

THE FORGOTTEN TREASURE OF IQBAL'S
RECONSTRUCTION

Dr. Muhammad Maruf Shah
Dr. Ibtasam Thakur

ABSTRACT

Iqbal's is the unique flowering of poetical, mystical and philosophical genius in recent Islamic history. What makes him truly modern and gives him a permanent places in the annals of modern history is his largely forgotten gospel of religious modernism, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

Reconstruction makes Iqbal the most important intellectual of modernist Islam. His unique contribution in appropriating modern science and its methodological and philosophical premises in Islam has however not been duly appreciated. He has attempted to write a prolegomena to new *kalam*. *Reconstruction* is the boldest ever critique of traditional religious thought in the light of modern episteme. It is the most frantic and intellectually advanced attempt to reconcile the cognitive and epistemic universe of traditional Islam with that of modern scientific and philosophical thought. It attempts to reorient or restructure traditional hierarchy of power relations. One can safely assert that the Muslims have not realized the significance of this Iqbal who wrote *Reconstruction*. This book has either not been read or understood or reckoned with seriously by the Muslims.

The significance of Iqbalian insights for modern Islam however can't be overemphasized. If modern thought needs to be respectfully approached and if Islam is to appeal to modern sensibility, then Iqbal's significance and relevance can't be doubted and his contribution needs to be highlighted. This article is an attempt to point out importance of this ignored and forgotten treasure. Providing a consistent theory for modernist Muslim approach to science, Iqbal is undoubtedly worth reckoning for not only the student and historian of modern Islam but also for anyone interested in the field of philosophy of religion and modern science in general.

Iqbal's is the unique flowering of poetical, mystical and philosophical genius in recent Islamic history. He has few predecessors and fewer inheritors. His encyclopedic mind wrestled with almost all the important issues that modern Muslim and modern man confronts in his life's odyssey. His is the original, bold and very unorthodox approach. He is an arch innovator and non-conformist. His attempt of bridging philosophy and religion, or in general, knowledge and religion is unique in boldness and originality. What makes him truly modern and gives him a permanent places in the annals of modern history is his largely forgotten gospel of religious modernism, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

Reconstruction makes Iqbal the most important intellectual of modernist Islam. His unique contribution in appropriating modern science and its methodological and philosophical premises in Islam has however not been duly appreciated. In an unprecedented move in Islamic history he reinterpreted the idea of finality of prophethood in such terms as to legitimize modern scientific project. His apology for the modern age that defines itself with respect to modern science constitutes a very interesting chapter not only in the history of Islam but also that of modern thought. His demythologizing, evolutionist, empiricist, inductionist, rationalist reading of Islam constitutes his unique contribution in the development of modernist Islam. His *Reconstruction* is an attempt in the direction of appropriating modern scientific thought in Islam. His brilliant insights in this context need to be foregrounded and critically evaluated. Iqbal has written and embarked on hitherto unprecedented enterprise of reconstruction of traditional religious thought in the light of modern scientific and philosophical developments. This kind of title of any book and this kind of reconstructive work implying reconstruction of traditional metaphysical-philosophical-theological-juristic thought structures has never been proposed in the history of Islam before him. There is a huge difference between reconstruction and reinterpretation. Many think that Iqbal has just written some sort of a new *tafsir* like so many new commentaries that have been read in the modern age. This only shows crass ignorance of Iqbal and traditional metaphysics. Indeed he has attempted to modernize Islam, not only its theology but *shariah* in many significant ways. He has attempted to write a

prolegomena to new *kalam*. *Reconstruction* is the boldest ever critique of received/traditional religious thought in the light of modern episteme. It is the most frantic and intellectually advanced attempt to reconcile the cognitive and epistemic universe of traditional Islam with that of modern scientific and philosophical/thought. It attempts to reorient or restructure traditional hierarchy of power relations. One can safely assert that the Muslims have not realized the significance of this Iqbal who wrote *Reconstruction*. This book has either not been read or understood or reckoned with seriously by the Muslims. The Muslims have usually denounced it (excepting certain modernists) or they have not bothered to read or could not understand it as it demands good familiarity with everything that constitutes modern episteme – one must have a deep acquaintance with the whole philosophical tradition of the West, especially its post-Cartesian developments, with modern science and its methodological and philosophical assumptions, with modern social-political and economic structures that shape modern mind, with changed perception that has grown from a sort of frameshift mutation of the traditional religious (Christian) *Weltanschauung*. Understanding *Reconstruction* also needs a knowledge of such variety of disciplines as modern physics, psychology and psychoanalysis, biology and even mathematics to certain extent. One must also have a good understanding of history of civilizations and religions and especially of Muslim history to properly contextualize and foreground the theses of *Reconstruction*. The integrated knowledge of both sciences of humanities, both traditional and modern, alone will allow one to properly understand and appreciate the radical nature of his claims made in *Reconstruction*.

He and his *Reconstruction* are phenomena in themselves and history hardly ever repeats such phenomena. His appropriation of modern science in Islam, his rereading of Sufism and his individualist religious metaphysics are uniquely his and constitute his originality. It is ridiculous to argue that Ibn Hnifa did something similar. Ulema have some reservations about the whole project of reconstruction. If any *aalim* had done something similar there would have been no reason for saying that “it would have been better if Iqbal had not written it.” Rational appropriation of traditional Islamic metaphysical thought that invokes modern philosophical and scientific thought structures as has been done in these lectures has hardly any orthodox/ traditional warrant. Saeed Akbar Abadi’s defense of *Reconstruction* in traditional terms has not found and cannot find much favour with the generality of Ulema. Iqbal’s concept of ego, his individualistic metaphysics, his divinization of time, his

epistemology, his rejection of orthodox Unitarian Sufi metaphysics, his theological and philosophical dualism, his humanist orientation, his evolutionist and empiricist approach, his concept of God's omniscience and freedom, his view of good and evil, his concept of *taqdir* and so many other dimensions of his metaphysical and theological thought—all are not easily reconcilable with traditional/orthodox interpretation of Islam. Iqbal has reread Rumi and certain other great classical authorities and conceptions of traditional Islam from the perspective of philosophy of ego and this constitutes his unique approach to Islam. There is no other modern Muslim philosopher or traditional scholar who has done anything comparable. Iqbal and his overall philosophy, not just his *Reconstruction* are phenomena in themselves, unique, unprecedented. Iqbal is in himself an institution, a school that originated with him. Here I intend neither to defend nor to critique Iqbal vis-à-vis traditional metaphysical/mystical/religious thought spearheaded by either the exoteric ulema or the Sufi authorities or the perennialists but just point out how radical a divergence is between the two.

There is only one Iqbal and only one *Reconstruction* in history. Without a deep familiarity with such abstruse metaphysical and Sufi works as *Insani Kamil* of Al-Jili, *Fusus* of Ibn Arabi, such modern philosophers as Hegel, Nietzsche, Bergson etc., such scientific works as Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Freud's important works, Fraser and Comte's works, such physicist philosophers as Einstein and Eddington, such theosophical works as *Secret Doctrine* to name only a few, understanding Iqbal or his *Reconstruction* and his originality and genius is not possible. He is *mazloom* as someone has well remarked as everybody who has memorized some of his verses and has not mastered or at least has not good acquaintance with world's metaphysical, religious, philosophical and literary traditions has hardly any moral right to dabble in Iqbali studies or discuss *Reconstruction*.

Another point is understanding Islam – its doctrines, both at theological and metaphysical planes, its esoteric and exoteric dimensions, its symbolist sciences. It is safe to assert that most interpretations and appropriations of Islam with which we are flooded are guilty of meaning closure as they ignore/marginalize some aspect or dimension of Islam as an integral metaphysical-mystical-theological tradition. Islam ultimately is practical existential affair; it is a matter of realization rather than disputation. Faith and metaphysic transcend language and thought. And it is only to the pure in heart to which is granted God's vision. Reason is limited; it cannot comprehend the Infinite that traditional metaphysics (but not

its modern Western counterpart) tackles. Mysteries of faith become clear to only those who purify themselves with severe moral discipline as Iqbal emphasizes in his *Asrar* and *Ramooz*. It is ultimately only in silence that God dawns. This is because God transcends phenomena and all categorical frameworks. He is not caught in the net of language. Those who are closer to God know that he is to be attained by humility and *faqr* and in the believer's heart in utter silence. *Mutakallim* and *faqeeh* with their propositional exoteric approach cannot comprehend or apprehend Gos as Iqbal also says. We need to be lovers to have some glimpse of transcendence. Love alone can transcend finitude. Iqbal's whole metaphysics of love makes this point admirably. Many fatwas were issued against him but he didn't consider them worth reckoning and how could he for even Jibriel was his prey and he was the only secret in *seena-i-kaayinat*, and deemed man to be *masjoodi kayinat*.

We need to rediscover Iqbal in light of his forgotten / ignored / misappropriated *Reconstruction*. Their relevance for modern(ist) Islam can't be overemphasized. The epochal significance of *Reconstruction* which is a key in understanding this seminal thinker of the 20th century Islam lies in:

1. Plea for opening the gates of absolute *Ijtihad*(*ijtihad-i-mutlaq*).
2. Questioning many an outworn theological and juristic dogmas that do not have any Quranic warrant.
3. Anticlerical spirit of Islam.
4. Questioning or pointing out all pervasive influence of Greek thought on Islamic heritage and arguing for emancipation from it.
5. A unique attempt to bridge the West and the East by focussing on a sort of modern (Western) reading of Islam which is seen as a bridge builder as though originating from the East has intellectual affinities with the West.
6. How creative and fruitful can be an encounter between Islam and the West and pointing out hitherto unheeded affinities between them; how Islam has a potential to adapt to modernity and how the latter could be moulded in an Islamic framework is brilliant.
7. Amongst a variety of responses to modernity such as traditionalist, fundamentalist, neofoundationist and secularist Iqbalian "inner radicalist" interpretation of Islam in response to modernity and a sort of Islamized modernity has the merit of being capable of wide appeal to modern audience that is committed irrevocably to thought structures of post-Renaissance – empirical scientific inductionist evolutionist this-worldly orientation. Iqbal takes modernity as 'the given' with its concrete mind and to physiology and then tries to interpret/reconstruct

religious thought of Islam. For many modern thinkers which include some influential theologians Iqbalian type of response is the only possible religious response that could be taken seriously by modern man. For the modern scientific mind Iqbal's case is a worth reckoning one and cannot be a priorily dismissed. The secular scientific colouring of almost everything modern incapacitates modern man from sympathetically responding to traditional religious thought structures as they stand. In a world that declares itself post-Darwinian post-Nietzschan and post-Freudian and now post-modern where traditional religious symbols are either rejected or appropriated in a secular perspective as essentialistic thinking is disparaged, the God of exoteric theology who stands over and against man as some interested being and manipulator of human destiny and the universe and threatening human individuality and freedom, is dead. This is a world where nothing makes sense except in the light of evolution and which is committed to some sort of progressivist myth where material biological and psychological roots of human personality are very much emphasized and taken as *ab initio* for any other reading of man such as spiritual one, where science stands almost as a metanarrative, reason's authority is supreme and where anthropocentric humanistic secularist assumptions are so deeply entrenched – in short where everything that goes by the name of tradition is suspect – Iqbal's modernist (non-orthodox) reading of tradition is of great value. If modern man is not willing to renounce modernity with its aintitraditional commitments lock, stock and barrel and still in search of a soul he would possibly see his salvation in such appropriations of modernity as that of Iqbal. To enter a dialogue with modernity on latter's terms is possible (to negotiate *sulahi-budaibiyah* with it) in Iqbalian modernist reconstructionist perspective. If the West cannot fundamentally reconsider and revise its Aristotelian and then Cartesian heritage that necessitate a dualistic mode of thinking that absolutizes subject-object duality and is not quite favorably taking mystico-metaphysical outlook and is irrevocably committed to the realm of finitude and some sort of humanism Iqbal's personalist philosophy and individualist religious metaphysics has something to offer for consideration.

8. If reconstruction of religious thought is a need as modernists argue then Iqbal's is a great contribution. He has provided the methodology and consistent theory for modernist reading of Islam.

We shall now take up certain points that Iqbal has raised in *Reconstruction*.

Iqbal lays down the charter of *Reconstruction* in its preface. He has succinctly put forward his agenda in the book. The very first line that “Islam is a religion which emphasizes deed rather than idea” is quite a loaded statement in tune with modern sensibility. Iqbal has elsewhere declared that action is the highest form of contemplation. This is quite an innovative rereading of the whole Eastern tradition. Modern man, for good or worse, is committed to action instead of contemplation. It is not however very clear what Iqbal here means by the word “Idea”. But one may reasonably infer that he has in mind eastern and Platonic idea of Idea and contemplation for which the consistent philosophy of ego has not much space as the East is against the ego as well as actions that fortify it as a separate individual entity in a tensionful state with a dialectical relation to the world and associated dualistic philosophical framework. The whole metaphysical and mystical tradition privileges contemplation over action, being over becoming, eternity and space over time, universal over individual (spirit over soul and body). However Iqbal problematizes most of these binaries and sometimes argues for reversing the hierarchies.

Starting with this assertion Iqbal makes another statement that the traditionalists would contest. He says that for a concrete type of mind the traditional modes of thought (as represented in classical mainstream Sufism as he explains after a few lines) are no longer valid or need to be adapted to changed perception. This is indeed true but the question is ‘is not concrete type of mind itself a problem?’ Could not the whole problem lie in modern mind’s peculiar make-up itself? Should it not be asked to remould itself and renounce the whole (rationalist-empiricist) philosophical-scientific tradition that has shaped it in the first place.

God of the traditional religions (or the Absolute of traditional metaphysics) – and the means of realizing Him/It (metaphysical and mystical realizations) – is something that is alien to modern sensibility. Modern man’s turning away from God is not entirely unconnected with Cartesian philosophical turn. From a strictly Eastern viewpoint mind itself is the problem, the inheritance and consequence of the primordial fall and needs to be transcended. Mind itself is a distorting lens and thus illusory entity. The “I”, the cogito, the thinking thing is a weak read. It constitutes the misery of men though for the modern Western philosophical tradition it constitutes his grandeur and the defining identity of man.

Modern mentality seems to be trapped in the realm of the individual, the finite the psyche, and does not know much of the universal, the infinite, the intellect, the spirit. However Iqbal is very anxious to somehow bring modern mind back to God, to make heaven accessible and desirable for him, to present it in an image that is not too incongruous with hum. This necessitates giving great concessions to modern sensibility. But Iqbal, unlike the traditionalists, thinks that times have changed for good and there is nothing wrong with the modern mind itself, with time's movement or Islam's moving closer towards the West. Much of modern psychology and modern psychological turn is implicitly accepted in the preface. The type of mystical meditational techniques that he demands cannot be devised because all realization must be violence to the mind, the ego, the realm of thought and language. The domain of psyche has to be transcended. For the realization of true *tawhid*, subject must be transformed rather annihilated in the Divine subjecthood. Man cannot utter *shahadah*. The separate experiencing subject must go. The experiencer, the empirical self, the separate subject who perceives the world and God as the other, the objects must go. Philosophical and theological dualisms are simply irreconcilable with the Unitarian world view where God alone is the Reality, the whole Reality, the infinite. Mysticism and metaphysics are antithesis of anthropocentric humanistic worldview of the modern west. Only God is and man is not in Sufism and traditional metaphysics. The Spirit in man that alone constitutes his glory and that alone can assert "I" is not his though in him. This Spirit is not realizable in time; it is not realized through actions/deeds and becoming or through any concrete experiences. It is realized in the repose of being, in the silence of all thought and mind, in love. For this self-naughting is a must. All separative divisive entities such as the mind and the ego must be transcended. Iqbal's concept of *ishq* comes close to it though he would like to appropriate from a personalistic individualistic metaphysical perspective. Such weird and useless phenomena in the western personalist philosophical context/phenomena as experience of sleep (rather dreamless sleep) and mystical ecstasy hold a key to such a state. Iqbal does reach a threshold of such things at many places in his *Reconstruction*. He too feels need of transcending the fundamental dualisms of thought and being by seeing religions object not in the category of seeing but being. But the proposed means for doing so in the context of background dualistic philosophy seem to be problematic. New "suitable" techniques for doing so can not be developed. Even Rajnesh – the most modern of the mystics – also who concedes so

much to the perversions of modern mind could not devise technique that are not psychologically less violent. His dynamic meditations or his techniques for attaining silence all do great violence to modern mind.

Iqbal makes another big claim that we need to reconstruct theology in the light of modern discoveries. This seminal claim has hardly been made in the history of Islam until modern times. From a metaphysical point of view such claims that presuppose modern science's epistemic sovereignty are problematic. Integral metaphysics is independent of developments in individual science, as Guenon has explained. Traditional cosmology is incommensurate with modern cosmology and has quite a different objective. The same is true of traditional psychology and most traditional sciences. Modern scientific disciplines having abandoned the symbolist view and belief in the hierarchy of existence are simply degenerate residues of traditional sciences according to the perennialists. A science cultivated in a secular perspective is crass ignorance according to the perennialists. Iqbal too is very critical of modern science, its claim to be a metanarrative, its disenchanting alienating soulless mechanistic materialistic worldview. But he is hopeful that religion and modern science will discover hitherto unsuspected harmony and it is possible to reread modern science and its methodological and philosophical assumptions Islamically and there is nothing fundamentally wrong with modern science's knowledge and existence claims. The traditionalists, however, have quite a different view of modern science and reject any constructive dialogue with its. They are for its reorientation that amounts to almost total rejection of post-Renaissance science and see no possibility of reconciliation between modern science and Islam. However if Iqbal just means that law must be reformulated in consonance with changing times it is hard to disagree with him for traditional authorities.

These introductory explanatory remarks provide a context to appreciate a host of theses of *Reconstruction*. We will attempt a brief critical appreciation of some of these theses.

1. Islam is a religion which emphasizes deed rather than idea. This point could not be contested if one understands it from the perspective of Iqbal's concept of *ishq* and concede his rereading of action as contemplation.
2. Traditional Sufi techniques (he does not elaborate what he means by this) are not suitable for concrete type of a mind that modern man's is characteristically. As Iqbal is already critical of Sufi metaphysics – its central doctrine of oneness of being and the idea of the self – so his plea for reformulating its techniques also

is understandable. Modern man has alienated himself from the well-springs of tradition and he finds traditional metaphysics that has hardly any scope for his thought inassimilable. The objective of mystical and metaphysical realization seems to be quite strange and alien to dualist cogito-centred personalist philosophical tradition of the West. The means and techniques that lead to such an end cannot but be suspected on this or that ground.

3. Every age has a right to formulate its own theology as the frontier of human knowledge extends further and farther. Religious thought must adapt itself to changed perceptions generated by modern outlook which is principally shaped by modern science. We must reread our classical tradition in light of modern scientific developments. This may necessitate a partial break from the past or commitment of certain heterodox notions for which we must be prepared. Modern man's demand for a scientific form of religion is quite legitimate and we must reinterpret/ reconstruct traditional religious thought to give it a scientific guise. Iqbal does not clearly explain what he means by "scientific form of religion." But one can reasonably infer that he thinks modern scientific developments – which he later catalogues in the book and which include such things as evolution and psychoanalysis – are vitally relevant in understanding/interpreting traditional religious thought. Any formulation of religious doctrine – which constitutes an intellectual element in religion as it makes existence and knowledge claims – must be respectful (though critically respectful) towards developments in the fund of human knowledge. Science's claim to have some jurisdiction to clarify, test and evaluate knowledge and existence claims of religions – Islam is thus implicitly conceded.
4. Modern mind's empirical and positivist attitude is a fact that is there to stay; religion cannot afford a position that is antithetical to it. Iqbal asserts that religion too has adapted empirical methodology in its exploration of Reality though it treats only a specific type of experience called religious experience. Thus he argues that science and religion have similar methodologies and both build their case on empirical experience. He does not think that there is any necessary link between modern empiricism (and positivism) and reductionist demythologizing agnostic philosophy of modern science. He does not see science committed to any specific ideology and questions its materialist mechanist appropriation at the hands of certain philosophers. He sees science as ideology-free, as innocent looking objective exploration

of reality. Experimental and inductive scientific attitude he sees as characteristically Quranic in spirit.

5. With Whitehead he maintains that the ages of faith are the ages of rationalism. He does not elaborate on his use of the term rationalism. If by rationalism one means giving reason the sovereignty that modern rationalism has given it then it is an unwarranted claim. However Iqbal does not seem to have such a version of rationalism in mind that denies intellectual intuition and revelation. But Iqbal's perspective is not fully identifiable with what the perennialists call the intellectual perspective according to which reason is an individual mental faculty but Intellect is something supra-individual and universal and is capable of absolute certitude and direct apprehension of truth. Islam is intellect centred rather than rationalistic as modern Western philosophy understands the latter. Iqbal's conception of reason illumined by love or *danish-i-yazdani* comes close to the traditional notion of Intellect. Reason complements intuition. Science complements religion. Intuition is developed reason. This seems to be his original claim. However Iqbal accepts non-discursive element of reason. This could well allow him to connect reason to intuition through intellect as Naquib al Attas does. Iqbal doesn't limit reason to conceptual intellect as Stace does. So Iqbal's very original approach needs to be seriously reckoned with. Reason can comprehend the infinite according to Iqbal and this can be possible by means of non-discursive element in reason. Iqbal has Ghazal's critique of reason in mind who argued against such a possibility. I think loose use of terms by philosophers creates confusion. Most philosophical texts don't make any distinction between reason (*ratio*) and intellect (*nous*).
6. The Quran is anticlassical in spirit. This argument is original contribution of Iqbal to classification of Islamic thought. Speculative as against the empirical spirit is alien to the Quranic world-view according to Iqbal.
7. The birth of Islam is the birth of inductive intellect. However carrying this thesis too far and absolutizing the inductive mode as the only Quranic mode of reasoning is unwarranted. The Quran uses deductive as well as inductive argumentation. The speculative tradition has been cultivated in Islam also and it has fructified in magnificent philosophical and metaphysical structures built by Muslim philosophers and sages. However it should also be noted that numerous pointless controversies between Muslim theologians are traceable to Greek influence that privileged essentialist abstract way of seeing things.

8. Hitherto the spirit of Islam had only been partly realized. Our ulema as well as the perennialist authors flatly deny this thesis.
9. The idea of Mahdi is connected with Magian mentality of constant expectation and is alien to the Quranic spirit. He quotes Ibn Khaldun's authority also in this connection. Ulema's view of the same is well known. The Sufi view too and thus any deeper significance of the idea of Mahdi seem to have escaped Iqbal's notice.
10. Muslims did not realize the full meaning and revolutionary import of the idea of finality of prophethood. This is distinctively Iqbalian and unprecedented claim.
11. The Prophet (SAW) heralded the birth of modern age and said goodbye to the ancient mentality by sealing off the institution of prophethood. Now inductive reason will reign. Mystics and all those who invoke supernatural authorities are to be subjected to the critical scrutiny of reason. This might legitimize post-Enlightenment exclusion of nonrational modes of knowledge that led to unilateral development of the West which created huge problems for modern man.
12. There is no qualitative distinction between prophetic and mystic experiences. But he does not explain how should the same experience make one's return creative. Traditional Islam emphasizes qualitative distinction between the two.
13. He does not recognize/accept conception of metaphysical realization and focusses wholly on mystical realization.
14. He takes Lord-man polarity to be absolute and dubs Unitarian Sufism and the doctrine of *Wahdatul Wajud* as pantheistic. This is simply unacceptable if we consider the explanations given by traditional authorities.
15. An act of scientific observation is an act of observing behaviour of God. Science studies habit of Allah. Thus scientific observation is an act of prayer. Scientist is a sage – a mystic in the act of prayer. Modern spirit is thus ingeniously appropriated by Iqbal. We need not refer to the traditionalist view of the same. While as in principle it could be conceded that scientific observation is an act of prayer but when applied to modern science which excludes and even distorts truth because of constraints of its very methodology and then contemplate fruits of modern science's understanding in the "habit of Allah" we hesitate to go too far with Iqbal.
16. Defends Mansoor by his ingenious reinterpretation of his *An'al Haqq*. He does this without the concept of metaphysical realization which is central to Sufi thought. His ambivalent

- attitude towards Sufism or unique individualistic personalistic appropriation of it is his unique characteristic.
17. Dubs all mysticism as quietist and individual centered. He has no concept of prophetic mysticism.
 18. Following Hegel believes in the fundamental unity of thought and being.
 19. Like process philosophers takes a panentheistic rather than classical theistic view of God.
 20. Defends to the hilt man's autonomy and freedom vis-à-vis divine freedom. And gives his own view of divine omniscience.
 21. Gives his own twist to the concept of *taqdir* that is at variance with orthodox metaphysical thought.
 22. Divinizes time following Bergson. Appropriates the traditional notion of eternity in his Bergsonian conception of pure duration. Declares that appreciative self lives in eternity. Attempts to synthesize otherwise polar opposites of time and eternity in the concept of appreciative self. But he does not satisfactorily work out complex relation between pure duration and serial time. The Bergsonian influence leads to unorthodox reading of traditional metaphysical and religious thought.
 23. Declares that man due to his fragmentary vision is unable to comprehend the mystery of evil. Leaves the problem of evil largely unsolved.
 24. Disagrees with Sufistic interpretation of the famous light verse of the Quran. Invokes the theory of relativity in its commentary.
 25. Invokes Sufi insights in explaining the concept of creation and makes a panentheistic reading of the Islamic doctrine of creation. He takes recourse to Sufism whenever he encounters difficulty. His central ideas on the self, pure duration, religious experience, creation, heaven and hell, Prophet, love etc. are all deeply informed by Sufism. *Reconstruction* can be described as a Sufi work in modern idiom. Iqbal had later largely retracted his key criticisms of traditional Sufism. Even his idea of the self and its relation to the Divine Self that constituted his key disagreement with traditional Sufism comes very close to traditional view when properly understood.
 26. Hell and heaven are states but that doesn't mean he denies their ontological status. On this point Iqbal is almost in full conformity with traditional metaphysical and Sufistic thought. Iqbal only emphasized the concrete living existential and psychological reality of hell and heaven. On this point he has been widely misunderstood. For him hell and heaven are more real than this world though he rightly rejected unsophisticated view that has

crept in popular exoteric imagination. Iqbal's view on the duration of hell has also been held by great authorities in Islam.

27. Without completely breaking from the past we must boldly chart fresh terrains. We must apply the principle of movement not only to *fiqh* but to other domains of religious thought in order to encounter modern challenges. Iqbal, unlike some extreme modernists didn't nullify the past or tradition but asked for a creative and critical approach to it. It is Rumi rather than any modern philosopher who is his guide (though he would reread him in his own fashion). He is servile imitator of neither the East nor the West but appropriates all the universes in himself. His consciously chosen frame of reference was the Quran though he self avowedly (he has confessed this in one of his letters) saw through the Western eyes as well. But his primary intention was always to defend religion and have a secure place for *umma*.

Thus it is evident that his unique philosophy and interpretation of Islam is understandable only in reference to *Reconstruction*. Masses don't read and understand *Reconstruction*. Even Iqbalian scholars have usually focused on his poetical works. There are very few competent scholars of *Reconstruction* and still fewer studies of it. But comprehensive studies of this seminal work have hardly been attempted. This has caused certain misunderstandings about Iqbal's philosophical and religious thought. Pervasive impact of modern science on Iqbal has yet to be fully documented. Without in depth understanding of modernity and modern science we can't comprehend Iqbal's unique contribution, his differences from traditionalists and why he wrote this book. I will content myself with just pointing out how modern science has impacted on his thought in order to emphasize my point that we must be firmly grounded in knowledge of modern science, its methodology and philosophy to understand Iqbal and *Reconstruction*.

Iqbal's belief in evolution with its methodological naturalism, his idea of perfect man and belief in progress, his eschatology, his interpretation of finality of prophethood, his theodicy, his critique of mysticism, his empiricist defence of religion, his inductionist outlook, his demythologizing attitude towards the legend of Fall, his divinization of time and his time-centred interpretation of Islam, his views on psychology, his rejection of parapsychology or occultism as pseudoscience, his plea for absolute *ijtihad* and dynamism and the whole project of reconstruction of religious thought in Islam, his appropriation of the West as the further development of some of the most important phases of Islamic culture and thus welcoming Islam's movement towards the West, his critical attitude towards

traditions, his privileging of becoming over being and time over space, his interpretation of prophetic and mystical experience, his elevation of scientist to the status of sagehood, his philosophy of ego, his rejection of traditional cosmology, his condoning of the Renaissance, his attitude towards Nature and environment, his interpretation of man's vicegerancy, his reading of many modern scientific notions in the Quran and Islamic history, his rejection of what is called as Islamization of knowledge, his concepts of space, time, causality and destiny, his positivist spirit (seen in his praise of Zia Gokalp), his approaching certain tricky theological issues in the light of modern science, his proofs for the existence of God, his belief in a growing universe, his defense and interpretation of Muslim culture and civilization, his advocacy of deed and action over idea and thought, his advocacy of experimental method, his critique of "Magian" supernaturalism, and "worn out" or "practically a dead metaphysics" of present day Islam – all these reveal the influence and unique appropriation of modern science.

The significance of Iqbalian insights for modern Islam however can't be overemphasized. If the project of reconstruction has any validity, if modern science is really a stupendous problem in the way of traditional Islam, if modern thought needs to be respectfully approached and if Islam is to appeal to modern sensibility, then Iqbal's significance and relevance can't be doubted and his contribution needs to be highlighted. The present piece is an attempt to point out importance of this ignored and forgotten treasure. Providing a consistent theory for modernist Muslim approach to science, Iqbal is undoubtedly worth reckoning for not only the student and historian of modern Islam but also for anyone interested in the field of philosophy of religion and modern science in general.