



IQBAL: A CRITIC OR A DEFENDER OF SUFISM?

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Abstract

Allama Muhammad Iqbal, a celebrated political leader, philosopher and scholar of Islam, is considered the national poet of Pakistan. He belonged to a religious family which was spiritually affiliated with Sufism. The place of Sufism in Islam has always remained a controversial question in the history of Islam. The question regarding the compatibility of Islam and Sufism and the place of Sufism in Islam was raised afresh with the advent of modernity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Iqbal attempted to reconcile Sufism with rational-scientific knowledge and tried to address this issue by challenging the traditional sufi conception. He advocated the need to reform the institution of Sufism. He considered it compatible with Islam but rejected the un-Islamic practices amalgamated in the institution. Iqbal never engaged in a wholesale rejection of Sufism per se as an ideology, but he criticized some of the sufi doctrines and practices, which include un-Islamic influences, hereditary succession, commercialization of khanqahs, and the ideal of asceticism or world-renunciation. In fact, Iqbal propagated the idea of "Reformed Sufism," which refers to the kind of Sufism which is shariah-oriented, and has the ability to reconcile with modernity, and contribute to moral reconstruction of the society. His idea of reformed Sufism entailed the concept of 'ego' or khudi, determination, dynamism, optimism and hopefulness.

Key Words: Iqbal, Sufism, Reformed Sufism, Islamic Sufism, Un-Islamic Sufism, Shariah-Orientedness.

1. Iqbal's Life and Sufism

Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) was born to a religious family in village of Lochar (Sialkot). The religious inclination of his family towards Sufism and his higher education in Europe were the two essential elements in shaping his thought but the influence of family ever remained the dominant factor in him. His father *Shaykh* Nur Muhammad, was a great admirer of Sufism or spiritual values, and had pledged in the Qadri *Silsilah*. He also used to meditate, and even when someone reads his life history and spiritual experiences, he appears to be a sufi.¹ Iqbal himself had spiritual initiation or *bay'ah* in the Qadri *Silsilah*.² He had a spiritual connection with Ghauth al-Asar Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Umar Abbasi of Gujranwala in the Qadri *Silsilah* because of his father's connection with him. Iqbal had pledged at the hand of his father, his father had pledged with Hazrat Sa'in Shah, who was a *khalifa* of Khwaja Muhammad Umar.³ Mosque was the centre of learning for Iqbal in his early age, and then he went to elementary school. He did his Masters in Philosophy and got higher education abroad. Then, he did PhD and wrote thesis with the title *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. However, he himself had claimed that western education provided him the opportunity to study Islam with new perspectives but he categorically rejected the European influence.⁴ He admitted that he is an enlightened being only because his family inculcated the true spirit of Islam in him.⁵ He composed various books on themes including prose, poetical works, and works regarding Sufism and theological issues. His major works are *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi*, *Asrar-i-Khudi*, *Payam-i-Mashriq*, *Zabur-i-Ajam*, *Javid Nama*, *Bang-i-Dara*, *Bal-i-Jibril*, *Armughan-i-Hijaz* and *Zarb-i-kalim*. Iqbal's works which throw light on his religious ideas, particularly dealing with Sufism are *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* and *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*.

The present paper is an attempt to analyze Iqbal's interpretation of Sufism; an esoteric concept of religion or spirituality in rationalist/modernist framework in a very different manner from the traditional Sufi conception. It also sheds light on the idea why he appeared as a defender or a critic of Sufism by critically analyzing his views on Islamic and un-Islamic Sufism. This paper is a humble attempt to fill the research gap on Iqbal's religious thought with particular reference to Sufism, and holds academic significance as it critically analyses his original writing and brings to the surface his original words which were wrongly interpreted, and he appeared only to be a critic of Sufism. The question that he was a defender or a critic of Sufism is extensively debated by the students of Iqbal studies but usually scholars ignore the bases of this controversy. It further explains how Iqbal redefines various traditional concepts associated with the institution of Sufism and tried to reform it. On the one hand, he appears to be advocating Sufism, and on the other, seems to reject it; but, in fact, he criticized the un-Islamic practices or traditions of the prevailing Sufism and never criticized Islamic Sufism. Iqbal was never a critic of Sufism *per se*, which means he never rejected Sufism as an ideology. He only criticized the un-Islamic practices associated with this institution.



2. Iqbal as a Defender of Sufism

Some scholars have a view that Iqbal was a defender of Sufism who advocated everything associated with Sufism. He is said to have defended some of the practices associated with the institution of Sufism and criticized many others. He renounced *rahbaniyat* or asceticism that confines a person to spend his life in sufi dwellings. He opposed the anti-*shariah* influence of regional and local cultures on Islam and Sufism. He wanted to inculcate the spiritual leanings in an individual, but this spiritual inclination does not confine him to lead a secluded life. He primarily wanted to develop the character of Imam Hussain (RA), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in an individual. To him, he should live an energetic life in society, as Imam Hussain (RA) did, who challenged oppression or coercion and sacrificed his life for this purpose but never submitted before the forces of oppression and tyranny. He stated in one of his verses:

*nikal ker khanqahon se ada kr rasm-i-shabiri
ke faqr-i-khanqahi hae faqat andoh-o-dilgiri
tere din-o-adab se arahi hae bou-i-rahbani
yahi hae marne wali umato ka alam-i-piri*⁶

(You must come outside from *khanqahs* or sufi dwellings, and perform the tradition of Imam Hussain (RA). The *khanqahi* system is only woe and grief. The pungent smell of asceticism is coming from your religion and literature. This is a feature of communities who are approaching their decline).

3. Iqbal as a Critic of Sufism

Many scholars and students of Iqbal are of the view that he was a critic of Sufism, and cited Iqbal's letter addressed to Syed Suleiman Nadvi (1884-1953) in which the former disapproved of Sufism in an open manner.⁷ It was published first in *Kuliyat-i-Makatib-i-Iqbal* and later in *Iqbal Nama*. In *Kuliyat* Iqbal stated:

*"...Tasawwuff ka wujud hi sarzamin-i-Islam mein aik ajnabi poda hae jis ne ajamiyon ki dimaghi ab-o-hawa mae parwarish pai hae"*⁸

(There is no doubt in it that the presence of Sufism is an alien plant on the soil of Islam that had grown in the surroundings of Persian mindset).

However, this letter erupted a controversy, therefore, this letter needs careful scrutiny by the scholars. The typed text of the letter was printed in the *Kuliyat* along with the image of Iqbal's original letter. The typed text talks about *Tasawwuff* but the original letter talks about *wujudi Tasawwuff*; actually the term *wujudi* was omitted from the typed/printed text, and caused confusion. The typographical mistake in *Kuliyat* needs to be corrected in order to understand the ideas of Iqbal regarding Sufism. The original letter is also available at Iqbal Academy Lahore.⁹ The Letter published in *Iqbal Nama* and the original letter published in *Kuliyat* states,

*"... Tasawwuff-i-wujudi sarzamin-i-Islam mein aik ajnabi poda hae jis ne ajamiyon ki dimaghi ab-o-hawa mae parwarish pai hae"*¹⁰

(There is no doubt that *Wujudi Tasawwuf* is an alien plant on the soil of Islam that had grown in the surroundings of Persian mindset.)

If one acknowledges the statement of Iqbal given in the original letter in *Kuliyat*, he does not appear as a critic of Sufism at all, but appears to be an opponent of *Wujudi* Sufism (Sufism that supports the philosophy of *Wahdat-al-wujud*). This is the major source which is being cited by many scholars and researchers to make an argument that Iqbal was a critic of Sufism. For instance, a renowned religious thinker of Pakistan, Ghulam Ahmed Pervez (d.1985), cites the statement of Iqbal's letter with typographical mistake to prove that he rejected Sufism.¹¹

If one further analyzes the remaining text of the same letter, Iqbal seems to continuously oppose *Wujudi Tasawwuf* or Persian Mysticism, as he says:



“It is my belief that among Muslims heightened asceticism (*ghulu-fil-zuhd*) and issue of *wujud* is a result of the influence of the Buddhism or Buddhist religion. I have a lot of respect for Khwaja-i-Naqshband and Mujaddid-i Sirhind but its lamentable that today these *silsilahs* have also come under the Persian influence. The same situation is of Qadri *Silsilah* in which I also have a pledge, although the purpose or objective of Hazrat Muhiyy al-Din Abd al-Qadir Gilani was to purify Islamic Sufism from *ajamiyat* (Persian influence).¹²

One can assess that Iqbal opposed in this letter is the influence of asceticism (*rahbaniyat*) as he clearly argued that the founders of the sufi *silsilahs* had very different intentions but later the Persian Mysticism or other local religions influenced all sufi *silsilahs*. He was not an opponent of the sufi *silsilahs* and Sufism, but seems to oppose the un-Islamic practices prevailing in sufi *silsilahs* under the influence of Persian Mysticism and Buddhism. Further, we can make an argument that he was not against the practice of pledge in sufi *silsilahs* as he admitted the fact that he himself had a pledge in Qadri *Silsilah*.¹³ If he had been against the pledge and Sufism, he would have written that he had mistakenly pledged in Qadri *Silsilah* as he challenged many beliefs on which he had a firm faith in his young age. We can infer that the typographical mistake in publishing the *Kuliyat* created this great controversy and Iqbal was made to appear as an opponent of Sufism.

4. Partial Rejection of Sufism, and the Need for its Reform

Iqbal never rejected Sufism in a wholesale manner, only partially disapproved of certain practices which he considered un-Islamic in nature. Some ideas presented by Iqbal such as un-Islamic influences, hereditary succession, *khanqahs* as a storehouse of wealth, *faqr*, asceticism and *wahdat-al-wujud* need discussion to analyze his partial rejection.

4.1. Iqbal's Criticism on Un-Islamic Influences on Sufism

Iqbal was against the anti-*shariah* regional influences on Sufism. He labeled them as Greek *Tasawwuf*, Iranian *Tasawwuf* and Indian *Tasawwuf*. He divided Sufism in two categories: Islamic and un-Islamic Sufism, generally referred to as Persian Sufism (*ajami tasawwuf*). Now the question arises how these terms were interpreted by him? In his perception Sufism is permitted in Islam but it should be based on the principles of *shariah*. It should inculcate in an individual the power of determination, dynamism and optimism. This kind of Sufism is permitted in Islam. In *Asrar-i-khudi*, he paid tribute to those sufis who taught the kind of Sufism which inculcates dynamism, optimism and action-oriented approach among the seekers, which include Bu Ali Qalandar Panipati (d.1337), Saiyyid Ali Hujwiri (980-1072) and Bayazid Bistami (d.874).¹⁴ When the message of Islam disseminated in other regions of the world, the local traditions, cultures and the regional practices influenced the true spirit of Islam. Consequently, some un-Islamic practices amalgamated in Sufism and it started inculcating pessimism, asceticism, and feebleness among the seekers. The key elements in un-Islamic Sufism are the *khanqahs* becoming the storehouses of wealth, infiltration of local cultural influences, emergence of hereditary succession, and proliferation of the ideas of *Wahdat-al-wujud*, asceticism and *faqr* (beggary or isolation from worldly affairs). We can see these two kinds of Sufism in Iqbal's works.

Iqbal had a very different interpretation regarding these two categorizations. He tried to develop the compatibility between the rational and scientific knowledge and Sufism as a spiritual institution, based upon his ideas regarding knowledge and its reliability. In his views, the knowledge gained through every medium is reliable whether it is religious-mystic experience or intuitive faculty and the five senses. To him, “intuition is only a higher kind of intellect.”¹⁵ In all human beings there is some rational faculty; in some cases, it is in the form of temporal thought while on the other hand, it is in the form of intuitive faculty. Iqbal believed that ‘the birth of Islam is the birth of inductive intellect,’¹⁶ as, according to Iqbal, the Greeks failed to assign any positive value to sense perception, and it was Islam that accorded induction its true status as a source of knowledge.¹⁷ As Iqbal stated in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* that one must admit it as

“... something focal in the process of reflective synthesis. Nor is there any reason to suppose that thought and intuition are essentially opposed to each other. They spring up



from the same roots and complement each other. The one grasps Reality piecemeal the other grasps it in wholeness. The one fixes its gaze on the eternal and the other on the temporal aspect of Reality. The one present enjoyment of the whole of Reality, the other aims at traversing the whole by slowly specifying and closing up the various regions of the whole for exclusive observation. Both seek visions of the same Reality which reveals itself to them in cordance with their function in life ... [intuition] is a higher kind of intellect.”¹⁸

Further, Iqbal more clearly differentiated between the Islamic and un-Islamic Sufism by admiring the sufis who are inclined towards the true spirit of Sufism. In *Saqi Nama*, he wrote:

tamaddun, tasawwuf, shariat, kalam
butan-i-ajam ke pujari tamam
haqiqat kharafat mae kho gai
*ye ummat riwayat mae kho gai*¹⁹

(Culture, Sufism, *Shari'ah* and scholasticism; all are idols of worship which are composed by the non-Arabs. The reality has been lost in absurdities. This *Ummah* is lost in traditions).

wo sufi ke tha khidmat-i-haq mae mard
muhabbat mae yakta hamiyat mae fard
ajam ke khiyalat mae kho giya
*ye salik maqamat mae kho giya*²⁰

(The sufi who was involved in the service of God, he was matchless in love and in ardency of soul, but somehow got lost in the Persian thought. This traveler got stuck in the half-way stations).

These verses are presented for arguing that Iqbal was an opponent of Sufism. But these verses need proper understanding. If we consider it a critique on Sufism, it means Iqbal not only criticized Sufism, but he also condemned culture, *shariah* and rationalism. Then we must acknowledge that all these notions were born out of Persian influence on Sufism, and hence, un-Islamic. According to Iqbal, in the past, the sufi seekers were absorbed in serving the Truth, and were endowed with chivalry and love, but in his own days, the sufis were stuck in the Persian ideas and stages of Sufism. This is criticism on un-Islamic orientation of Sufism but not on Sufism and its stages *per se*. He knew that the real sufi is not bound by time and space.²¹

In *Zarb-i-kalim*, Iqbal stated that Sufism which teaches the lesson of escapism or isolation from this world is un-Islamic. If knowledge gained through intuition is not the guardian of one's self or ego, it is useless. Iqbal redefined the concept of 'ego' (*khudi*), which is central point to understand Iqbal's ideas about Sufism. In his perception, ego is the development of self-consciousness and man is basically an ego which cannot be isolated from the Ultimate Ego but he retains his own individuality. He is giving rational approach to his philosophy in a way that he describes his overall philosophy by presenting the spirit (*ruh*) in a constant journey through which it reaches the level of perfection where God becomes his co-worker. This is the point where the consciousness become dynamic and active and changed into an active consciousness, which is independent in the understanding of the inner and outer world where the impossibility converts into possibility.²² The intuitive knowledge is significant and Islamic in its nature, only when it paves the way for the development of ego in a being. Islamic Sufism inculcates optimistic attitude and builds a dynamic personality, but un-Islamic Sufism focuses on asceticism.²³ Further, he believed that the sufis have lost their energy to work as a *mujahid* (a person who puts a lot of effort in something) and the wine of *alast* (primordial covenant) is presented as an excuse for this inertia.²⁴ He only approved Sufism which is pro-*shariah* and rejected anti-*shariah* practices of the institution of Sufism. He never rejected Sufism in wholesale manner.

4.2 Critique on Hereditary Succession in Sufism

Iqbal had pro-*shariah* approach towards Sufism and never criticized the real sufis and the institution of Sufism. He tried to clarify his disposition through various articles, letters and verses. He stated in one of his articles that



philosophically and historically, he had some reservations on certain issues, but they are considered as the issues or topics of Sufism. Then he said how he could criticize the objectives of Sufism and posed a question; is there any Muslim who would look down upon those who have love for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), through which they develop a relationship with God, and become a reason of the strong faith of others.²⁵ After that he stated if he would have been a critic of sufis, he might definitely not have taken help from sufi literature.²⁶

Iqbal, nonetheless, criticized the descendants of the sufis who claim their authority as legitimate heirs and argued in his verses that the aerie of an eagle is in the possession of a crow.²⁷ He refers to eagle as a symbol of the sufis who knew the true spirit of Sufism, on the other hand the crow refers to the people who claim their inherited authority as sufis with the intention to collect wealth. However, it appears that Iqbal criticized only the imposters, as he declared:

*ham ko to muyassar nhi bijli ka diya bhi
ghar pir ka bijli ke charaghon se hae roshan
shehri ho dhiyati ho musalman hae sadaa
manind-i-butan pujte hen kaabe ke barahman
nazrana nahi sud hei piran-i-haram ka
har kharqa-i-salus k andar hae mahajan
miras mei ai hae inhe masnad-i-irshad
zaghon kay tasarruf mei uqabon ka nasheman*²⁸

(We do not have lamp for light, while the house of the sufi master is illuminated by lamps. The Muslims, rural as well as urban, are simple; they worship the caretakers of *Kabah* as their idols or gods. The offering is in fact, usury. There is a usurer in every cloak. The claim and use of spiritual authority is their hereditary right; the aerie of an eagle is in the possession of crow).

Iqbal presented the same idea in many verses, so it means that he admitted those who are the real sufis considered as eagle but criticized the tradition of hereditary succession in Sufism or a pseudo-sufi referred to as crow.²⁹ He clearly stated while criticizing the pseudo-sufi that spiritual wisdom or *hikmah* are insignificant and have no use and significance if someone is not true and sincere. Their prayers, worship at middle of night, contemplations and meditations are significant only when it can develop ego in an individual.³⁰ The study argues that to him, *shariah*-orientedness is the key element of a sufi and the institution of Sufism.

4.3 Critique on *Khanqahs* as Storehouse of Wealth

Iqbal criticized the sufi institutions which had transformed into wealth collection centres. To him, the sufi imposters collect wealth from the poor class of society for their lavish life style full of comforts and use Islam as a legitimate tool as he stated:

*yahi shaykh-i-haram hae jo chura ker beich khata hei
kalim-i-bu zaro, dilq-i-awais-o-chadar-i-zahra*³¹

(This is the sufi master who sells and misinterprets the conversation of Abu Zar Ghaffari, love of Awais Qarni and the teachings of Hazrat Fatima (R.A)).

He never criticized a genuine sufi; however, the person who claims to be but who is not a sufi in actual is rejected by him. Iqbal never rejected Sufism and a sufi but he rejected pseudo-sufis who are the caretakers of the ancestors' shrines and are involved in collecting wealth.

4.4. Redefining *Faqr*

Today *faqr* (generally understood as voluntary poverty) is a very contentious term used in sufi circles and has very complex meanings attached with it. Iqbal also used his controversial term but with a very different interpretation in comparison to today's understanding. Usually, it is interpreted as beggary, poverty, asceticism and the complete escapism from this world but Iqbal interpreted it as the power which develops certain kind of determination and struggle in the way that the greatest flash of this worldly life cannot dazzle the eyes of an individual.³² He does not see this materialistic world with abhorrence but enjoys the colours of this life. When a *mard-i-momin* or a 'true



believer' is moving towards his destination, *faqr* is the power due to which this materialistic world cannot become a hurdle in his way. To accomplish this kind of *faqr* is only possible by living in this world as in Iqbal's thought this whole world is a holy place. According to a *hadith* of Prophet (PBUH), the whole of this world is a mosque or a sacred place.³³ This is the state for which Iqbal said:

chist faqr ae bandagan-i-aab-o-gil
*yak nigah-i-rah bien, yak zindadil*³⁴

(What is *faqr*, O human beings? It is the vision that perceives the way, and it is the heart that is alive)

This is the stage where a true believer can explore all the powers of this universe and use them according to God's commands. The non-believer's identity is that he remains busy in exploring universe, whereas the identity of a true believer is that he gets the universe involved in him.³⁵ As Iqbal stated in one of his verses that

kafir ki ye pehchan keh afaq mae gum hae
*momin ki ye pehchan keh gum is mae hae afaq*³⁶

(The non-believer's identity is that he remains busy in exploring universe whereas the identity of a true believer is that he gets the universe involved in him).

Iqbal has, in fact, redefined the concept of *faqr*. He stated in one of his verses that this kind of *faqr* inculcates a spirit which challenges the evil forces. In Iqbal's perception, today to some extent all the sufi *silsilahs* are disseminating the concept of *faqr* which inculcates in man escapism from this world and Islam does not allow this, though, the founders of these *silsilahs* had very different intentions. To him, the founders of sufi *silsilahs* never advocated escapism or isolation from this world and encourage the people to leave the worldly affairs and spend the whole life in *khanqahs*. Iqbal brands this kind of *faqr* as '*faqr-i-kafir*' (the renunciation of an unbeliever) and *rahbaniyat* or asceticism as he declares:

faqr-i-kafir khalvat-i-dasht-o-dar ast
*faqr-i-momin larza-i-behr-o-bar ast*³⁷

(The *faqr* of an unbeliever is solitude in the forest, whereas that of a true believer can shake the land and the water).

To Iqbal, the one who is the advocate of Quranic *faqr* '*faqr-i-momin*' works with the intention to serve the truth and to challenge the *batil* (falsehood/evil). This kind of *faqr* develops knowledge and spirit in an individual as Iqbal stated in one of his verses:

faqr uryan garm-i-badr-o-hunayn
*faqr uryan bang-i-takbir-i Hussain*³⁸

(The naked *faqr* is the heat of the battles of *Badr* and *Hunain*, it is the slogan of Husain's call).

In another verse he argues that this materialistic world is the prey of a true believer. But to tell him to give it up is like telling a falcon to let go of its prey.³⁹ Iqbal focused on the social and societal life. In his view, *faqr* is the power which can be achieved only by living in society, not in the isolated meditational life; which is not permissible in Islam.⁴⁰ But many scholars used these points to present Iqbal as a critic of Sufism.

Iqbal clearly differentiates between the Islamic and non-Islamic *faqr*. According to him, one type of *faqr* is not permissible which teaches the hunter to be a prey, whereas there is another that unlocks the secrets and mysteries of mastery over the world (mysteries of life), and this is endorsed. This *faqr* indoctrinates in nations the attitude of pensiveness, and can transform a soil into elixir. This *faqr* is associated with Imam Hussain (R.A) and has attributes of power which is the heritage of Muslims.⁴¹ In this way, Iqbal redefines the general concept of *faqr*, which is a fundamental doctrine of Sufism.



5. Iqbal's Idea of Reformation of Sufism

The concept of reform is taken generally to conceptually analyze Iqbal as a critic or a defender of Sufism in flexible manner without referring to the orientalist approach to study the process of reform. The term reform refers to restructure or redefine Muslim society with the aim to find the solutions of new problems in the light of fundamental sources and have the ability to reconcile with modernity. The term reform is generally used in scholarly literature but with different meanings. For instance, Osella and Osella argue that reform "refers to projects whose specific focus is the bringing into line of religious beliefs and practices with the core foundations of Islam, by avoiding and purging out innovation, accretion and the intrusion of 'local customs.'" ⁴² Thus the term reform advocates the compatibility of Islamic traditions and contemporary challenges by considering *shariah* as focal point. Iqbal tried to reform the institution of Sufism in the light of Islam and to reconcile it with rational knowledge by considering *shariah* as yard stick.

Iqbal never disapproved of Sufism *per se*, but he rejected some of the sufi practices as well as institutions. He wanted to inculcate spiritualism which is not characterized by asceticism and isolation from this world. To him, Sufism should lead to development of love, ego and power which permits a spiritually inclined individual to use his obscured powers and capabilities to challenge the evil forces. This is the stage where an individual develops these forces of life and can perform extraordinary tasks which are apparently not possible but only due to his love (*ishq*) and strife. Iqbal says in one of his verses that one must enlighten one's lamp or heart, as Rumi did. Iqbal admitted that Rumi got indulged in the love of Shams Tebriz (the mentor of Rumi) which brought a great revolution in his life. ⁴³ In Iqbal's perception, the sufi master and spiritually inclined individual who is energetic can change the life of an individual only by his one glance and has the capacity to control all the apparent and hidden powers. ⁴⁴ He wrote a detailed narrative of Bu Ali Qalander and his disciple to explain the idea that how an individual with strong *khudi* (ego) has the capacity to control all the powers of this universe by the development of ego and love.

To sum up the discussion, it appears that Iqbal did not altogether reject Sufism he only criticized some practices that prevailed in the sufi institutions such as hereditary succession among sufis, transformation of *khanqahs* into wealth collection centres and the asceticism. Earlier, the sufi *khanqahs* disseminated the kind of Sufism which inculcated in an individual the capability to challenge the evil forces and explore the universe. Later on, when the message of Islam spread in different regions of the world consequently, various un-Islamic influences polluted the institution of Sufism. Many anti-*shariah* practices got amalgamated in it. In Iqbal's perception Sufism is permitted and compatible with Islam but only that kind of Sufism which has the capability to acquire fresh knowledge, develop ego and empower an individual. In a nutshell, the study concludes that he was a defender of Sufism but he was against un-Islamic Sufi

sm which was polluted by varied influences. He never criticized Sufism *per se*. To him, Islamic Sufism refers to Sufism which is based on the principles of *shariah*. It should develop power, determination, dynamism, optimism and hopefulness instead of escapism and renunciation. The un-Islamic Sufism refers to Sufism which promotes asceticism and inculcates passivity and pessimism. He tried to reform the institution of Sufism and redefined the concepts associated with the institution of Sufism by primarily highlighting the role of a sufi master, who should contribute positively in the moral reconstruction of the society.

References

- ¹ Letters of Atiya Faizi in Ata Allah, Sheikh. ed. *Iqbal Nama: Majmua-i-Makatib-i-Iqbal* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2005), 423.
- ² *Bay'ah* is a pact or rite of initiation into a Sufi *tariqa*. This pact, which in truth is a pact between Allah and His slave, eternally bonds together the *murshid* and his *murid*.
- ³ Pir Jamaat Ali Shah (1834-1951), Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Bashir Abbasi and Professor Sufi Mehboob Ilahi also advocated Iqbal's *ba'yah* or spiritual initiation with Muhammad Umar Abbasi of Gujranwala. See Muhammad Qamar Iqbal, *Iqbal aur Gujranwala*, ed. Sahibzada Ahmed Kamal Abbasi (Gujranwala: Abbasi Publications,



2013), 82.

⁴ *khira na kr saka mughe jalwa-i-danish-i-farang*
surma hae meri ankh ka khak-i-madina-o-najaf

(The dust of Madina and Najaf stains like collyrium/stibium in his eyes and even the glitter of the western science could not dazzle his eyes). See Muhammad Iqbal, *Bali-i-Jibril* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 2002), 49.

⁵ *jis ghar ka magar charagh hae tou*
hae us ka mizaj arifana

(You are the light of the family which is spiritually inclined). See Muhammad Iqbal, *Zarb-i-Kalim* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 2002), 100.

⁶ Iqbal, *Armaghan-i-Hajaz* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 2015), 49.

⁷ Letter of Iqbal written on November 13, 1917 to Syed Suleiman Nadvi, as cited in Muzaffar Hussain Barni, ed. *Kuliyat-i-Makatib-i-Iqbal* Vol. I (Delhi: Urdu Academy, 2010), 673.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Original Letter is available at Iqbal Academy Lahore.

¹⁰ Ata Allah, *Iqbal Nama*, 112. Barni, *Kuliyat-i-Makatib-i-Iqbal*, 675. Also see the original Letter which is available in the Iqbal's Letters Files at Iqbal Academy Lahore.

¹¹ Ghulam Ahmed Pervez, *Tasawwuf ki Haqiqat* (Lahore: Tulu-i-Islam Trust, 2008), 280, 322.

¹² Barni, *Kuliyat-i-Makatib-i-Iqbal*, 674. and Ata Allah, *Iqbal Nama*, 112.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Syed Nazir Niazi, *Maktubat-i-Iqbal* (Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1957), 301, 346.

¹⁵ Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2011), 2.

¹⁶ Ibid., 101. Also see Tanvir Anjum, "The Birth of Islam is the Birth of Inductive Intellect: A Study in Iqbal's Epistemology," *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society* Vol. XXV (2000): 73-87.

¹⁷ Ibid., 73-87.

¹⁸ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 2011), 2.

¹⁹ Iqbal, *Bali-i-Jibril* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 2015), 61.

²⁰ Ibid., 127.

²¹ *mehr-o-mah-o-anjum ka muhasib hae qalander*
ayyam ka murakkab nahi rakib hae qalander

(A sufi like a steed grasps the reins of time and brings sun, stars and moon in a balance with his speed). See Iqbal, *Zarb-i-Kalim* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 2015), 54.

²² "The nature of the ego is such that, in spite of its capacity to respond to other egos, it is self-centred and possesses a private circuit of individuality excluding all egos other than itself. In this alone consists its reality as an ego. Man, therefore, in whom egohood has reached its relative perfection, occupies a genuine place in the heart of Divine creative energy, and thus possesses a much higher degree of reality than things around him. Of all the creations of God he alone is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of his Maker." See Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 57.

²³ *usi quran mei he ab tark-i-jahan ki taalim*

jis ne momin ko banaya ma-o-parvin ka amin

That Quran which made a true believer the commander of the sun and moon (nature) is teaching the escapism or isolation from this world. See Iqbal, *Zarb-i-kalim*, 28.

²⁴ *mujahidana hararat na rahi sufi mei*

bahana bey amali ka bani sharab-i-alast See Ibid., 51.

sufi ki tariqat mae faqat mastiy-i-ahwal See Ibid., 52.

²⁵ Muhammad Iqbal, "Asrar-i-Khudi Aur Tasawwuf," *Iqbal Review*, (1974): 38. Also see Ghulam Ahmed Pervez, *Tasawwuf ki Haqiqat* 7 Edition (Lahore: Tulu-e-Islam Trust, 2008), 292-93.



- ²⁶ Ibid., 295.
- ²⁷ Iqbal, *Bal-i-Jibril*, 172.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 172.
- ²⁹ *ramz-o-ima is zamne kay liye mozon nhi or ata bhi nhi mugh ko sukhan sazika fan qum bi iznillah kh skte the jo rukhsat hwe khanqahon mei mujawar reh gay ya gorkan* (Mysterious allusion of faith is not significant for this era; I do not know the art of adorning language. Those who could say *Qum Biznillah* departed; and only the successive heirs or guardians are left in shrines.) Ibid.
- ³⁰ *ye hikmat-i malkuti, ye ilm-i lahuti haram ke dard ka darman nahi to kuch bhi nahi ye zikr-i-nimshabi ye maraqabe ye surur teri khudi kay nigahban nahi to kuch bhi nahi.* Iqbal, *Zarb-i-kalim*, 47.
- ³¹ Iqbal, *Bal-i-Jibril*, 36.
- ³² Ghulam Ahmed Pervez, *Majils-i-Iqbal*, Vol. II (Lahore: Tulu-i-Islam Trust, 1997), 64.
- ³³ According to a hadith of Prophet (PBUH), the whole of this world is a mosque or a sacred place. As cited in Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 122.
- ³⁴ Ghulam Ahmed Pervez, *Majils-i-Iqbal* Vol.II (Lahore: Tulu-i-Islam Trust, 1997), 64. (The man ardour and zeal from There is no deity (but God), the Sun and Moon will revolve only at His bidding of faith is a symbol of perfect existence: he alone is real; all else is mere appearance. If he gains). See Muhammad Iqbal, *What Should Then Be Done, O Nations of the East! & the Traveller*, trans. Bashir Ahmad Dar (Lahore. Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2014), 4.
- ³⁵ Iqbal, *Zarb-i-kalim*, 57.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Iqbal, *Then What Should be Done O Nations of The East*, 26.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 7.
- ³⁹ *saed-i-momin ein jahan-i-aab-o-gil baz rago ike said-i-khud bahel* (this materialistic world is the prey of a true believer. But to ask him to give it up its prey is as if falcon is ask to let go of its prey) See Pervez, *Majlis-i- Iqbal*, 69.
- ⁴⁰ Khwaja Hamid Yazdani, *Sharah-i-Asrar-o-Rumuz* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2011), 69-71.
- ⁴¹ *ek faqr sikhata hae sayyad ko nakhchiri ek faqr se khultey hain asrar-i-jahangiri ek faqr se qoumon mein maskini-o-dilgiri ek faqr se mitti mein khasiyat-i-akseeri ek faqrhae shabiri, is faqr se hae miri miras-i-musalmani, sarmaya-i-shabiri*, See Iqbal, *Bal-i-Jibril*, 166.
- ⁴² Flippo Osella and Caroline Osella, "Introduction: Islamic Reformism in South Asia", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.42, no. 2/3, March/May (2008): 247.
- ⁴³ Hameed Yazdani, *Sharah Asrar-o-Rumuz* (Lahore: Sang-i-Mil Publications, 2011), 39-40.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 57.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 60.

Appendix



سید سلیمان ندوی کے نام

لاہور ۱۳ نومبر ۲۰۱۷ء

مخدومی السلام علیکم

اپ کا نوازش نامہ قوتِ روح اور اطمینانِ قلب کا باعث ہے۔
میں ایک مدت کے مطالعہ اور غور و فکر کے بعد انھیں نتائج پر پہنچا ہوں جو آپ کے
والانامے میں درج ہیں جو کام آپ کر رہے ہیں، جہاد فی سبیل اللہ ہے۔ اللہ اور اس کے
رسول آپ کو اس کا اجر عطا فرمائیں گے۔ اس میں ذرا بھی شک نہیں کہ تصوف کا وجود
ہی سرزمینِ اسلام میں ایک اجنبی پودا ہے جس نے عجیبوں کی داعی آب و ہوا میں پرورش
پائی ہے۔
آپ کو خیر القرون قرنی والی حدیث یاد ہوگی اس میں نبی کریمؐ فرماتے ہیں کہ

سے حدیث نبوی ہے: خیر القرون قونی ثم الذین ینزلون ثم الذین یجہلون ثم الذین یلکون ثم الذین یلکون ثم الذین یلکون
رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم (ترجمہ: یعنی سب سے اچھا یہ زمانہ ہے پھر اس کے بعد جو لوگ آئیں، پھر ان
کے بعد جو لوگ آئیں، اور اس کے بعد جو لوگ پھیل جائے گا۔)
دوری روایت میں "ثم ینظر فیہم السمن" ہے اور اس سے اقبال نے ربانیت مراد لی ہے۔ [برق]



کلیات مکاتیب اقبال۔ ۱

میری اہمیت میں تین قرونوں کے بعد سمن (ویلفریم سمن) کا ظہور ہو گا۔ میں نے اس پر دو تین مضامین اخبار ذکیل اتر میں شائع کیے تھے جن کا مقصورہ ثابت کرنا تھا کہ ”سمن“ سے مراد رہبانیت ہے، جو وسط ایشیا کی اقوام میں مسلمانوں سے پہلے عام تھی، ائمہ محدثین نے جیسا کہ آپ کو معلوم ہے یہ لکھا ہے کہ اس لفظ سے مراد عیش پرستی ہے، مگر لسانی تحقیق سے محدثین کا خیال صحیح نہیں کھلتا افسوس ہے کہ عدیم الفرستی اور علالت کی وجہ سے میں ان مضامین کا سلسلہ جاری نہ رکھ سکا۔ میرا تو عقیدہ ہے کہ غلو فی الزہد اور سکر و وجود مسلمانوں میں زیادہ تر مبدہ (سمنیت) مذہب کے اثرات کا نتیجہ ہیں۔ خواجہ نقشبند اور مجدد سرہند کی میرے دل میں بہت بڑی عزت ہے۔ مگر افسوس ہے کہ آج یہ سلسلہ بھی بحیثیت کے رنگ میں رنگین ہے، یہی حال سلسلہ قادریہ کا ہے جس میں خود بحیثیت رکھتا ہوں، حالانکہ حضرت محی الدین کا مقصود اسلامی تصوف کو بحیثیت سے پاک کرنا تھا۔

مولف سے میری مراد ایڈیٹر کتاب الطواسین موسیو میگنان ہے جس نے فرانسیسی زبان میں طواسین کے مضامین پر حواشی لکھے ہیں۔ ان شارالٹر ”معارف“ کے لیے کچھ نہ کچھ لکھوں گا میری صحت ہالعموم اچھی نہیں رہتی اس واسطے بہت کم لکھتا ہوں۔ مثنوی اسرار خودی کا

۱۔ خواجہ بہار الدین نقشبند

۲۔ شیخ احمد فاروقی مجدد الف ثانی سرہندی

۳۔ حضرت محی الدین عبدالقادر گیلانی

۴۔ فرانسیسی مستشرق لوئی ماسینیوں جس نے منصور علاج کی کتاب الطواسین

کو ایڈٹ کر کے شائع کیا تھا۔

۵۔ رسالہ معارف اعظم گڑھ



۱۱۱
 زکریا کے لیکن مندرکیت کے بعض مبروں کی تعمیل ارشاد میں آپ کو کھانا منور
 تھا کسی قدر خود غرضی کا شائبہ بھی میرے خط میں تھا اور وہ یہ کہ میں ہوتا تھا کہ جس طرح
 پنجاب والوں کو کھانا منور کے علاوہ کھانا ان سے پیشتر کا وہ پہنچا ہے، اب بھی
 وہ سلسلہ آپ کے یہاں رہنے سے بستر جاری رہے۔ مولانا شبلی رحیم کی زندگی میں
 میں نے بڑی کوشش کی کہ کسی طرح مولانا رحیم پنجاب میں مستقل طور پر اقامت کریں
 ہر جہاں مگر مسلمان گھر میں خالق علی مغفور ہو چکا ہے، میری کوششیں بار آور نہ ہوئی
 فرقہ واری دارالافتین کے کام میں برکت دے اور آپ کا دھرم مسلمانوں کے لیے مفید
 ثابت کرے!

آپ کی غزل لا جواب ہے، بالخصوص یہ شعر مجھے بڑا پسند آیا ہے
 ہزار بار مجھے بے گناہے قتل میں
 وہ ایک قفس قتل جہاں گھوم رہے
 مولانا شبلی رحیم دھرم دھرم سے قدرتی واقعات کو نظم کرنا شروع کیا تھا، اور چونکہ
 نظمیں انہوں نے کتنی قلیل ذہنیت متبرک ہرگز غزل کے ساتھ وہ سلسلہ جاری رکھے
 باقی انہما کے فضل و کرم سے خیریت ہے، امید کہ آپ کا مزاج بخیر ہو گا۔
 غرض
 محمد آقبال، لاہور

۱۱۰
 محمدی، اسلام علیکم! آپ کا فرائض نہ وقت نہ روح اور نہ ان کی قلب
 لاہور
 ۱۴۱۵ھ

۱۱۰
 اس وقت گلشن میں ہیں۔ غالباً وہ بھی آپ کے لکھے پر ۲۹ جنوری تک وہاں قیام
 کر لیں۔ جو تجرؤ پسند غافل ہوا اس کو عمل میں لائے، باقی خیریت ہے۔
 آپ کا مخلص
 محمد آقبال، بیرسر لاہور

سید سلیمان ندوی کے نام

(۳۶) ————— (۱)
 لاہور
 یکم نومبر ۱۹۸۳ء

محمدی، اسلام علیکم!
 اور شبلی کا کچ لاہور میں پینڈ پشین ٹیچر کی مگر خالی ہوتی ہے۔ اس کی
 تنخواہ ایک سو میں روپیہ ماہوار ہے۔ میں یہ دریافت کرنا چاہتا ہوں کہ کیا آپ اس
 جگہ کو اپنے لیے پسند فرماتے ہیں۔ اگر ایسا ہو تو آپ کے لیے سہی کی جلتے۔ آپ کا
 لاہور میں رہنا پنجاب والوں کے لیے بے حد مفید ہو گا۔ واسطہ
 آپ کا خادم
 محمد آقبال، بیرسر لاہور

(۳۷) ————— (۲)
 لاہور
 ۱۴۱۵ھ



کا باعث ہے۔ میں ایک مدت کے مطالعہ اور غور و فکر کے بعد انہیں نہایت پرہیزگار
 جو آپ کے دلائل سے میں واقف ہیں۔ جو کام آپ کر رہے ہیں جہاد فی سبیل اللہ ہے۔
 اللہ اور اس کے رسول مقررہ عہد نامہ آپ کو اس کا اجر عطا فرمائیں گے۔ اس میں ذرا بھی
 شک نہیں کہ تعزیت و جہاد میں سرزمین اسلام میں ایک ایسی پیدا ہے جس سے
 مجبوروں کی واقعی آپ دہا میں پرورش پائی ہے۔

آپ کو خیر و معاون قری فی ذی صلیب یاد ہے کہ اس میں بھی کریم و مصلحین (مصلحین) فرماتے
 ہیں کہ میری امت میں تین تہوں کے بعد من (و عظیم فیہم الصالحین) کا تصور ہے کہ
 میں نے اس بدترین معنائیں انہماز دیکھ کر تیسری شاعت کیے تھے جس کا مقصد یہ
 ثابت کرنا تھا کہ من سے مراد رجا نیست ہے جو وسط ایشیا کی قوم میں مسلمانوں سے
 پیچھے عام تھی۔ آخر میں نے جیسا کہ آپ کو معلوم ہے یہ کہتا ہے کہ اس شخص سے مراد
 پیش پرستی ہے۔ مگر ساری تحقیق سے تحقیق کا خیال یہ نہیں لگتا۔ انوکھ ہے کہ
 عظیم و اعظمی اور طاقت کی وجہ سے میں ان معنائیں کا سلسلہ جاری نہ کہ میرا ترجمہ
 ہے کہ غلطی انہماز اور سزاوارتہ و جہاد مسلمانوں میں زیادہ تر بڑھ (استنیت) مذہب کے اثرات
 کا نتیجہ ہیں۔ خواجہ نقشبند اور مجدد سہیل کی جیسے دل میں بہت بڑی عزت ہے مگر
 انہوں نے کہ آج یہ سلسلہ بھی جہالت کے رنگ میں رنگ لیا ہے۔ یہی حال سلسلہ نقشبندیہ
 کا ہے جس میں میں خود بہت رکھتا ہوں، مگر حضرت علی نقشبند کا مقصد یہ بھی تھا کہ
 کہ جہالت سے پاک کرنا تھا۔

مختلف سے میری مراد ایڈیٹر کتاب انوار میں سید سلیمان ہے جس نے کراچی
 نے حضرت علی نقشبند کی عبارت لکھی ہے

۱۱۳

۱۱۴

زبان میں عوامین کے معنائیں پر حاشیہ لکھتے ہیں۔ انشاء اللہ مسامتہ کے لیے کچھ نہ
 کچھ لکھوں گا۔ میری محنت اصرار چینی میں رہتی اس واسطے کہ بہت کو لکھتا ہوں۔ شہزادی
 اسرار خدی کا دوسرا حصہ میری مراد ہے خدی اسرار حیات فیہ السلامیہ قریب الامت ہے
 شائع ہونے پر ادائیہ خدمت کروں گا۔ انہی کو آپ کا مزاج بخیر ہوگا۔
 خلیص
 محمد تقی

(۳۹) ————— (۴۰)

دہر
 دہر اپریل ۱۹۱۷ء

مقدمی: استہدایہ مکمل!

دلائل نامہ ای ہے۔ جو میرے خودی میں نے ہی آپ کی خدمت میں بھیجانی
 تھی۔ ریویو کے لیے مرزا سچا سپس ہوں۔

آج مرزا ابوالکلام کا خط آیا ہے۔ انہوں نے بھی میری اس نمبر کو بخشش کو
 بہت پسند فرمایا ہے۔ مرزا شہابی رحمہ اللہ عید کے بعد سب استاذ لکھیں ہیں۔ اقبال آپ
 کی تحقیر سے مستند ہوگا۔ اسرار خدی کا دوسرا حصہ میں تیار کر رہا ہوں۔ اعتدال آپ کی خدمت
 میں بکسل ہوگی۔

دہر "مصری" میں میں نے کوئی تقریر شائع نہیں کی۔ کوئی پڑائی مطہرہ نظم انہوں نے
 شائع کر دی ہوگی۔ ورنہ یہ کیر کو مکمل ہے کہ میں "مصری" کو "مصلحت" پر ترجیح دوں مسامتہ
 ایک ایسا رمان ہے جس کے پڑھنے سے حرارتِ انسانی میں آگئی ہوتی ہے میں انشاء اللہ ضرور

2. Iqbal Nama

Iqbal's Letter written to Syed Suleiman Nadvi on November 13, 1917 published in *Iqbal Nama*

