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## Muhammad Iqbal and German Idealism: A Comparative Review

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
<p><b>History:</b> Accepted 06 June 2023 Available Online June 2023</p>	<p><i>The phrase Idealism is not new for the students and readers of Philosophy, however, when the prefix German is added before it, it acquires a different meaning. German Idealism is distinguished from all other forms of European Idealisms. It concentrated on mind as an active and self-conscious entity. German Idealists suppressed the traditional ontologies based on substances and their accidents. Muhammad Iqbal received enormous inspiration from German Idealism. Iqbal felt weary with the materialistic philosophical trends in vogue at his time. His major interest was in the Self and Consciousness. Ego and Spirit were his main areas of philosophical inquiry. He drew immense intellectual stimulus in the development of these ideas from German Idealism. Besides his Urdu and Persian poetry, his political ideas bear profound stamps of German Idealists. This comparative study intends to highlight the impact of German Idealistic Thought on Philosophy of Iqbal.</i></p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Self, Ego, Spirit, Consciousness, Unity, Monism, Freedom, Intuition, Man</p>	
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### 1. Introduction

Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) the most famous Muslim poet and philosopher of 20<sup>th</sup> century, needs no formal introduction. He is widely respected in the entire world as a great thinker and scholar. Muhammad Iqbal was a Kashmiri Brahmin by origin whose forefathers converted to Islam. He hailed from *Sapru* Clan of Kashmiri *Pandits*. Though a devout Muslim; Iqbal has very often quoted his Brahmin origin in his poetry. In one his couplets, he has said that his lineage is Brahmin, that is why he has “inherited philosophy” in his blood.

Iqbal visited Cambridge at a time (1905) when Philosophy in Europe was taking a new turn and scientific and empirical methods were gaining popularity and anti-metaphysical trends were at their peak. Old traditions of Idealism were the target of harsh criticism. Though Hegelian Idealists like T.H. Green and F.H. Bradley were still teaching at Cambridge, and Iqbal's own mentor John MacTaggart was a British Idealist too, however, overall milieu was hostile for any kind of Idealism. Common Sense was being promoted in Philosophy; Analytical Tradition has gained momentum while

Logical Positivism was attracting the philosophical circles. Therefore, England could not satisfy the deep philosophical urges of Muhammad Iqbal and he could not find satisfaction in the empirical and the tangible, since he was yearning for something higher and insightful which was not limited to the visible alone. His own ideals were a universe free from mechanical causality, a liberated Self which could surpass the boundaries of time and space, an Ego that was beyond dissolution and capable of surviving itself in the presence of the infinite, a spiritual reality which depended essentially on consciousness, an anthropocentric universe wherein Man was The Crown of Creation. Definitely a soul with such paragons and constructs could not find comfort in the dry and cold logical inquiry of the analytical tradition since it was pulsating with life, energy and warm blood which wished to outflow any boundary. Nevertheless the passionate and restless soul ultimately located its desired abode in Germany where Hegel, Schelling, Fichte and Nietzsche were waiting for him with open arms. Finally his “genes” brought him back to the same land where he could find the true solace of his soul. Iqbal did his PhD from Germany, learnt German language, drank deep from the German Philosophical tradition and disseminated it through his Urdu and Persian Poetry. His great work *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is still a great source of inspiration for students of Philosophy. It is an intellectually stimulating book, wherein a thorough influence of German Idealism can be easily traced. It is interesting and surprising to know that Brahmanism or Ancient Indian Orthodox Philosophy bears an astonishing resemblance with German Idealism too. However, currently it is beyond the scope of this discussion. Hence, Comparative study or review of German Idealism, known as Classical German Idealism too with the philosophical thought of Allama Muhammad Iqbal is a justified, interesting and fruitful project without any fear of contradiction.

## **2. Discussion and Main Heads of Comparison**

The salient features of German Idealism which give it a distinct identity separate from the rest of Western Philosophy include: i- Idea of the Absolute, ii- Beginning of the world in the Absolute, iii- Stages and phases of Self- consciousness, iv- Unity of the Subject and Object, v-First traces of Philosophical Anthropology (What man is in itself beyond all physical things and the universe?), vi- Intellectual intuition as a source of knowledge and a tendency towards esotericism, vii - Enthusiastic interest in Dialectics, viii- Freedom and Determinism, ix- Self as an entity free of external and causal determinants, x- Ideas of Ego and Spirit, xi- World Spirit and xii- Existence as a whole or a Unity.

The most prominent German Idealists include I - Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), II- Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), III-Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Von Schelling (1775-1854) and IV- George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). These philosophers were not interested in the substances and their attributes; hence they did not produce traditional metaphysics like other Western philosophers. Their main emphasis was on *Mind* as an active and self-conscious entity which was not merely a passive recipient of knowledge of the external world.

Kant, though an empirical rationalist, could not deny the supremacy of mind over matter and of human beings over the external world (Kant, I.,1999). For him space, time and causality were the categories of mind, which it imposed on the outer world. However, he did believe in the dichotomy of mind and matter though he combined rationalism and empiricism in his Transcendental Idealism, which is an unconscious move towards unity despite the belief in *noumena* and *phenomena*. Later thinkers, however, gradually moved closer and closer to the Idealism and especially Monism. These eternal, perennial, deep, highbrow, captivating, serious, scholarly, cherished, enthralling and fascinating ideas were presented and discussed at length by Muhammad Iqbal too in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

German influence on Iqbal is mammoth; however, to make this study more precise and palatable, it has been divided under appropriate and well defined heads. It will be the best to start with Monism.

## 2.1 Monism

A cursory look on the salient features of German Idealism is enough to convince the reader that it has a strong leaning towards Monism. Following items stand as an evidence for the same:

- Idea of the Absolute,
- Existence of the World in the Absolute;
- Unity of the Subject and Object;
- Existence as a whole or a Unity.

Kant was the first forefather of the monism whose Transcendental Idealism was an unconscious step towards *unity* despite the belief in *noumena* and *phenomena*. The later German Idealists, however, advocated monism aggressively and vigorously. This Monistic tradition is known as Pantheism as well. Iqbal has frankly admitted Chapter II of *Reconstruction* that, “The result of an intellectual view of life, therefore, is necessarily pantheistic” (Iqbal.M, 2006). He has cited a well-known dialogue between a mystic and his disciple when the pupil said that once nothing existed except God. The mentor replied that situation was still the same. Iqbal does not consider creation of the universe a remote act of past, in which it was brought into being and now was deprived of the hands of its maker. He also does not believe that universe is something separate from being of God and there is a space between Him and it. Moreover, it is not a confronting “Other” for God (Iqbal.M, 2006).

If the universe is not a separate entity distinct from God, then definitely it is either a part of God or resides inside its Being, the Idea or the Absolute. It will be discussed further in the next segment regarding the Spiritual nature of the Reality Being a consistent Monist, Iqbal considers the Ultimate Reality (The Absolute) an Ego, from whom only Egos may emanate. Regarding creation, he asserts, “From the unity of the all-inclusive Ego, who creates and sustains all egos, follows the essential unity of mankind” (Iqbal.M, 2006). In the same vein he precedes, “I have *conceived* the Ultimate Reality as an Ego; and I must add now that from the Ultimate Egos only egos proceed” (Iqbal.M, 2006).

Here the esteemed readers are requested to pay attention to a point that this view is not creation in the standard sense of the word, moreover, it is markedly different from the Semitic conception of creation. In its true essence, it is essentially German and Aryan. It will be beneficial to add here that this is also called Panpsychism, which immediately reminds us another great German Rationalist philosopher, Leibniz.

The similar monistic leaning is more than evident in his Urdu poetry and political Thought. In one of his Urdu verses he has said that the Unreal (*Batil*) is dualistic, whereas the Real (*Haq*) is monistic and one must not admit the admixture of the two (Iqbal.M, 1982). We must stop here for a moment and think why Iqbal is a passionate upholder of monism at all?

Moreover for some of his political ideals he was direly in need of Monism. He wished to dissolve the duality of mind and matter, body and soul (say Religion and State) for the sake of his political aims and objectives, and an Islamic State in Sub-continent.<sup>1</sup> It will be surveyed in depth at

next segment.

## **2.2 The Ego and the Spirit**

Another hallmark of German Idealism is the Idea or Spirit. It is interesting to note that German Idealist developed a novel sort of Metaphysics which is not based on substances and their attributes. They constructed their philosophies specially Metaphysics on the notion of the Idea or the Spirit. It is the synonym of Mind in the overall Western Philosophy; however, this mind is not merely a recipient of knowledge, perceiver or a passive store-house, rather an active and self-conscious entity as mentioned earlier. Though Idealism is not new in Western Philosophy, but German Idealism is markedly different from all other brands of European Idealisms. Moreover, Consciousness has a central role in German Philosophy, which is the fundamental building block of the Universe; this Consciousness is free from mechanical causality and expresses itself in the form of Ego. The entire universe or the external world is the expansion of the Ego. Therefore, in this segment our main focus is Ego or the Spirit. As per German Idealists, ultimate reality is spiritual, essentially an ego, therefore not material.

The word Ego was introduced in German Philosophy by Fichte. Fichte says that instead of any outer object, he is more aware of his own Self and Consciousness. He has immediate knowledge of his Self and he does not need any 'method' like Descartes to affirm it. It was evident for Fichte without slightest doubt that his Self was Absolute Ego, and being an Absolute Ego it was bound to be free and active. Moreover, it was 'self-affirming- intelligence-in-itself'. It was not only the Absolute Ethical standard but also the creative idea of a human being. It is the universal 'I' principle which is active within all consciousness. Fichte is sure and confident that we have a definite intellectual intuition of this Self and Consciousness. Our free moral choices and independent actions are its greatest confirmation. He equates it with 'doing' (*Tun*) or an action (Aubrey .G, 2014).

He further expounds his idea that, The Ego postulates a limited (finite or divisible) empirical and individual ego in opposition to the unlimited Non-Ego. For practical purposes Ego very carefully chooses this Non-Ego to distinguish itself as a distinct unity. This Non-Ego is conceived as external world or Nature. Theoretically speaking the Ego struggles to realize itself in the context of the Non-Ego exploiting it as its means (Hegel, G.W.F, 1953).

An important point will definitely attract the attention of the readers that Fichte has declared theory as subordinate to the praxis which Iqbal has translated as *amal* in his poetry, he holds *amal* in high esteem. This activity or *amal* is the maker of life, paradise and hell, since without *amal* the creature of dust is nothing *per se*.

Muhammad Iqbal has also found relief and desire of his heart in the term of *Absolute Ego* or *Ultimate Ego* for the *Ultimate Reality* which is, nevertheless, God. God is an Ultimate Self, with the highest degree of the intuition of 'I-amness'. In the words of Holy Qur'an, only the Ultimate Self can afford to dispense with all the worlds (Iqbal.M, 2006). To Him the not-self does not present itself as a confronting 'other.' (Iqbal.M,2006). Iqbal in second chapter of *Reconstruction*, "The Philosophical Test of the Revelations of Religious Experience" again asserts that:

"Intuition reveals life as a centralized ego.....Thus the facts of experience justify the inference that the ultimate nature of Reality is spiritual, and must be conceived as an ego." (Iqbal.M, 2006).

To quote his beautiful words here will not be out of context:

“Reality is, therefore, essentially spirit.....I have conceived the Ultimate Reality as an Ego.....The creative energy of the Ultimate Ego, in whom deed and thought are identical, functions as ego-unities.” (Iqbal.M., 2006).

Certainly the readers are capable of finding astonishing similarity themselves between the approach of two great thinkers regarding the nature of Ultimate Reality and declaring it as an Ego. Fichte has identified the Ego as an activity or doing (*Tun*). Since it is an energy and spirit, it cannot be static or idle, it is persistently mobile and active. Iqbal has also endorsed the idea and to him the Ultimate Ego is an active energy whose creation is a one unified and continuous act, but our finite minds see it divided into time and space since they cannot liberate themselves from the categories of time and space (Iqbal.M, 2006). Though Iqbal consciously does not hold dear Kant like Bergson, but here he is not only in consonance with Fichte but also with Kant.

Fichte wrote an essay under the title of “The Vocation of Man” in which he wrote that everything exists as a presentation of the Infinite Creative Reason or an Eternal Will. Therefore, everything becomes conscious of itself. He delivered a series of lectures in 1804 on “Theory of Science” wherein he declared the Absolute as Light and creation its essence. For the readers of Iqbal this statement must have brought extreme surprise since Iqbal has used both the terms for the Absolute Ego. In the end of the second lecture Iqbal has concluded after extensive and intensive investigation that “Ultimate Reality is a rationally directed creative life” (Iqbal.M, 2006). .

In the beginning of the third lecture of the Reconstruction, Muhammad Iqbal, has quoted the famous verse of Holy Qur’an according to which God is the light of the heavens and of the earth. (*Al-Qur’an*, 3: 97, 29:6: 1930) He has given example from the Modern Physics as well which declares light as the fastest entity in the universe of which the velocity may not be exceeded. Thus he has concluded:

“Thus in the world of change, light is the nearest approach to the Absolute. The metaphor of light as applied to God, therefore, must, in view of modern knowledge, be taken to suggest the Absoluteness of God. (Iqbal.M, 2006).

Hence one may infer beyond reasonable doubt that Iqbal is highly influenced by Fichte in conceiving his Idea of God as an Ego, Creative Life and Light. However, this comparison would remain incomplete if we do not discuss it in the context of Hegel who brought the Spirit to its culminating point. One of the aims of the Hegelian Philosophy was to establish the strong foundations of Metaphysics with the help of Pure Reason alone contrary to the Kant. Secondly he wished to found knowledge on indubitable and certain grounds by diminishing the difference of the things-as- they- appear-to -us and the things-as-they-are-in-themselves. Hence he was in need of a singular principle which itself was self- evident, free and beyond any doubt to overcome the dual formula of Kant. This he could originate in the Spirit, which is actually the Divine Will, realizing itself during the course of history. He has used the phrase energy for that too very frequently (Hegel, G.W.F, 1953).

Let us have a thorough review, why did this Energy enthral Muhammad Iqbal so overwhelmingly? Besides, German Idealism, he was an ardent admirer of Modern Physics too, and in the very first chapter of *Reconstruction*, has vowed to reinterpret rather reconstruct the Islamic religious thought anew in the light of the findings of Modern Physics (Iqbal.M, 2006). Iqbal found early traces of Modern Physics and a dynamic universe in the Asharaites' Atomic Theory which though having many flaws was nearer to the anti-classical spirit of Qur'an (Iqbal.M, 2006).

What actually was very significant for Iqbal was the dissolution of the duality between the mind and matter (mentioned above). Modern Physics, no doubt totally revised classical notion of space, time and matter. Celebrated philosopher and illustrious mathematician Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) also accredited that the outmoded theory of materialism was completely unsound. Failure of Newtonian Physics rejuvenated Iqbal so much that he victoriously announced:

“Thus Physics, finding it necessary to criticize its own foundations, eventually found reason to break its own idol, and the empirical attitude which appeared to necessitate scientific materialism has finally ended in a revolt against matter (Iqbal.M, 2006).

This dilapidation and deprivation of matter affirm and approve Iqbal's and Hegel's ideas, that ultimate nature of reality is spiritual (Iqbal.M, 2006). Some very pertinent philosophical questions arise here. First is how and why does this Spirit convert itself into matter? Why does it manifest itself into space and time at all? What is its ultimate motive and objective behind this *modus operandi*? The answer will not be surprising rather expected. The Spirit has clear-cut and well defined political aims which it wishes to attain with the help of a State and in order to establish this State, is ready to manifest itself in material and temporal mode (Iqbal.M, 2006).

It is clear that the Islamic State is one wherein Ultimate Reality or God realizes His immense creative possibilities through material manifestations in space and time. The idea is not difficult to understand since any student of philosophy may recognize the most pronounced influence of Hegel on Iqbal.

### **2.3 Philosophical Anthropology, Consciousness And Freedom**

One of the greatest contributions of Iqbal to the modern philosophy is to restore the human freedom and lost and robbed status of man in the scheme of things. Iqbal was born in that brutal and cruel period of human history when man surrendered his entire dignity before naturalism and materialism and was reduced to a worthless product of evolution residing a tiny and unimportant planet of an infinite universe. He was no more a chosen creature of a Creator having freedom to make his destiny but an insignificant material being fixed in the causal nexus and determined by the forces of nature.

Muhammad Iqbal's dynamic and agitated soul could not compromise with chains of any sort; he wished to break all kinds of restrictions and limitations. The contemporary philosophies of Europe could not provide him that grace, dignity, honour, autonomy and freedom he yearned for.

Fortunately he could find these gems too in Germany, amongst the galaxy of idealists. He was one of the most well-read scholars of the world. He read Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Von Schelling as well in-depth who remained least-known in the English speaking world till his 100<sup>th</sup> death

anniversary, that is, 1954. Schelling is a luminous star whose light will irradiate the intellectual horizon of mankind till eternity. He has condensed his entire thought in one line: “The beginning and end of all Philosophy is.....freedom” (Schelling, F.W.J.V., 1978). This is the same freedom for which Iqbal dreamt, fought and urged throughout his life.

However, freedom in the universe is manifested by man alone--- therefore, man is the pivotal point of creation. This man is the paramount love of Iqbal; Iqbal is the first poet of Urdu who has sung the songs of dignity of man most enthusiastically and eagerly far before the advent of Progressive Writers’ Movement in India (1936). Nevertheless, his one soul-mate once existed in Germany and upheld the same ideals. He was no other but Schelling. Iqbal bears surprising similarity of views with those of Schelling regarding the Fall of Adam. Moreover for both great thinkers, man is the finest and most unique creature on the face of the earth and his study is the most promising academic project. Who is man and what is man apart from other creatures? What distinguishes him? Both Iqbal and Schelling are unanimous in their opinions that freedom is the essence of man and he is the only free creative entity in this boundless universe. Iqbal has passionately described in one of his Urdu verses that “You (Man) are neither for the earth nor for the heavens. The world is for you; you are not for the world” (Iqbal.M. 1982).

Hence Schelling may be legitimately declared the founding father of philosophic anthropology. The issues of morality, good and evil are related to the same freedom. Schelling, like Boehme has made a distinction between God as ground of being and God as perfection. At first good and evil were a single entity; evil was separated from good in order to make man realize both his freedom and morality. Hence, evil is a necessity without which freedom and morality lose their meaning (Schelling, F.W.J.V., 1936).

Here the words ‘fall’, ‘consciousness’ and ‘free activity’ demand special attention. We are now going to trace the same with similar results in Iqbal’s Philosophical Thought. Iqbal has reached the same results using the same legend of fall. Iqbal has expounded these interwoven concepts in detail in the third lecture of the *Reconstruction*, “The Conception of God and the Meaning of Prayer”; Iqbal firmly opines that legend of Fall has nothing to do with the first appearance of man on this planet as a punishment.

“Its purpose is rather to indicate man’s rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and disobedience” (Iqbal.M, 2006).

Iqbal further explains that man’s first act of disobedience was his first act of free choice. Moreover, goodness is not an act of compulsion rather it is self’s free surrender to the moral ideal. A being’s whose acts are pre-determined like a machine cannot produce goodness. Freedom is thus a condition of goodness. Hence evil is a necessary pre-condition to judge goodness of a free and self-conscious person. He has quoted a verse from the holy Qur’an:

“And for trial will We test you with evil and with good”. (*Al-Quran*, 21: 35, 1930).

Good and evil though opposite, must fall within the same whole” (Iqbal.M, 2006). This comparison shows clearly that ideas of Schelling have impressed Iqbal visibly and he has drawn definite inspiration from him. Iqbal like Schelling believes in the ultimate triumph of goodness over

evil, which is called Meliorism (Iqbal.M, 2006).

Both Iqbal and Schelling have a mystical and pantheistic bend of mind which we have discussed in the beginning already. It has been repeated here that about scientific knowledge both great thinkers have similar views, for both scientists is really a mystic who is studying Divine miracles.

Schelling presented his own idea of Science according to which the main purpose of Science was to explain the nature as a unity (Schelling, F.W.J.V., 1798). Hence for him the genuine idea to be explored by the Science was 'Force'. In the following year, he defined this force as "pure activity" (Schelling, F.W.J.V., 1799). For him the universe was the manifestation of this force which is inexhaustible, ever renewing and recreating itself moment by moment to realize itself (Schelling, F.W.J.V., 1799). Iqbal replaced this force with Divine Energy which displays itself in new fashion every day as per Qur'an. (*Al-Quran*, 55:29, 1930).

This immediately brings to mind immortal verse of the Poet of the East:

This universe is probably still incomplete. Therefore, the sound of  
*Kun Fayakoon* is persistently coming! (Iqbal.M,1982).

Iqbal has brought the proof in the favour of his thesis from Qur'an that every moment in the life of Reality is original and giving birth to what is absolutely novel and unforeseeable.<sup>ii</sup> And truth according to Iqbal is not only a search for knowledge, but essentially a form of prayer. The scientific observer of Nature is a kind of mystic seeker in the act of prayer (Iqbal.M, 2006). Here the notice point is writing of nature with capital N by Iqbal. Why? The reason is that he considers Nature as a *Unity* and longs for a science which may give a unified explanation of the same. Like Schelling Iqbal also believes in the primacy of life over organic matter, instead of vice versa. For him, like Schelling, life is independent of mechanical causality to which inorganic matter is subject. It astonishes the reader that though Schelling, grand in philosophical stature is relatively less famous and less read in Europe shares largest range of Ideas with Iqbal. Iqbal is a fervent lover of freedom and his zeal for the same may be witnessed in his fourth lecture of the *Reconstruction*, "Human Ego- His Freedom and Immortality". Space at our disposal does not allow here for a more detailed comparison, however, interested readers may study lectures two, three and four of the *Reconstruction* with the above mentioned works of Schelling for a more fruitful and stimulating review.

#### **2.4 Unity of the Subject and the Object**

As we have seen earlier, German Idealism is a dignified and splendid philosophy in every sense of the word; even then it carries within itself profound seeds of mysticism, esotericism and monism/pantheism. Iqbal's philosophical thought is also studded with these gems. One logical corollary of this approach is the unity of the subject and the object, a condition in which the known and the knower are one and the same. It requires a different type of epistemology and definitely a logic which is not based on subject- predicate duality. Similarly a specific metaphysics is imperative which does not presuppose substances and their attributes in outer world separate from consciousness.

It is a subtle and intricate matter, how is knowledge possible if nothing exists outside the subject and there is no object? Can it be called knowledge at all? If yes, which sort of knowledge it is



and what does it tell about? Moreover, is this knowledge valid and can be equated with scientific and empirical knowledge? These are the supremely fantastic questions we are going to deal with in this segment of the study.

One of the most difficult ideas to comprehend in early nineteenth-century German philosophy is that of the Absolute. Schelling was the first German to introduce it as a philosophical term. It was taken as the ontological basis of Being, moreover, a 'philosophical ground' wherein the subject and the object unite. In the beginning Hegel opted for it in the similar sense, however, later he gave it his own specific meaning. After the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781 and 1787 respectively; it became evident that his Transcendental Idealism will be a great source of Scepticism because it rested on the duality between self and nature, sensibility and understanding, *numena* and *phenomena*. Only a Philosophical Monism could overcome that sort of doubt in which distinction between the subject and the object no longer exists. This was neither a naive nor a dogmatic Monism, instead the German Idealists wanted to found the phenomenological reality on a standard code of unity or identity in order to minimize or eradicate possibilities of doubt in knowledge. They introduced another kind of epistemology which does not entertain dualities. Definitely the intellect alone may not grasp the Absolute. Discursive reason may not be of great help there, hence an immediate insight or tool is required which does not divide things into parts to understand and appreciate them. This insight is known as 'intuition' *Anschauung* (Stone. A, 2022).

After this explanatory note, it would be easier for us to understand the stance of Muhammad Iqbal on the very serious and sensitive issue. Iqbal wished to establish the knowledge, better to say religious knowledge not only at par with the scientific and empirical knowledge in validity but also to test it with the help of scientific, intellectual and pragmatic methodologies. To overcome the duality of the subject and the object was the intense desire of his heart to reach this end. His keenness and passion may be measured from the fact that he has dedicated the very first lecture of the *Reconstruction* to the very ideal under the title of "Knowledge and Religious Experience". All the honourable readers know well that this sort of absolute monism may not be accommodated easily within the framework of Islam. However, Iqbal has made room for his ideal with extraordinary intellectual and academic skill. As he has expressed in his erudite words:

"With Islam the ideal and the real are not two opposing forces which cannot be reconciled. The life of the ideal consists not in the total breach with the real which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life into painful oppositions, but in the perpetual endeavour of the ideal to appropriate the real with a view to eventually absorb it, to convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole being. *It is the sharp opposition between the subject and the object, the mathematical without and the biological within, that impressed Christianity. Islam, however, faces the opposition with a view to overcome it*" (Iqbal.M, 2006) [Italics added]

Religious or mystical experience is real, a concrete capability and practice according to Iqbal in which the person involved actually feels this unity, though it is momentary but perfectly real. While describing the salient features of the religious and mystical experience, in his point number three, he has thoroughly elaborated that during this experience the boundaries of the distinct personalities melt and division of the subject and the object vanishes. The person who undergoes mystical experience finds himself one with a Unique Other Self. However, he raises a pertinent

question that how does a God, who is an Independent Other Self can be united with and known? He gives a clear and categorical answer with complete confidence that the mystic state cannot prove veritable 'Othernesses' of the Self experienced<sup>iii</sup>. For him the Self was the part of his own being.

As far as the knowledge obtained through religious experience is concerned, it is as real and valid for Iqbal as the knowledge gained through other philosophically acclaimed sources. Its authenticity cannot be undermined only on the basis of this objection that it is not based on sense perception or logic (Iqbal.M,2006) For Iqbal there are some subliminal levels of consciousness which are as respectable and reliable as is our so-called normal consciousness.

However, it will have to be expected that to appreciate these levels of consciousness and the type of knowledge gained through religious experience, sense perception and intellect may not be a good help. Why? The answer is that both sense perception and intellect are capable of seeing things in their pluralities with distinct identities, they are discerning not unifying. So if we have to fully understand the unity of the subject and the object, we have to seek after another source of knowledge, that is, the *intuition* which we have mentioned above. This unique and fabulous source of knowledge is going to be the last segment of our comparison between similarity of Iqbal's thought and German Idealism.

## **2.5 Intuition**

'Intuition' (*Anschauung*), too is a gift of German Idealism to the History of Philosophy. It is a special sort of epistemic faculty which may know the entire scheme of things in their entirety as one entity without facing the devastating duality of the subject and the object. Only this approach could establish knowledge on a doubt-free and stable ground.

This intuition grasped the immediate attention of Muhammad Iqbal who was in need of a philosophical method to support his religious experience. Let us have a thorough glance that how meticulously and with erudition, Iqbal has maintained superiority of intuition over intellect and sense-perception.

In the "Knowledge and Religious Experience" Iqbal has paid rich tribute to Ghazali and Kant and declared that Al-Ghazali's mission was almost apostolic like Kant in Germany of eighteenth century; his Critique of Pure Reason revealed the limitations of human reason and reduced the whole work of the rationalism to the heap of ruins (Iqbal. M, 2006)

Similarly, in the World of Islam, Ghazali broke the back of that proud but shallow rationalism which moved in the same direction as pre-Kantian rationalism of Germany. When the back of "shallow rationalism" was broken, what did replace it? It was nothing else but Intuition. He is not happy with Kant since he asserted that metaphysics is impossible because thought being finite cannot comprehend the infinite. Iqbal, however, is annoyed that Kant produced a cleavage between thought and intuition "and he failed to see that thought and intuition are organically related" (Iqbal. M, 2006).

Both Kant and Ghazali could not recognize that thought in the act of knowing can surpass its own limitations. But how can the thought be assisted in this grand task, because it cannot accomplish it alone. Iqbal has moved towards Holy Quran to support his thesis that to securing a complete vision of Reality, sense perception must be supplemented by another perception which is

described by the Holy Book as *Fuad*, *Qalab* or heart. The ‘heart’ is a kind of inner intuition or insight which brings us in contact with those aspects of Reality which sense perception may not appreciate. Heart, according to Allah, is something which sees and its reports if interpreted properly can never be faulty (*Al-Quran*, 53: 11-12, 1930).

This intuition makes piecemeal and fragmentary reality merge into one, single and indivisible whole. It must be kept in mind that this intuition is not something opposite to sense perception or intellect. It is an assistant and facilitator of the both not an opponent. The difference of the mystic state from the ordinary rational consciousness does not mean discontinuation with the normal consciousness as William James wrongly interpreted.

Intuition generates that type of knowledge which may cover total passage of Reality. This is the knowledge in which according to Iqbal all the diverse stimuli merge into one another and form a single unanalyzable unity in which the ordinary distinction of subject and object does not exist<sup>iv</sup>.

The last sentence links the segments ‘d’ and ‘e’ and connects the oneness of subject and object, certainty of knowledge, reality as an organic whole and unity and its knowledge and apprehension through a special faculty, that is, Intuition, which is though part of the intellect yet is superior to intellect.

### 3. Conclusion

Iqbal is an unfathomable ocean and one paper cannot cover all the dimensions of a multifaceted and dazzling diamond. Moreover, German Idealism too, is a mammoth and gigantic tradition consisting of philosophical giants. Their full comparison is humanly impossible in a single paper; however, this paper to its level best has tried to establish the similarity between Iqbal and German Idealism.

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