (trans. Nicholson), pp. xix-xx.

[8] See Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, 64.

[9] Thus, Iqbal considers "fear of God" to be the *only* desirable fear that a creature should have, and "fear of other than God" (*khawf-i ghayrullah/ bīm-i ghayrullah),* as the wrong moral-ontological attitude, which underpins every kind of moral lapse. We see this in his section of the *Rumūz-i Bekhudī* which describes fear as the "mother of all

human's "fear in nature" is an understandable reaction to the preponderance of grief and suffering. [10] Thus, in the same work, he employs bloody images of death and destruction, to sear into the reader's mind, the possibility of imagining human life as an exercise in God's "stone-hearted-ness" (*sangīn-dilī*).[11]

However, while fear of everything "in heaven and earth", is understandable and ingrained, if it becomes predominant in the creature, then it is wrong in two related ways: it is both morally undesirable and theologically incorrect.[12] In this vein, Iqbal writes that "fear" is "the principal fact which stands in the way of man's ethical progress,"[13] and that:

> Every hidden evil (*sharr-i pinhān*) that is concealed within your heart;
> Its reality is fear, if only you could see it properly.
> Lowliness and deceit and bitter hatred;
> All these derive their strength from fear.[14]

Iqbal is not recommending that humans seek out suffering as inherently desirable. In fact, he considers the self-preserving avoidance of suffering and death to be desirable, as it is a sign of appreciative gratitude towards God, for one's having been created.[15] Rather, underlying Iqbal's deep distaste and caution about fear, is Iqbal's construal of fear as the imperceptive reduction of God to a kind of creature (or even less than a creature); as an incapacity to see that God is God. The nub of this theological critique, is put forth pointedly in an Urdū poem, which chides the reader: "You have hopeful expectations (*umīdayn*) from idols, and hopelessness (*nā-umīdī*) in God/ Tell me: if this is not disbelieving ingratitude (*kufr)*, then what is?"[16]

We might ask: why does Iqbal conceive of fear of creatures as theologically erroneous ingratitude? The answer relates to Iqbal's vision of Divine Creativity as ceaseless and un-divorceable from the creature. In the same vein, now, Iqbal envisions fear as a futile attempt by the creature at the "stunting" and "choking" of Divine Creativity as it relates to their person, out

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evil impurities" or "*umm ul-khabāith*" (Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 126-129), but repeatedly qualifies that this applies to creatures, not Creator. A desirable fear of God, would thus be one which does not fear anyone but Him. Iqbal uses the same words, *khawf/ bīm,* to signal the desirable and exclusively God-directed fear.

[10] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings*, 102.

[11] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, 30.

[12] We see, here, the moral-ontological nature of Iqbal's vision of *khudī.* Fear is not simply a reaction to immediate stimuli, but it gets something wrong about the way things are in a much larger sense.

[13] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* 102.

[14] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, 128.

[15] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* 103-104.

[16] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, 379. The profound falsity of fearful despair, is conveyed by Iqbal's choice of the word *kufr.* As Islamicist Toshihiko Izutsu has noted about this word, "As a matter of fact, *kufr* is not only the most comprehensive term for all negative ethico-religious values recognized as such in the Qurʾān, but it functions as the very center of the whole system of 'negative' properties." It includes a prevailing sense of "disbelief" and "lack of faith", as well as a brazen, foolish, and punishable, ingratitude. Cf. Izutsu, "The Semantic Field of Kufr", in *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.), pp. 156-177.

of their supreme desire to avoid suffering.[17] It is not the avoidance of suffering which is distasteful, but its de-centering the working of Divine Creativity through one's own self. Perhaps Iqbal's best illustration of this point is his description of the fearful person as a kind of anti-Mary (i.e. mother of the Prophet Jesus). The fearful person is correct in perceiving that God's Creativity can be severely painful for, or literally *through*, them, as with the pain of childbirth. It is no trivial matter. However, if they attempt to insulate themselves from this pain, they are also an incredibly foolish perceiver of things as they are, because "she does not recognize the worth of [what is as valuable as] Jesus",[18] and "preserves her body to sell away her life".[19]

Albeit understandable, this is a profoundly wrong way of responding to God, because one's individuality *is*, only because God "gives" them "self-ness"/*khudī*, in first place. That which I might foolishly attempt to "preserve" by keeping "my" self safe from the working of Divine Creativity (which makes everything that confronts me), is in fact, that which I do not possess, but can endlessly cultivate only by and for and in relation to, God. Inherent in the very fabric of my self, is a call to respond properly and continually to the One who has endowed me with this self-ness.[20]

Understanding these moral-ontological underpinnings of the undesirability of fear in Iqbal, enables us to appreciate the significance of its countervailing "force", i.e. love. A better word here is countervailing "response", or "theo-response", since Iqbal construes fear not as an impersonal "force", but as a person's fearful responsivity to God's creatures, which involves a profound theological error and ingratitude to God Himself. Thus, as we move into describing the three morally nourishing dimensions of "love" in Iqbal's moral anthropology, we can recall the general function of Iqbal's conception of love in his moral-ontological vision, i.e. to relate God and human. As we will see, love is integral for moral formation; it is that underlying God-responsivity which sustains the performative and rule-abiding dimensions of moral formation. Before we turn to see this, it is important to become aware of the three morally significant dimensions of love, in Iqbal.

ii) Three (Morally Nourishing) Features of Love

[17] Hence, the fearful person is described vividly; as a rising mountain attempting to be squeezed by the earth during its ascent; as a choked up fountain; as an entire garden smothered to sleep in the folds of a veil; as a sluggish limb; and as a narrow prison. Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 126-127.

[18] Noteworthy here, is that Iqbal does not use the name *īsā* but *rūḥ ul-qudus* (Holy Spirit), which is, among other things, a Qurʾanic description of Jesus [Q. 2: 253; 5:110]. Possibly, there is an even more intimate sense of the moral agent as refusing God, directly and personally.

[19] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, 654.

[20] My exposition of Iqbal's critique of fear adds nuance to Schimmel's somewhat less textured observation that "braving the struggle" and "heroism" are attitudes in which "the *telos* is hidden", for Iqbal (*Gabriel's Wing,* 60; pp. 133-135.) There is an element of self-performativity in Iqbal which is quite significant, but the undesirability of fear has a relational quality, i.e. it responds badly to God, and is undesirable for me, as a self, through whom Divine Creativity is working. Moreover, Iqbal's contrast to fear is not courage or "heroism", but love, one part of which is a courageous pain-seeking, but is more than that *in toto*.

In his auto-commentary to the *Asrār-i Khudī,* Iqbal very shortly defines love as "assimilative action", "the power of assimilative action", and "personal effort", which he undergirds with his recurrent sense of God as continuously Creative.[21] However, it is a broader range of Iqbal's other words on love and loving individuals, which enables us to clarify what this "definition" means.

First, in sharp contrast to the image of a fear-consumed "anti-Mary", a common feature of those individuals with whom Iqbal explicitly associates the enactment of love,[22] is their "pain-seeking/ pain-desiring", or *jafā-ṭalbī.* E.g., in the third section of the *Asrār* which describes love as that which "fortifies"[23] the Divine gift of *khudī,* following a more general articulation of this point is a devotional appreciation of the Prophet Muḥammad's daily life. Here, every first hemistich is an activity of "pain-seeking"; whether it be the Prophet's battles, his perceived choice to sleep on an uncomfortable "mat of thrushes" even when he gained power and prestige, "passing many sleepless nights in tears", or "raining tears in the hour of prayer".[24] Likewise, in Urdū *ghazals*, Iqbal present's Muḥammad's companion and an oft-brutalized slave, Bilāl, as "not letting go of the threshold of pain" in the love of God, and "flinging a new coolness upon [his] each flailing", in his love.[25] Similarly Adam, i.e. the human progenitor, is described as innately pain-seeking and threat-preferring (*khaṭar-pasand*);[26] as a creature with whom "granted paradises do not sit well", but whose "paradise is hidden in your own heart's blood".[27] This association of "love" with "pain-seeking" also bleeds over into Iqbal's descriptions of ordinary, un-prophetic people, e.g. in the eulogy "Fāṭimā bint-i Abdullāh: an Arab girl who was martyred while providing water to soldiers in the war in Tripoli in 1912".[28]

However, this pain-seeking is one out of love's three dimensions. Pain is not an end in itself, but the appreciable aspect of such pain-desire is that the person is "capable of inflicting pain on

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[21] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i Khudī),* trans. By R.A. Nicholson. London: MacMillan & Co, 1920, pp. xxv-xxvi.

[22] Thus, for all the examples which are given below: Muḥammad has "the vision of love"/ *nigāh-i ʿishq* (e.g. Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 37); Muḥammad's companion Bilāl is described as "in love" and using the words for "love" (e.g. Urdu Kullīyāt, pp. 106-107; 271); Adam, the first human, is described as exerting himself in love (e.g. Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 460-461), and the ordinary child, who died giving water to soliders in 1912, is also described using the word love (Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 243). Both *ʿishq* and *muḥabbat* are used across these examples, with no difference in usage that I have been able to discern.

[23] The verb used is *istiḥkām pazīruftan,* i.e. to gain or receive strength/fortification.

[24] Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i-Khudī),* trans. By R.A. Nicholson, pp. 30-32.

[25] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 106-107.

[26] Ibid., 348.

[27] Ibid., 461. This statement is uttered by the spirit of the earth (*rūḥ-i arzī*), when the angels (*farishtay*) are escorting Adam out of paradise and to his earthly abode. The earth exhorts him to "build his *khudī",* and recognize himself as "hard-working" (*miḥnat-kash)* and "blood-letting" (*khūn-rēz*), and a creature who has an attitude of love (*muḥabbat*).

[28] This likely refers to the First Balkan War against the (eventually defeated) Ottoman Empire (1912-1913). See Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, 243. Although, as the title of the eulogy conveys, there is a much larger war going on in the background, here Iqbal focuses on the vulnerable child's act of providing water to the wounded (at personal risk of death), as a self in love (*muḥabbat*).

himself *in his ceaseless quest* after fresh scopes *for self-expression.*"[29] Thus, the second key element of love is personal restlessness; to recognize that one's self qua creature, is an expression of the ceaseless Divine Creativity. For Iqbal, a prominent aspect of the loving person is that they resolve to endeavor ceaselessly and untiringly for this Divine "unfailing realization", in and through their person.[30]

This second, restless element of love, which is informed by Iqbal's vision of Divine Creativity, can be seen in a number of places. In his auto-commentary to the *Asrār,* Iqbal cautions the person aspiring to love, not against hatred, but against "inaction", "relaxation" and "rest", which spell the weakening in one's participation in the endless Divine gift of *khudī,* which is given but never possessed.[31] This restlessness of love is also expressed vividly, in some of Iqbal's most brilliant and well-known Urdū poetry, e.g. in the famous verse that "there are yet more universes beyond the stars/ there are yet more tests in love".[32]

It is highly significant for Iqbal that this restless element of love be *personal*, i.e. of and through one's own self, like a Mary giving birth. In this connection, Iqbal emphasizes the word "*faqr"* as a key element of love. This Arabic word often means "poverty", and has a long history of positive moral association in "the ascetic-mystic tendencies in Islam".[33] For Iqbal specifically, *faqr* involves what I have just described, i.e. that "personal effort" of the moral agent always be as such, and not "outsourced" to another party. In this vein, he clarifies that *faqr* is not to be envisioned as an inherent distaste for material wealth, but as an aversion to the absence of personal striving. Therefore, interestingly, for Iqbal it is "begging" and "asking" which is the opposite of *faqr* and not power or wealth.[34] This does not mean that a creature cannot, or should not, depend on another. As we see here and in the next chapter, Iqbal sees the inter-relationality of creatures as quite significant. What it means to be an "asking beggar" (in contrast to a *faqīr*) is to lose out on the cultivation of *khudī* in my own person, out of a fear of effort and strife.[35] Thus,

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[29] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 9. My emphasis.
[30] Ibid., 48.
[31] Iqbal, *Secrets of the Self* (trans. Nicholson), pp. xxiv-xxviii.
[32] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, 389.
[33] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* 140. Thus, I do not mean to suggest that Iqbal is new in construing this word positively. As Schimmel notes, it has often been taken to refer to the "preparatory stages of the mystical path, and has been understood most often in a literary sense as possessing nothing". As Schimmel notes, there is also a genre of writings in Islamic literature, about the *faqīr* (i.e. one who is poor/ in *faqr*), as a critical voice to the powers that be, especially the king (*shāh*). Iqbal's emphasis on *faqr* is distinct from both of these.
[34] Iqbal, *Secrets of the Self* (trans. Nicholson), pp. xxv-xxvii. Here Iqbal says: "The son of a rich man who inherits his father's wealth is an 'asker' (beggar); so is every one who thinks the thoughts of others". One is far from the *faqr* of love because of one's lack of personal effort, not because of wealth itself. Iqbal, "Secrets of the Self" (trans. Nicholson, p. xxvi). In this vein, one might also consult Iqbal's poems from his work *Bāl-i Jibrīl* ("Wing of Gabriel") in his Urdū Kullīyāt, which specify his construal of *faqr.* E.g. "there is no great difference between *faqr* and rulership (*saltanat)* (p.355); "the excellence (*kamāl*) of renunciation (*tark*) lies not in separation from soil and water, but in the control and mastery of earthiness/ I give up such "*faqr*", oh you people of the assembly, such as is not-wealth-ness (*bē-dawlatī*) and weakness (*ranjūrī*)!" (p. 375).
[35] I have found that Schimmel appreciates the distinctiveness of Iqbal's usage of *faqr,* most admirably (see esp. *Gabriel's Wing,* 142).

the person who does not have the restless element of love about their own self, i.e. *faqr*, is described repeatedly using the phrase, "not-haver" (*nā-dār*); a poor loser in a moral-ontological sense, who chooses comfort over recognizing and building the significance of their own self, as Divine creature.[36]

If pain-seeking and personal restlessness are integral elements of love, then there is a third key ingredient which is definitive of the loving human person. This brings us to the adjective "assimilative" in Iqbal's definition of love as "assimilative action". [37] This ingredient of love is best introduced with reference to Iqbal's negative portrayal of Iblīs or Satan, as contrasted with his positive portrayal of Adam.[38]

In introducing this third element of love, it should be noted that Iqbal, like a number of Islamic thinkers, does not perceive Iblīs wholly negatively "as the Absolute Evil",[39] and Iqbal openly says: "I have a certain amount of admiration for the devil".[40] In Iqbal's portrayal, Iblīs is highly successful in terms of the two love-ingredients I have outlined thus far. Thus, Iblīs is extremely

[36] This comes in the section of the *Asrār-i Khudī* which describes "asking" (*suʾāl*) and "begging" (*gadāyī*) as attitudes which weaken one's participation in *khudī.* In his auto-commentary, Iqbal defines "asking" as the absence of "personal effort" (p. xxvi).

[37] Ibid.

[38] What is assumed to be true for this contrast, is the Qurʾānic account of Adam's departure from Paradise. Cf. Qurʾān, 7: 10-11; 20: 120-122. Iqbal strongly rejects any view of this perceived event as a "Fall" or anthropological "taint" (which he associates with Christianity) and instead calls Adam's leaving, "Adam's departure", which was part of the working out of Divine Creativity and had the positive effect of making Adam aware of his own capacity for free action. In Iqbal's view, the key elements of the Qurʾānic account are the (successful) temptation of Adam by Satan, to "eat from the tree" (Q. 20: 120-122); the absence of an asymmetrical blame placed on the female human (which he also associates with Christianity), but a broader Qurʾānic critique of "the human"/ *Insān*; and despite the clear sense that the human being had erred, a lack of what Iqbal calls "cursing" language, i.e. that this world is an inferior realm to Paradise (which he says is the language of the Old Testament, but does not give any verses) (Q. 7:10). Thus, on Iqbal's view, Adam *was* disobedient to God, and his disobedience caused him to be "inserted" into a "painful physical environment", i.e. this world. However, Iqbal does not see this "insertion" as "punishment" into a debased state, but as a severely painful "corrective experience", so that Adam himself might be improved or reformed. In continuity, Iqbal also sees Hell not as a "torture-hall" but as "corrective experience", as we will see below (notwithstanding its severe agony, in which he also believes). Cf. Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* pp. 65-75; 97-98.

[39] This assumes the Qurʾānic account of God commanding Iblīs to bow down before Adam, followed by Iblīs's refusal to do so, and God's consequent displeasure with Iblīs/Satan (Q. 7: 11-13). The fact that Iblīs had refused to bow before anyone other than God, has been taken by a number of Islamic thinkers as a sign of his unerring, perfect faith in the Oneness of God/*tawhīd.* For this larger context, Cf. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* pp. 208-219. We can also notice that Iqbal describes this un-bowing element of Iblīs, as admirable, but in the same flow, as akin to "the beautiful eyes of a toad". Cf. *Speeches, Statements and Writings of Iqbal,* Ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2015), pp. 108-109.

[40] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 108-109. Here Iqbal is admiring the "personal exertion" and monotheistic element of Satan's love, while also critiquing his failure to give "absolute obedience" to God, "the Ruler of the universe" (this kind of obedience being also the beginning of human moral formation, as we see below).

pain-seeking in his love for God,[41] and rightly hyper-cognizant of the personal restlessness of love. He is discontent with his own achievements, discontent with stasis, and aware of his own ceaseless potential as Divine creature. He desires more personal exertion, and not ease, begging God for fresh challenges, like a "riper enemy" than Adam.[42]

However, for Iqbal, what Iblīs gets wrong is quite essential for a complete love. What cannot be avoided for a loving responsivity to God, is also to see God's other creatures as *His* creatures. This is to realize the "about-God-ness" of all creatures; that the other creature, too, is an expression of Divine Creativity and as such, has an ineradicable relationship with the same God as me. Thus, on Iqbal's presentation of Iblīs, while Iblīs is personally "toiling hard, like a renunciant ascetic (*zāhid*)" and esteeming himself correctly qua creature by asking for endless challenges, he is not extending this same estimation to other creatures. Iblīs' words about humans are presented, not as a frank critique of Adam's shortcomings, but a more serious and theologically incorrect reductionism: "What is the progeny of Adam? Just a bit of dust".[43]

Highlighting the moral implications of seeing other creatures in such a way, Iqbal further presents Iblīs as "completely drowned (*gharq*) in the battle of good and evil (*khayr va sharr*), still (*hunūz*)/ He has met a hundred prophets, and is unbelieving ingrate (*kāfir*), still."[44] While Iblīs is immersed in the tussle, being presented as a perfect renunciant who is centrally concerned with "good and evil", he is insular, and not so good at relating to, or being changed by, other creatures. However, for Iqbal, this makes him more than un-relatable to creatures; it damages his relationship with God, and makes him a theologically erroneous and unbelieving ingrate (*kāfir*) who cannot appreciate the breadth of Divine Creativity as it meets him.

By contrast, Adam, despite his perceived finitude and errors,[45] extends to Iblīs the very recognition of being an expression of Divine Creativity, which Adam himself never received, nor receives, from Iblīs. Thus, in a distinctly imaginative passage, we see Iqbal's Adam remembering Iblīs with esteem before their Creator, on the Day of Judgment. Adam recalls that both himself and Iblīs were disobedient, and repents once again for his own disobedience, but also thanks God for the "seduction" (*aghwā*) via Iblīs, and for the ensuing personal strife for Adam and his progeny, which enriched their cultivation of *khudī*. In other words, Adam's love manages to see even the Adam-reviling Iblīs as un-divorced from Divine Creativity, in addition to being (as we have seen above) pain-seeking and restless. [46]

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[41] He is willing to face the displeasure of God Himself, because of his refusal to bow down before Adam. As a result, he is "bloodied", "never smiling", morose, and his "garments are rent". Iqbal, "*Jāvīd Nameh*", in Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 748.

[42] Iqbal, "*Jāvīd Nameh*", in Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 752.

[43] Ibid., pp. 751-752.

[44] Ibid., 478.

[45] E.g. in being "hasty", and "yielding" too easily to Iblīs suggestion to taste that Heavenly fruit which set this primordial saga into motion (Q. 20: 120-122). Cf. Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* p. 69.

[46] We see this in Iqbal's Persian poetic work "*Payam-i Mashriq"/* "Message to/of the East", in which Iblīs and Adam are contrasted. While Iblīs enacts a rejection (*inkār*) of Adam, which had caused Adam and his children great

This rich tri-dimensionality of Adam's love might be what makes Iqbal describe love itself as "Adam-ing (*ādam-garī*), not mirror-making (*āʾina-sāzī*)."[47] We see this tri-dimensionality also, in Iqbal's other words on supremely loving individuals, e.g. Muḥammad. Muḥammad has a unitive "vision of love" *(nigāh-iʿishq)* which, in addition to pain-seeking and restlessness, also manages, not only to envision apparently unrelated creatures as related, but to bring them into a living relationship. Hence, in the *Asrār,* Iqbal writes that Muḥammad, the lover, "makes earth and Pleiades familiar"; he "eats with the slave (*ghulām*), on the same spread (*dastarkhwān*)"; and "in his vision, low and high are one".[48] In his other writings, Iqbal reiterates this view of Muḥammad actualizing a unitive capacity; he "brought a law"/ *āʾīn,* in which "the proud aristocratic Brahmin of South India is daily made to stand shoulder to shoulder with the "untouchable" (the form in which Muslims pray in congregation, involves physically standing shoulder-to-shoulder, in rows);[49] and perhaps the greatest proof of this for Iqbal, is that Muḥammad "mixed in freely with the people", living without ostentation and allowing members of his proximate community to question him. For Iqbal, this also constitutes an example of Muḥammad's "vision of love", but now with respect to his own person and others.[50]

With the above knowledge, we can more properly understand Iqbal's usage of the word "assimilative" with respect to love; love irreducibly involves a capacity to envision creatures as inter-related, because they are all expressions of Divine Creativity. Even though Iqbal's construal of love involves an intense emphasis on the individual self; i.e. i) on personal effort and ii) on one's pain-seeking, it also iii) involves a non-insularity which is due to God being the only Creator.[51] As we now move into understanding Iqbal's vision of moral formation, we might be able to think retrospectively about our observation in the previous chapter, i.e. Iqbal's words on the beginnings of human moral formation, are so heavily about nature (i.e. another kind of creature). Although Iqbal does not say so explicitly, it is possible to imagine how Iqbal's vision

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suffering, Adam's response is to find something of Divine Creativity, even in the animosity of the other creature, Iblīs. Cf. Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 286-290. For those interested in reading this, an English translation (not entirely accurate, but conveying the larger contours) can be accessed at http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/payam/translation/index.htm

[47] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, 476.

[48] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 38-40.

[49] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 75. Obviously this situation assumes that the individual of "proud Brahmin" heritage has converted to Islam, as has one (wrongly perceived to be) "untouchable".

[50] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 165-166.

[51] My laying out of all three dimensions (pain-seeking, personal effort, and other-embracing) as integral, adds some breadth to scholarship which relates Iqbal's usage of "love", to his ethics. E.g. Reza Shah-Kazemi focuses so heavily on the third dimension (seeing the other as God's creature), that he equates this aspect to the entirety of Iqbal's usage of love. Cf. Reza Shah-Kazemi, "Iqbal and Ecumenism: The Inescapability of Love", in *Muhammad Iqbal, A Contemporary*, eds. Muhammad Suheyl Umar and Basit Bilal Koshul (Lahore, Pakistan: Iqbal Academy, 2010), pp. 27-47. By contrast, I show that Iqbal's usage of love involves all three dimensions, and perhaps readers may be helped to become aware of these dimensions by looking in places one might not think of as associated with "love", e.g. Iqbal's words on Iblīs, and in the Iblīs/ Adam contrast. Also worth consulting here, is: A. Bausani, "Satan in Iqbal's Philosophical and Poetical Works", *Iqbal Review* vol. 9, no. 3 (1968). http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct68/3.htm

of the beginning of moral formation, might be so nature-focused. It might be attempting not to insulate the human person from the rest of creation, and to see this creation as something from which the human person can (unlike Iblīs, and like an Adam) learn.

Therefore, in Iqbal's moral anthropology, we see an emphasis on fear/love as undesirable/desirable, within which his vision of Divine Creativity, and of *khudī* as given-yet-aspired, and to be cultivated for God, are all central. With this overview of Iqbal's moral anthropology in mind, we can turn to understand his vision of moral formation.

II. Moral Formation

Having described the more descriptive dimensions of Iqbal's moral vision vis-à-vis the individual, we now describe the more explicitly normative. Here, we answer the question: given the moral "ingredients" of the human person, what, for Iqbal, is the activity that makes the person better?

At the outset, let us observe that Iqbal divides moral formation "in this world" into three stages, described mainly in two places in his work:[52] in chapter VII of *The Reconstruction,*[53] and in a central portion of the *Asrār-i Khudī* ("Secrets of Self-ness"), beginning with the heading: "The Cultivation/Education of *Khudī* has Three Stages: i) Obedience, ii) Self-Control, and iii) Divine Representation."[54]

This heading is a good self-description by Iqbal, which will help us to successively understand each of its components. Even before understanding the contents of each stage, the larger point that invites careful attention is the distinctive way in which Iqbal defines moral formation.[55]

i) "Education/Cultivation of Khudī"

As seen previously, Iqbal imagines *khudī* as given-yet-aspirational. It is given by God, yet, it cannot be "possessed" by any finite creature. Recalling and granting this "informing conception", is important to understand the larger construal of what moral formation is, in Iqbal.

Ethics is often thought of as a process of working upon the self.[56] However, if not just my individual self, but my participation in an unpossessed *self-ness* is always a work-in-progress, then the locus of moral concern is shifted from an individual's attributes, to that person's relationship with the Divine Individual, who is the One who is granting me the capacity to be a

[52] And listed, also, and briefly translated in this way, in his auto-commentary to the *Asrār-i Khudī.* Cf. "Secrets of the Self", trans. Nicholson (1920), pp. xxv-xxix.
[53] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 143-144.
[54] Iqbal, Farsī Kullīyat, pp.62-70.
[55] Hence, he clarifies that these three stages are his view of how "ethics" should proceed successively, "in this world". Cf. Secrets of the Self", trans. Nicholson (1920), pp. xxvi-xxvii.
[56] I come again to this point in Ch.6, where we will have a sufficient amount of information before us to be able to "locate", in a qualified sense, Iqbal's vision of *khudī* as moral-ontological vision, with respect to more field-familiar typologies.

self, in the first place.[57] Thus, we see that in one narrative continuity, Iqbal describes these three stages, *as* stages of *morality*; as "ethics", "religious ethical life", and "ethical growth", and, also that Iqbal *de-centers* the focus of ethics on "good and evil", or "the problem of good and evil" (which he mentions to de-center, and not to work out).[58] As seen above vis-à-vis his view of fear, he believes that "every hidden evil" (*har sharr-i pinhān*) can be reduced to a fearful responsivity towards God's creatures. Thus, "deceit" (*makkārī*), for example, is undesirable primarily because its "origin" (*aṣl)*, i.e. fear (*khawf/bīm*), is a bad way of responding to God's Creativity, and not because it violates an impersonal principle or axiom, such as "do not deceive".[59] Indeed, as we have seen above, one of the distinctive features of the Iqbalian Iblīs, who is a non-ideal and "unbelieving ingrate" (*kāfir*) despite all his admirable uprightness, is that he is "still drowned in the battle of good and evil", despite encountering so many prophets and failing to be moved and transformed by them.[60]

Relationality with God, which involves relating to His creatures, is a key feature of Iqbal's vision of moral formation; it is an enduring feature across all three stages, and in his view of societal moral formation, as well. This is why, when speaking of the concern of ethics in general, or describing what he believes the human being *should* do in broad terms, Iqbal uses language which simultaneously is self-performative, i.e. describes an activity of "increasing" by one's own doing, and also, relational, i.e. of one's carrying out this activity *for* someone (God), as a self in relation to a Self.

This larger picture is crucial in understanding Iqbal's usage of the word that I have translated here as "education" and "cultivation", i.e. *tarbīyat.* In Iqbal, this word is continuous with a range of similar language about the moral agent's ways of "doing things to" *khudī.* E.g., Iqbal writes, "for Him [God] do I guard, do I guard, *khudī"*;[61] Iqbal exhorts his listener to "elevate *khudī* so much" that "God Himself asks His servant (*banda*): what is your wish?"[62]; the "building (*taʿmīr*) of *khudī"* is described as an activity which is also "the cry/sigh (*āh*) of Adam to God";[63] and it is said that, "the "education/ cultivation (*tarbīyāt*) and the nurturance (*parvarish*) of *khudī*" is that

[57] This much is also said in an explicit and prosaic form in *The Reconstruction,* where Iqbal describes "relationship" and "relationality", and not body, soul, or mind, as the ineluctable feature of being a self (pp. 78-79).
[58] Cf. Iqbal, in Secrets of the Self", trans. Nicholson (1920), pp. xxvi-xxvii; *The Reconstruction,* pp. 19; 69-70;
[59] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 128.
[60] Ibid., 478. A similar critique is made, not about Iblīs but about Iqbal's co-religionists, in a short Urdu poem which says that "nightly vigils" are no use, if one is not anxious (*pareshān*) to guard *khudī* for God. (Urdū Kullīyāt, 547)
[61] Ibid., 584. He repeats the verb, *nighidāram, nigihdāram,* which is understandable knowing he perceives greater participation in *khudī* as an endless activity. That the "Him" here refers to God is made clear in the poem itself, but also, clarified by Iqbal in one of his essays referencing this verse. Cf. *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 187-188.
[62] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, 387. This is one of his most oft-recited verses, known to virtually every Pakistani child. While its esteem of humanity is often admired in popular culture, what is less often noticed or remarked upon that in this verse, the "elevation" of *khudī* is *so that God* can ask what the moral agent desires, and not another creature.
[63] Ibid., 461.

upon which the "endless burning (*soz*)[64] of man is dependent (*mawqūf*)".[65] Thus, when Iqbal writes of the "education" of *khudī,* one might be tempted to immediately assume the performance and reception of a bounded lesson. In Iqbal's case, this *tarbīyat* is endless, and God-relational, in addition to being specifically about the increasing of *that* particular moral agent's participation in *khudī.*

While, that which God, "the Eternally Rich,"[66] has to give is endless, the human moral agent is always a finite creature. Attempting to encapsulate this uncontainable immensity of God's gift of *khudī* vis-à-vis the finitude of the creature, Iqbal says that it is like "the pupil of an eye" (*ānkh kā til*) attempting to capture the firmament (*falak*).[67] However, this finitude of the creature is not undesirable, in Iqbal's view, because it reveals something about God.

Thus, as seen above, an essential element underpinning Iqbal's moral anthropology is the idea of God as "Self-limited", now because he has made a creature who is capable of "private initiative"; who can respond to God's endless giving lovingly, or fearfully.[68] Iqbal voices this range of moral response, in a tender verse addressed to God: "Is it oppression or generosity, Your taste for creation?" [69] It is genuinely possible for the moral agent to ask both kinds of questions when Divine Creativity meets them. Yet, this human capacity for disobedience also shows the unfailing nature of God's love—that He always "lovingly embraces the finite", and that His will be done, even with the extreme limits He has set Himself. For Iqbal, the indefatigable nature of His Creativity is such that it makes some "thing" (e.g. the morally matured person) with endless, illimitable aspirations, from a creature which is so vulnerable and finite. "Thus in his inmost being man…is a Creative activity".[70] In Iqbal, the human capacity for disobedience is envisioned as a "Self-limitation" by God upon His power to compel, but this is a Self-limitation which only shows or proves the inexorable nature of His Creativity, all the more.[71]

We have seen in this section that Iqbal envisions moral formation more generally, as an ever-increasing, responsive, participation of a person in the endless Divine gift of *khudī.* With this in mind, we can now turn to understand what Iqbal considers to be (necessarily and unavoidably) the first stage of moral formation.

ii) "*Obedience"/ "Itāʿat"*

In this section, we describe the contours of the beginnings of moral formation, for Iqbal. In *The Reconstruction,* Iqbal describes this "first period" as: "as a form of discipline which the individual or a whole people must accept as an unconditional command [,] without any rational

[64] This word implies both "heat" and "passion", and is often used to describe loving desire, in Urdū.
[65] Ibid., 588.
[66] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* 142.
[67] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, 456.
[68] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 86-87.
[69] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 348-349.
[70] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 9-10.
[71] Ibid., pp. 86-88.

understanding of the ultimate meaning and purpose of that command." The name given to this stage, in this text, is "faith".[72] Likewise, in the *Asrār-i Khudī,* the *marḥalā-yi awwal* (first stage) is titled "Obedience"/ "*itāʿat"*, and described in much the same way.[73] I have already discussed in the previous chapter, how there are more words in this section which are about nature, than are about the human being. Here, Iqbal repeatedly exhorts the human being to learn an exemplary obedience from nature. Moreover, Iqbal exhorts in particular, a "head bent down in submission" (*sar-i taslīm, kham*), "patience" (*ṣabr*), "constancy" (*istiqlāl*), "enchainment" (*zanjīrī*), "captivity" (*qayd*), "glee" (*sarkhushī*), with respect to the "law" *(āʾīn*) and "commands" (*farmān*) of God.[74] Then, he specifies that this entails the performance of the obligatory ethico-legal acts, or *farāiḍ*, which are essential to Islamic moral life, and which a community receives from a prophet like Muḥammad. [75] This becomes even clearer when he gets into the "second stage", describing a maturer moral agent as one who is already regularly performing *namāz* (obligatory five-time daily prayer), *rozā* (fasting in Ramadān), *zakāt* (the alms-tax) and *Ḥajj* (pilgrimage),[76] and who has a "perfect submission to [this] discipline."[77]

Some further dimensions of Iqbal's obedient "first stage" are best understood by referring back to Mahmood's excellent work. The precision of Mahmood's analysis is extremely helpful in understanding some elements of Iqbal's own moral vision, with a long overdue precision.

Thus, we might recall two brilliant contributions of Mahmood, which were described in my Ch.1: i) She is countering a prevalent Western assumption that the incapacity to give rational assent to an action, is a degrading state for the moral agent; a course of morality, say, for, the "weak" and "primitive" Muslim woman who needs to be "saved" from such an undignified self-conception;[78] ii) Mahmood's counter-account of the human person, ultimately presupposes a moral agent whose malleability is their most interesting moral-anthropological feature. If malleability is that which moral formation addresses, then it is completely understandable that visible, undeniable, durability, in the form of "exterior" performativity is so indispensable and primary. Thus, Mahmood embraces and construes the Aristotelian notion of *habitus* as something more than habit, i.e. a habit so regularly and "assiduously" exercised that it "becomes a permanent feature of one's character".[79]

One prominent feature of Iqbal's "first stage" is that it, too, does not construe "rational understanding of the ultimate meaning and purpose of that command" as the beginning of moral formation. However, in Iqbal's view, the esteem of such a submissive moral beginning is more

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[72] Ibid., 143.
[73] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 62-64.
[74] Ibid. *āʾīn* as object of obedience is repeated around a dozen times, in this section.
[75] Ibid. Cf. footnote no. 117 of Chapter 3.
[76] Ibid., 65-66.
[77] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 143.
[78] Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 13-15.
[79] Ibid., 139.

moral-ontologically conceived. Iqbal's emphasis on beginning from obedience is not tied to the visibility or assiduousness of practices, but rather, to his view that obedience is integral in one's most significant, and Divine, relationship, as a self being given self-ness. Thus, we might recall what Iqbal had said about God; that in creating a creature "capable of doubt and disobedience", God has shown "His immense faith in man; it is for man now to justify this faith."[80]

It is in this sense that Iqbal's description of the first stage of "obedience" as "faith", can also be understood, i.e. as a faith in response to God's own, which is made so by its absence of "rational understanding". In this vein, Iqbal boldly describes the "guarding" of *khudī* as a response to God: "My heart burns for the loneliness of God/ So, for the adornment of His gathering (*bazm-ārāʾī-yi ū*), I keep sowing the seed of *khudī."*[81] And, let us recall: moral formation is defined by Iqbal, as the increasing fortification and cultivation of *khudī.* Therefore, obedience, which is the beginning of moral formation, is seen as an all the more desirable response to God, coming from a "gathering-adorner" of God who is capable of disobedience. As Iqbal says: "Man…occupies a genuine place in the heart of Divine creative energy…Of all the creations of God, he alone is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of his Maker."[82]

Thus, the dignifying dimension of obedience is construed as one's tremendous, and God-given, capacity as a self, to respond to God's giving of self-ness. This point is also visible in a range of Iqbal's other words, which present the submission to Divine law, as the moral agent's embrace of their most significant relationship (with God). In Iqbal's words: "This one prostration which you consider so heavy/ Saves you from a thousand other prostrations [i.e. before anyone but God]".[83] This view is then echoed in *The Reconstruction,* where Iqbal describes the performance of the obligatory prayer as an affirmation of one's ability to act despite the externalities of "sleep and business". Thus, in Iqbal's view, obedience to God and His law, represents a dignifying "escape from mechanism to freedom" for the moral agent.[84]

Furthermore, a second aspect of Iqbal's first stage, which can be clarified with help from Mahmood, is its resistance to cleaving obedience along an "exterior"/ "interior" binary. Interestingly, otherwise admirable readers of Iqbal have construed his first stage as about

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[80] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 68.
[81] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 584. Cf. Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 187-188.
[82] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 58.
[83] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 550.
[84] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 87. My exposition of Iqbal's emphasis on "freeing constraint" or "dignifying fettering", adds a nuance to Schimmel's reading of Iqbal's ethics. Schimmel understands Iqbal's "first stage" to be about "interiority" and "seclusion", which is too partial and misunderstands the holistic and total nature of that obedience which Iqbal describes (*Gabriel's Wing,* pp. 105-107). This is probably due to her over-focusing on one (beautiful and sensuous) image from the relevant section of the *Asrār-i Khudī*. This is the image of "perfume" being formed "inside captivity of the bud" (Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 63). Yet, the larger thrust of the section in which this image comes is the "compulsion" (*jabr*) or "constraint" (*bandish*) of Divine commands, which are positively transformative, and paradoxically freeing, for the person. This has been elaborated, above. One might even consult a verse from one of Iqbal's Urdu poems, titled "Flower" (*phūl*), in which the exact same image is described more richly: "In these very constraints, gain your freedom!" (Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 278)

"interiority", and the arc of Iqbalian moral formation as moving from "interior" to "exterior".[85] Yet, when we study an analysis like Mahmood's, in which exteriority is so powerfully and transparently described as the beginning of moral formation, and interiority as secondary, we can better appreciate that this kind of paradigm is un-mappable onto Iqbal, on whichever side the "first stage" may fall.

Thus, speaking specifically about the "law of God" and "Divine law" (which is the immediate "object" of submission for the first stage), Iqbal rejects and "repudiates" the notion that this law is an "outer husk", and criticizes those who "make a distinction of inner/outer" with respect to this law, as "sentimental obscurantists".[86] In *The Reconstruction*, Iqbal challenges this view from a more anthropological perspective, critiquing views which reduce the reality of the human self to: i) "logical postulate" (that something like a self must be postulated to build an ethical system), ii) "soul" (that the true nature of the self is a "soul-substance" largely unaffected by material vicissitudes), or iii) "sensations" (that what appears to be a self is "accidental succession of thoughts and ideas, ultimately resolvable to units of sensations").[87] Looking at all of these moments, it is difficult to imagine Iqbal's conception of a primary obedience, as reducible to a "polarity" of exteriority/interiority. As indicated by a range of his words, this first stage involves the whole of the moral agent, and is much more centrally about a self in proper response to God and His commands.

With this description of the incipient stage of moral formation in Iqbal, we now turn to understand the second stage.

iii) "Self-Control"/ "Ḍabt-i nafs"[88]

Iqbal describes the second stage of moral formation most pithily in *The Reconstruction*, in the following way: "[p]erfect submission to discipline is followed by a rational understanding of the discipline", and "a logically consistent view of the world". [89] In the *Asrār,* he describes this stage as what might be called a free-er obedience, a "bringing your halter into your own hands". This stage can also be described succinctly as a normalization of Divine law, wherein the Divine commands begins to become natural to one's self. Thus, one of its defining features is that a

[85] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* 105-107.
[86] This is the "modern-day Muslim" who is too impressed with "Hellenized mysticism" and the colonizing Western powers. Cf. Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 154-155.
[87] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 79-86.
[88] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 64-66. He uses the Persian phrase "*ḍabt-i nafs*" or "control/discipline of *nafs*". The word *nafs* is an integral feature of many Islamic moral anthropologies, often used to mean "soul", including a "lower" or "evil" part of the soul which commands the fulfilment of physical appetites and desires. However, in his auto-commentary, Iqbal clarifies that by this word, he means "self", and translates *ḍabt-i nafs* as "self-control". Cf. Iqbal, "Secrets of the Self", trans. Nicholson, p. xxvii. An argument could be made that Iqbal's usage of this word corresponds more with "early Arabic poetry", where it more plainly "meant the self or person", and with "Ḳurʾānic uses…where it most often means self or person". Calverley, E.E. and I.R. Netton, "Nafs", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 14 July 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0833>
[89] Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* 143.

person begins to experience the Divine law, as more intimate to one's self than food and drink, and even one's immediate family and children. After saying exactly this, Iqbal exhorts the reader to be more "like an Abraham", i.e. willing to have "the knife at his son's throat", if God commands as much.[90]

On one level, the moral agent in the second stage is still the same, i.e. they are "haltered" to Divine commands, and performing the ethico-legal commands and practices stated above. However, on another level, the moral agent is now able to understand this Divine command as part of their own rational worldview, within which the command can now be seen as performing a positive function. Here, Iqbal gives examples like: one sees the capacity for the five-time daily prayer (*namāz*) to keep society pure of sexual transgressions (presumably, because prayer's pre-conditional ritual ablution is annulled by sex), and, of the *Ḥajj* to unite all Muslims, by "nation burning" (*watan sūkhtan*). This (is not a call to burn countries, it) presumes some basic knowledge about the *Ḥajj* that virtually all Muslims know, i.e. there are some requirements for dress and bodily grooming (e.g. hair, nails), and some obligatory practices and rituals, which equalize all participants in the *Ḥajj*.[91] Thus, *Ḥajj* can be seen as a dissolver or "burner" of the inequalities based upon belonging to diverse nations.

Iqbal's larger point is that this *kind* of "rational insight", if it comes to the person who is moving in the proper moral direction, only appears in the second stage of moral formation, after the person's "perfect submission".[92] This is a key point, which carries over into Iqbal's view of social moral formation, and informs his critique of what he sees as "irreligious politics", as we will see in the next chapter. The observation for now is that, for Iqbal, a person's moral formation cannot begin with their own rational decision-making. Such a construal of moral beginnings is best approached with the aforementioned reference to Mahmood, for those readers in Religious Ethics who might be unfamiliar with Iqbal.

Moreover, in Iqbal's view, what also underlies the secondary position of "rational worldviews" within moral formation, is his take on rationality as "part-worshipping". To understand this aspect of Iqbal, we can recall that the Divine gift of *khudī* is endless, and the creature is finite. What is to be done? On Iqbal's view, what cannot be done is to make the finite creature, who is definitionally incapable of relating to the totality of creation, to be the source of guidance to himself or other creatures. For Iqbal, this also means that rationality cannot be the source of guidance, but that the normative commands for creatures, as well as the representative of these commands, must both be decided by the One who is not finite.

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[90] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 64-66.

[91] Cf. Wensinck, A.J. *et al*, "Hadj", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 14 July 2020.

[92] It is unlikely that anyone outside of the prophets is considered to have reached this stage, in Iqbal's view. No name is named in this section except for Abraham, who is exemplary for his willingness to cut his son's throat, for God. More prophets are named in the next/third stage of moral formation, which is the blossoming maturation of this prior stage.

Thus, Iqbal understands rationality/ʿ*aql* as a "part-worshipping" (*juz-parast*) activity, but also one which is desirable and necessary, because it has been given the education (*taʿlīm*) to be so by God.[93] Iqbal does not "define" rationality as he does love, but provides a functional "definition" of what it does. For Iqbal as a moral-ontological thinker, rationality is a tool (*ālat*) given by God, to assist with the finitude of the creature in relating to God.[94] It involves the exercise of the "intellectual faculties" of a "finite self", and it gathers "the type of knowledge which necessitates the toil of patient observation and admits only of slow accumulation."[95] Its central moral function is in the development of purpose(s) (*maqṣad*), because it can "direct" and "economize" the limited capacities of the finite agent, towards what requires urgent transformation, by relating many particular events or encounters to a "logically consistent view of the world".[96] Were it not for such an "economizing" capacity, the finite creature would always be overwhelmed, and unable to form specific, actionable purposes.[97] Thus, rationality in moral life, is seen as an essential, purposive intermediary between obedience to Divine law (stage one), and enactment of Divine directive in the world (stage three). This is why Iqbal introduces its role in the second, intermediary stage of moral formation.

Careful readers of Iqbal have also noted that in his works, rationality does not stand as an oppositional contrast to love, but "both belong to each other" and "are integrally related to one another", although love often has a "predominant" role.[98] On Iqbal's view, rationality is "one of the children of desire"/ "of desire's household", and its best place is to stay housed in the service of the broader function of love, i.e. relating God to creature.[99] As is the case with tools (*ālāt*), rationality can be misused. If it does not see love as its roof, it misguides the person and ensures that their rationally coherent world view, as well as their purposive decisions, will not be in a direction desired by God.[100]

In other words, the intermediateness of the second stage of moral formation is quite significant. While purposive rationality has the potential to be abused if uninformed by obedience to God, it is also, if stemming from a "perfectly submitted" agent, a sign of moral *maturation* and of moving in a desirable moral direction. Iqbal's vision offers neither a rejection of, nor an apology

[93] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 35-36.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 69.
[96] Ibid., pp. 47-48; 99-100.
[97] Basit Koshul has highlighted how this "purposive function" of Iqbal's conception of rationality allows us to develop a much broader definition of "rationality" than ordinarily imagined, and has deeper affinities with Iqbal's esteem of nature. If we grant this function of rationality as central, then, Koshul argues, certain behaviors of (non-human) living organisms can be seen as "rational" in the Iqbalian sense. Cf. *Semiotics,* pp. 44-47.
[98] Cf. Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker,* pp. 46-48; Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* pp. 133-137.
[99] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 34-36.
[100] Ibid., pp. 298-299.

for, what he sees as a purposive rationality, but an attempt to place it within a larger account of the human person (and society) as relating to God, within a course of moral formation.[101]

Therefore, Iqbal's description of the second stage of moral formation forefronts its intermediary status, and assumes a further progression in moral growth, which we now turn to understand.

iv) "Divine representation"/ "Niyābat-i ilāhī"

For Iqbal, the aforementioned stages of "perfect submission", and a "logically consistent worldview", are preparations for the most desirable stage of worldly moral formation, which this section describes.[102] In *The Reconstruction,* Iqbal describes this third stage of moral formation, which has been reached by "the minority of mankind", i.e. the prophets of God. This enviable stage is "personal assimilation of life and power", within which a person is "not released from the fetters of the law", but able to become a more intimate, active, and direct agent of God in the world.[103] In the same vein, in a Persian short poem, he writes:

> The lover is not someone with a hot, moaning tongue;
> He is the one with the two worlds on his palms.
> The lover is the one who builds the world of self (*khud*);
> And does not make a door to any world that has an end.[104]

In the longer *Asrār-i Khudī,* Iqbal terms this stage "Divine representation" or *niyābat-i ilāhī,* and only names prophets like Muḥammad, Moses, Jesus, and Solomon, as examples of this stage.[105] Moreover, the significance of the language which Iqbal uses regarding this stage in the *Asrār*, is only fully appreciable if one has read *The Reconstruction,* and is aware of the contours of Iqbal's vision of Divine Creativity, which has been described in the previous chapter.

Thus, Iqbal's description of the moral agent in this enviable stage, keeps returning to the word *amr* which, as we have seen, is considered to be the "Divine creative directive", which is never divorceable from the creature. In the third stage of moral formation, the moral agent becomes "*amīr*"; a word which ordinarily means "commander"/ "ruler", and also is related to the word

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[101] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 1- 22. In this first chapter, Iqbal's central argument is that scientific observation and experimentation, philosophical reflection and its results, and religious-experiential knowledge (which he defines as a type of knowledge in which God chooses to convey something to the person through means other than the senses or reasoning), can all be considered as a continuum despite their differences. They are all varieties of one "thing", i.e. "knowledge". While this would be an essential exposition for a project on Iqbal's general epistemology, when Iqbal is speaking specifically about morality and moral formation, it is the *purposive function* of rationality (i.e. as an intermediary between obedience and Divine representation) which is significant. Cf. also, a reference to some poetic moments that bolster the argument from the *Reconstruction* chapter, in Jamila Khatoon, "Iqbal's Theory of Knowledge", *Iqbal Review,* vol. 1, no. 1 (1960).
http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr87/7.htm

[102] Iqbal, "Secrets of Self" (trans. Nicholson), pp. xxvi-xxvii.

[103] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 100-101; 143-144.

[104] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 506-507. These words are uttered about Adam, the first human and prophet.

[105] Ibid., pp. 66-70. As he makes clear in his auto-commentary to the *Asrār,* he was inspired, in naming this stage, by the Qurʾān, 2:28, which speaks of a *khalīfah* or "Divine vicegerent on earth". Cf. Iqbal, "Secrets of Self" (trans. Nicholson), xxvii.

amr. Here, we also see Iqbal describing the prophet as "established (*qā'im*) by the *amr* of God (*amrullah*)", and then even more directly, simply calling them the *amrullah/* "*amr* of God".[106]

For Iqbal, this intimate relationship of the moral agent with Divine *amr* never becomes an "effacement" of the individual person.[107] It is not as if the moral agent is a passive vessel for the enactment of Divine directives, or that they arrive at this stage by a process of self-emptying,[108] but that they are Divine "co-worker".[109] There is an irreducibility to the self-to-Self, relational quality, even in the person's embodiment of Divine *amr.* Iqbal's own words are transparent, both about the enduring reality of this non-effacement, *and*, about the intellectual incomprehensibility of such a relationship, which remains a relationship, even when the person becomes the *amrullah.* Thus, he rejects the view that "the self becomes united with God" and "loses its identity", and simultaneously, probably anticipating questions which are concerned with smoothing out logical paradoxes related to Divine Oneness, writes: "The *amr* is distinct but not isolated from God…But I confess I cannot intellectually apprehend this relationship".[110]

As can be expected, depending on their own ways of reading, different readers have construed Iqbal's combination of the non-effacement of the self, with the un-divorcing nature of Divine *amr*, differently. For some, holding on to both of these commitments, (at least partially) compromises Iqbal's Islamic monotheism, and such critics conclude: "There is no place for a non-dual conception of the self and the Divine in Iqbal's thought."[111] Contrastively, other readers have seen Iqbal's irreducibility of the human-to-God relation, what I have called his persistent "relationality", as one thinker's account of a "genuine love" between God and human, "which preserves the individuality of the lover and Beloved".[112]

It is accurate to say that on Iqbal's view, and in his own pointed words: "Love individualizes the lover as well as the beloved".[113] For Iqbal, it would be demeaning to God, beneath God, to imagine Him as "making" something, the highest aspiration of which is to become nothing, even if for God's sake. This is why, as I have said earlier, the Creativity of God bears a prominent role in Iqbal's vision of *khudī.* A substantial part of the unwillingness to forego the individuality of the human person, even in the riper stages of intimacy with God, consists of a commitment to a certain view about Divine Creativity which has been outlined previously. Thus, for Iqbal, the genuine, "true infinite" that is Divine Creativity, does not efface the finite creature, but "it

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[106] Ibid.
[107] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 88.
[108] So Schimmel, for example, observes that more "conventional" poets would have welcomed a "killing poison" because it is from God, or, have desired that the "self should be poured out", but Iqbal subverts this attitude towards the self and ties it to a vision of esteeming God Himself properly. *Gabriel's Wing,* pp. 104-105.
[109] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 10.
[110] Iqbal, *Discourses of Iqbal,* Ed. Shahid Hussain Razzaqi (Lahore: Sh. Ghulam Ali & Sons, 1979), pp. 179-183.
[111] Muḥammad Faruque, *The Labyrinth of Subjectivity: Constructions of the Self from Mullā Ṣadrā to Muḥammad Iqbāl,* at digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu. 2018, p. 277. However, it is worth noting that this reading has little account of Iqbal's self-consciousness about the limits of intellectual "comprehension" of God.
[112] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* 139.
[113] Iqbal, "Secrets of Self" (trans. Nicholson), xxvi.

embraces the finite without effacing its finitude, and explains and justifies its [i.e. the finite creature's] being." Anything that would involve desiring an effacement of the finite creature, would be a kind of "creativity" that is not Divine, and not "genuine", in Iqbal's view.[114]

It is also noteworthy that the *Asrār's* poetic description of the stage of Divine representation, subtly alludes to the inherence of the prior two stages in this stage; that the moral agent has not "escaped the fetters of the law". Thus, Iqbal describes this mature moral agent as:

> To the species of humanity, a bearer of good message and glad tidings;
> He is himself foot soldier, mid-soldier, and commander (*amīr*). [115]

Furthermore, two of the most outstanding, and mutually related, features of this mature moral agent are power and dynamism.

In the *Asrār,* there is a heavy, even heady, preponderance of language of power and authority; e.g. the mature agent is "the rider" (*shahsavār*); "strongly established" (*moḥkam*); "pitching his tent across the expanse of the universe" (*khaymeh, dar wusʿat-i ʿālam, zanad*), and (in the *Reconstruction*, described as) "penetrating".[116] As the individual who is Divine representative, he can reliably command the other two creaturely kinds: nature, and society. It is here that Iqbal places what might ordinarily be called "prophetic miracles", e.g. Moses splitting the sea, Jesus reviving the dead, Muḥammad's night journey and ascension (wherein his bed was reported to be warm upon his return), etc.[117] In Iqbal's presentation of these, there is far less of a sense of departure from normal, than might be expected. The overwhelming thrust of his language here is about the prophet's authority over nature, rather than of a disruption in natural patterns, because obeying the Divine directive is what nature always does, anyway.[118] In fact, in *The Reconstruction,* Iqbal describes the prophet's commanding authority over nature, as continuous with natural patterns like growing plants and evolving animal organs.[119] The case with society is partially different, insofar as society can obey or disobey the Divine directive, as we shall see in the next chapter, but the authority of the prophet over his community is described in much the same way as that over nature. Thus, the prophetic agent is irreplaceably powerful; he is the only one who can provide a Divinely given law (*āʾīn*) to a community, which is essential for the moral formation of that community.[120]

For now, the other aspect of the prophetic agent is that his power is both purposive and restless; he is described as the "thriving tumult" (*rawnaq-i hangāma*).[121] In this sense, every prophet is an

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[114] Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* pp. 23-24.
[115] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, 67. *"ham sipāhī, ham sipah-gar, ham amīr",* most literally rendered: "he is soldier, and also, soldiery-doer (general), and also, commander".
[116] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 99.
[117] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, 68.
[118] Cf. footnote no. 107, my Ch. 3.
[119] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 100-101.
[120] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 69-70.
[121] Ibid., 69.

Adamic lover of God; discontent with stasis, and "capable of inflicting pain on himself in his ceaseless quest after fresh scopes for self-expression".[122] We need not give all the examples,[123] but can observe that for Iqbal, Muḥammad's encounter with God during the night journey and ascension (*miʿrāj*)[124] is the most accomplished example of such personal restlessness.

For Iqbal, when Muḥammad meets God, it the most intimate encounter that a creature has had with their Creator, and one so intense that it could not be withstood by God's angels. This pinnacle of moral formation for an inhabitant of the world, involves a naturalization of what was previously difficult, as well as a *decrease* in rest, and an "increase in intensity of his [i.e. Muḥammad's] activity". We might call Iqbal's description of this stage, a description of an "ever-expectant mastery". Hence, even this encounter, which is an unflinching and "smiling" converse with God; which proves to Iqbal "that the heavens are in the grip of creaturehood"; this is, even so, perceived to be a "gradual growth" in the "intensity of his activity", and a sign that "all that is, is unfinished still".[125] Once again, we see his sense of the Divine Creativity as inexhaustive, but now, within his appreciation of what he sees as the most morally formed human being, who has cultivated the gift of Divine *khudī* most richly out of all creatures.

Finally, on the morally mature individual; as is to be expected based on Iqbal's moral anthropology, the "personal effort" element of such an individual (for which Iqbal also uses the Arabic word *faqr*) becomes so intense that the self-to-God relationality becomes undiluted.[126] Such a person is *not* insulated from other creatures, but profoundly engaged with them; indeed, they are continuously, transformatively commanding nature and society in accordance with, and *as*, God's directives. Yet, they do not rely upon anything but their personal strife and God, in order to relate to God and any expression of His Creativity. Thus, for such a person, any and all interactions with other creatures become elements of their own, personal, God-responsivity, in ways that can only ever be beneficial for other creatures, and a source of "good tidings" and "the night turning into darkness", because these are all God-obedient transformative commands.[127] Thus, on Iqbal's view, the morally mature person is the one who "absorbs" or concentrates all of their creaturely interactions, into their own, self-to-Divine-Self, relationality.[128] Such individuals

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[122] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 9.

[123] For an overview of Iqbalian prophetology within which this dynamism can be discerned across a range of prophets, Cf. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* pp. 251-273.

[124] This account famously involves the angel Gabriel telling Muḥammad that there is a point beyond which he cannot go, but Muḥammad the human, can. For an overview of the scriptural account and its receptions in the Islamic tradition, Cf. Schrieke, B., Horovitz, J., Bencheikh, J.E., Knappert, J. and Robinson, B.W., "Miʿrāḏj", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 18 July 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0746>

[125] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 93-94; Urdū Kullīyāt, 364. This untitled Urdū ghazal offers a distinctive reading of the *miʿrāj,* and has resonances with *The Reconstruction's* view that even the "climax" of growth is not a terminus.

[126] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 476-477. Here Iqbal exhorts the reader to become a traveler (*musāfir*) and "make illumined, the night, by the scars of your own heart".

[127] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 67-69.

[128] Iqbal, "Secrets of Self" (trans. Nicholson), pp. xix-xx.

are a "minority of mankind", who have reached this stage by developing via the prior stages of moral growth.[129]

As indicated this section and the ones above, there is no "conclusion" to Iqbal's stages of moral formation, even in what he sees as the moral crescendo or "climax" of an inhabitant of this world. This is why he clarifies that the three stages of moral formation, are "for this earth", but not a terminal vision.[130] His positive rendering of personal incompleteness, then carries over into his views on what he calls "personal immortality". One gets a clear sense that Iqbal believes we cannot know precisely what happens to us, after death. Nevertheless, his views in this regard are continuous enough with his larger moral-ontological vision, to merit being seen as a possible, but less thickly detailed, "next" stage.

v) "Personal Immortality"

As with his larger moral vision, the individual self in endless aspiration to *khudī,* is also, overwhelmingly the central concern of Iqbal's vision of life after death. In this respect, his view of life after death is continuous with his concerns of moral formation in this world, and even his vision of nature.

Iqbal's vision of what happens after death, is rather distinctive and in many ways, unelaborated. He is not concerned with Heaven and Hell per se, or with describing terrains of agony/ ecstasy in any level of detail which might dissuade from moral degeneration, or persuade to moral betterment. While such a function is often performed by conceptions of Heaven and Hell in many religious moral thinkers, and indeed, in scriptures, this is not the case in Iqbal. Readers of Iqbal have noted that angels, Heaven and Hell occur rather sparsely in his writings as inherently interesting subjects,[131] and if they do, as parts of a larger vision of the restlessness of the maturing self, which continuously aspires to "personal immortality". Thus, Iqbal sings, continuous with his larger sense of ontic dynamism:

> If our freedom (*najāt*) were in dispensing ourselves from diligent searching (*justujū*),
> Then a grave (*gūr*) would be better than Heaven, despite Heaven's perfume and color.
> Oh traveler (*musāfir*)! Life dies by finding a station (*maqām*);
> So keep roaming, increasingly alive (*zindah-tar*), with a continuous flying (*parvāz-i mudām*).[132]

Coherent with his emphasis on irreducible relationality, even in intimate representation of God, Iqbal has a vision of what he calls "personal immortality", which is developed most explicitly in

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[129] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 100.
[130] Iqbal, *Secrets of Self* (trans. Nicholson), xxvii.
[131] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* pp. 203-205. Almost the whole of her section on Iqbal's belief in angels is about his contrast of Adam/Iblīs. This is also evidenced by the fact that Mir, in his introduction to Iqbal (2006) which attempts to cover the widest possible range of the thinker's interests and concerns, does not have a separate section on angelology or Heaven/hell.
[132] Iqbal, "Jāvīd Nāmeh", Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 628.

The Reconstruction.[133] He is careful to separate his usage of this term from what he does not take it to mean. In this respect, he outlines what he calls "metaphysical arguments" and "mechanistic views", both of which seen as are equally abhorrent.

The first, i.e. "metaphysical arguments" are seen as propounding the view that the true "essence" of the self is supra-material, e.g. a transcendental soul, and it is this which endures after death, for eternity. Iqbal rejects this because it has too low an estimation of the natural universe qua expression of Divine Creativity, essentially reducing it to "a physical medium for a short period of sport" [i.e. something trivial], which is contrary to Iqbal's sense of the ontic esteem of nature which has been outlined previously.[134] Bolstering this thread of critique from *The Reconstruction,* is Iqbal's short essay, "Corporeal Resurrection", which is a devotional assertion of the reality of its titular subject, after a quotation of the following verses of the Qurʾān, in this order (*ṣurāh*: verse) 50: 47-48; 50: 60-62; 29: 19-20; 75: 3-4; 17: 49-51; 19: 66-67.[135] Likewise, a few pages after the thread against "metaphysical arguments" in *The Reconstruction,* Iqbal writes that precisely what "reconstituted form" the materiality of the individual will take after death and the Day of Judgment, is unknown to us. However, it is clear to him that God's Creativity is not of the nature that can be stopped or discarded. Thus, "our present physiological structure" is continuous with "some kind of body" in the afterlife, which will be the result of our "present structure" undergoing indeterminable transformations and reconstitutions, rather than materiality being eradicated from our individuality.[136]

The second body of views from which Iqbal seeks to distinguish himself, is what he calls "mechanistic" views of the afterlife. In Iqbal's reading, such views are not concerned with a material/immaterial binary, but with "the order of happenings in the universe", which is perceived to be wholly "repetitive" and "cyclical". Iqbal presents such views as propounding "the hypothesis" that "there are no new happenings", and that the kind of imaginable occurrences is both "perfectly calculable" and "already exhausted", and whatever happens to the individual falls within this larger pattern. Iqbal rejects this view not only because it "makes immortality absolutely intolerable", because in his view the notion of "aspiration" for personal betterment goes out the window, but also, because it misrepresents the reality of Divine Creativity, which is

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[133] Khurram Ali Shafique has made the suggestion that one of Iqbal's other poetic works, *Jāvīd Nameh,* be read as a "commentary" upon the idea of "personal immortality" in *The Reconstruction.* In this Persian poetic work, Iqbal travels through the planets with his master Rūmī, encountering many illustrious names and learning something from each one; and eventually speaking to God. This work contains parts which bolster the insights of *The Reconstruction.* However, I am not convinced that there is a pervasive chapter-to-section correspondence of the kind which Shafique suggests, unless this claim is developed in further detail. Cf. "The Reconstruction as a Commentary on Javīdnāma", *Iqbal Review* vol. 47: 4 (Oct 2006).
http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct06/3-The%20Reconstruction%20as%20a%20Commentary.htm

[134] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 89-90.

[135] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings of Iqbal.* Ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2015), pp. 189-192.

[136] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 96-98.

"unlike mechanistic repetition".[137] Thus, in Iqbal's view, whatever it will be, the experience of the individual-in-afterlife, qua expression of Divine Creativity, will be a "*forward* movement"; a progressive development in which, after death, "there is no possibility of return to this earth", and consisting of wholly unprecedented and novel occurrences. [138]

Rejecting these two conceptions of life after death, at the heart of Iqbal's positive vision of "personal immortality" is that he *centers* something that might not be immediately associated with the word "immortality", i.e. "creaturely finitude". Underpinning this vision of personal immortality, is the view that finitude is not something from which the creature will ever be "liberated". However, nor should they desire such a moment, for that would spell the end of that restlessness which it is to be a self, and it would reject one's participating endlessly and increasingly in the gift of *khudī.* As Iqbal says more pithily: "finitude is not a misfortune". [139] Here again, we see his view of the simultaneous given-ness-and-aspirationality of *khudī,* but now within Iqbal's vision of the afterlife. Thus, the "reason" for personal immortality in Iqbal, is not so different from what he sees as happening in this life. The "reason" is not that the creature has reached some unsurpassable state, but that what God has to give, is endless, and cannot be contained by the creature, as conveyed by his aforementioned image of the contrast between an eye's pupil and the cosmos.

Finally, in *The Reconstruction* we see Iqbal stating that "Hell is not a pit of ever-lasting torture inflicted by a revengeful God…Nor is Heaven a holiday",[140] hence, de-centering the painful or pleasurable experiential aspects of Heaven/Hell. He even says: "There are no pleasure-giving and pain-giving acts", but that "life", is what offers a "scope" for increasing activity and intensification, as a self, participating in self-ness.[141]

Rather, the function of these two concepts in Iqbal, fits within his broader view about *khudī* as endlessly given. Therefore, "the resurrection" will be a highly personal event for each individual; "a stock-taking of past achievements and future possibilities", with God providing the shape of these future directions.[142] Hell is a painful, but fundamentally "corrective experience", which will undergo change once the moral agent, whose "reshaping requires time", becomes more receptive to God; "more sensitive to the living breeze of Divine Grace".[143] However, precisely

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[137] Ibid., pp. 91-92; 40-41.

[138] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* p. 93; *Speeches, Statements and Writings of Iqbal.* Ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2015), pp. 189-192.

[139] Ibid., 93.

[140] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 98.

[141] Ibid., 95.

[142] Ibid., 96.

[143] This vision of Hell as a corrective and beneficial experience, is bolstered by Iqbal's bold assertion in his last large poetic work, the *Jāvīd Nāmeh,* where he journeys through the planets, and heaven and hell, with Rūmī. In this work, there is one section in which Iqbal speaks of individuals who are so morally de-formed, that even Hell will refuse to accept them, and show disdain about letting them touch its fires. For them, there is a place that is described rather mysteriously, which is heavy, unmoving, and stationary, and in it, bloodless themselves but in an ocean of their own blood, are persons who will be denied the useful "stock-taking and further unfolding" that is

how this will happen, or what the signs will be that this is happening, are not specified. Iqbal stops his articulation at this place, highlighting that "we cannot go farther than this."[144]

What we have highlighted in this section, is how Iqbal's vision of personal immortality is continuous with some of the core features of his larger moral-ontological vision, particularly an emphasis on ceaseless dynamism, and a construal of the individual self as a finite creature of God, who gives self-ness. Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on morality (a distinctly human activity) as a relational activity, and, on responsivity, i.e. the person is always responding to God, even via their interactions with other creatures. These latter two dimensions become even more embedded in the third, societal layer of Iqbal vision of *khudī*, as the next chapter will describe.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has described the contours of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* with respect to the individual person. In being attentive to a range of facets, e.g. descriptive and normative, incipient agent and mature agent, worldly stages and personal immortality, we have been able to see how certain patterns recur in Iqbal's person-centered vision, which are resonant with the previous chapters, even as they clearly add new, non-negligible information.

Thus, in this chapter, I have attempted to give a richer picture of Iqbal's vision of personal moral formation, than is often the case. Perhaps due to his centering of the term "self-ness"/ *khudī*, readings of Iqbal's vision of individual morality, often see it as comprised of insular beginnings, or, as a view of lofty, but terminal, aspirations for the person. In this vein, some readers have asserted that, Iqbal's vision of *khudī* for the individual, is an exhortation to "self-consciousness and the notion of self-respect",[145] while other readings contend that "the goal of moral activity" in Iqbal is a rare "integration of personality".[146] Yet, in Iqbal's view, moral growth, which is defined by him as the ever-increasing fortification of *khudī,* which itself, is both given and always aspired-to, the demands of moral beginnings are perceived to be heavier and more totalizing, and, the "ends" of moral aspirations, far more endless and non-terminal, than is often noticed. In describing Iqbal's person-centered vision in this way, we have found that Mahmood's emphasis on performativity and moral formation, which was outlined in Ch.1, helps us in being sensitized to, and then delineating, these dimensions of Iqbal. Her frank, transparent

resurrection. Iqbal stops a short while to look at this place, but cannot stand its horror, and asks his master to move on. Most interestingly, but not at all surprisingly considered what we have described in this project, Iqbal uses (often positively used) words like *sukūn* ("peace"/ "rest") to describe this most undesirable place. Cf. Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 754-756.

[144] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, 98.

[145] Ishaque, Khalid M. "Preface," in Muhammad Munawwar, *Iqbal: Poet Philosopher of Islam* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1985), pp. 6-7.

[146] K. G. Sadiq, "Iqbal on the Conception of Morality," *Iqbal Review* vol. 10, no. 3 (1969). Accessed online at http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct69/5.htm

prioritization of “exteriority”, and her clearly understandable reasons for doing so, also aid us in contrastively understanding Iqbal as challenging such a binary.

Having before us a rich account of Iqbal’s moral-ontological vision of *khudī* with respect to nature and individual person, we now turn to understand its societal dimensions.

Chapter 5

Iqbal's Vision of *Khudī* and Society

Chapter Overview

In the previous chapters, we had detailed the first two layers of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* i.e. nature/the universe and the human individual. In this chapter, we parse out the third dimension i.e. society and social history. This chapter completes the thick description of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* after which the next chapter will move into a more condensed articulation of this vision.

In this chapter, we will read Iqbal's social vision in a way that is not common. Instead of asking whether he was "ultimately" a "nationalist" or a "pan-Islamist", [1] or whether he was "Western" or "Muslim", we focus on describing the ways in which Iqbal's social vision has recurrent patterns, internally, and, how it resonates with his broader vision of *khudī.* Due to our way of reading, one of the key insights of this chapter is that Iqbal has a rich construal of what kind of creature societies are, and what social history is. This construal of society as creaturely self is deeply informed by the contents of the previous chapters. We see that Iqbal's vision of the directions in which societies should move, is more intricate, and resonant with his larger normative thought, than might be assumed.

In continuity with the structure of the previous chapter, in Part I, we outline those "givens" of Iqbal's social vision, which make certain normative *societal* directions possible or desirable. We might even say, that these are Iqbal's "social moral anthropology", as they convey what kind of beast society is, for him. Then, in Part II, we move towards more explicitly normative dimensions, which Iqbal considers to be true for all social groups, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. In Part III, we describe Iqbal's vision of "post-finality" society (i.e. humanity after the historical prophethood of Muḥammad), and his words on the directions of a contemporary "Muslim collective".

As with the prior chapters, and indeed, as with the entire dissertation, the part-by-part description of different dimensions of Iqbal is not intended to suggest their fragmentation. On the contrary, the parts of Iqbal's vision of *khudī* require this treatment, because they are so intertwined. This reminder is helpful, because the contents of Parts II and III often occur on the same pages in Iqbal's works. Part III should be read, not as a silo in which Iqbal thought's about Muslims are

[1] One might consult the compilation of essays titled *The Political Sagacity of Iqbal,* Edited by Nadeem Shafiq Malik (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 1998), in which at least 25 of the 32 essays are about "Iqbal and nationalism", especially whether he "wanted" Pakistan or pre-1947 India. In very recent works published in the American academy, Iqbal's name comes up with respect to questions about a "post-statist Islamic theocracy", and is dismissed quickly, as part of a preference for "more theoretically systematic accounts". Cf. Andrew March, *The Caliphate of Man: Popular Sovereignty in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 2019.), 7; 111. Iqbal Singh Sevea argues, more subtly, that even in determining Iqbal's position vis-à-vis the acceptability of nation-state models, we should have some understanding of his larger "socio-political discourse", and be transparent about our own methods of reading. Cf. *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 1-3.

confined, but, as I specifically have just stated, as Iqbal's views on the developments of human society as a creature, after Muḥammad.

With this larger structural overview in mind, now we turn to understand the descriptive "givens" of Iqbal's social vision.

I- Descriptive Dimensions

There are two kinds of descriptive givens, without knowing which Iqbal's social vision would be unintelligible. The first are those things which Iqbal thinks are true as a function of (what we have, in shorthand, described in Ch.2 as) his canonical devotion. These starting points are beyond questioning or debate, for him. The second are more "functional", and Iqbal does not present these in the same devotional manner but rather as facts about the world, i.e. as the way that societies are, in his understanding as a "critical student" of history. The two explicitly "canonical" aspects of Iqbal's social history, are as follows:

i) History, and Finality

First, for Iqbal, the history of human societies is (like nature and individual person) also an expression of the ongoing Creativity of God and as such, has an ontic esteem. Iqbal argues that "the historical process [is] a perpetually Creative movement" of God, and then details this in *The Reconstruction*. In this respect, he quotes (alongside those Qurʾānic verses which speak about natural phenomenon) those Qurʾānic references to "History, or in the language of the Qurʾān, "*the days of God*" ", which exhort humanity to "reflect upon the past and present experience of mankind".[2] Iqbal then argues that the Qurʾān has an "interest in history" which has not been fully "appreciated", although the great early historian Ibn Khaldūn had made some advances in this direction by taking history as a subject of vital importance, and by treating "cultural history…as a genuine Creative movement" with a theological import.[3] While citing these Qurʾānic verses, Iqbal obviously assumes that the Qurʾān is speaking truth, and in doing so, providing to humans both "a source of human knowledge" and an insight into the "genuinely Creative movement" of God, which is "not predetermined" and "eternal".[4]

Second, for Iqbal, not only is it unquestionably true that Muḥammad was the final prophet and that there cannot be any prophet after him, but also, this fact is of great significance for social history qua expression of Divine Creativity. The reader can consult virtually every counter-statement of Iqbal's against "Qadianism". These statements declare the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood as "a simple of proposition of faith" which is to be "jealously guarded" and on which "debate" and "tolerance" is not admissible.[5] Iqbal also writes in moments a bit more

[2] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), pp. 110-111. Iqbal quotes Q. [14:5], [7:181-183], [3:137], [3:140], [7:34] in succession.
[3] Ibid., pp. 113-114.
[4] Ibid., 113.
[5] Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings of Iqbal.* Ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2015), pp. 217-221.

abstracted from this lived and polemical debate, that "Muḥammad is the last in line" of the prophets of God and that "no new revelation" is possible after Muḥammad.[6]

Thus, history, for Iqbal, is most broadly divided into a pre-finality[7] and post-finality epoch, and there is both continuity and difference between these two epochs. The fulcrum for this epochal shift is Muḥammad's prophethood itself, in which its own finality was inherent. Succinctly put, the basic content of the shift is that before Muḥammad's arrival into history, all societies "lived in a state of constant expectation" (of a new Divine representative/prophet to keep guiding them when they strayed),[8] and upheld "a theory of perpetual revelation"[9] which enabled certain attitudes towards society, the individual self and nature. By the resounding full stop on "perpetual revelation" (in the sense of scripture) that was Muḥammad's prophetic finality, an epoch was opened up in which these older attitudes could be changed, albeit gradually. This is all we will say on this fascinating periodization, for now. I explore the implications below, and for now we are simply noting its prominence and primacy.

In addition to the above, Iqbal assumes two more facets of social groups, which are also key to understanding his normative, ethical vision. None of these are stated with a creedal robustness. Nevertheless, they are made quite explicit in his writings.

ii) Society, even pre-finality, is non-monolithic[10]

Iqbal has a broad, asymmetrical historical periodization into the aforementioned two epochs, but he also clarifies that this does not mean that all societies in the pre-finality epoch were monolithic and homogeneous. In this respect, Iqbal first recognizes that both within a single social group and across different societies, there can be different kinds of *forces* of consolidation, which range from "blood-relationship"[11] to "race and language"[12] to "nationality and geographical frontiers"[13] to "the amount of dividend earned…or equality of stomachs" (i.e. economic forces)[14] to "like-mindedness", i.e. "the unity of a religious and political ideal" which cannot be reduced to any of the above.[15] In addition, there can be many *forms* in which the boundaries of a societal self are consolidated; "the crowd, the mass meeting, the corporation, the

[6] Ibid., p. 209; p. 219.
[7] Henceforth, whenever we use the term "finality" in this chapter, it is shorthand for "Iqbal's belief in the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood".
[8] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings*, 198.
[9] Ibid., 209.
[10] It is possible that this assumption has some creedal or canon-devotional basis. When writing public essays on society and politics, he does not quite explicitly frame this insight in terms of devotion to a Qurʾānic verse, but, one of the Qurʾānic verses he cites in *The Reconstruction,* as an exhortation to esteem history properly, is about (in his words): "the variety of tongues and colors" in human beings, i.e. Q. 30:22. See *The Reconstruction,* p. 11 and pp. 110-111.
[11] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* 236.
[12] Ibid., 154.
[13] Ibid., 284.
[14] Ibid., 44.
[15] Ibid., 141.

sect…the deliberative assembly" (to quote just a few examples) being "the various means by which the body-social organizes itself in order to secure the unity of self-consciousness".[16]

Furthermore, for Iqbal, an individual's "social rank" can have differing criteria across societies, which are virtually the same as the forces of consolidation listed above, e.g. a society coalesced around economic "dividend earned" will privilege the economically successful.[17] Iqbal also recognizes the reality of deep, *well-founded conflicts* inside any society. Here, he gives the famous example of an "aristocratic" woman from Muḥammad's time, not being able to gel with a freed slave as her husband (Muḥammad's matchmaking), leading to divorce, and then her subsequent marriage to Muḥammad. Iqbal considers the woman's pride wholly rational (even if incorrect from the perspective of Muḥammad's superior, assimilative "vision of love") based on the cultural consciousness of that tribal society.[18] In a similar vein, Iqbal considers cultural conflicts *between* various societies as founded in not-insignificant differences. His brief gloss on the differences between "Christian" and "Zoroastrian" cultures, for example, shows an appreciation of what he sees as a deep divergence in worldviews and "foundational presuppositions about humanity and the universe"; he does not belittle such differences as reducible to, say, "greed" for material gains. [19] Articulating this same point more abstractly, Iqbal also says specifically to a gathering of Muslim political elites, that "politics have their roots in the spiritual life of man"; that the questions of how to reshape society, which they consider simply urgent and exigent for the short-term, i.e. whether to "construct a harmonious whole" out of "rich diversity" or to "disturb" such a social consolidation,[20] are so deep as to be based in a particular world-vision and a religious "faith, culture and historical tradition". Thus any kind of political conflict must be seen, for Iqbal, as having its "roots in spiritual life" instead of being dismissable from a standpoint of religious worldviews.[21]

Iqbal does not want to brush aside the differentiation and variety of social groups, both pre/post-finality. In addition, there is another key element underpinning Iqbal's social vision, i.e. his conception of social groups as kinds of "selves" which are irreducible to individual selves. As we

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[16]Ibid., 119. Iqbal has a clear sense that communities prior to Muslims, had societal consolidations based upon religious worldviews. Moreover, his recognition of the different forms of social groups is broader than the nation vs. world contrast. Noticing such moments adds some nuance to the reading that Iqbal's social vision, vis-à-vis *khudī* especially, is about "the preservation of national memory" as social "glue". Cf. Mustansar Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 110. Rather, Iqbal has a less determined and more general sense of "society" or "societal creature".

[17] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings*, 44.

[18] Ibid., 105-106.

[19] Ibid., pp. 100-101.

[20] This was not a theoretical comment. These remarks came in Iqbal's Presidential Address delivered to the annual session of the All-India Muslim Conference in Lahore, which suggested the idea of a new Muslim state with certain geographical boundaries, much of which are now part of modern-day Pakistan.

[21] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 31-32. Here, Iqbal clarifies that by "spiritual", he does not mean supra-material, but a community's relation with God, including its adherence to Divine law. I add this clarification because for some readers, Iqbal's "philosophical conviction that Ultimate Reality is spiritual in character", is what makes "religion central to politics". This is not quite the case, and it depends on reading the whole text of this statement, and understanding the sense in which Iqbal uses the word "spiritual". Cf. Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker,* pp. 118-119.

now turn to highlight another descriptive element of Iqbal's social vision of *khudī,* we find it useful to refer back to Asad. As we have seen in Ch.1, Asad is challenging a separation between reality, language, and materiality. By uncovering the various intellectual strands that came together to imagine language and nature as merely instrumental for access to reality, Asad also alerts us to modes of collective life in which all the "aural, oral, tactile" elements of scriptures, especially the Qurʾān, can be seen as an embodied challenge to the "de-ontologizing" view of language.[22]

Within his counter-account, it is understandable that Asad focuses on the "material object" of scripture and its tremendous capacities for collective formation and reformation. In this vein, when he describes the "classically imagined" conception of a Muslim community or *umma,* his framing is of a "theologically defined space", within which, "theological predicates" as conveyed by the scripture and prophet are central, and the "universalizing" impulse of this community is primarily a matter of the rational entailment of "presuppositions". Thus, on Asad's view, the "collective moral" impetus of the Muslim community most broadly conceived, is that if certain predicates are held to be true, then ""a system of practical reason morally binding on each individual", follows.[23] This Asadian account of "theologically defined space" is well-developed, and useful because it helps us to more precisely understand Iqbal's vision, in a way that can be better appreciated even in Iqbal Studies.

Yet, as we see below, in Iqbal's case, neither communities in general, nor the Muslim collective, are primarily "spaces". Instead, in Iqbal, there is a carrying over of the same sense of "self-ness", i.e. of an ever-increasing inculcation of *khudī* by the creature, as with the individual person, into Iqbal's social vision.

iii) The societal self is more than the sum of individual selves

As the following statements by Iqbal show, he sees society as a creature of God which is not a location, but a self. In this vein, related to Iqbal's aforementioned statement that any "body-social" will have a "self-consciousness",[24] Iqbal also believes that a "body-social" cannot be reduced to a conglomeration of individual selves. Iqbal states:

> Society has, or rather, tends to have, a consciousness, a will, and an intellect of its own, though the stream of its mentality has no other channel through which to flow than individual[s]…It is, therefore, clear, that society has a life-stream of its own. The idea that it is merely the sum of its individuals is essentially wrong, and consequently all projects of social and political reform which proceed on this assumption must undergo careful re-examination. Society is much more than its existing individuals…[25]

In other words, while a social entity is not possible without individuals, it cannot be reduced to these constituent individuals either. There is a "self-consciousness" and an "individuation"

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[22] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 27-57.
[23] Asad, pp. 197-198.
[24] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings*, 119.
[25] Ibid., pp. 119-120.

characteristic of "collective life", just as these qualities are also characteristic of "individual life". [26] Moreover, for Iqbal, it is not the case that societal change is the net result of divergent "component units taken individually…in a state of disorder", i.e. the end result of various individual vectors pulling in different directions. Rather, for Iqbal, the nature of "collective life" is such that it "tends to" make "into its communal self" and also "bring into subjection" individual selves; these approaches depending on the individual's own attitude with respect to the "communal self" (i.e. whether he is "performing a function which society has allotted to him" or "insubordinate"). Furthermore, Iqbal believes that this kind of "bringing in" of constituent individuals into the "communal self", can often be feature of apparently quite different societies. He offers as an example, the following remarks, that while many European nations complain that Muslim societies are "fanatical", in fact

> All forms of life are, more or less, fanatical, and they ought to be so, if they care for their individual or collective life. And as matter of fact, all nations are fanatical. Criticize a Frenchman's religion, you do not very much rouse his feelings; since your criticism does not touch the life-principle of his nationality. But criticize his civilization, his country…you will bring out his fanaticism.[27]

While this is probably, on one level, a complex pushback to an immediate and unspecified irritant, what is less often noticed but also deserves to be pointed out, is that this passage comes as an illustration of Iqbal's larger social thought.

Thus, having outlined what is taken for granted in Iqbal's "social moral anthropology", we now turn to describe the normative dimensions of Iqbal's social vision of *khudī*.

II- Normative Dimensions

Before getting into the details of Iqbal's normative social vision, it is necessary to highlight what might be called the larger ethos of this vision, with assistance from an apt image provided by Iqbal. This image comes in the aforementioned Persian poetic work, the *Rumūz-i Bēkhudī* ("Mysteries of Self-less-ness), which is generally (and in my view, correctly) seen by scholars as a "sequel" or "companion" to the *Asrār-i Khudī*, although it certainly also stands on its own. Scholars recognize that, while there is a range of subjects covered across both works, the former is centrally focused on individual/ personal normativity, and the latter, on collective moral and religious life.[28]

Alongside the power of society over individuals, Iqbal also imagines society to be "like a newborn baby" (*mi<u>th</u>l-i ṭiflak-i nawzādeh*).[29] This is one of Iqbal's favorite images for the societal creature. In another place, he describes the love of a mother for her baby, as the

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[26] Ibid., 121.

[27] Ibid., 123.

[28] Cf. I.S. Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, in toto but esp. pp. 28-29; Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), pp. 42-44; 234; Mustansar Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 14-15; 29; 63.

[29] This section of the *Rumūz-i Bēkhudī* is elaborately titled: "That the excellence of a community is as follows: that like an individual, it develops a consciousness of *khudī,* and the cultivation and honing of this consciousness is made possible by the disciplines of laws (*ā'īn*)". Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt*,* pp. 187-191.

prophetic affection for a community. [30] It is noteworthy that despite Iqbal's acknowledgement of its capacities, Iqbal sees society as another creature, and not as an arena or platform where individual and natural creatures interact. Thus, the "community-baby" is fragile, impressionable, easily injured, and, it can it cultivate a sense of "self-awareness" *(khud āgāhī*) and even endure for centuries, thereby "relating yesternight and tomorrow,"[31] and establishing chain-like continuity (*tasalsul*) through time. [32] Iqbal recognizes the relative longevity of the societal self. Indeed, "an individual may live for sixty-and-seven years, and then? To a community, a hundred years are but one breath." Simultaneously, Iqbal clarifies that both the individual and communal self are finite; both experience death (*marg*), and both receive commands (*farmān pazīrand*) from God. [33]

The image of a weak yet powerful infant, helps us to access the interplay of two ideas that we have seen before, and which also characterizes Iqbal's social vision, i.e. the finitude of the creature (in this case, the societal creature), and the ceaseless nature of Divine Creativity. As seen in the previous chapter, Iqbal likens the incomparability of the Divine gift of *khudī* and the finite creature, to the incomparability of the eye's pupil with the cosmos. A similar dynamic is visible in his social vision, as we now see.

i) Society and Individual: Mirrored Moral Formations

For Iqbal, the societal self is a creature alongside the individual human self, and it has its own trajectory of moral formation. Both kinds of creatures are intimately interdependent (as we will see below), but they cannot be reduced to each other.[34] This is enabled by Iqbal's views that society is an expression of Divine Creativity in its own right, and that the "communal self" cannot be reduced to its constituent individuals. Hence, in the opening section of the *Rumūz,* Iqbal uses the word "mirror", saying that "the individual and society are mirrors of each other" (*fard-o-qawm, āʾīneh-yi yak dīgar and*).[35] What he means by this becomes clearer throughout the

[30] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 191-194.

[31] (*rabṭ-i dūsh va fardā*; an oft-repeated refrain in this section)

[32] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt*,* pp. 187-188.

[33] Ibid., pp. 154-155.

[34] My emphasis on the parallelism of society and individual as creatures, adds nuance to readings that Iqbal's vision of *khudī* was "located firmly within the ambit of the social body". Cf. Sevea (2012), pp. 139-140. Rather, the tri-creatureliness of Iqbal's vision of *khudī* is one of its irreducible features. Society is not seen primarily as a context but as a fellow, finite creature, however overwhelming it may be.

[35] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 116. Some scholars might be skeptical whether my word "society" is a good translation for "*qawm*", which can often mean "nation" in Urdu and Persian. It is, in this case. We have evidence that these kinds of questions, (i.e. what is meant by words for different kinds of groups e.g. *qawm, millat, jamāʿat*) were being asked of Iqbal in his own time. One might consult his rejoinder to Maulana Husain Ahmad's complaint that Iqbal has not used the word *millat* correctly in a particular verse, when he should have used the word *qawm* instead. Iqbal replies that these questions are "immaterial" and a form of "philological quibbling", and then turns to questions of the implications of his own views for what he terms, more broadly, "human society". Cf. Muhammad Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings of Iqbal,* edited and compiled by Latif Ahmad Sherwani (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2015), pp. 300-313. It is also worth noting that in the poetic passage quoted above, and across the broader text of the *Rumūz*, some terms are used interchangeably to refer to a social collective. In just the short span of four pages (pp. 115-119), the terms *jamāʿat, qawm, millat,* and *anjuman,* which might otherwise connote widely different kinds of social units to readers, are all used interchangeably. This might seem too broad-stroked to

broader text, where he continuously exhorts that the individual and society should both become "disciplined" *(bā-ḍabt)* and "captives of the circle of the law (*asīr-i- ḥalqa-yi āʾīn*)", who hold each other to account for their works (*iḥtisāb-i kār*).[36] Throughout the *Rumūz,* Iqbal uses the same word, *āʾīn/* law, to describe the object of collective submission, as he had used to describe the object of personal obedience, in the *Asrār*. The depth of this overlap then becomes apparent, as the structure of Iqbal's words on collective moral formation, appears before us.[37]

An early section in the *Rumūz* is devoted to explaining that "the maturation of communal character" (*pukhtagī-yi sīrat-i millīyah*) is by "following the Divine law" (*itbāʿ-i āʾīn-i ilāhī*)", which mirrors the exhortation to the individual, from the earlier *Asrār*, that obedience to the Divine law is the first and unavoidable step of moral formation.[38] This section includes multiple emphases on both the primacy and necessity of communal submission to Divine law.[39] Thus, Iqbal now exhorts the societal creature, not to "search for any other meaning (*maʿnī-yi dīgar*) in the law/*āʾīn*". It is from God for you, societal self: "it is a jewel (*gohar*) for you, of which the jeweller (*gohar-gar*) is God Himself".[40]

After this, Iqbal moves to explain that this communal "following" of the Divine law engenders a capacity for the community to have will/control (*ikhtiyār)*, and also a communal purpose (*maqṣad*),[41] which is grounded in a particular rational conception of the world.[42] Here, he explains how the human capacity for rational reflection (using the words *fikr/ʿaql*, interchangeably), can help the community to decide on a communal goal and start working towards it, similar to his view on the intermediateness of purposive rationality for proper individual moral formation. This rational purpose-forming can happen in a morally unformed community, i.e. not following the revealed Divine laws, or in a maturing community, i.e. which submits to Divine laws, but only the latter is presented as desirable. This mirrors his description of the second stage of individual moral formation as the exercise of purposive rationality.[43]

Then, on the heels of this section on a collective goal/ *maqṣad*, Iqbal describes how "the expansion of communal life is by subjugating the forces of the order of the world" (*tosīʿ-i-ḥayāt-i millīyah, az taskhīr-i-quwā-yi-niẓām-i ʿālam ast*). It is not difficult to see how this mature stage of development of "communal life", mirrors Iqbal's description of the commanding prophetic individual. Thus, the societal creature in this stage is repeatedly described using the

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a reader with a certain sensibility, but in Iqbal's own words to the Maulāna: "I…leave these questions aside" (*Speeches, Statements and Writings,* p. 302). For a more historically embedded account of the debate between Iqbal and the Maulana, Cf. Sevea (2012), pp. 151-160. Sevea reads this debate as a debate about the creation of a new state like Pakistan.

[36] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 117.

[37] Although, I am not suggesting a "one-to-one correspondence" such that every section of the first work, necessarily has a counterpart in the later work. Rather, the point is that there are clear conceptual resonances.

[38] Ibid., 164; pp. 168-172.

[39] Ibid., 179, where he says very vividly about the God-given law/ *āʾīn*, that "If you become neglectful for even the span of one breath/ You will be a hundred miles away from any goal".

[40] Ibid., pp. 164-167.

[41] Ibid., pp. 177-182. This word, and the idea of a collective goal, is repeated continuously through this passage.

[42] Ibid., 179.

[43] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 143.

word "*moḥkam*"/ "strongly established", and as transformative of its natural and social milieu, in accordance with Divine commands.[44]

There are clear resonances between Iqbal's view of individual and collective moral formation: a primacy of obedience to the Divine law; an intermediary function of rationality in forming purposes and goals; an idealization of world-commanding authority (if it has begun from submission to Divine law) as the highest stage of worldly moral formation. In addition to this "mirroring", there is also an unavoidable dependence *of* the societal creature, upon that individual creature who is a prophet/ Divine representative.

ii) The Societal Self Depends on the Prophetic Individual[45]

For Iqbal, the finite societal creature, in addition to needing individuals simply to exist, absolutely needs the prophet, i.e. the representative of God, in order to begin its moral formation. Without those Divinely given laws which are conveyed by the prophets alone, the moral formation of any societal self cannot even commence. Thus, the proper relationship between one creature (society) and another (the prophetic individual), is a necessary aspect of Iqbal's view of moral formation.

This depth of prophet-dependence is symbolized by a variety of poetic images; if a society were without a prophet, it would be "a bunch of disordered words" (*ḥarf-i bī-ṣūrat*), but the prophet "composes us into a hemistich (*miṣra ʿ*)".[46] Likewise, God created (*āfrīd*) the body/figure (*paykar*) of society, and the prophet is like the life (*jān*) being breathed into that societal creature.[47] This primacy of the prophet is then stated even more directly:

> From prophethood, is our beginning/genesis (*takvīn*) in the world (*jahān*);
> From prophethood is our law (*āʾīn*), our religion (*dīn*).[48]

In addition, the continuing maturation of any societal unit, after its prophetic guide has departed from this world, depends on how well it *keeps adhering* to the laws that were conveyed by that prophetic individual. Hence, in a poetic passage which is aptly titled "In times of decadence, strict conformity is better than speculation",[49] Iqbal explains that the societal self must adhere to the prophetically conveyed laws, if it is to have constancy (*thabāt*) and discipline (*ḍabt*).[50] Iqbal praises those "Israelities" of "the community of Moses and Aaron", who have, in his view, kept

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[44] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 182-186.
[45] I mean "the individual who is a prophet", not a disembodied quality of prophecy. Cf. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 100.
[46] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 133.
[47] Ibid., pp. 133-134.
[48] Ibid., 134. The word I have translated for brevity as "religion", i.e. *dīn,* is notoriously difficult to translate. It can also mean "judgment/retribution', e.g. as in "The Day of Judgment", and "custom/way", often also being translated as "way of life". It can often mean religious practice, i.e. the practice of ethico-religious law. See L. Gardet, "Dīn", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 26 March 2020 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0168>
[49] Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 161-163.
[50] Ibid., 161.

strict adherence to their prophetically revealed laws/ *āʾīn*, and in doing so, "retained a hardness of life (*sakhtī-yi jān*)" even through "the hot and cold of days" (*garm-o-sard-i rūzgār*). The positive valence of this perceived "un-melting hardness" is made clear, as he then asks his fellow Muslims to *learn* from those who have remained loyal to their Divinely revealed laws, who have "kept alive the memory of Moses and Aaron" and have, even under the harshest of conditions, maintained "unity of appearance/visage" (*yak-sīmāʾī*).[51]

A related precondition for the continuing maturation of the societal unit, is that political authority, and political leadership, continue to be based upon prophetic authority. [52] Hence, for example, in an Urdū poem titled "Irreligious Politics" (*lā-dīn siyāsat*), Iqbal focuses specifically on the "abandonment of churches" (*tark-i kalīsā*), and more broadly, of a prophetically revealed religion/ *dīn,*[53] by the *firangīyān* ("foreigners"/ "white people", often used in the sense of "European colonizers"), which "in my view" has made their politics into "an unchained demon" (*dīv-i bē-zanjīr*).[54]

Similarly, in his Persian poetry, perhaps his sharpest articulation of this point is the juxtaposition of communities based upon "the wisdom of Moses" (*ḥikmat-i Mūsā*) vs. "the wisdom of Pharoah"; the former being submitted to an authority which "puts forth the commands of God" and the latter, despite its many forms of "skill" (*fan*), being "like a corpse, unaware that it is dead."[55] Likewise, in an English essay which gives a very broad overview of sources of political authority in Islamic history, Iqbal positively appreciates virtually all of them, despite his view of their other shortcomings, as attempts to relate themselves to the prophetic authority of Muḥammad, in different ways.[56] Iqbal's emphasis here, is not that the prophetic authority is "personal authority" per se, or warranted insofar as a prophet is like any other individual, but

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[51] Ibid., 162. This is presumably a reference to that certain level of physical uniformity that comes with a community collectively following religio-legal injunctions. It is not specified what those precise aspects of the "unity" of "Israelities" are, which Iqbal finds admirable. Nor are the travails of the modern followers of Moses specified, even as they are sympathized with, and their resilience admired, e.g. it is said that they have endured and "persisted, through hundreds of gravestones", and even when "the claws of the heavens were pressing upon them".

[52] I say "based upon" because Iqbal gives many different examples of this, both within and across prophetic communities.

[53] Cf. footnote 50.

[54] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 664-665.

[55] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 878-883. This juxtaposition is at the beginning of his Persian work, "Hence what must be done, oh nations of the East?"

[56] Iqbal, "Political Thought in Islam", *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 138-154. These range from: views of "divinely ordained succession" to Muḥammad, which he groups as "Shiah views", to myriad understandings of what represents "the Muslim community", or, "the will of the people"; ranging from "elective monarchy", in which the Caliph is chosen by a set of criteria both ethico-legal and lineal, to a purely a-lineal "sovereignty of the people", who elect "a determinate personality in which the collective will is…individualized". It is noteworthy that, even in the case of these more "elective" varieties (which he groups under "Sunni views"), Iqbal sees them as based in Muḥammad's own precedents and words. For example, he presents "the idea of universal agreement" as decisive of political authority, to be generated by a *hadīth* of Muḥammad. The point is that there is no getting around the question of a collective relationship to a prophetic individual, in deciding legitimate political authority, for Iqbal. For a similar reading of Iqbal as mine (on this point), which also sees him as discontent with early Islamic political theory for being too "hereditary", Cf. Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker,* pp. 119-120.

particularly in being a Divine representative who brings "a law which is revealed" by God Himself, for a particular community.[57]

Moreover, Iqbal is confident that God has provided prophetic guidance to every societal unit; in fact, he names the "cultures" of "Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Chaldean and Sabean religions" as "creed-communities" to whom "the idea of the continuity of prophethood was essential", because they kept deviating from the Divine laws and kept being sent prophets, and thus "lived in a state of constant expectation" (of a new prophet to repair them).[58] This collective "psychology" of "constant expectation", which Iqbal believes was both "rational" and "enjoyable" in a pre-finality milieu, changed with the arrival of the Prophet Muḥammad on the historical landscape,[59] as we will see below. The point here is that every community has received prophetic guidance, in Iqbal's view, and some, even repeatedly.

Related to his trust in God doing His job full well (or more specifically, being Creative in a way that never divorces what is created from His Creative directive) Iqbal has a negative vision of any society which does not respond properly to God's laws, thereby neglecting its dependence on the prophetic individual/Divine representative, which is an aspect of its dependence on God. In such cases, "the hemistich" of society is described as degenerating in two broad ways.

In the first mode of failed prophet-responsivity, the societal self is aware of its own finitude, but does not actively embrace the law-giving role of prophethood (*nubūwwat*). Such a societal self is described as lazy; [60] in fact, "its life flees from hard exertion" (*jān-i ū, az sakht kūshī, ram zanad*). Because it does not obediently embrace that God, the Creator, alone can be the source of its growth, all of its efforts at bettering itself are ultimately wasted. Such a societal self [61] can have a particular ideal conception of the world, which is generated by rational reflection (*fikr/ ʿaql*), but this understanding will be "guesses" (*gumānhā*) and, in the absence of obedience to Divine law (*āʾīn*), as real as "fairies (*parīhā*)." Despite any material and intellectual efforts-expended, such a society will eventually again become "lazy and lifeless" (*sust-o-bījān).*[62] Even in terms of material advances, it might imagine itself as making great strides in material technologies, but in Iqbal's estimation it has "not" yet "begun to pluck from nature's skirt". Its existence (*hastī*) is thus summed up as a "constricted field" (*tang maydān*), reiterating Iqbal's

[57] Ibid., 142.
[58]Ibid., p. 198.
[59] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 198-199.
[60] Ibid., pp. 119-121. The title of this section is, quite aptly: "That the society comes into being as a collection of individuals, but its education, cultivation and excellence is by way of prophethood". The descriptions above are of what a society behaves like, when it loses sight of its prophet.
[61] In the *Rumuz-i-Bēkhudī,* this societal self is described in more ideal-typical terms. Reading his Urdu poetry on "Europe", one finds a similar description of European society as striving, but ultimately directionless. E.g. see his straightforwardly titled poem, "Europe" (Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 497), which describes European nations as "ready to fall on their own, like overripe fruits". Similarly, a poem titled "Freedom of Thought" (*āzadī-yi afkār*) describes European nations as "poor, thrashing little birds (*murghak*), who are falling" because "in a society where individuals are free of all constraints/fetters (*band*)/ keenness of thought is dangerous" (Ibid., 498). For Iqbal, obedience to Divine law is the unavoidable first step of moral formation, whether individual or societal self.
[62] The images Iqbal uses here are: stunted like an "unopened bud" (*nā-kushūdeh ghuncheh)*, and like "greenery unventilated" (*nā-damīdeh sabzeh*).

description of the stunting that attends to a fearful person's inability to embrace Divine Creativity as the source of one's continued formation. Although Iqbal does not explicitly say so, we see a resonance here with the "personal exertion" element of love, which was described in the previous chapter.

Second, there is an erroneous mode in which the societal creature refuses to acknowledge the finitude of all creatures.[63] I say "creatures" because in Iqbal's view, this erroneous societal self can fashion as "idol" (*but*), any of the following: a social group, an individual person, and/or nature/elements of nature (all of these being, in Iqbal's view, three prominent expressions of Divine Creativity). In various places, Iqbal sharply criticizes these idolatries, which he considers to be rampant throughout the history of human societies.[64] It is also noteworthy that we use the word "idol", because Iqbal tends to use the word *but* (idol), and verbs like *but-sāzī* ("idol-making") rather than explicitly accusing a particular society of the gravest Islamic sin, i.e. associating partners with God/ *shirk.* In fact, I have searched for and not found a direct accusation from Iqbal of the kind that "X society/person is committing God-association/ *shirk."* In general, when describing the inability of a particular societal self to see creaturely finitude, he tends to use slightly more forgiving "making" verbs attached to the word "idol"/ "*but".* [65]

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[63] There is some indication that there can be an overlap between these two modes, i.e. between a society which is aware of its own finitude but neglectful of the prophetic laws, and one which is ignoring creaturely finitude altogether. See Iqbal's short Urdū poem titled "Power and Religion" (*quwwat aur dīn*) in the Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 541. Here, he describes those people commanded by Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan, as kind of negatively ideal-typical societies. *Both* societies are described as lazy and lackluster with respect to religious laws, but also, as intoxicated with their powerful idols. Thus, these are not two mutually exclusive threads, although the shift from one to the second is not explicated.

[64] This does not mean that individuals are immune to idol-making. It is understandable that, as a self-perceived socially rousing voice, Iqbal would be more concerned with collective forms of idolatry which would be more historically long-lasting. However, Iqbal does not let individuals off the hook, so to speak, even as idolatry does appear a more frequent concern in his words on the collective self. Yet, no individual who lets himself be treated as a servant to an idol, is morally absolved. In fact, Iqbal wrote a rather heated poem to poor Punjabi farmers, chiding them for being "sleepy", and not challenging the "idols of old tribes and associations" which continued to exploit them (Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 482.). A mirror image of this poem are Iqbal's severe words to the Punjabi Muslim landowner, who, in his view, pretends to be an "inheritor" of Islam, but is simply groveling, ineffectual, and "intoxicated with docile servitude to government" (Ibid., p. 489).

[65] In two instances, Iqbal presents *shirk* as something "hidden" (*pinhān*) and "concealed" (*muḍmar*) in fear, but does not name any particular society or individual as committing this sin (see Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 129; 132). Likewise, in an essay in his compiled *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* he makes a passing reference to the fact that there can be both "subtle and coarse forms of idolatry", but does not name examples for these placeholders (p. 122). This reluctance to accuse concrete individuals or societies of *shirk* is understandable, since, from an Islamic theological perspective, *shirk* is the gravest sin of which any creature can be accused. For one overview of the enormity and non-pardonability of *shirk* from a Qur'ānic perspective (and the general theological consensus in the tradition) see Einar Thomassen, "Islamic Hell." *Numen* 56, no. 2/3 (2009): 401-16, esp. p. 410-11.
One might also reasonably speculate that, given Iqbal's self-assessment as an ordinary devotee prone to lapses (see my Ch.2), he would recognize that it would be unwise for him to go around accusing others of the greatest sin imaginable. We find an indication of this reluctance to make maximal theological accusations, in the poem *Zuhd Aur Rindī (*Ch.2) where his co-religionist is irritated with Iqbal for refusing to overtly call a Hindu, a "*kāfir*" (ingrate/unbeliever). Iqbal does not indulge this particular irritation, even as he admits his myriad flaws before his scolding coreligionist. Even more germane here, is a short, humorous poem in which a sermon is being delivered by a rather harsh *shaykh* ("elder"/ "wise religious man"). This "learned" man labels *mushrik* (one who commits

Thus, sometimes a society makes into an idol, itself, e.g. the ancient consolidation of the tribe (*qabīla*)[66] or the modern nation (*watan*).[67] Then, there are those cases in which human individuals are worshipped as idols by a society.[68] Finally, nature/ parts of nature, e.g. "rivers", or genetic variables e.g. "color and blood" (*butān-i rang-o-khūn*),[69] are seen as idols. The visible manifestation of such idol-making, for Iqbal, is that the creaturely finitude of that which is worshipped is covered up. There are no constraints or discipline, which might re-form the idol (the kind of constraints that prophetically revealed law provides). For example, when an individual is envisioned as beyond-finitude by a society, the sign of this for Iqbal, is that such individuals are freely allowed to rape, steal from, and enslave other human beings, these activities all being possible because of the absence of disciplining by the prophetic laws revealed to that social unit.[70] Likewise, echoing his description of love as Adamic and "assimilative", now in the case of social groups, Iqbal writes that while people have a natural attachment to their geographical place of birth, this can be "so much exaggerated" into "territorial nationalism", that any exchanges, "economic", "artistic", or "cultural", with other human groups, is prima facie seen as "peculiar", and such a group, insulated from any reformative relation with others, "bears within itself the germs of its own destruction".[71]

The above are, broadly speaking, the Iqbalian contours of the ways in which the societal creature degenerates, without embracing the Divine representative and the revealed law. However, if the finite societal self is so deeply dependent on the individual, both non-prophetic (for its very existence) and prophetic (for its moral formation), then complementarily, the individual, too, depends on society.

iii) The Individual's Dependence on Society

Here, we describe how Iqbal envisions the complementary dependence of the individual person upon their fellow, societal, creature. Iqbal considers the "individual in the

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shirk) the entire class of non-believing commercial elites in India (*tājir-i-kuffār-i hind*), and scolds his stupid community for being unable to see this. One man from the audience complains to the *shaykh* that his pronouncement is too harsh, because if taken seriously, it would imply an embargo on all food and drink. Iqbal's short, pithy reply, which ends the poem, is a jibe at both parties: "*You* should have no trouble!/ In this land, creed-professing people sell alcohol!*" (See Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 319-320). It is hinted that the complainant is, perhaps, being too lax with respect to the religious law. The harsh elder is also chided, albeit playfully, for not first paying attention to the shortcomings of his fellow "creed-professors" (*kalima-gū*).

*[notably, the formal/ plural "you" is used, i.e. *āp*]

[66] See Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyat, p. 482.

[67] See, for example, his Urdū poem, "Nationalism; meaning "nation" as a political concept" (*watanīyyat, yaʿnī watan ba-ḥaithīyat aik siyāsī tassavur ke*), in which he declares "the nation, the biggest of the fresh idols". Urdu Kullīyāt, p. 187.

[68] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 137. He names "Caesar and Chosroes" as such "worshipped highway robbers", and laments: "The human becomes, in this world, human-worshipping (*insān-parast*)/ Thus, a nobody (*nākas*), full of not-ness, (*nā-būd-mand*), crushed (*zīr-i dast;* literally, "under the hand")."

[69] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 300.

[70] Iqbal, Farsī Kullīyāt, pp. 137-138. He describes these crimes in heart-wrenching poetry. Preponderance of rape/ rapacity (*ghārat*), slavery (*ghulāmī*), and economic extraction from the poor, are described as the signs of a societal self having made an idol.

[71] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* p. 122.

gathering/congregation" (*fard dar jamāʿat*) to be an ineluctable aspect of the individual self in this world. Hence, "we observe the individual", and "we pluck him out, like a flower from a garden" (*az chaman, ū rā chū gul chīnīm, mā*), but "individuals become strung together in a relationship/chain, like gems [on a string]" (*softeh dar yak rishteh chūn gohar*), and "they become accustomed/habituated (*khūgar*) to each other".[72] Therefore, even as Iqbal clearly believes that the individual as an expression of Divine Creativity is irreducible to either nature or society, even so, in Iqbal's thought, the moral formation of an individual in this world, occurs with respect to society.

For Iqbal, the responses of the individual self to the societal self, constitute an important aspect of the individual's responsivity to Divine Creativity. An ideal or well-functioning societal self is an indispensable aid to the individual, in terms of keeping him on his trajectory of moral formation. However, conscious not to make a failure-proof idol out of society, Iqbal admits that even the best societal self is finite, and "in secret, idols (*but*) are made in the hearts" and "minds".[73] Conversely, a non-ideal societal self is a powerful, but not insurmountable, obstruction to the individual's moral formation.

Taking the ideal case first; a societal self that has responded properly to their prophet and the Divine law, will assist the individual by providing them "accountability of works" (*iḥtisāb-i kār*) and "dignity/respect" (*iḥtirām*) for all, and thus, keeping both individual and society "captive within the circle of the law" (*asīr-i ḥalqa-yi āʾīn*).[74] This is Iqbal's more general articulation in the *Rumūz*; the ideal is of the individual and societal self, working symbiotically to keep each other obedient to Divine law. In his prose writings, he takes as example of this dynamic, cases where some unnamed early Caliphs of Islam appeared before courts to be held accountable for accusations of stealing.[75] Furthermore, although this example is not presented as society keeping the individual in check, Iqbal, in one instance, admires the story of the Prophet Muḥammad receiving direct "Divine rebuke" which was recorded in the Qurʾān, after the Prophet frowned at a questioning man.[76] Iqbal's poetic statement is more general, but in his prose, we find allusions to powerful individuals being kept obedient to God, within what he envisions as a well-functioning group.

By sharp contrast, the societal self can also be an obstruction in the way of the individual's moral formation. Perhaps Iqbal's favorite example here, is the Indian Muslim youth who are, in his view, being "seduced" to grossly underestimate "the Divine law" as an "outer husk" that can be bypassed on the way to moral betterment, by groups like the British colonizers.[77] However, in Iqbal's view, the capacity of a society to impact the individual is both powerful and limited. Exceptional individuals can resist the obstructions of society, even under severe torture. We see this in Iqbal's words on Muḥammad's companion, Bilāl, an oft-brutalized slave, who refused to

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[72] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 119.
[73] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 302. See also his poetic statement that the mind (*dimāgh*) can be an idolhouse (*but-khānā*), p. 322.
[74] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 116-117.
[75] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* p. 114; pp. 144-145.
[76] Ibid., 166. This refers to ṣurāh 80 of the Qur'ān, which is titled "He frowned" (*ʿAbasa*).
[77] Ibid., pp. 154-156.

stop obeying God and the Prophet under conditions in which he was presumed to be *"ḥaqīr*" (base/contemptible) due to his blackness, as per the mores of that tribal society, and pressured (unsuccessfully) not to obey Muḥammad. In this case, responding properly and obediently to God, was not performed in terms of bringing oneself "in subjection" to society, but resisting this subjection on pain of death.[78]

Notwithstanding the particularities of each example, what is illustrated by these individual responses to society is that, in Iqbal's view, the individual's responsivity to Divine Creativity happens not simply in their privacy, but also, insofar as they are relating to a social collective. In addition, since Divine Creativity is also being expressed through society, the individual's response to society can never be "neutral" in the sense of having no theological import. The ways in which an individual responds to the societal self, always constitutes a significant part of their responsivity towards God.[79]

In this vein, when he is writing about the individual-in-society, Iqbal sometimes uses a word, *bī-khudī,* or *bēkhudī,* which literally translates to "self-less-ness".[80] Hearing this word, one might expect a conceptual symmetry between it and "*khudī".*[81] The fact is that in Iqbal, *bēkhudī* is not a conceptual counterweight to *khudī. Bēkhudī* has a non-negligible role to play within Iqbal's broader vision of *khudī,* which is explained in the next paragraph. My asymmetrical reading of this term is neither radical nor new; it concurs with the readings of careful readers like Annemarie Schimmel and I.S. Sevea, who rightly locate this term as a description of a particular dynamic between the individual person and society.[82]

Within his vision of *khudī* on the societal level, Iqbal sees the individual person as dependent on, and responding to, the communal self which is also a creature. In these moments, Iqbal uses the word, *bēkhudī,* to describe a formative experience of individuals within an ideal society. This experience is most succinctly described as the "disciplining/controlling" (*ḍabt*), or, the

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[78] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 106-107; 271. These two beautiful poems, both titled "Bilāl", illustrate this amply.

[79] Iqbal maintains this view even for prophetic individuals. Consider the following words from Iqbal about Muḥammad's actions after his conquest of Mecca: "It was a very easy course for Muhammad to tell Abu Lahab, Abu Jahl, or the Unbelievers of Mecca that they could stick to their idol-worship while he himself would hold fast to the worship of God, and that they could together form an Arabian unity by virtue of the factors of race and land common to them both…[but]…The ultimate purpose of the prophetic mission of Muhammad (may peace be upon him) is to create a form of society, the constitution of which follows that divine law which the Prophet Muhammad received from God." *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 310-311.

[80] Explicit usages of this term in Iqbal are rare. Somewhat ironically, in the work which is *titled* "Mysteries of Selflessness (*bēkhudī*)", term *bēkhudī* itself appears only three or four times, whereas *khudī* is on virtually every other page, if not every page. I have combed through every instance I could find, and see it occurring in contexts where Iqbal is describing the individual's dependence on an ideal society.

[81] This anticipation might be heightened by the fact that Iqbal had published two huge poetic works on which we have been relying; one titled *Secrets of Selfness (Asrār-i Khudī),* and its sequel, *Mysteries of Selflessness (Rumūz-i bēkhudī).*

[82] Sevea defines "Iqbal's usage" of the term *bēkhudī* as "bringing the individual ego in line with the social ego" (p xii; 14, 29). Schimmel sees this term, and in fact "the entire *mathnawī Rumūz-i Bēkhudī* as deeply impressed with this idea" of "unity of… [individual] members of a community". Cf. *Gabriel's Wing* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), p. 196. Both scholars place this term within Iqbal's view of the individual's relationship to society.

"fettering" (*bandish*)[83] of an individual within and by society, *to the law* (*āʾīn*), in order that, that Divine *khudī* which is being given to the societal self, can become more "known" (*shanākhteh*) or "manifest" (*padīdār*).[84] Knowing Iqbal's description of society as "more than the sum of individuals", we might say, *bēkhudī* is the experience of the individual, when the capacity of the societal self to bring individuals "into subjection", works as it should, i.e. in obedience to God.[85]

Hence, unlike the aforementioned modes of societal waywardness and idolatry, in a society in which the individual experiences *bēkhudī,* both the individual and society recognize that Divine gift of "*khudī* is one, and brooks no two-ness" (*khudī vāhid ast, va bar namī tābad dūyī*).[86] Thus, the impetus behind "disciplining/fettering" the individual is not to make him idolize the societal creature, but to obey that Divine law which society itself obeys. Insofar as specifically the "accountability"/ *iḥtisāb* of the individual by the society is concerned, Iqbal's words are in a Mahmoodian vein; this accountability is of "works"/ *kār*, and there appears to be a limited locus for the disciplinary capacity of the societal self, which is the bounds of action. [87]

However, the whole relationship of the *bēkhudī*-experiencing individual to society, is not limited to a publicly visible accountability. There is also a significant "interior" dimension to this "disciplining". For example, in the same *Rumūz,* Iqbal presents as didactic lesson to his reader, a self-deprecating story of his father scolding the adolescent Iqbal, who injures an unprovoked beggar. Interestingly, this tale is presented not simply as an inculcation of manners in the child. Rather, before reforming the boy, the father agonizes over what the prophet Muḥammad will say, about such a poor addition to the Muslim community. After imagining the prophet's pricking remarks, e.g. "God gave you a child, and you did not discipline him/ Was the labor too hard for you?" the father then decides he must do the difficult work of setting his son straight. Iqbal presents this episode as a positive ideal of parental discipline, which involved the parent's anxiety about the way they were responding to God and the prophet.[88]

More generally as well in the *Rumūz*, Iqbal clarifies that both the person's "hidden" (*pinhānash*) and "his apparent/manifest" (*ẓāhirash*) are "by the society" (*zi qawm*).[89] The "by" (*az*) here refers, as is made clear in the rest of the passage, to the individual's growth or "ripening"

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[83] The specificity of these terms is important. In Iqbal's usage, *bēkhudī* does not connote a kind of effacement or erasure of the individual self, which is an idea quite antithetical to his views on the individual as an expression of Divine Creativity. The idea of "effacement or annihilation" of the individual is "completely unacceptable to Iqbal", and, see Schimmel's lovely historical overview of "classical" usages of term *bēkhudī,* especially within Sūfī discourse, which *can* tend towards a vision of self-effacement and not just self-discipline (Cf. Schimmel*, Gabriel's Wing,* pp. 363-369).

[84] Iqbal's most frequent and explicit explanations of *bēkhudī* occur in the first section of *Rumūz-i Bēkhudī,* where he conveys these ideas, and uses this exact language. See Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 115-118.

[85] Notably, Iqbal does *not* use this term when he is describing the strayed types of societies, which we have discussed above.

[86] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 117.

[87] He also clarifies this in his prose; for example: "A Muslim is free to do anything he likes, as long as he does not violate the law." (*Speeches, Statements and Writings,* p. 142).

[88] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 168-172.

[89] Ibid., p. 116.

(*pukhteh shudan*) via society.[90] Alone, the individual's "power is susceptible to dispersion" (*quwwatash, āshuftagī rā mā'il ast*); society not only makes him more "disciplined" (*bā-ḍabt*) but also, receptive and "soft-natured like the morning breeze" (*narm-raw mithl-i ṣabā*) towards these Divine commands. It does so by conferring upon him a "dignity" (*iḥtirām*) such that, he feels personally invested in the continuation and maturation of that particular society. Thus, he feels "rich"/ "substantive" (*māyeh-dār*) as a "meeting of the future and past" (*vaṣl-i istiqbāl va māzī*) of that community, and embraces its "character" (*sīrat*) and "language" (*zabān*).[91] Affectively, this relationship is both painful[92] and enjoyable[93] for the individual, but it is one he participates in, in responding to the Divine Creativity, now, not only as individual qua individual, but as an individual-in-society.

Above, we have described those essential dimensions of Iqbal's social vision, which are relevant to all human groups, including Muslims. In addition, Iqbal's social vision contains a core historical periodization, which revolves around his conception of the prophethood of Muḥammad. As we shall see below, for Iqbal, it is not just this prophethood which is significant, but its finality.

III. Post-Finality Society

As we have seen so far, Iqbal's vision of *khudī* sees human society as another kind of creaturely self. We have also seen that Iqbal considers history to be an expression of Divine Creativity. These two points are important to understand Iqbal's views on human society since Muḥammad, which we briefly call his "post-finality" vision. We can summarize this side of Iqbal's social vision by saying that it has both continuities and discontinuities with pre-finality society, and we turn to the former first.

i) Continuities with Pre-Finality Society

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Iqbal says, in this regard: "His pain [i.e. the individual's] is the taste of growing, by/through society" (Fārsī Kullīyāt, p.116). Also see, his more stylized Persian quatrain, where:

"A clay bud (*ghuncheh-yi rust*)* within a flowerbed
Was imparting tears in its dreams (literally, "selling" (a form of the verb *furūkhtan*) tears in its dreams).
Khudī becomes manifest (*padīdār*) by (*az*) *bēkhudī;*
The world (*jahān*) discovers that which it has been diligently seeking" (Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 270).

* On "*ghuncheh-yi rust",* i.e. the formulation I have translated as "clay bud"; the word *rust* is a difficult one. It is often taken to mean "argil", or "potter's clay". In that case, it would lead one to think of the human individual, i.e. the Adamic being that has been fashioned from clay. However, this "one bud of clay", which is crying, and has dreams/aspirations, is also placed within a flowerbed, within the imagery of the verse. Hence, "bud of clay" or "clay bud".

[93] Ibid., p. 116. Iqbal says that the individual who undergoes *bēkhudī* within such a society, is like a word properly placed within a poetic verse. When "the word [i.e. the individual] goes out of its house/verse (*bayt*)", i.e. its society, "the jewel of its self-meaning (*gohar-i maḍmūn-i khud*), slips out of its pocket, and breaks". In addition, Iqbal uses the words "joy" (*khushī*) and "taste" (*dhawq*), when describing the individual's experience of "fitting into his verse", throughout this passage.

Building upon his view that societies are creaturely selves, Iqbal sees similarities, and even deeper forms of continuity, between the varieties of societal creatures that were historically before Muhammad's prophethood, and those that came during and after it.

For Iqbal, Muḥammad's prophethood is nothing novel insofar as it brings a Divine representative to a community and reforms a wayward societal creature. It is "the last in a line of prophets", and like every other Divine representative, e.g. Abraham, Moses, and Jesus who guide a particular, strayed community.[94] Like other communities forged by Divine representatives, this community also "looked askance" at the idolatrous impulses of societal creatures, and in this sense it is also "synthetic" from the perspective of rampant socio-historical consolidations, i.e. it creates a new collective whose consolidation is based not upon geography, economic gain, or lineage, but upon a shared theological vision.[95]

Another way in which the Muslim collective is seen as similar to prior prophetically forged societies, is that it is a finite creature; it does not escape the difference between present reality and future aspirations (if anything, this dissonance is more painful for the Muslim collective, as we see below). Thus, Iqbal writes that the Muslim community as it is, and has been since the time of Muḥammad, is, despite its aspiration to universality, still "confronted" by "the non-Muslims taken collectively".[96] The potential consolidation into one, global, "Muslim communal self" is not yet historically realized, although this process had begun with Muḥammad, specifically with his migration from his ancestral home of Mecca to the city of Medina (i.e. the *hijra*, the beginning of the Islamic calendar) and his "mixing" of two very different groups, to be an event of not only local but universal import.[97] However, for Iqbal, the aspiration to universality for the Muslim collective, is unrealized. Iqbal explains that "ideally", there would be something like a "world-State" which is Muslim,[98] but the determinate political mutations the world will take to achieve this "ideal", are not yet known. He is openly ambiguous about this. It could result via "a league of Muslim states", or, as he says elsewhere, the very notion of a "state" could "assimilate" into something hitherto unimagined, and then be "radically transformed".[99] In other moments, he feels the pain of what he sees as the politically weak and fragmented situation of "Muslim states", asking them to "gather up their resources" till they can acquire more power to advance towards such a "pan-Islamic" unity.[100] In any case, there is no rosy view of the Muslim collective as beyond unrealized aspirations.

In addition to the above similarities, Iqbal has a deeper sense of the way in which the Muslim collective is continuous with what came before, and this is described in the *Rumūz.* Underlying this third continuity, is Iqbal's vision of Divine Creativity as interminable and ongoing, but now

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[94] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 219; 307-309.
[95] Ibid., 218; 236.
[96] Ibid., p. 309.
[97] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, p. 149.
[98] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings*, pp. 238-239.
[99] Ibid., pp. 6-7.
[100] Ibid., 284; *The Reconstruction,* 126.

with respect to social history. More specifically, Iqbal considers the Muslim community to be inherent or dormant in the creation of prior prophetic communities, and inherent in the creation of humanity itself. His words here illustrate what I have called "moral-ontological vision"; one sees that he is more concerned with relating apparently disparate threads, than with specification or systematization.

In this vein, Iqbal writes that the Muslim community is "eternal" (*jāvdān*);[101] it "has no spatial end" (*nihāyat-i makānī*)[102] and "no temporal end" (*nihāyat-i zamānī*), and "the continuation of this noble community is promised" (*dawām-i īn millat-i sharīfah, mawʿūd ast*).[103]
With respect to "no spatial end", this essentially means what has been said above, i.e. the "idols" of geography, race, nation etc. are not the basis of social consolidation, but a shared theological vision which envisions itself as for the whole world.[104] With respect to "no temporal end", Iqbal writes that the Muslim community is "a blade drawn out of the sheath of Abraham's desires", i.e. it is (and was) an ongoing creation, which was inherent in the prior prophetic communities.[105] Even more extensively and pre-historically, "its reality/origin (*aṣl*) is since "they said: yes" (*qālū balā*)".[106] This refers to a verse of the Qurʾān[107] which is often called the "primordial covenant" verse, where God directly asks the gathered-up "children of Adam", "am I not your Lord?" and all reply, "Yes, we testify!" (*balā*).[108] Iqbal writes, in his distinctive poetic reception of this verse, that the "original reality" of the Muslim community is since this affirmative "yes". In Iqbal's view, this "yes" of all humans obviously affirms God's Lordship, but is also a relationship with God, in which the creation of the Muslim collective was inherent. Iqbal thus imagines a responsive promise of God about the Muslim community, and, to them, to make them endure for posterity.[109] Moreover, Iqbal's view of this "promise", relates to his vision of God as "needing" and "desirous". God needs the Muslim community which He is creating and has been creating, because "remembrance is established, by the establishment of the rememberer" (*dhikr, qā'im az qiyām-i dhākir ast*).[110] This community is termed one singular, communal,

[101] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 299. One might also notice Iqbal's "narrative" capacities, here. While one might not consider the concepts "limitation" and "eternal" to be in the same register, Iqbal sees them as related. This seeing of finitude as related to "eternal life", also came to the fore in his distinctive vision of "personal immortality", in Ch. 4.
[102] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 147-150.
[103] Ibid., pp. 153-157.
[104] Ibid., pp. 147-150.
[105] Ibid., 155.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Q. 7: 172-173.
[108] Wadad Qadi has given an excellent overview of this verse and its various readings. Cf. "The Primordial Covenant and Human History in the Qur'ān," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 147, no. 4 (2003): 332-38.
[109] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 156-157.
[110] More literally, *qā'im* means "standing" and *qiyām* means a standing position, necessary within the five-time daily prayer. There is an additional sense that the basic ethico-legal duties, or *farāiḍ,* are necessary for the worship and remembrance of God.

"rememberer".[111] Although Iqbal does not say so explicitly, his view here, of the Muslim community as "out of the sheath of Abraham", and his description of a singular collective "rememberer", implies that he is including all of the prior prophetic communities in this "self", at least insofar as they were the prior manifestations of Divine Creativity.

Furthermore, Iqbal's vision of the Muslim community as an expression of the ongoing Divine Creativity, is also apparent in his words on its painful challenges. This point is illustrated well by an Urdū poem titled "The Rise of Islam" (*ṭulū'-i islām)*.[112] The title alone might convey a glorifying tone, but the ethos of the poem is subtler, often "blood-soaked" (to borrow its own term) and keeps returning to Iqbal's idea of Divine Creativity as "Self-limited". The recurrent theme is of something unimaginable, being made from or under severe constraints, and the "Maker" is God Himself.

As one verse says: "Could anyone guess?"[113] This question, which highlights the unfailing and manifesting nature of God's Creativity, is served by many images, e.g. the classic, sunrise from darkness; "an eagle's heart from a pigeon's frail body";[114] and "pearls from the slaps of the waves".[115] Iqbal exhorts the Muslim reader, his poetic addressee, to have faith (*īmān/ yaqīn*) in the ineradicable and ongoing role of God in the formation of the Muslim community.[116] The word "blood" (*khūn*), and images of "becoming blood" are frequent, alongside exhortations to faith.[117]

Yet, this immersion in suffering is not without meaning; the Muslim community has the potential to intimately embrace the Divine gift of *khudī:* to "drown in *khudī";* to become "the confidante (*rāzdān;* literally: "secret-holder") of *khudī*", and the "translator" or "representative" (*tarjumān*) of this *khudī* to the world.[118] From a "frail pigeon", God can make something which will be "world-conquering love".[119] This is hinted in *The Reconstruction* as well, where Iqbal comments how remarkable it is that the earliest Muslims, in his view "a simple people, untouched by any of the ancient cultures" should be the ones who "define the direction" of history.[120] The larger point

[111] The word I have translated as "remembrance", *dhikr,* often means the repeated, or prayerful, remembrance of God. See Gardet, L., "Dhikr", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 24 April 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0162>

[112] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 297-307. *ṭulū* is also the word for sunrise, and a good encapsulation of the central theme, i.e. something previously unimaginable, being made from what was.

[113] Ibid., 301.

[114] Ibid., 299.

[115] Ibid., 303.

[116] Ibid., pp. 300-301.

[117] Ibid., pp. 298-302.

[118] Ibid., 304.

[119] Ibid., 302.

[120] Ibid. But few have understood how this sentence fits with his broader view on the Muslim community as expressive of Divine Creativity.

is that the suffering and challenges of the Muslim community are envisioned by Iqbal as a way to manifest God's unfailing Creativity, through this new societal self.

Alongside these deep similarities and continuities, Iqbal also envisions some significant discontinuities between human society before and after the prophethood of Muḥammad. More specifically, he envisions "Finality", as he more shortly calls it, as "the most original idea in the cultural history of mankind,"[121] whose "theological significance" has not yet been "appreciated" by humanity, including Muslims.[122]

ii) Discontinuities

If we understand, as explained above, that Iqbal sees social history as an expression of ongoing Divine Creativity, then, we are able to see the significance of those discontinuities that Iqbal envisions between pre/post-finality society. To put it succinctly, for Iqbal, Muḥammad's prophethood represents a maturation and progression of social history, in the following ways.

Most centrally, Muḥammad's prophetic finality represents an epochal progression, because it carries a Divine message to all societal creatures, that

> …life cannot for ever be kept in leading strings; that in order to achieve full self-consciousness, man must finally be thrown back on his own resources.[123]

On Iqbal's view, unlike all pre-finality societies, which had a "constant expectation" that a new prophet would appear at some point, the post-finality human community is Divinely assured of the opposite. [124] However, this Divine "no more" is not seen as a punishment or a termination, but a growth of societal creatures, for the following reasons.

For Iqbal, Muḥammad's prophecy is entirely new in its universality. Its "particular community" is all of humanity, and this has novel repercussions. This new prophetic community has to "reconcile, in its life, the categories of permanence and change", more than those before. Theologically, it must recognize that God's Creativity "reveals itself in variety in change", is never "immobile", and, that the God it worships forevermore, is One. Second, more pragmatically, it recognizes that the Divine law which has been revealed to Muḥammad is the "eternal law" for posterity (since only prophets bring Divine laws). Thus, in order for this community to stay on track in terms of its moral formation, it must keep adhering to "eternal principles to regulate collective life", but "with a foothold in the world of perpetual change".[125]

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[121]Ibid., 198.
[122] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* p. 313. Here he is criticizing a Muslim interlocutor for failing to recognize the theological significance of Finality.
[123] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 101.
[124] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* 198; 209.
[125] Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* 117.

Illustrations of this intensifying relationship between permanence and change, abound in Iqbal's words on the Muslim collective, as well as its interactions with other communities. Coming to the Muslim collective first: on the one hand, when describing the "permanent" or "uniform" aspects of this community, Iqbal gives an example like the ritual of obligatory daily prayer (*ṣalāt*), which is so similar across geographical locations that an Indian Muslim "is at home" in Morocco, despite "disparity in race and language".[126] Similarly, from the standpoint of belief, Iqbal repeatedly states that, precisely, the Oneness of God and the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood are the two "propositions of faith", and "as long as" a Muslim "is loyal" to these two, "not even the strictest *mullah* can turn him outside the pale of Islam", whatever other shortcomings or sins they might display.[127]

On the other hand, when describing the internal variance of this Muslim collective, Iqbal will be stunned by the range of physical appearance, dress, and inheritance and family law, all within the conceivable bounds of Divine law.[128] Likewise, but now on diversity with respect to beliefs, we find Iqbal defending Ismaili Muslims against a perceived charge by "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru" that Ismailis are not really Muslims if we take Iqbal's view of Ahmadis, because if anything, "their [Ismaili] theological interpretations" are more different from Iqbal than the Ahmadis. Iqbal responds that, no matter how Ismailis "err in their theological interpretations", they are not "in the same category as Ahmadis" (i.e. "outside the pale of Islam") because the followers of the Agha Khan *do* profess the aforementioned two beliefs (and then quotes speech of the Agha Khan as evidence).[129] Iqbal's interlocutor appears to have been flabbergasted that this group, in some ways more discontinuous, would be "included", but in Iqbal's judgment, this misunderstanding is a non-Muslim's improper discernment between what is permanent and varying, and inability to see these two as related, in the manner of the Muslim collective.[130]

This dynamic between permanence and change carries over into his words about non-Muslim communities. Iqbal's complex words on *jihād,* which he sees as an activity of violence and "war (*jang*) for God",[131] provide a good window into this point. He has a recurrent concern which he

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[126] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 236-237.
[127] Ibid., 231.
[128] Ibid., pp. 233-234.
[129] Ibid., pp. 239-240.
[130] For the larger back-and-forth of Iqbal's conversations with Nehru, see Riaz Hussain, "Iqbal and Jawaharlal Nehru", *Iqbal Review* vol. 18, no. 4 (1978). The reader might have to take Hussain's "adulatory" attitude to Iqbal with a grain of salt, but he very usefully compiles a larger picture of the dialogue between the two charismatic individuals.
http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/jan78/9.htm
[131] Cf. his Urdu poem, "*Jihād",* Urdu Kullīyāt, pp. 540-541. There is one place in *The Reconstruction* where he recognizes the linguistic continuity between the word *jihād,* and independent legal reasoning or *ijtihād,* but this does not cut against the dominant sense in which he uses this term (p.117). Schimmel, an otherwise admirable and close reader, incorrectly extends Iqbal's anxieties about the moral pre-conditions for *jihād,* into: "As a matter of fact, Iqbal was against any war" (*Gabriel's Wing,* 200). This might be because she is trying to place Iqbal in her history of reception of the word *jihād* vis-à-vis "the mystics", construed in a particular way (pp. 199-201).

thinks should shape the collective exercise of violence by Muslims against non-Muslims, which is the obedience of the Muslim collective to Divine law. He illustrates this in various ways. For example, in a statement which actively calls for religious armed violence/ *jihād* against the state in "Chinese Turkestan", the reason given is that Muslims are being impeded from congregational worship and prayer in Arabic, and application of Muslim law to their family disputes. [132] Voicing the same concern from a different angle, Iqbal writes remarkably in the *Asrār,* that wars waged by those who do not "eat, drink, and sleep by God's command", are not *jihād,* but "hunger for land" (*jūʿ ul-arḍ*), which is essentially another form of societal idolatry (*but-garī).*[133]

However, for Iqbal, a radically different dimension of "war for God" in the post-finality age, is that *any* community's (dis-)obedience to Divine law is of universal moral import. Therefore, the community that admits Muḥammad as final prophet, is in a terrifying moral bind. It cannot become a genuine practitioner of *jihād* without perfect obedience to Divine law, but, as a communal self, it will surely be held accountable by God Himself, if others are disobedient and wayward. In the *Rumūz,* Iqbal feels "trembling shame" that God will ask Muslims, why they "rested" while "the children of Adam are being slaughtered for idols". [134] Iqbal's moral anxiety on this point, is almost unbearable and cuts both ways; he is unwilling to compromise the universal import of obeying Divine law, as well as the primacy of Divine law-obedience. For him, *jihād* is a painful exercise performed for God, which is opened up by Muḥammad's prophetic finality, but, it still contains a primacy of obedience to Divine law.[135]

As this shows, another broad repercussion of the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood, is an increased burden (*bār*) on societal selves, including the relationship of societies with individuals and nature. Here too, Iqbal's words are centered on the Muslim collective, but with a universal reach. His most general articulation of increased socio-moral burdens, is the shift from "monarchical" to "elective" political leadership, which for him was inherent in Finality. The pragmatic reason given is that if any post-finality political leader "loses reference to Divine agency", no prophet will come to recalibrate the societal creature. Thus, the burden of shaping social directions is now on that collective. [136] Iqbal considers everyone, i.e. the Muslim and non-Muslim collectives, to be insufficiently embracing of this post-finality development; the former, because in his view, Muslim political theorists had added compromising "hereditary requirements" for leadership, like being of Muḥammad's tribal ancestry;[137] the latter, because "Western democracies" have not admitted the theological impetus of "elective" political forms,

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[132]Iqbal*, Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 275-276.
[133] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 87-90.
[134] Ibid., pp. 177-184.
[135] He is cognizant of this difficult bind in another poem, where he is in a dialogue with his master Rūmī, and pained that *jihād* is required by God. Rūmī's reply stresses the desirability of *jihād* as "friendship" (*dūstī*) with God, but does not suggest it can be performed by an immature moral agent. Cf. Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 463-464.
[136] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 163-167.
[137] Ibid., pp. 138-146.

which are only made necessary due to Muḥammad's final prophethood, in his view. On the latter perceived failure, his words are continuous with his aforementioned words, that societal moral formation must always have a basis in prophetic authority, and this holds, for him, in the post-finality age.[138]

Finally, in much the same vein, Iqbal envisions the Divine "no more" of prophethood, as calling upon all creatures to intensify their efforts in relating to God. With respect to individuals in the Muslim collective, we find Iqbal praising few categories of individuals, but clearly: "the Muslim mother", whose role now "has likeness (*nisbat*) to prophethood", and, "her affection (*shafqat*) is the affection of the prophet", because she is the "shaper of communal character" (*ṣūrat-gar-i sīrat-i millīyah*). [139] Likewise, Iqbal praises whom he variously calls the "ordinary Muslim", "average Muslim", or "poor Muslim" (distinct from "the brainy graduate of high culture"), because the ordinary Muslim is, in his view, more concerned with obedience to the laws of God and obligatory ethico-legal duties.[140]

Furthermore, coming full circle from where we had started in Ch.3, Iqbal imagines that attitude of ontic esteem towards nature, which is found in his own natural vision, to be an attitude made historically necessary by the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood. This is because "perpetual [scriptural] revelation" has ended and in his view, the Qurʾān itself, cognizant of the scriptural-revelational "no more", exhorts humanity to look for the signs/ *āyāt* of God in nature as well as scripture.[141] The basic contours of Iqbal's natural vision have already been sketched in Ch.3. Here, we are adding that Iqbal urges "modern man" *not* to conceive of the scientific investigation and transformation of nature, as an impersonal activity with no relation to God, but to admit "the burden of science", i.e. recognizing that these activities are always engagements with an expression of Divine Creativity, and as such, constitute ways of humanity responding to God.[142] However, as said before, Iqbal does not give himself a predictive or action-specifying role, such that he might be able to tell us precisely when or how humanity will embrace these post-finality opportunities.

To sum up Part III of this chapter: Iqbal sees the prophethood of Muḥammad, especially its finality, not just as an important event, but as an expression of Divine Creativity via social history. In Iqbal's words on post-finality society, we see similar patterns, as in his larger words on the moral formation of the individual and societal creatures. Part III of this chapter has highlighted these patterns. Societal creatures post-finality, cannot overstep the priority of obedience to Divine law. At the same time, societal creatures are not called to stasis, but quite

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[138] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 142; *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 221-222.
[139] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 191-194.
[140] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* pp. 107; 200; Urdu Kullīyāt, p. 231.
[141] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 1-12.
[142] Ibid., pp. 11-12; 148-149.

the opposite: Finality represents, for Iqbal, a call from God to societal creatures, to increase their own efforts in relating to him. Yet, the shape or signs of such increased efforts, are yet unknown.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, we have continued our reading of Iqbal as a moral-ontological thinker, for whom the activity of moral betterment is an increasing participation in the dynamics of *khudī*-given-ness. This reading has helped us to see certain resonances between Iqbal's social thought and his larger moral vision, which includes person and nature. As we have seen, Iqbal's social thought sees the beginnings and directions of moral formation, as "mirroring", his view of individual moral formation. Moreover, society is perceived of, primarily, not as a context for individuals, nor as an infallible structure, but as a fellow, finite, baby-like, creature which depends on individual selves, notwithstanding its overwhelming capacities over the individual person, and its status as an expression of Divine Creativity.

We have appreciated Iqbal's creaturely construal of society, and his discussion of society in terms that are applicable to a self with responsive attitudes and not, in the alternative manner of Asad, as "a theologically defined space". This helps us to potentially rethink readings of Iqbal within which his social thought is seen of as a "programme", in which "foundational texts" and "principles" only need to be "applied" or "implemented".[143] Religious Ethicists might say with qualifications, that, Iqbal construes the beginnings of *societal* moral formation in a slightly more Mahmoodian rather than an Asadian manner. As shown above, for Iqbal, the question of obedient collective responsivity to God, is prior to the question of purposive rational directions. And, clearly, there are moments where Iqbal is anxious about the incapacity for genuinely reparative collective action, if obedience to Divine law does not precede such an endeavor. Yet, echoing his persistent emphasis on dynamism qua expression of Divine Creativity, his anxiety is two-pronged; it is made all the more "shameful" because, sitting around being morally unformed is, also, a bad way of responding to God, which will encounter pricking Divine questioning. Envisioning this kind of collective moral bind, which ushers to action through Divine obedience, is a non-negligible feature of his social thought, which is brought to light by reading his *khudī*-words.

Thus, Iqbal's vision of *khudī* as it relates to society, is more complex than taking the term *khud-ī,* "self-ness", as his signifier for "robust national identity".[144] In his view, *khudī* is not something "had", but Divinely "given", yet, aspired-to by creatures. This makes it difficult to see his usage of *khudī* as a fixed, semantic placeholder for any one group's identity. Moreover, much of his vision of societal moral betterment, while deeply concerned with, enamored with, and pained by,

[143] Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker,* pp. 39-41.
[144] For such a construal, Cf. A. Shakoor Ahsan, "Iqbal on Muslim Fraternity", *The Political Sagacity of Iqbal* (1998), pp. 257-278.

"the Muslim collective", is also about a more general creature, i.e. "human society", within which post-finality community is a radical progression, but with an immeasurably long way to go, even for the Muslim collective, in terms of becoming one consolidated "self".

As said in the Introduction and Ch.1, Iqbal's vision of *khudī* needs to be parsed out carefully before attempting to say "what it means". Now that we have before us, a thick description of the layers of this vision, we can turn to become more abstracted, in the next and final chapter.

Chapter 6

Khudī: What it is, Why it Matters

Chapter Overview

This final chapter reaps the harvest of our exploration into Iqbal's vision of *khudī.* We describe in a more abstracted fashion, that: *khudī* is a multi-layered vision, which sees individual, society, and nature, as interrelated. Although "self" is often seen as a category which refers to the individual person, often in opposition to "world" and "nature", Iqbal's vision sees self-ness as that which is the reason for all that is in the universe, and, that which is always aspirational for individuals and social collectives. In Part I of this chapter, we give a more bird's-eye view of what *khudī* means, and how it functions as moral vision. In garnering this understanding, we see how Iqbal's vision might sit next to categories familiar to Religious Ethics. A key insight here, is that Iqbal's vision resists a neat "situation", even as it has dimensions that are familiar to many moral reflections. Based on Part I, and everything said in the prior chapters, Part II then states some characteristic features of Iqbal's moral vision, which can make it forceful and compelling.

With this overview in mind, we turn to a more panoramic description, and understanding, of *khudī* as moral-ontological vision.

I. Khudī: Meaning and (De-)Situation

In this section, after giving a distillation of Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* which is drawn from the contents of the prior three chapters, we turn to broadly recapitulate the ways in which it functions as a moral vision.

Coming first, to the distillation of what *khudī* means: in the sense that was defined in the Introduction and Ch.1 of this project, the moral dimensions of Iqbal's *khudī*-talk are a "narrative" or "unitive" moral-ontological vision. The term *khud-ī* literally translates to "self-ness". As we have seen, a clear feature of Iqbal's usage is that it is vastly greater than the individuality of the human person, but of which the latter is also an ineluctable expression.[1] The reason is that "God Himself is an individual: He is the most Unique Individual."[2] With important qualifications on the word "quality",[3] third-wave, global Religious Ethics scholars can understand *khudī,* as per Iqbal, as a "quality" of God, or as that which only God fully has. In the broadest sense, *khudī* is the Unique Divine Self-ness, which has an insuppressible tendency to show itself, to become

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[1] This much, i.e. noticing the broad quality of *khudī,* can be seen in Mustansar Mir in *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 28-29. One might also consult Annemarie Schimmel's statement that Iqbal's "revaluation of man is not that of man qua man, but of man in relation to God, and Iqbal's anthropology, the whole concept of *khudī,* of development of Self is understandable only in the larger context of his theology." *Gabriel's Wing* (Leiden: Brill, 1963).

[2] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i Khudī),* trans. By R.A. Nicholson. London: MacMillan & Co, 1920, 21.

[3] In keeping with our goal of understanding Iqbal, the word "quality" here should not be taken to refer to a technical distinction between "essence" and "attributes". In fact, as we have seen previously, Iqbal had considered discussions of this kind to be fruitless and detrimental for moral character. Cf. Iqbal, *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl, Urdū* (The Complete Works of Iqbal in Urdu), ed. Ahmad Raza (Lahore: Sa'ādat Press, 2005), p. 590. Thus, when we use the word "quality" here, an alternate way to say the same would be that for Iqbal, God "has" *khudī.*

more known and manifest, and simultaneously, to be secretive, and always inadequately conceived and received by creatures.[4]

Furthermore, as we have seen, for Iqbal, *khudī* is given by God to what He creates, and also, eternally aspired-to, and never terminally attainable by creatures, even in its sheer given-ness.[5] We see this at various points in Iqbal's articulations e.g. in the three stages of moral formation (described in Ch.4), the enviable "third stage" is still a "worldly stage", and not a terminus.[6] Most generally, he writes that *khudī* is an infinite and "shoreless ocean" which we, in our finitude, mistakenly imagine a rivulet.[7] He also presents *khudī* as so freely given by God, that we can "educate"/"inculcate" it,[8] "guard" it,[9] and "fortify" or "strengthen" it.[10]

Moreover, recurrent and central in Iqbal's vision of *khudī,* is his commitment to the idea of Divine Creativity as inexhaustive and ceaseless, and never divorceable from the finite creature. As seen throughout Chs. 3-5, a core dynamic of Iqbal's vision of *khudī* is what he sees as the endless interplay between the ceaselessness of God's Creativity, and the finitude of the creature. On Iqbal's view, even the impetus for "personal immortality" is not "liberation from finitude", because "finitude is not a misfortune", [11] but rather, the endless dynamic between finite creatures and God's Creativity. In this sense, the ontic dynamism of Iqbal's natural vision carries over into his vision of human individual and collective morality.[12] This restless dynamism of Divine Creativity, while it can be painful for the finite creature, and often call them to be pain-embracing, also shows that God's giving is such that, what God has to give, never ends.[13]

For Iqbal, this "dynamic interplay" is not an impersonal structure. Rather, it is seen as a relationship with God, in which a person and collective's participation in "self-ness", is itself, an irreducibly theo-relational activity, i.e., one in which the finite, creaturely self is never effaced or erased in its relation with God, and also, an insuperably theo-responsive activity, i.e. in which

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[4] Iqbal, *Kullīyāt-i Iqbāl, Fārsi,* The Complete Works of Iqbal in Persian (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1994), pp. 30-33.

[5] In saying this, my exposition adds nuance to discussions of *khudī* which waver between presenting it as fully "possessed" (e.g. "every existent has a khudī of its own") and as an impersonal "primordial force" (Cf. Mir, *Iqbal: Poet and Thinker,* 28). It is, instead, always given by God (never impersonal), and, never fully "had" by a creature.

[6] Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i Khudī),* trans. Nicholson, xxvi-xxviii. This is Iqbal's own, brief, commentary upon his work.

[7] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, p. 376.

[8] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt*,* pp. 62-70. This is the section of the "Secrets of Self-ness" which, as we have seen in Ch.4, defines moral formation as the "inculcation" or "education" (*tarbīyat)* of *khudī* by the moral agent.

[9] Ibid., p. 584. This is where Iqbal describes the person as "guarding" (*nighidāshtan*) *khudī* "for Him, for Him" (i.e. for God), as we have discussed in Ch. 4 as well.

[10] Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i Khudī),* trans. Nicholson, xxii.

[11] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 93.

[12] On this point, my exposition adds substance to emerging recognitions that "Iqbal never fails to underscore "action" or dynamism that helps the self to grow" (e.g. Muhammad Faruque, *The Labyrinth of Subjectivity: Constructions of the Self from Mullā Ṣadrā to Muḥammad Iqbāl,* at digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu. Accessed online on 10 Mar 2019. p. 274). This dynamism is not just a feature of Iqbal's vision of the ethical growth of the individual self, but a broader "ontic dynamism", as I call it, which also pervades his naturalistic vision.

[13] Schimmel gives the astute biographical observation that Iqbal informally liked to describe God as "the Most Rich", as gleaned from some of his private conversations with Syed Nazir Niazi. *Conversations with Iqbal,* (quoted in *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 96), German-Pak Forum, p. 118 (n.d.).

God is the only One giving one self-ness, and, the One on whom one depends, in order to be a self, in the first place.

For Iqbal, to be a self already means to be relating to God, and a properly responsive self, sees one's self and other creatures of God as such, as seen in: Ch.4, in Iqbal's words on love and the Adam/Iblīs contrast. Likewise, as we have seen in Ch.3, the majority of words on incipient human moral formation, are about nature's exemplarity, and also in Ch.5, how the societal creature depends on a prophetic individual, "like a newborn baby". Iqbal recurrently forefronts the significance of a creaturely self, properly and God-obediently relating to other creatures, as a non-negligible part of properly responding to God.

To say the above more succinctly: for Iqbal, *"khudī"* is not one concept, and not even a "cohering concept" or an interpretive frame, but a unitive moral-ontological vision, in which God and His creatures are inter-relating. *Khudī* is "had" and "given", uniquely, by God, and aspired-to by all other than God. *Khudī* is showing, yet secretive, and this activity of *khudī* is the reason for all that is, including natural universe and human persons and collectives. Within this vision of *khudī*, moral betterment (i.e. desirable moral activity) means that the moral agent continuously fortifies and inculcates, their "participation" in *khudī.* Thus, increasing one's participation in the "ontic structure of things" happens by becoming more properly responsive to God. This is an inerasably theo-relational process that will never end. However, this dynamic is also not a "misfortune" to lament, but an affirmation of God's endless giving. The activity of the self, as moral agent, "fortifying" *khudī*, must involve God-obedient interactions with social collectives and nature.

Bearing in mind this bird's-eye overview of what *khudī* means, which presupposes all the nuances and thick description of the prior chapters, we can now recapitulate the ways in which it can be understood, and also how it resists situation, with respect to familiar taxonomies in Religious Ethics. The goal here is twofold: to situate or understand Iqbal better, but also, to de-situate and show how Iqbal's vision resists a neat placement within familiar or prevalent categories of moral reflection.

i) The Relational Fabric of Iqbal's Vision of Khudī

In this section, we recall one of the key features of *khudī* as a moral vision, i.e. that morality is always construed as an activity of relating to God, even in moments where Iqbal is writing about activities that an agent performs to better their own selves, or when he writes about obedience to rules. In order to clarify this relationality of Iqbal's moral vision, we recall some familiar taxonomies within Religious Ethics.

As Liz Bucar, Aaron Stalnaker and Irene Oh have all reflected about the field of contemporary Religious Ethics, we seem to be collectively moving toward an explicit paradigm of "expansion of the range of the field".[14] Whereas, there tend to be important counter-voices, who argue for

[14] Bucar, Elizabeth M and Aaron Stalnaker, *Religious Ethics In a Time of Globalism: Shaping a Third Wave of Comparative Analysis* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 13.
See also, Irene Oh's recent article "Decolonizing Religion: The Future of Comparative Religious Ethics" in *Contending Modernities* (University of Notre Dame). Accessed online on 20 May 2020, at

"fixing" the parameters of "comparative ethics", and the need to develop a shared "definitional scheme" amongst all or most scholars,[15] nevertheless, there is also a gaining impetus in our field which seeks to give more space to "distinctive conceptions", and allow these to continuously keep expanding our understanding of what "ethics" could mean and involve.[16]

As suggested in Ch.1, this project finds itself in affinity with these new commitments of what might also be called a "third wave" within Religious Ethics. Uncovering and describing how Iqbal's vision of *khudī* is a moral-ontological vision, is a novel service to our collective body of knowledge.[17] Moreover, doing so in a detailed way, allows us to highlight some recurrent, resonant, and also un-mappable dimensions of Iqbal's moral reflection.

Among the different ways of delimiting ethics, an enduring distinction is the one between teleological and deontological ethical visions. One way to think about ethics is as an answer to the question: "What kind of person should I be?", rather than asking first what rules are to be followed. Such a vision sees ethics as a process of making and re-making the self, very similar to a purposive craftsman *working upon* raw material, until a certain teleological excellence is reached.[18] Moral agents mainly engage in "shaping" and "making" themselves.[19] On the contrary, a very different way to conceive of ethics is as a system to prioritize the "most important aspects of how we ought to live", which are to be "governed by moral rules that ought

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https://contendingmodernities.nd.edu/theorizing-modernities/decolonizing-cre/?fbclid=IwAR1_KPTkqGYyoFZcizHGlHT9ahxr62V7jcVY9Yi0RPXTI6WLzQXcR6lZMNI. My project is not concerned with de- or post-colonial theory as a lens for interpreting Iqbal, but the reason for citing Oh's article is to notice how her interpretive paradigm sees the new directions within Religious Ethics as yet another structural "expansion" (of a new collective method), which continuously "brings forth distinctive voices and perspectives", and rejects a crystallization or fragmentation.

[15] See, for example, John Kelsay's reasoned complaint that, instead of a shared "vocabulary or classification scheme", the field seems to be moving towards (what he sees as) "perspectival studies". John Kelsay, "The Present State Of The Comparative Study Of Religious Ethics: An Update", *Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 40, no. 4, 2012, pp. 583 - 602.

[16] Bucar and Stalnaker, pp. 13-14.

[17] This contribution can be helpful for Iqbal Studies too, because of its detailed exposition which can be accessed conceptually by a non-specialist of Iqbal. I am thinking, for example, of Mir's section on *khudī* which simultaneously proclaims the utter significance of this "concept" and then, out of its complexity, settles on giving a "very brief answer" of what this term means in/for Iqbal, with a very quick gloss on normative dimensions (2006; pp. 28-35); I am also thinking of Muhammad Rafiuddin's "Iqbal's Idea of the Self", *Iqbal Review,* vol. 4, no. 3, Oct. 1963, http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct63/index.htm . Rafiuddin, a founding voice for Pakistani Islamic Studies, correctly notices the relational nature of this term in Iqbal, but adds such a tall precondition to understanding, i.e. to first undergo "the mystic or spiritual experience" which "Iqbal himself" underwent. We do not pass judgment on the author's "adulatory" tone (as Faruque might call it), but we note that it makes learning about Iqbal's vision of *khudī* with any degree of complexity, virtually impossible.

[18] Both the self-performative element, as well as the teleological element, are equally crucial to such ethical visions. This is why it has been observed recently that, one of the enduring criticisms of virtue-ethics is that they are too "self-oriented" (such a criticism could be made of Iqbal as well). However, this family of ethical visions is also very different from Iqbal, insofar as the moral agent is clearly desiring a "final end for her". Cf. Ryan Darr, "For the Sake of the Final End: Eudaimonism, Self-Orientation, and the Nature of Human Agency." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 48, no. 2 (June 2020): 182–200. doi:10.1111/jore.12305.

[19] For a cogent articulation of this view, see Greg Pence, "Virtue theory", in *A Companion to Ethics*, Ed. Peter Singer (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991), p. xiii; pp. 249- 258.

not to be broken, even when breaking them might have better consequences". On this latter family of ethical visions, ethics is largely about maintaining a moral "world", within which the moral agent has to imagine themselves as *abiding within* the context of certain operations, and see the self as a "citizen" or denizen of a maximally rule-governed unit. [20]

Yet, an insight of no less significance for scholars, is that there is "no universally accepted taxonomy of ethical theories."[21] One further insight, made visible by this non-rigidity of "taxonomy", is that ethics can be, and indeed, often are, as much about self-to-self *relations* as they are about self-making like a craftsman or self-abiding like a denizen. For example, while feminist ethicists have argued that a failure to see ethics as patterns of relationality is one of the major intellectual weaknesses of perverse patriarchal systems,[22] also within explicitly religio-ethical analyses, a comparable argument has been made in terms of a person and a community's "living relation with God".[23] Likewise, Amyn B. Sajoo has noted briefly that, while Islamic ethical discourses often have "systems of conduct and belief laid out in an analytical framework", in addition to affinities with notions of "Hellenic *ethikos*", there is also, always, a "call to betterment" from God, to the human being, which is generally seen as embodied in the word of God, the Qurʾānic scripture, and in the sayings and life of Prophet Muhammad.[24]

Hence, as Religious Ethics scholars (and, indeed, as people), we know full well that moral reflections do not always respect a rigid boundary between conceptions of the self as making, abiding, and/or relating. Contributing to this ongoing fluidity is Iqbal's vision of *khudī*. For Iqbal, ethics is *irreducibly*, always, about the (individual and societal) moral agent, responding and relating to God. In this specific sense, Iqbal's vision of morality is pervasively and

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[20] For a very broad overview, see Nancy Ann Davis, "Contemporary Deontology", in *A Companion to Ethics* (Blackwell, 1991) p. xii; pp. 205-218. A less contemporary articulation of deontological ethical visions, but one which captures well the element of "maintenance of a system" as a prominent feature of this family of ethical thought, is A. Campbell Garnet's "Deontology and Self-Realization." *Ethics* 51, no. 4 (1941): 419-38. Accessed Jan 28, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/2989167. Cf. Helmut Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963) pp. 53-60.

[21] Robin W. Lovin, "Moral Theories", in *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics,* Ed. William Schweiker (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005) pp. 19-26.

[22] For example, Ruth L. Smith's argument that moral judgment is always a "relationally oriented" activity. See her article "Relationality and the Ordering of Differences In Feminist Ethics + an Exploration of the So-Called Historicization of Relational and Liberal Notions About Contemporary Society" in *Journal of Feminist Studies In Religion*, vol. 9, no. 1-2, 1993, pp. 199 - 214.

[23] For example, Hilary Putnam, "Jewish Ethics?" in *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics,* Ed. William Schweiker (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 161-162. Joshua B Levy, "A Personal Struggle With Jewish Ethics." *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 40, no. 2 (2007): 161-70.

[24] Amyn B. Sajoo, and Institute of Ismaili Studies, *A Companion to Muslim Ethics*. London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010. Especially useful is "Introduction: Roots and Branches" (pp.1-24). While Sajoo gives a broad overview of various sources of moral authority in Islam, Kevin Reinhart's introduction to Qurʾānic Ethics gives a meticulous picture of a scripture which continuously speaks of various responsive attitudes required from human beings towards God (e.g. "gratitude for a benefactor", etc.). Cf. A. Kevin Reinhart, "Ethics and the Qurʾān", in: *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC. Consulted online on 04 February 2018 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00056>

overarchingly "personal", or more specifically, "theo-personal".[25] Bearing in mind the relational nature of Iqbal's construal of morality, we now turn to describe the performative dimensions of this relationality.[26]

ii) Performative Dimensions

Having before us a reminder of Iqbal's persistent emphasis on morality as an activity of relating and responding to God, we can now highlight how this relational undergirding is not devoid of "performative" dimensions, i.e. those activities which an agent repeatedly performs upon their self, for moral betterment.

These performative elements of Iqbal's moral vision are best recapitulated, for our field, with reference back to Mahmood.[27] For Mahmood's explicitly neo-Aristotelian and teleological frame, the moral agent is, above all, malleable. Hence, the self is spoken about as a living but highly plastic stratum, something to be "crafted upon", "worked till an excellence is reached", "left a permanent mark upon", and "a durable character", often against, but also taking advantage of, its plasticity. Ethics involves the "substance" of the self achieving a "natural", "habituated" and terminal excellence in the virtues.[28]

In Iqbal, too, there is a gradual increase in the moral agent's maturation. Thus, the three stages of worldly moral formation are seen as *progressive*, in the sense that movement from one stage to the next presupposes a degree of accomplishment in the prior stage. Hence, we recall that, rather than writing about the dangers of a morally mature agent backsliding into the incipient stages of obedience, Iqbal writes instead that the prophets (i.e. the most morally mature individuals) inhere in their person, the performance of all three stages (obedience, self-discipline, and Divine representation).[29] However, this is the extent to which Iqbal's vision could be called "teleological". Iqbal's vision of moral growth is not mappable onto a teleological vision, in the sense that a terminal moral excellence would be seen as possible or even desirable, by him. For Iqbal, there will always be yet more "opportunities" for self-cultivation, albeit we do not know the details of these Divinely known opportunities, due to our creaturely finitude.[30]

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[25] This undergirding of relationality in Iqbal's moral vision of *khudī* can sometimes be overlooked by scholars when they shift from the descriptive to the normative dimensions of Iqbal's ethical vision. For example, while Mir correctly notices that Iqbal admires Muslim communities for their desire to relate politics to prophetic authority (2006; pp. 45-48), when describing what Iqbal thinks *should* be done, the language employed is no longer about Muslims responding to demands/commands from God, but about realizing the entailments of "a foundational text", and "one principle" (pp. 40-41).

[26] In the following, which is abstracted from the prior three chapters, there will be a degree of repetition. I can only ask the reader to bear with me, but I cannot cut out the repeated words. My aim is to show that certain ideas and motifs are recurrent, but also, in what places in Iqbal's thought they recur. Difficult and dull though this might be to read, it is accurate and does not oversimplify Iqbal's vision.

[27] Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[28] Mahmood, pp. 134-136.

[29] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 70-72.

[30] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 97-98.

Another key aspect of Iqbal's performative moral dimension is its relationality. This side of Iqbal is better seen, not as analogous with "craftsmanship *upon*", but as a form of "doing *for*" (God). The activity of painstakingly working upon some "substance" till a perfected state is the admirable work of many a human artisan.[31] However, for Iqbal, this kind of activity is incomparable with what he calls the "intensive" and "unfailing" nature of Divine Creativity, which we have described in Ch.3. Thus Iqbal's moral vision does not presuppose a "craft-like" structure to the moral formation of the human moral agent. Rather, the impetus of performative moral growth from the perspective of the creaturely agent, is also relational. It is in this vein that Iqbal writes that the activities which constitute "inculcating *khudī",* are *"for Him",* and of "watching over", or "guarding" the gift of *khudī*, "for Him".

Furthermore, another performative element of Iqbal's moral vision, is that moral formation does not begin with an exercise of rationality within a consistent rational worldview. A well-known thinker like Mahmood, arrives at this point from a powerful pushback against the prevalent Western images of Muslim women as feckless, arguing instead that "the capacities of the self" which enable it to engage with the world in various rational ways, are themselves, first formed in the crucible of regular "bodily practices".[32] Iqbal can be understood as like Mahmood, insofar as he also sees purposive rationality, and a capacity for self-direction, as necessarily coming *after* a moral agent regularly undergoes and performs certain processes.[33] However, Iqbal is distinctive because for him, the incipient stage of moral formation is not limited to "bodily" or "exterior" practices, and "exteriority is [decidedly, not] a means to interiority".[34] Instead, for Iqbal, what is demanded of a person even in the beginnings of moral formation, is far more total. It is complete "obedience" to God, both in the emotional/affective and the "bodily" dimensions of one's self.[35] In this vein, we have seen that Iqbal does not shy away from using quite holistic language like "bondage", "fettering", "captivity", "chain yourself", and "head bent in submission", when describing the demands upon the moral beginner.[36] This strong and totalizing obedience is distinct from the idea of an arduous crucible of formative bodily practices.[37] Such a hefty

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[31] Mahmood, 136. Here she gives a beautiful quotation of Aristotle's construal of *ethike,* which are described as continuous, in important ways, with "lyre-playing", "building", and other such human performances.

[32] Mahmood, pp. 25-27.

[33] Hence, "self-direction" and a "rational conception of the world" come in the second stage of Iqbal's construal of moral formation, as seen in Ch.4.

[34] Mahmood, 134.

[35] Thus, for example, in his poetic description of the first stage of moral formation, Iqbal exhorts the reader to be more like the camel not just in terms of continuously "trailing" the desert or "bearing burdens", but also in terms of inculcating the more affective glee (*sarkhushī)* with which it does so. Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, pp. 63-64.

[36] Ibid., pp. 62-70 (individual moral formation); pp. 115-118 (societal moral formation). He uses this language for both individual and society.

[37] Mahmood's articulations really help us to understand this point more finely. I am thinking, for example, of Annemarie Schimmel's view that the incipient stage of moral formation in Iqbal, is about a "seclusion" or "interiority", which has little to no visible or transformative engagement with the world. Such a reading takes Iqbal's moral formation as a move from interiority to exteriority (pp. 105-107). However, using Mahmood's analysis to understand Iqbal, we see that such a paradigm is ill-fitting, in whichever direction it might move. Iqbal's first stage is not about an interior/exterior binary, but obedience, or an obedient responsive attitude, which involves the whole of the moral agent.

demand upon the moral agent is, in turn, enabled by Iqbal's pre-conception that one's self, itself, is some "thing" one only "has" because God gives *khudī.*

Fortunately for the moral agent within Iqbal's vision, God sends guidance to assist with the moral necessity of obedience. This guidance is to be found, for Iqbal, in the Divine laws revealed by a prophet to his community. The individual person is also not entirely alone in obeying these laws, which are to be obeyed by others as well (in the form of revealed law) and are already obeyed by the natural universe, in its own ways which are not usually tied to recipience from a prophet, but more directly from God.

In other words, in addition to performatively relational dimensions, Iqbal's vision of *khudī* also has a sense of rules which are to be obeyed, which are (for him) always God-given, if the individual or collective is undergoing genuine moral formation. To now highlight these "rule-abiding" dimensions of Iqbal's moral vision, we will be helped by recalling some of Asad's words.

iii) Rule-Abiding Dimensions

Here, we highlight, with reference to Asad, how Iqbal's vision of *khudī* sees that aspect of morality which is about collective rule-following, as an activity of a creaturely *self* responding properly to God. To say this another way: Iqbal's vision of *khudī* sees society and nature as creatures of God, alongside the individual, and not simply as "contexts" for the individual person.

Unlike Mahmood, Asad is not explicitly interested in any particular form of moral thought, but he offers a useful reflection about the dynamics within and between human groups. One of his key insights is that our ways of treating the materiality of language, are inevitably tied to our conceptions of our society. In building this argument, he develops a genealogical vision of two competing streams of thought; one which divorces the materiality of language from access to reality (what he calls the "mythic imagination"), and one which envisions this materiality and all its aural, oral, tactile, and visual elements as indispensable in connecting to (Divine) reality (which he associates with "scriptural communities" like Muslims).[38]

Asad's account is powerful and reminds us of the possibility of the "object" of the Divinely invested word regularly reaching out to shape socio-moral life;[39] a word which can act upon and

[38] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 27-57. The question of the relationship of scripture to God, or, of God's word to God, has long engaged Islamic thought. A seminal event in this historical engagement was what is known as the *miḥnā,* often loosely translated as "inquisition", but culminating in the disciplining of forty-four scholars, including the alleged flogging of the paramount Sunni theologian, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, at the orders of the caliph al-Maʾmūn, in the 9th century CE. For a comprehensive account of this event and the theological debates surrounding it, Cf. Martin, Richard C., "Createdness of the Qurʾān", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 10 May 2017 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_24418. First published online: 2015.

[39] Of course, this is not a new discovery. From a more mainstream Qurʾānic Studies perspective, this argument has been elegantly articulated by Angelika Neuwirth. See "The 'Discovery of Writing' in the Qur'an: Tracing a Cultural Shift in Arab Late Antiquity", in *The Qurʾān and Adab: The Shaping of Literary Traditions in Classical Islam.* Edited

re-form the reader/reciter, partially contingent on their own engagement. Notwithstanding this subtle and essential point, we can see that Asad's specific conception of the idealized Muslim community as a "theologically defined space" is enabled, in part, by his intense focus on the material "thing". On such a view, the main "collective moral" concern for those inhabiting this "classically imagined" community would be, indeed, the maintenance of *space, within which* to "practice disciplines of *dīn* in the world". The fact that this "theologically defined space" has "universalizing power", or the desire to expand to all of humanity, is conceived of as a matter of "theological predicates". Thus, certain "presuppositions" of a theological import, have been conveyed, from which, "a system of practical reason morally binding on each individual", follows. The structure of the universalizing impulse is mainly seen as a matter of the rational entailment of predicates which are conveyed by the (Divinely dignified) material word.[40]

As we have seen in Ch.2, Iqbal considers himself as submitted before the Qurʾān and challenges those who would attempt to "change it" and who try to insulate themselves from being re-formed by it.[41] In this respect, he is understandable as with the grain of the above Asadian insight, i.e. the reality of Divinely invested material word.[42] However, we can understand Iqbal's vision better by noting that, in contrast to Asad, it has a far greater emphasis on the personal relationship between God and His creatures, of which the scripture and its contents are one key part. Thus, Iqbal's moral vision desires to see materiality *and* scripture as more deeply continuous. While Asad privileges the materiality *of* scripture and its amazing capacity to shape collective life, Iqbal focuses centrally on the relationship between God and humanity, which is always operant both in scriptures and in nature's materiality itself.[43]

Moreover, Iqbal construes both human materiality and the conception of an (aspiring) universal Muslim community, in terms of *responding* to God, and not primarily in terms of holding fast to rational predicates which would then entail the fulfillment of social directions. We see this in various ways; e.g. in the fact that Iqbal considers the incipient stage of *societal* moral formation as well, to be obedience to the Divine law. Moreover, as also seen in the previous chapter, Iqbal's vision of the necessity of *jihād* is not to fulfill the material entailments of a rationally ordered worldview, but one which seeks, first, to respond obediently to Divine commands, while anxiously cognizant of their burdensome beginnings, and of the shortcomings of himself and his

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by Nuha Alshaar (Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 65-72. Neuwirth argues that the Qurʾān radically transformed Arab linguistic imagination, particularly social views about the relationship of the word to truth.

[40] Asad, pp. 197-198. This Asadian reading of intellectual history, i.e. to see the aspiration towards a unified Muslim community as an entailment of theological predicates, helps us to ask whether Iqbal's social vision is indeed reducible to a "programme" of implementation, which has "foundational principles" and "texts" to be actualized (Mir, 2006; 40-48). Distinctions in Religious Ethics might potentially help Iqbal Studies scholars to think more finely about what might be conceivable as a normative social vision, when writing on Iqbal.

[41] (My translation): "They do not change themselves, but they would change the Qur'an/ Ah! How futile are these legal scholars of the sacred!" Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyat, p. 534.

[42] Asad helps us to make this point in a way that is accessible to Religious Ethics. Another mapping of this aspect of Iqbal, in contemporary Iqbal Studies, comes from Nauman Faizi (2016, dissertation). Faizi sketches out the semiotic and logical patterns of Iqbal's Qurʾān-reception, which will be of interest to readers who are interested not just in content, but in patterns of thought that can be diagrammed or mapped more mathematically.

[43] I highlight this in a bit more detail, below. It has also been discussed in Ch.3.

community, who have not even begun to begin.[44] In this respect of prioritizing obedience before arriving at a rationally ordered worldview, Iqbal is more like a Mahmood than an Asad, although Mahmood only argues for the primacy of the crucible of bodily practices, for the individual person. In Iqbal's vision, total obedience to Divine law is the beginning of individual as well as societal moral formation(s).

Having highlighted its key performative and rule-following contours, which are undergirded by theo-relational elements, we can now observe that Iqbal's vision of *khudī* interrogates a cleavage of the "personal" and the "universal", in a distinctive way.

iv) Universal Dimensions

Building upon the prior two sections, here we give a broad overview of how Iqbal's vision of *khudī* is also "moral-ontological," because it dynamically relates a person's moral betterment with the universe. For Iqbal, both individual and universe are creatures of God. Thus, morality and reality are interrelated, and Iqbal's natural vision plays a non-negligible role in this interrelation.

For Iqbal, the "connection" or "pattern that connects all that exists" (the "cosmic order" as Taylor might describe it) [45] is itself inerasably "personal", in a particular sense. Iqbal's natural vision centers *khudī,* which is also given-to, and aspired-by, every person. Iqbal says that all that exists, exists because of this same *khudī.* He thus envisions "man and nature" as "related" by virtue of existing due to Divine Self-ness. [46]Additionally, the human being's materiality, whether it be having a body and senses, or the scientific investigation into nature, is repeatedly described using language which is not just "connective" like a bridge, but about a personal relationship, because it absolutely assumes the Divine Individual to Whom the person is responding e.g. "being held accountable for gifts", "praying to", "seeking intimacy", etc.[47] It is apparent that this kind of language (coming in Iqbal's words about the natural universe) has no meaning that is not relational and personal. On Iqbal's view, already inherent and operative in our materiality, is an activity of responsivity to God.

However, building on this point, we cannot neglect that Iqbal's vision does not "flatten" or homogenize the moral-ontological terrain, so to speak. Iqbal organizes his vision in a "tri-creaturely" manner; the human individual, society, and nature, are all seen as the three inter-

[44] This project is not interested in political theory per se, but scholars who are far more squarely interested in questions of religious politics, have also intuited this anxiety of Iqbal. E.g. Roy Jackson has observed that while other socially influential religious voices were far more certain of their capacity to provide a rationally ordered worldview which only needed to be implemented, Iqbal was more conscious of the incapacity of a community to have a truthful worldview, if it had not become God-obedient itself, in the first place. Cf. Roy Jackson, *Mawlānā Mawdūdī and Political Islam: Authority and the Islamic State* (New York: Routledge, 2011), esp. pp. 89-91. We could also recall the reference in the previous chapter to Iqbal's distinction between "land-hunger" and *jihād,* and the "high moral bar", i.e. that those who practice religious violence should be such that they "eat, sleep, and wake for God alone".

[45] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, pp. 143-144.

[46] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* 12.

[47] Ibid., pp. 3; 44-46; 73.

relating expressions of Divine Creativity.[48] And indeed, as Iqbal says, God's Creativity is not limited to these three, with which we finite creatures are familiar, but that these are the ones germane to us in terms of moral and normative questions like "what we need to do", and "what humanity needs".[49]

Given this tripartite (but not limited to three) creaturehood, another significant aspect of Iqbal's ontic non-homogeneity, is his view of the ceaseless possibility and/or reality of moral betterment. In more familiar (to our field) moral languages, this side of ethics is usually called "increasing moral excellence", or "an ascending scale of dignity".[50] Yet, Iqbal's view does not assume that increasing participation in the "way things are", is by "acceding" from any one creaturely kind to another. Moral-ontologically speaking, the structure of one's moral improvement does not construe any one creature as a foundational "realm" off which to gradually propel, onto and into a "higher realm". Rather, the form of this increasing ontic participation is dynamically God-relational "all the way down", although the point here is precisely that Iqbal's vision is best understood as not following the grain of such a spatial-hierarchical imagination.[51]

Therefore, there is a varied non-rigidity, but this does not equate to a flattening of the moral-ontological terrain. There *are* sharply differing levels of moral accomplishment.[52] The prophets of God have reached a brilliance of moral maturation which puts them in a league of their own, a "minority of mankind",[53] and they are the only ones named in the third stage of moral formation. Indeed, the whole point of the stages of worldly moral formation, is to improve the moral agent, and to begin bettering their fortification of the gift of *khudī,* which itself is a non-terminal activity.

However, there is yet another way in which Iqbal's vision of *khudī* interrogates a binary of the "personal" and the "universal". This third potential contribution speaks to some prevalent, and

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[48] This point is also being elaborated in a forthcoming project on Iqbal by Basit Koshul, which is in close conversation with the philosophy of American pragmatism. Although I attempt to stick closer to the "plain text", and use the categories of individual, society, and nature, as Iqbal uses these terms most frequently, Koshul argues with a slight inflection that "temporal flux", "matter", and "human needs and desires" are the three "facets". It can be seen, however, how each of these might correspond to history, nature, and person (respectively), and the advantage of personal conversation with the author enables me to know this is the case. Cf. *American Pragmatism and Modern Islamic Thought: A Case Study.* Edinburgh University Press, 2021 (forthcoming).

[49] Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* 142.

[50] See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 164-165.

[51] Evidence for this point of ontic non-homogeneity has already come to the fore in multiple ways which have been repeatedly stated, here and previously; e.g. the emphasis on the inter-relationality of creatures as an ineluctable part of relating and responding more properly to God; the ontic dynamism of Iqbal's natural vision and moral vision, which rejects a notion of an unsurpassable terminus.

[52] This insight, based upon Iqbal's many articulations of moral-ontological variance, adds some texture to the reading that Iqbal "sought to make every Muslim a realizer of the Truth" Cf. Faizi (2016), pp. 98-99; and, Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), p. 340. Said so briefly, this would be a quite partial reading, if we did not add to it a recognition like the one I have provided above. The addition of texture here rests on our observing the relationship between the given-ness and aspirationality of *khudī,* and on Iqbal's view of the totalizing and arduous demands of moral beginnings.

[53] Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* 100.

justified, fears that parochialism and insularity are all-too-easy for a single human person, if they are too self-focused. In this vein, from methods both narratival and empirical, it has been rightly argued that: a "radical anthropocentrism" can develop in moral discourses, which envisions the moral agent as incapable of receiving any transformative "claims upon them", by the natural and social world,[54] and indeed, even by other individuals randomly encountered, with no "concern" or "basic sense of reciprocity" about the "impact" of "my actions" upon others.[55]

To note the obvious first, Iqbal is not anxious, in the way that some contemporary scholars are, with (what is now, often reflexively, seen as) the almost-libelous charge of being called "anthropocentric".[56] We can recall that even within contemporary Religious Ethics, receptive kinds of anthropocentrism have been articulated, which allow for the natural world to re-form the human being.[57] However, instead of attempting to focus only on one word or its absence in Iqbal, let us return to our more fruitful observation above.

The larger point is that we clearly see in Iqbal's vision of *khudī*, a recognition of the vulnerability and finitude of the individual person, and also of their great capacities. It is Iqbal who writes that the human being is a fragile entity who is constantly open to material-existential threats from the universe; [58] who is "amenable to reformation" by the world around them. [59] However, those scholars who have noticed an intense (even unnerving for some) emphasis on the individual person in Iqbal, are technically not incorrect, although they are partial.[60]

The moral concerns for which Iqbal emphasizes the individual's power and receptivity are distinctive. Studying his vision of *khudī* carefully, we see that Iqbal's moral vision is largely orthogonal to the "individual person" vs. "(social or natural) world" polarity; meaning that it does not perceive as an *inherently* desirable conceptual end, either a dismissal of this kind of contrast, or its cementation.[61] To be clear; what I mean by "being orthogonal" to a polarity is not

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[54] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 89-90.

[55] George Silberbauer, "Ethics in small-scale societies", *A Companion to Ethics*, Ed. Peter Singer (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 14-28. Silberbauer's material observation as an anthropologist is, in part, that the geographical displacement of some of the Botswanan bushmen groups by British colonizers, contributed to a stark atomism in their moral interactions, which was radically less when they were tied to a familiar spatial and cultural context. At the same time, he sees a moral fabric of bushmen's personal relations as definitionally excluded from the realm of "unitary cosmology" or "doctrine".

[56] Robert Elliot gives a helpfully broad overview of the main distinctions in the field of environmental ethics, in "Environmental Ethics", *A Companion to Ethics* (MA: USA, Blackwell, 1991), pp. 284-293.

[57] Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity,* pp. 88-90. See also, Nancy Frankenberry's scathing critique of a view that presumes that nature has "autonomous intrinsic value", in "Of Empty Compliments and Deceptive Detours: A Neopragmatist Response to Theodore W. Nunez," *Journal of Religious Ethics* no. 27 (1): 129-136. Faruque has also observed that Iqbal is, in continuity with some other Islamic thinkers, offering an "anthropocentric" vision of the self, but one that is also not capable of being insulated from "the Divine Reality" (p. 286).

[58] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* p.9.

[59] Ibid., p. 152.

[60] Yaseen Noorani, "Islamic Modernity and the Desiring Self: Muhammad Iqbal and the Poetics of Narcissism." *Iran*, vol. 38, 2000, pp. 123 - 135.

[61] Schimmel intuits what I call "orthogonality", although she does not present it in thus. She notes that the "polarity" of a "secluded" self, and an "active" and world-transformative self, is "not sharply distinguished in Iqbal", but that both kinds of self appear prominent in various contexts. However, she also presents interiority and

to be coldly indifferent about it. This means that what is centrally important, is not always articulated in terms of this polarity, although in many cases it is. For example, as we have seen in the previous chapters, Iqbal admires the resilient companion of Muhammad, the slave Bilāl, who was brutalized for his refusal to stop obeying God and His prophet, but stubbornly persisted in his personal faith, despite opposition from his social environment. However, Iqbal also presents positively and idealistically, a vision of an individual who is experiencing *bē-khudī* (self-less-ness) within their properly God-obedient social unit. Hence, we know that Iqbal idealizes both an individual who is resolutely turned against their social milieu, and also one who is harmonized with, and maximally porous to, their society.

We recall these examples to illustrate how neither the construction of a conceptual bridge, nor the discovery of a mediating frame, between "person" and "world", are *the* key concern of Iqbal's moral vision. Rather, where "individual" or "person" might be centered in a moral-ontological theory like Taylor's, which often desires an articulation of "personal resonance",[62] there is the "God-responsive creature", for Iqbal. For Iqbal, the human condition is precisely that the human, moral creature has been given the weighty opportunity to participate, ever "more and more", in the Divine gift of self-ness. Yet, this ever-increasing "inculcation" of *khudī* by the individual person, is not about uniformly maintaining a state in which person has "affinity" or "resonance" to the world around them (whether natural or social). Rather, morality is about continuously responding to God, as an imperfect and finite creature who is capable of disobedience. *This* always involves the recognition, that responding to God is something which both human society and natural universe, are also doing. Therefore, the point is that the individual person, and also society, can never stray from God-obedient interactions with their co-creatures, without also failing themselves, and failing to respond properly to God's Creativity.

Thus, the individual person has an "essential privacy" and "boundedness", to use Iqbal's words,[63] but not an "insularity". As per Iqbal's view, in one sense, the individual's interactions with nature and society are entirely personal and self-centered, because these are ineluctable aspects of *their* own relation to God and no one else's. Even the person who experiences *bēkhudī* within their society, is envisioned as primarily undergoing this "fettering" for God; so that Divine *khudī* may be more "known", and not motivated by the benefit of the social group, although they might eventually begin to enjoy themselves "fitting" perfectly into a community, like a word into a verse.[64] Yet, this moral self-centeredness is such that it cannot be parochial to me without compromising itself, not only because the structure of my moral formation is such that to commence, it must respond God-obediently to other creatures, but also, because what it means for me to be a self is to already presuppose that I am given self-ness by God, which does not entirely belong to me. Thus, as Iqbal says more succinctly, the "nature of the self" can only be understood by "thought which" is "relational", whichever dimension (material, spiritual,

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seclusion (which are not the same thing, but are seen as similar by her) as characteristic of incipient and not later moral formations, somewhat dissonant with the earlier point. Cf. *Gabriel's Wing,* pp. 102-107.

[62] Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity,* pp. 88-90.

[63] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 73-79.

[64] Iqbal, Fārsī Kullīyāt, 116.

psychological) of it we might choose to explore, and central to this relationality is the basic relation which enables my being a self, i.e. my relation with God.[65]

We have highlighted in this section, the particular ways in which Iqbal's vision of *khudī* speaks to the individual/ universe difference. Iqbal's vision sees both individual and natural universe as creatures of God. Therefore, personal moral betterment is related to the universe, because the individual person is a creature, who is called by God to ceaselessly inculcate *khudī;* that same Divine *khudī,* which is the reason for all that is in the universe. This particular kind of person-universe relation makes Iqbal's account quite distinct from those which seek to construct a mediation between person and nature, or to find stable patterns of connection between the two.

To sum up Part I of this chapter: here, we have articulated how Iqbal's vision of *khudī* can be approached for those interested in a range of religious moral reflection. Iqbal's vision of *khudī* is a religious moral-ontological vision, which includes accounts of moral anthropology and moral formation. It is not a system which provides processes to generate specific, actionable guidance, or a "framework" which prioritizes the achievement of logical non-contradiction. Rather, the moral power of Iqbal's vision of *khudī* draws from its "narrative" capacity to see as related, the individual, collective, and nature, within an (self-consciously human and limited) "account" of God as Creative and relating to creatures. This vision then enables particular kinds of moral beginnings and aspirations (both individual and collective) to be seen as desirable. Notwithstanding its complex detail and internal variance, one of the demonstrably recurrent features of Iqbal's vision of *khudī* is that it overwhelmingly construes moral formation as a relational activity (or set of activities) with performative and rule-abiding dimensions, in ways that have all been re-stated in this section. Having before us, this recapitulation of Iqbal as moral thinker, introduces Iqbal as such, to a broader field of Religious Ethics where he is virtually unknown, and also, potentially, invites those who are familiar with Iqbal, to reconsider whether Iqbal's moral thought is centrally concerned with maintaining a set of principles, or achieving a terminal set of goals, or if it is, as I have argued, a moral-ontological vision which makes certain kinds of agents, formations, and aspirations, desirable and undesirable.

With this summary of Part I in mind, we now turn to name some of the key dimensions of Iqbal's construal of human morality, which can be compelling and powerful for moral agents.

II. Stating its Compelling Features

If, as in this dissertation, Iqbal's vision of *khudī* is understood and read as a moral-ontological vision, then at least three compelling features[66] of this vision come to the fore, which we now state: the possibility of a non-insular moral self-centeredness, the recognition of moments of dense interrelation of moral life, and the naturalization of moral effort. Although these three features are organically related, we can explain them better in each of the following sections. First, we turn to what I call "non-insular moral self-centeredness".

[65] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 89-90.

[66] All of these features, could also make Iqbal potentially un-pleasing to contrary visions. These are prominent, characteristic elements of his moral vision, which can also be seen as compelling and forceful.

i) Non-insular moral self-centeredness

This refers to the fact that in Iqbal's moral vision, there is an intense centering of the self and a necessity for "non-insularity", i.e. that various selves and creaturely kinds need to continuously relate to each other. The root of this aspect of Iqbal is the God-relationality of his moral vision. As we have seen, for Iqbal, even in the enviable stages of moral maturation, the self-to-Divine-Self relation, is never erased or sublimated. This makes relating to other creatures a part of a much more fundamental and inerasable relation of one's self with God.

Iqbal's vision opens up a way of thinking about the self, within which centering what it means to be a self, is not an afterthought as in some contemporary moral topography. [67] Additionally, Iqbal's centering of self-ness sees self-focus as more than merely tolerable or instrumental for moral growth. [68] Iqbal knew that even those critics who, in his view, envisioned the self as "mere illusion" had to "postulate" its existence (e.g. to construct an ethical system, one has to imagine a canvas of units), but Iqbal's own assertion within moral thought is, in many ways, more radical than such a "postulation".[69] For Iqbal, moral formation is not accessorial to the self, but gets to the heart of what it means for me to be a self.

This is because, on Iqbal's view, what it means to be a self, is to already be in a relationship with God. To be a self means to be continuously given self-ness by God. Yet, and this is where the non-accessorial nature of formation comes in: this Divine giving always invites my response. This self-ness, which is being given by God, is never fully possessed by any creature; not just un-possessed by me, but also by all other persons, and all social collectives.

Thus, for Iqbal, all that is, participates in the immensity and dynamism of the Divine gift of self-ness. This makes all creatures, insuperably related. Although Iqbal does not present nature's participation in *khudī* in the same aspirational way as he does human persons and collectives, as seen in Ch.3, his words on nature continuously describe *khudī* as the reason why the universe, is. And then, Iqbal also defines human moral formation, rather distinctively, as the fortification and inculcation of *khudī.*

In other words, the moral-ontological nature of Iqbal's vision of *khudī* is difficult to miss. When we say that Iqbal's vision has an intense relationality, this does not just mean that he sees various creatures as interrelated, although that is part of it. However, more broadly, Iqbal sees self-ness as the reason for all that is, and, that to which persons and collectives always aspire in their moral strife for betterment. That which is why all that is, is (self-ness), is also that which is the endless work of morality (self-ness).

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[67] *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics* (2005), and *Companion to Ethics* (1991), both have a vast variety of headings but nothing like "Ethics of Selfhood" or "Personal Ethics". In the former, the Part under the heading "Persons" focuses on "Human Rights", mainly from a legal perspective.

[68] John H. Whittaker, "Selfishness, Self-Concern and Happiness," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 8, no. 1 (1980): 149-159; David W. Tien, "Oneness and Self-Centeredness In the Moral Psychology of Wang Yangming," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 40, no. 1 (2012), p. 52.

[69] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction,* pp. 79-80.

Thus, there is an inerasable focus on one's own self, but also on self-ness. To better my own self, means to be responding to God who is endlessly giving, by my inculcating that self-ness, which He alone is giving to me, but also to others.

Instead of saying, "moral life involves only me", or, "morality has no room for self-centeredness", Iqbal's moral vision alternatively asserts (to borrow a phrase) that "moral life involves always self-ness". [70] The lack of "full having" of self-ness by anyone but God, makes being a self, already a relationship, and necessitates a non-insular relationship between various creatures of God, for the moral growth of both individuals and collectives. Therefore, a moral agent can see themselves as a non-negligible, and un-effaceable, self. That particular self is inerasably significant; it is never reducible to other creatures, and not even to God. Simultaneously, because individual and collective "selves" are defined so relationally (i.e. as being selves, because of given-yet-aspirational self-ness), others must be related to in a manner that is God-obedient, and "self-centered", insofar as it inculcates my own God-self relation.

This non-insular self-centeredness, according to which relationality between selves is never effaced or sublimated, can be seen as the center of Iqbal's reflective moral power, from which the other two compelling features follow.

ii) Dense interrelation of moral life

Because Iqbal's vision sees creatures as so interrelated, and God as related to all creatures, an effect of this is that he invites us to be soberly attentive to the overwhelming trickiness of moral life, so much so that God *would* be needed on such an account.

One of the benefits of parsing out Iqbal's vision of *khudī* is to appreciate this particular point. If we had only said: all creatures are interrelated for Iqbal, then this would be insufficient. Rather, for Iqbal, creatures are interrelated in ways that absolutely exigent, and fundamental, for their own self. One example, as seen in the previous chapter, is how dependent (indeed, like a baby) the societal creature is upon the prophetic individual, to even commence their moral growth. Likewise, in beginning their moral formation, the individual person is called upon by Iqbal to learn obedience from nature, such that they might become properly submitted to Divine law.

This Iqbalian assertion is in sharp contrast to some modern religious accounts, which desire a jettisoning of the notion of a deep interconnectedness of various aspects of moral life. For example, some religious ethicists of the market, have argued that the way forward for many people who imagine morality as a relation with God, is to "separate the personal from the impersonal" (e.g. "home" from "market economy").[71] Yet, as contemporary sociologists have gone "into the field" and conducted investigations of "impersonal transactions" like pizza delivery person, government office employee, grocery cashier, etc., these interactions are discovered to be distinctive, not because of "impersonality", but that they involve different

[70] "Moral life involves also my "I"". Cf. James M. Gustafson, "Participation: A Religious Worldview," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 44, no. 1 (March 2016): 148-175.

[71] Peter J. Hill and John Lunn, "Markets and Morality: Things Ethicists Should Consider When Evaluating Market Exchange", in *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 35, no. 4 (2007): 627-53.

modalities of relating to others, and the world, than might be familiar to certain scholarly paradigms.[72]

Everyday moral life often bears out the view that different aspects of life, or, in Iqbal's terms, that different kinds of creatures, are intimately interrelated and interdependent. Iqbal invites us to consider whether the task of ethics might not be one of detaching relationships from universes of prescriptive rules, but that, given this thickness, we might need to (re-)turn to the relation that encompasses all other possible relations, i.e. the one with God, and begin by obeying first the demands and commands of this relation, in order to be able to see what is wrong or reparable in the first place, which we cannot do alone. Iqbal thus invites us to the task of envisioning a relational moral vision, within which persons, communities, and the natural world, are not insulated from each other, and also offers his vision in which God is necessary to provide even elementary guidance within such a densely interrelated reality. With Iqbal, we are prompted to ask whether, and for what gain, the relational and the personal dimensions of ethics should be assumed to be the province of the fragmentary and "small-scale".[73]

Furthermore, a characteristic feature of Iqbal's attention to the dense interrelation of moral life, is the following: these interrelations are not processes as much as ongoing, God-responsive relationships. In other words, the participation of individual and societal moral agents in the gift of "self-ness", is a prominent feature of Iqbal's moral vision.

This has particularly noteworthy implications for what Iqbal calls the "Muslim collective". Aspects of these implications have begun to be appreciated in recent years. For example, Sevea has sketched Iqbal's discontents with those political views which attempted to constrain the Muslim community's relationship with God, to the boundaries of any one nation-state or number of nation-states.[74] On the culture-of-science front, Basit Koshul has noted how Iqbal's invitation to the Muslim community to embrace "the burden of science" is not an end in itself, but envisioned as a way of a collective self relating to God, and one that is seen as continuous with the activity of properly receiving the verses of Divine word.[75] These are both excellent studies, and the more panoramic point which I am making here, is that both of these implications are part of Iqbal's even broader moral-ontological vision, because such calls to engagement with nature and the world, are enabled first by Iqbal's construal of the Muslim community as one God-responsive-"self", and not primarily as "space".

Iqbal's envisioning of societal moral agents as selves in relation to God, appears to be timely. The Pakistani writer Syed Nomanul Haq has recently written: "in the construction of what we

[72] Detlef Pollack and Rosta, Gergely, *Religion and Modernity: An International Comparison* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 15-30.
[73] Cf. Silberbauer (1991).
[74] Iqbal Singh Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 125-147.
[75] Basit B. Koshul, *Semiotics as a Resource for Theology: Philosophical Warrants and Illustrations* (Abu Dhabi, UAE: Kalam Research and Media, 2017).

call the modern world, Islam has had only an indirect role to play."[76] I can understand why my friends in Islamic Studies would immediately take apart this statement; one need only point at the subtlety of history, but we could also reference the myriad ways in which the modern world as it is, would have been inconceivable, were it not for unique intellectual and cultural developments spread all across the span of Islamic history, in a way whose "distance" from point of initial impact, is difficult to determine.[77] However, despite the hyperbolic articulation, there is also a stubborn truth in Haq's statement: many Muslim communities, and also individuals within these communities, are experiencing what Shahab Ahmad has more subtly called the "constriction" to envisioning Islam as "discourse of prescription", and not "discourse of exploration"; the latter being possible only when a community is able to imagine itself as a "*self* with its associated components of self-awareness, of personhood, of identity, of the individual, of the collective, of the personality, of self-action."[78] Muslim communities and individuals today, often do experience a "general loss of agency"; an "enervation" as Iqbal calls it,[79] with respect to the world and universe, whether it be in the lack of material-technological breakthroughs which could be located as "Islamic" in a geographical or intellectual sense, or the many, ongoing, political and military losses, and economic imperialisms, which continue to enable a receding scope of Islam within the fabric of everyday life.[80]

If we grant this situation, then Iqbal's vision provides a potential re-articulation of the "problem of loss of agency" of the Muslim collective. Then, the central anxiety would not be that this aspiring collective is incapable of transforming the world or nature, but that underlying this enervation is an erroneous moral-ontological fragmentation, i.e. the breadth of Divine Creativity, insofar as it is knowable or visible to a finite creature like a social collective, is not being properly embraced by this collective. To use another one of Iqbal's imagistic contrasts, seen in Ch.4: Iqbal's vision might caution that underlying such an enervation, is behaving too much like Iblīs, and not enough like Adam. Iqbal is genuinely sympathetic to what he sees as the enervation problem of his co-religionists, and he experiences it as his own. Yet, he also invites his co-religionists to re-imagine some of the terms in which it might need to be articulated. Iqbal ushers the Muslim communal self as he imagines it, to ask: in desiring to transform social collectives and the natural world, might we first need to envision individual, society, and nature, all as creatures of God, and in engaging with all of whom, nothing less than our collective relationship with God is at stake? Can finite creatures alone carry the burdens of moral epistemology, i.e. how to know that what we think we should do, is what we really should do? Or might it be that we need God, who alone has a continuous relationship with the complete entirety of his varied (individual, collective, natural) creation? At the very least, even for those who might not share

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[76] Syed Nomanul Haq, "Islamic Ecology: Toward Retrieval and Reconstruction", in *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust* (Cambridge, Mass: Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2003), 121.

[77] Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement In Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsid Society* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

[78] Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), pp. 341-342.

[79] See Chapter 2 of my dissertation.

[80] Ahmed (2016), pp. 516-517; Jonathan E. Brockopp, "Islam and Bioethics: Beyond Abortion and Euthanasia," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 36, no. 1 (2008): 3-12.

his theological commitments and directions, Iqbal invites all of us interested in religious moral thought, Muslim and non-Muslim, to be open to such questions, which appear to be all the more pertinent today.[81]

In addition to centering self-ness within moral reflection, in a non-insular manner, and being attentive to the dense interconnectedness of moral life, Iqbal's moral vision also offers a naturalization of moral effort. [82]

iii) Naturalization of moral effort

This refers to the fact that because dynamism is such a prominent feature of Iqbal's moral-ontological vision, he makes the personal and collective struggle for moral growth, itself a desirable activity, and not a cause for despair.

This is a prominent effect or upshot of his positive centering of self-ness/ *khudī,* without making it fully "given" to anyone but God. Thus, we see that restlessness and dissatisfaction are enduring features of Iqbal's moral vision, and ones which cohere with his vision of nature's ontic dynamism. We also see that language like "good" and "evil" is used rather infrequently by Iqbal, whereas the activity of moral betterment is described as a self increasingly inculcating *khudī.* The result of this view is a particular construal of moral agency as a reality, and not as an instrument towards accessing reality. What does this mean? If it were the case that moral agency were defined exclusively in terms of an individual's capacity to visibly change a creature in accordance with certain principles (as in certain popular understandings of activism), the scope of what it means to be a moral actor is narrower. Yet in Iqbal, moral agency is not exclusively about transforming the world, or nature, or a person, but also about a truthful account of, and participation in, the way things are in a much larger and ontologically broad sense.

My personal exertions to better my own self, my natural environment, or my community, all of my "not-yet-ness";[83] for Iqbal, these exertions express an eternal truth about the universe and social collectives, both of whom are dynamic and restless expressions of the Divine Creativity, which in turn is inexhaustive. It is in this vein that Iqbal distinctively describes the activity of prophets, whose moral elite-ness he has no qualms describing, as continuous with "growing

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[81] It should be noted that this side of Iqbal not been fully appreciated in his homelands, especially in Pakistan. There can be quite a euphoric tone among prominent media voices, with three main errors: i) an incorrect understanding of *khudī* as a teleological end or confident disposition, capable of being "possessed" by rational or emotional readjustment (to be fair, this aspect of *khudī* has been poorly observed by academic readers as well); ii) a misrepresentation of Iqbal as empty of any anxiety about the challenges and demands upon the finite moral agent (individual and collective); and iii) a lack of awareness about Iqbal's own distancing from the image of a "moral exemplar". For examples of such "arguments", see Syed Murtaza Hussain, "Iqbal and the Doctrine of Khudi", *Dawn Newspaper,* April 21, 1972; K. A. Rashid, "Allama Iqbal and his Philosophy of Self", *Dawn Newspaper,* April 21, 1966; Ali Mian Kifait, "Iqbal's Doctrine of Khudi", *Pakistan Times,* January 18, 1963.

[82] A slightly pedantic note, for Religious Ethics scholars: here I do not mean "ethical naturalism", which is often antithetical to moral-ontological reflections. I mean that in Iqbal's moral vision, ceaseless dynamism of the universe, and moral effort, are seen as part of the same continuum.

[83] I borrow this excellent phrase from S. Alam Khundmiri, "A Study of the Concepts of Transformation, Leadership and Freedom in the Political Philosophy of Iqbal" in *Iqbal: Commemorative Volume*, Eds. Ali Sardar Jafri and K.S. Dugal (New Delhi: All India Iqbal Centenary Celebrations Committee, n.d.), 95.

vegetation", and with "animals growing new organs to suit their environments".[84] Even the prophetic crescendo of moral agency, which is supremely world-transformative and nature-commanding, is not that radically different from the way the universe operates, and the universe is this way, because God's Creativity is dynamic, ceaseless, and unending. As the moon had said to the stars in Ch.4 (in my translation of Iqbal's verse): restless motion "is the ancient custom here".[85]

From the perspective of the majority of persons and collectives, who are all non-prophetic moral agents, one of the most attractive aspects of such a struggle-naturalized moral vision is that my exertions to better myself or fellow creatures are not a cause for despair. In Iqbal's own words: "finitude is not a misfortune"[86], and "fear and grief" about my endless exertions, are the hallmarks of an immature moral agent who has not yet grasped what morality is about.[87] In fact, on Iqbal's view, even "the greats" of human morality, i.e. the prophets, are not aspiring to terminal excellence, because such a desire would be theologically imperceptive. However, and this is where the complexity of Iqbal's moral vision is also worthy of our reading, there is a genuine acknowledgement (and in many cases, a conscious embodiment by Iqbal himself) of finitude and its discontents.

While, it is not a cause for despair that I have to struggle so hard and so continuously to improve myself or anything else, this naturalization of moral effort in Iqbal, does *not* equate to an equalization of all struggle. Most proximately in the dissertation, we had seen this in the previous chapter, in Iqbal's description of obedience to Divine law as the ineluctable beginning of collective moral formation. Thus, for Iqbal there are societies, which he often associates with Western or European nations, which struggle "like poor, thrashing little birds". However, because this struggle does not begin with an obedience to prophetically revealed law, in Iqbal's view, it is ultimately futile and non-generative.[88]

Rather, Iqbal's vision exhorts that individuals and social collectives should not "thrash" aimlessly, as it were, but center the relationship that is the most fundamental to them, i.e. the one between their own self and God, in order to be able to become God-obediently transformative or generative, in the first place. In this sense, Iqbal's vision is consistently "self-centered", i.e. it maintains its emphasis on relationality, and on a non-insular self-centeredness, even in moments where it envisions the dynamism of moral life.

There appears to be a growing appreciation of this subtle point within Iqbal Studies, largely with respect to the question of the religious meaning of scientific inquiry. For example, some earlier essays in Iqbal Studies had framed the importance of science in Iqbal, mainly in terms of a "changing global milieu". The argument went that the Muslim collective is experiencing a new

[84] Iqbal, *Reconstruction,* 100.
[85] Iqbal, Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 144-145.
[86] Ibid., 93.
[87] Iqbal, *Speeches, Statements and Writings,* 102.
[88] Cf. his Urdū poem, "Europe", in Urdū Kullīyāt, pp. 497-498.

technological environment, and it has to adapt in order to endure, materially.[89] In recent years, writings on Iqbal have begun to move towards a finer recognition, that for Iqbal, science is not just an unavoidable milieu for a Muslim collective, but that for him, the way that a collective interacts with, and inquires into, nature, is always part a relationship between collective self and God.[90] It is not just about survival; it is even more personal. It is about a self and God, Who alone gave the self, and gives the self, self-ness.

In closing this section, it is worth recalling that Iqbal never presented himself as a predictive theorist, and often uses the words "do not know". In appreciating the compelling and characteristic features of his moral-ontological vision of *khudī,* it would be unwise to search for "specific solutions" akin to something like a manual. Yet, it would be equally foolish, for anyone interested in a range of moral thought, to neglect that Iqbal offers a powerful moral vision, which asserts that those aspects of moral life are related, which are often assumed to be fragmented or divorced from each other. Absolutely central to Iqbal's distinctive envisioning, is to see self-ness as a far more central category for moral life, and moral reflection, than might be taken for granted. Iqbal offers a moral vision within which individual persons and collectives are called to act, not as units, objects, or spaces, but as selves responding to a selfness-giving God. Among one of the implications of such a vision, is that relating properly to others (or, in Iqbal's words, to other creatures) is not a matter of maintaining a proper, civil atmosphere between us, but that it is urgent, exigent, and non-negligible, for my own self, and for the relationship that should matter to me the most, because it is why I am a self, i.e. the relationship of myself and God.

Therefore, Iqbal's vision of *khudī* offers an account of the activity of human morality, within which both the nature of individual selves qua selves, and the necessity of relating to others, can be seen as desirable and real. Iqbal's account of self-ness as God-given, yet always aspirational, opens up a way of thinking about morality, within which the individuality of persons is intensely emphasized, but so is the dense web of relations between individual, society, and nature, all of which are seen as finite creatures of God.

Chapter Conclusion

After describing what *khudī* means in a more abstracted manner, we have seen how Iqbal's vision of *khudī* can be understood, by putting it next to some recognizable categorizations within Religious Ethics. This activity of "placing" or "situating" must also be de-situating, because Iqbal's vision does not need to sit comfortably within any of the known moral-theoretical taxonomies. However, that is precisely why it is of use for Religious Ethics as a field undergoing "expansion in its range" of applicability, to begin to understand more unfamiliar accounts.

Iqbal's vision is interesting for a larger field of readers, who are open to varieties of religious moral thought, because it simultaneously has quite recognizable concerns and directions, and,

[89] E.g. Mohammed Maruf, *Iqbal and His Contemporary Western Religious Thought* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1987), pp. 127-138.

[90] Peter Ochs, for example, writes about the significance of scientific inquiry for Iqbal, as an activity of "prayer" and of relating to God. Cf. "Iqbal, Peirce and Modernity," in *Muhammad Iqbal, A Contemporary*, eds. Muhammad Suheyl Umar and Basit Bilal Koshul (Lahore, Pakistan: Iqbal Academy, 2010) pp. 79-94.

because it folds these into a vision whose key elements are quite distinctive, and probably un-encountered in this precise "narrative" combination by most readers. In this chapter, we have highlighted all of the ways in which Iqbal's vision is as I have just stated. It is a moral-ontological vision which relates person, nature, and collectives, but, without desiring to build a mediating conceptual "bridge", or finding an ordered, hierarchical pattern; it sees moral formation as progressive, and, submission to discipline as primary within moral formation, and yet, how different it is from a neo-Aristotelian account like Mahmood's, in which exterior performativity and a final excellence are desired. Furthermore, Iqbal emphasizes obedient submission to the God-given law so repeatedly and intensely; and yet, refuses to define morality in terms of impersonal laws, instead viewing it with a persistent emphasis on relationality with God. And underlying all of the above: perhaps the most characteristic feature of Iqbal's moral vision is how it sees "self-ness" as a much more intensively real, and embedded, and yet endlessly and dynamically aspirational, feature of existence as well as morality. Iqbal's vision offers a reconsideration of conceptions of "the self" as a unit in contrast to, or situated within, social world, or natural universe. We are at least prompted to ask if self as a moral concept, can only be a powerfully receptive substratum or a nested unit within a stable scheme, or if it can also be an endlessly aspirational "given", given by God.

Iqbal imagines "self-ness", itself, as being of a more expanded significance within ethics, than might be ordinarily presumed, even by more prevalent "making" or "abiding" conceptions, which are already attentive to morality as personal and collective self-betterment. These conceptions, however, are very useful for reading and studying Iqbal, because they help us to sketch, in a more fine-grained manner than is common in Iqbal-readings, some of the understudied, and clearly present, moral dimensions of Iqbal's thought. Moreover, and coming full circle to what I had written in the Introduction and Ch.1: certain spaces have been opened up within contemporary Religious Ethics, which give Iqbal's *khudī*-talk as moral reflection, a much-needed room to be understood on its own terms. In particular, the move towards "thick description" in "third-wave global-ness", for which we are grateful to Bucar and Stalnaker, and, the embrace of "narrative" forms of coherence, in reflections on religious moral thought, both turn out to be uniquely suited to understanding Iqbal. To say this more briefly: such openings allow us to give Iqbal a space to be understood, without attempting to make him "fit".

Thus concluding our final chapter, we now turn to provide some concluding remarks for the whole dissertation.

Conclusion

This project has offered a new contribution to a growing, and heartening, set of ways of reading Iqbal, which are attentive to his many dimensions, and which do the work of carefully treating a delineated dimension. Indeed, the study of Iqbal is a fertile intellectual location, as evidenced by the very recent and upcoming works which generate a worthwhile "yield", even as they focus on "just" one facet of Iqbal. E.g. we have studies of Iqbal as a formal-logical thinker,[1] as a historically embedded political voice,[2] as a reader of other Islamic thinkers from the vantage point of historical-critical hermeneutics,[3] and currently, we have an upcoming, and much overdue, study of specific parts of Iqbal's poetics.[4] Amidst these exciting contributions, this project has offered a reading of Iqbal that can articulate some of the most significant ways in which he was a moral thinker, and, notice the intricacies, internal patterns, and coherences, which lend his moral thought a richness that should not be neglected by those interested in Iqbal and/or in a range of religious moral thought.

I have argued and demonstrated that Iqbal's vision of *khudī* offers an account in which the activity of moral betterment is insuperable from the ways things are, or what is, more generally and ontologically. Observing and describing this dimension of Iqbal, allows us to see him as a previously unexplored contributor to a growing set of discourses within Religious Ethics, which see ethics not just as an act of construction but as a form of participation. In other words, a substantial part of Iqbal's power as a moral thinker lies in what might be called his "narrative capacity"; his capacity to en-vision as related, (in his case) the natural universe, human person, and collectives, as distinct-yet-interrelated layers of his vision of *khudī.* Moreover, he offers a distinctive vision of ethics as an inerasably relational and responsive activity, which is also better understood with reference to more familiar conceptualizations, and, which resists being neatly "situated" or "placed" within these familiar moral taxonomies.

The current directions and trends within global and/or comparative Religious Ethics, particularly those opened up by thinkers like Bucar and Stalnaker, help us to understand Iqbal in a careful manner, while using multiple explanatory tools which are suited to delineating a particular sub-dimension. This means that, while we embrace the push against exclusively centering action-determination or systematization within Religious Ethics, which is powerfully argued for by thinkers like Taylor and Gonzalez-Andrieu, we do not need to be complacent in terms of providing

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[1] Basit Bilal Koshul, *Semiotics as a Resource for Theology: Philosophical Warrants and Illustrations* (Abu Dhabi, UAE: Kalam Research and Media, 2017).
[2] Iqbal Singh Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[3] Muhammad Faruque, *The Labyrinth of Subjectivity: Constructions of the Self from Mullā Ṣadrā to Muḥammad Iqbāl,* at digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu. 2018. Accessed online on 10 Mar 2019.
[4] Francesca Chubb-Confer, "The Poetic and the Political in Islam: Lyric Form in Muhammad Iqbal" (Dissertation, University of Chicago, forthcoming).

thick description and exposition which is evidenced in Iqbal's own words. That directions in Religious Ethics intersect to be able to read Iqbal in this way, is fortunate for both that field and Iqbal Studies, because this helps us to understand the details of Iqbal as moral-ontological thinker, in a fine-grained manner that can still be intelligible to those concerned with expanding the range of what is included in the study of religious moral reflection.

As we wrap up this project, it is germane to mention some further, unexplored opportunities within the study of Iqbal, which one hopes will be taken up in the future. In this project, particularly in Ch.3, we have articulated the recurrent features of Iqbal's natural vision, e.g. a sense of nature's ontic esteem and dynamism, which are significant within his moral vision. Alternatively, but not in contrast, there are excellent projects which describe the logical patterns of Iqbal's "nature-talk", in a more abstracted and formal manner that can converse with central philosophers of American pragmatism.[5] Alongside moral-ontological vision and logical mapping, there is a space for what might be called a more explicitly "phenomenological" articulation of Iqbal's natural vision; one which provides an account of all the *hows* of how nature is experienced as non-negligible Divine Creative expression, in addition to arguments like mine and Koshul's that this *is* so, in Iqbal's view. There have been hints and gestures towards this direction, e.g. Annemarie Schimmel, when discussing "sacred aspects of nature and culture" within a more general "phenomenological approach to Islam", quotes Iqbal's words in some places, to bolster her picture of nature's religious import from an Islamic intellectual-historical perspective. [6] However, a worthwhile reading of Iqbal himself could be developed, which focuses more squarely on the lived experience of nature as Divine Creative expression, in/for Iqbal. This could, at least partially, respond to the call of some Muslim Iqbal readers that a practically-oriented environmental ethics might begin to be constructed, in which Iqbal's vision plays a guiding role.[7] This kind of reading would be a carrying forward of the aspirations and directions which are opened up by Iqbal's broader moral-ontological vision, which my project has described.

Even more distinct from this current project, and from all or most of the works which I have cited: to my knowledge, as of yet, there has not been a textured study of Iqbal's usages in South Asia that involves statistical or quantitative modes of reading. At certain historically and politically significant times of the calendar, at least in Pakistan, particular verses, images, words, and emotional associations, all revolving around the iconic persona of Iqbal, frequently come into play. Although we all know that Iqbal was a masterful poet who succeeded in generating

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[5] Cf. Koshul (2017).

[6] Annemarie Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 6-21.

[7] Javid Iqbal (Iqbal's son), "Iqbal's Views on the Material and Spiritual Future of Humanity," *Iqbal Review* vol. 45, no. 2 (Apr 2004). Accessed online at http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr04/01.htm; Ejaz Akram, "Iqbal's Political Philosophy in the Light of Islamic Tradition," in *Muhammad Iqbal: A Contemporary,* Eds. Muhammad Suheyl Umar and Basit Bilal Koshul (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2010), pp. 129-166.

political emotions, it would be useful, especially as a field usually interested in qualitative forms of reading and understanding, to have on the table, a data mapping of these various social usages. I do not have the intellectual or social-scientific tools to articulate precisely what such a mapping might look like, but, for example, we might benefit from a visualization of which words are most frequently used, at certain times in election cycles, or which images receive the highest representation in print as well as digital media. It would be interesting to model and compare South Asian "frequent usages" with Persian and Anglophone ones, in addition to other geographical locations where Iqbal has been read. Such modes of qualitative or social-scientific analysis have generally been underrepresented within the study of Iqbal, and they would greatly aid the collective body of Iqbal readers, in terms of having an evidenced representation of those aspects of Iqbal which various publics repeatedly select and forefront. This kind of analysis might also aid more "mainstream" scholars of Iqbal, in their educational role as public teachers and academic professors, who specialize in Iqbal, and have the capacity to bring understudied dimensions of Iqbal to the world.

The above are just some examples of the future, worthwhile directions that the study of Iqbal as moral thinker, could take. For brevity's sake, we cannot list all of these, but one hopes that any such endeavor rides those currents within the study of Iqbal, which are sensitive to the many dimensions of this influential thinker, as well as the limitations of any one reading; those which seek to inform the reader about Iqbal's aspects in a fairly detailed manner, rather than focusing overwhelmingly on the reader's own assessments or choices. In other words, what would be welcome more generally speaking, is a continuation of the current increase in scholarly attention towards the contents and patterns of Iqbal's own thoughts, words, and reflections, but in a way which seeks to speak intelligibly and generously to those who are yet unfamiliar with Iqbal.

Across his writings, Iqbal has inscribed, and re-inscribed, the interrelation of the human person, nature, and social collectives, in such a way that all three are seen by him as non-negligible expressions of Divine Creativity. Few authors who have written on Iqbal have explicitly mentioned or highlighted this creaturely inter-relation and this breadth, particularly with respect to Iqbal's vision of *khudī*, where it is so prominent. In selecting to read Iqbal as a moral-ontological thinker with aid from recent currents in Religious Ethics, this project has forefronted and detailed what is often ignored. Although this final comment is not a strictly academic one, it is probably a good note on which to end the dissertation: in workshops, seminars, classrooms, mosques, lectures, private gatherings, and public conversations, I cannot recall the number of times that an interlocutor of mine, has been surprised that there really is much more to Iqbal's vision of *khudī* than personal "self-confidence" or "national pride", let alone, that it might even have something to do with his thoughts on the universe. Yet, it is so. If this project, and the findings herein, can succeed in engendering a deeper and broader understanding of Iqbal, and one of his most distinctive "concepts" —and indeed, if my work can problematize the notion that

khudī is “one concept” or “programme” that is easily captured and implemented—then for this effect, one can be grateful.

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