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BECOMING A GENUINE MUSLIM

KIERKEGAARD AND MUHAMMAD IQBAL

Sevcan Ozturk



Becoming a Genuine Muslim

Despite the apparent lack of any cultural and religious connection between Kierkegaard and Iqbal, their philosophical and religious concerns and their methods of dealing with these concerns show certain parallels.

This book provides a Kierkegaardian reading of Muhammad Iqbal's idea of becoming a genuine Muslim. It reflects on the parallels between the philosophical approaches of Kierkegaard and Iqbal, and argues that, though there are certain parallels between their approaches, there is a significant difference between their philosophical stances. Kierkegaard was concerned with developing an existential dialectics; Iqbal, however, focused mostly on the identification of the problems of the modern Muslim world. As a result, Iqbal's idea of becoming a genuine Muslim – the practical aspect of his thought and one of the most central issues of his philosophy – seems to be unclear and even contradictory at points. This book therefore uses the parallels between the two philosophers' endeavours and the notions developed by Kierkegaard to provide a strong hermeneutical tool for clarifying where the significance of Iqbal's idea of becoming a Muslim lies.

By bringing together two philosophers from different cultural, traditional and religious backgrounds, this book will appeal to students and scholars of Comparative Politics, Contemporary Islamic Philosophy and the Philosophy of Religion.

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Preface

The philosophical deliberations of Kierkegaard and Iqbal respectively have parallels in certain regards and yet, in spite of this, surprisingly little work has been done on the relationship and implications that may be drawn from their work being compared and contrasted. This book has as its principle that of applying a Kierkegaardian hermeneutics, which itself gives a particular emphasis to the subject of becoming a religious self, to Iqbal's discussion of becoming a Muslim self. Kierkegaard paid much attention to the developing of a dialectics and is rigorous in this endeavour; Iqbal, on the other hand, focused mostly on the identification of the problems of the Muslim world of his day, so he chose to remain actively engaged in the political and social issues of the Muslims of India. The main result of this is that Iqbal does not provide his readers with a clear idea of how to become a Muslim despite the fact that it is perhaps the core of his philosophical thought. This book aims to identify and dispel the issues caused by the inconsistencies and lack of clarity in Iqbal's philosophical thought which are partly the results of his particular interest in the identification of the problems rather than providing concrete solutions for them. This will be achieved through the application of the Kierkegaardian techniques and concepts to Iqbal's discussions. Therefore, the intention of this book is to make a contribution in three directions: (1) to the academic literature on Iqbal, a field which, with a few notable exceptions, is lacking in analytical and critical studies; (2) to Kierkegaard studies, by juxtaposing Kierkegaard with a philosopher from the Muslim world, who has, largely, not been taken seriously by Western philosophy and who deserves to be taken more seriously; (3) to intercultural studies, by reflecting on the common ground of a philosophical project in spite of religious and cultural differences.

After a review of literature on Iqbal, and also on what has been written about him in relation to Kierkegaard, there is an attempt to construct a Kierkegaardian hermeneutics, the establishment of which incorporates the main principles of Kierkegaard's philosophical method. Iqbal is then set in his cultural and philosophical context, with a focus on his view of the problems of the modern Muslim world of his day and his solutions for them. The remainder of the book is concerned with the application of Kierkegaardian hermeneutics to the main points of Iqbal's discussion of the development of the self

and specifically of the genuine Muslim self. This requires the making of certain distinctions between concepts, and also the cultivation of an existential appropriation on the part of the reader. Concepts which led to ambiguity in his work and particularly in his idea of becoming a genuine Muslim, are identified and then clarified with the help of Kierkegaard's theory of making distinctions. Iqbal's understanding of the existential character of Islam is identified with the help of a number of Kierkegaardian notions, and the role of this existential character of Islam is discussed in relation to becoming a genuine Muslim. Lastly, the concepts which were clarified through the principle of making distinctions and other Kierkegaardian notions, such as religiousness and the spheres of existence, are applied to Iqbal's discussion of the existential character of Islam.

In this book, which originally was in the form of a PhD dissertation, I have chosen to write in a depersonalized style for the sake of clarity and precision. Occasionally I have given examples which have required the use of the first person singular or plural. I have also cited the name of the work itself instead of using 'ibid.' in referencing the works of Kierkegaard and Iqbal, again, for the sake of clarity. In referencing secondary resources, however, I have used 'ibid.' to avoid duplicating the same reference details. Although all of Iqbal's poetry has been translated into English, and a few works have been rendered into Turkish, I have made a point of checking the Persian text in cases where I needed to examine the details of technical terms, e.g. where the translations might be ambiguous, or where the published translation is inadequate. Although Iqbal is widely known as a 'philosopher-poet', and although most of his authorship consists of poetry, he presents his philosophical discussions mainly in his prose works, including newspaper articles. I have referred to only a couple of his poems in which he raises philosophical discussions and notions that are significant and relevant to the subject of the individual's becoming a genuine Muslim self. And finally, in this book I would wish to adopt a gender-neutral style using 'he', 'him' or 'himself' when talking about the 'individual' and the 'human being', and using the word 'man' as a term beyond gender.

I would like to thank my supervisors Professor David R. Law and Professor Alan Williams for their full support and expert guidance throughout my PhD research at the University of Manchester. I am also grateful to Professor Oliver Leaman for encouraging me in publishing my research as a book, and also I am thankful for his support, guidance, understanding and kindness throughout this book project. I would like to extend my appreciation to Professor Abraham H. Khan for all the inspiring conversations we had on Iqbal, and for his feedback on my dissertation. I also would like to thank Iqbal Academy Pakistan for providing a huge collection of Iqbal's poetry in English without which this study would probably have been an overwhelming pursuit.

I owe an immense depth of gratitude to my family for their continuous prayers that kept me motivated. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my beloved husband, Fahri, who deserves my heartfelt gratitude for his

unwavering support and understanding throughout our life together. And finally, my lovely daughter, Asude, deserves my deepest gratitude for sharing every single minute of the first fifteen months of her life with me at my office at the university, for joining me in almost every academic event I attended for the last three years, and for being such a calm girl especially at academic occasions.

Abbreviations*

- CUP* *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (1846), 2 volumes (vol. 1 text; vol. 2 supplement and notes), ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
- JP* *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, 5 vols, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967–1978). Cited by volume number and entry number.
- PC* *Practise in Christianity* (1850), ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).
- PF* *Philosophical Fragments* (1844), ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
- POV* *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (written 1848; unpub. in Kierkegaard's lifetime), ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

Note

- * These abbreviations are used only in the Note sections.



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1 Introduction

In this book the overall aim is to provide a Kierkegaardian reading of Muhammad Iqbal's idea of becoming a self, particularly a Muslim self. At first sight this may seem to be a surprising project. Kierkegaard (1813–1855), after all, was a nineteenth-century Danish Christian thinker, whereas Iqbal (1877–1938) was a twentieth-century thinker living in British-ruled India. Furthermore, Kierkegaard only very occasionally refers to Islam,¹ while Iqbal makes no mention of Kierkegaard in his works despite being in close contact with European thought and talking about many of the major European and American philosophers.² Despite the apparent lack of connection between Kierkegaard and Iqbal, there are, however, good reasons to deal with these two thinkers as a research topic. First, there have been very few critical studies of Iqbal's philosophy. This book will attempt to rectify this state of affairs by providing a critical analysis of Iqbal's notion of the self. Since Iqbal develops his notion of the self in part in dialogue with existentialist thinkers, notably Nietzsche,³ it makes sense to apply to Iqbal's thought the profound analysis of becoming a religious self provided by the 'father of existentialism', namely Kierkegaard. Second, although this book aims primarily at shedding light on Iqbal's thought, it also makes a contribution to Kierkegaard research. In the voluminous secondary literature on Kierkegaard there have been very few studies aimed at developing a relationship between Kierkegaard and any thinker belonging to a different tradition or religion, particularly to Islam.⁴ The fact that there is not much written on Iqbal and Kierkegaard in these respects indicates that there is a significant gap in the literature. Despite the fact that there have been a vast number of studies on each of these thinkers separately, there are only three published works dealing with them together. Only one author, Ghulam Sabir, has penned a long comparative study on Iqbal and Kierkegaard, and one other, Abraham H. Khan, published two articles on these two thinkers in English. Sabir published a book entitled *Kierkegaard and Iqbal: Startling Resemblances* in 2003.⁵ However, as the title clearly suggests, the work focuses on comparing Iqbal and Kierkegaard, and finding similarities between these two thinkers. It does not, as such, apply Kierkegaardian insights to the interpretation of Iqbal. Khan, on the other hand, has authored two articles on Iqbal and Kierkegaard. One of these articles, entitled 'Kierkegaard and Iqbal on Becoming a Genuinely Existing Self', has been published

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among the proceedings of the annual meeting of the Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Group and the Søren Kierkegaard Society in 2007.⁶ This article is the basis for Khan's more recent paper on Iqbal and Kierkegaard entitled 'Muhammad Iqbal and Kierkegaard's "Judge William"'.⁷ They show that there is not much secondary literature available that analyses Iqbal and Kierkegaard and that, what there is, it is inadequate in some respects on Iqbal and Kierkegaard. This book aims to rectify this deficiency.

The third and perhaps most important reason for undertaking this study is that Kierkegaard and Iqbal are addressing similar problems. They both aim at purifying religion from 'alien' elements. Christianity, for Kierkegaard, must be distinguished from the other phenomena that had been associated and confused with it such as Hegelianism, which had reduced Christianity to an inferior form of philosophy. Kierkegaard is also concerned to distinguish Christianity from the social norms of society and from simply being human. That is, in Kierkegaard's works there is found an early critique of what would later be called 'culture Protestantism', the confusion and conflation of Christianity with the dominant norms and values of contemporary society.⁸ Iqbal's thought includes a parallel set of concerns. Like Kierkegaard with regard to Christianity, Iqbal holds that Islam has been confused and conflated with non-Islamic ideas that undermine the true character of the faith. For Iqbal, the elements from which religion must be purified are Greek thought and Islamic mysticism, which in his view undermine the significance of human existence. Their critique of the contemporary forms of their respective religions in turn led both Kierkegaard and Iqbal to be critical of the religious authorities who had allowed such a lamentable state of affairs to come about. Both thinkers call for return to the original sources of Christianity and Islam respectively.

A closer examination of the methods Kierkegaard and Iqbal use in regard to these problems reveals another parallel, namely that they both attempt to deal with their concerns in similar ways. These similarities can be found in their literary technique, their emphasis on taking human existence as the starting point for their reflections, and their development of a notion of the self. It is their common concerns, and the parallel methods adopted by Kierkegaard and Iqbal in order to address these concerns, that seem to allow undertaking a comparative study of Iqbal and Kierkegaard. However, anyone attempting to undertake a comparative study of Iqbal and Kierkegaard, particularly of their understanding of the notion of the self, faces the problem that Iqbal seems not to plan the details of his philosophy of the self in a clear way as Kierkegaard does. In Khan's words, Iqbal presents the notion of the self 'as emerging through relation, as corresponding with consciousness of itself, and as becoming. But he does not seem to map out details of the relation as Kierkegaard does.'⁹ As a result, Iqbal's philosophy of the self is problematized by a terminology that is not perfectly fit for the purpose. What seems to be most important for Iqbal is the identification of the problems of the Muslim world in the modern era. As Ebrahim Moosa nicely puts it, 'He was more interested in pushing the boundaries of thought by raising still more questions to highlight some interminable

problems.¹⁰ Even if it was deliberate as Moosa claims¹¹ or not, the main result of this is that Iqbal does not provide his readers with a clear idea of how to become a Muslim self despite the fact that it is perhaps the core of his philosophical thought.

Iqbal's philosophy aims at dispelling the problems of the modern Muslim world by reconstructing Islamic thought and creating a new world. As it is hoped will become clear in the course of this study, Iqbal focuses on this motivation and seeks an urgent way to make this purpose real in a most ambitious manner. He believes that in order to create his ideal world there are many urgent issues ranging from politics and economics to education that need to be dealt with. He had a very wide philosophical knowledge, and showed his ability to use this knowledge in what he wrote. One of the main features of Iqbal's thought that distinguishes it from others is, in Charles Taylor's words, that he

manages to establish a mutual and fruitful exchange between thinkers and texts that are quite distant from each other: Nietzsche and Bergson, Hallaj and Rumi, and between those and still others, taken up in the context of rereading the Quran.¹²

Iqbal is not only successful at cultivating fruitful conversations between different thinkers in different contexts, he also presents an unusual ability to establish a connection between modern Western philosophy and traditional Islamic thought. In other words, he successfully deals with modern discussions in an Islamic context. An example of this can be seen in his discussion of the notion of action. Iqbal discusses the notion of action in Hegelian and Kantian contexts and with references to dualism and mechanistic understanding of action,¹³ but he also discusses it with references to the Qur'anic verses. He establishes a relationship between human actions and the development of personality, he even invents the notions of 'ego-sustaining action' and 'ego-dissolving action', and introduces human actions as the means of achieving immortality promised by the Qur'an.¹⁴ The examination of his philosophy of action would be the subject of a whole other study. However, it should be noted that, although his discussion of action involves ambiguities at some points, the relationship he establishes between actions and the development of the self as an ultimate aim of Islam can actually be regarded as a significant contribution to contemporary philosophy of action, which currently seems to neglect Islamic contributions to the concept.¹⁵ The main problem with Iqbal's presentation of his philosophy, particularly in terms of the practical aspect of it, is that his terminology is not up to the task and sometimes creates problems for his aim of the 'reconstruction' of Islamic religious thought. In spite of this, the parallels mentioned are thought to provide sufficient justification for the application of aspects of Kierkegaard's thought to Iqbal's. Despite his rejection of any kind of system and his avoiding of defining his own terms directly, it is the contention of this book that the concepts Kierkegaard develops, and his wish to develop a consistent terminology, provide a powerful hermeneutic

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both for interpreting Iqbal's thought and for making clear where the significance of Iqbal's conception of the self lies.

The feasibility of providing a Kierkegaardian reading of Iqbal is supported by the fact that I am not the first to have undertaken such a project. The next task here is therefore to review the literature that has addressed the questions with which this study is concerned. First, this will expose the philosophical inadequacy of much of the secondary literature on Iqbal, which makes necessary the type of philosophical analysis that will be undertaken in the subsequent chapters. Second, it will set the scene for the discussion by considering the few studies of the relation between Iqbal and Kierkegaard that have appeared thus far.

A critical survey of selected secondary literature on Iqbal

Previously it was mentioned that although there is much written material on Iqbal, these works are rarely critical, objective and analytical. The two main characteristics of such uncritical studies of Iqbal are first, that they are extremely appreciative of Iqbal almost to the point of being celebratory, and second, that they have mostly been published in Pakistan.¹⁶ This is understandable, because Iqbal is much more than merely an intellectual for Pakistan. He is best known not as a religious philosopher but as the spiritual father, and foremost proponent of the idea of Pakistan as an independent Muslim country, although it is claimed that he is not actually the real 'father' of this idea.¹⁷

An example of the uncritical and highly appreciative treatment of Iqbal can be observed in A. K. Brohi's article 'Iqbal as a Philosopher-Poet'. Brohi writes: 'And Iqbal is significant to us precisely because nobody has served more than he has the cause of Islam – he is, for us, the mouthpiece of Muslim destiny as it articulates itself in our own day.'¹⁸ This suggestion by Brohi is an exaggeration of Iqbal's status by claiming that no one has served Islam as much as Iqbal did. He also fails to justify this claim for he does not provide any arguments as to why Iqbal has 'served more' than any Muslim thinker in the history of Islam. Mumtaz Hasan presents a similar view. He writes: 'He [Iqbal] has written some of the greatest poetry ever produced in Urdu or Persian, or, indeed, in any of the other languages we know.'¹⁹ These two claims regarding Iqbal are subjective and dramatic ideas written in objective terms and are in need of justification. However, the authors provide no justification of these claims with any references or proofs. In the same article, Hasan also presents conspiracy theories about the Indian-Pakistan clash by claiming that the Indian attack on Pakistan, about which he does not give any more details of the date or the attack, consciously aimed at the two important cities in Iqbal's life. He writes: 'It is significant that the recent Indian attack on Pakistan was concentrated mainly on two cities, Sialkot and Lahore, the former being the birthplace of Iqbal, and the latter the city where he lived and died.'²⁰

Iqbal stands among the most famous of modern Muslim thinkers in Turkey as well and is a spiritual leader not only for most Pakistani scholars but also for scholars who write in Turkish. An overview of the literature on Iqbal in Turkish

shows that he is an immensely famous figure, particularly among religious people and especially religious conservatives. Yet in spite of his popularity there, there are few serious studies on Iqbal in Turkish either. Only a few of Iqbal's poems have been translated into Turkish. Furthermore, until 2013, there had been two different versions of the Turkish translations of Iqbal's main prose work *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. However, these translations include a number of mistakes, and even omit some sentences present in the original English text. This, unsurprisingly, has presented problems for researchers wanting to study Iqbal in Turkish. In 2013 a new translation of the work was published which is much more satisfactory than the previous versions.²¹

Iqbal's popularity is not limited to Pakistan and Turkey; he has also been highly influential among intellectuals in Iran. Ali Shariati, the well-known Iranian revolutionist and sociologist of twentieth-century Iran, is among these intellectuals.²² The extent of Iqbal's fame at least in the three centres of the Muslim world raises the question of why he is so popular and influential. Although it is not among the main concerns of this research, it is hoped that this study may also provide an insight into the question of the source of Iqbal's outstanding popularity and an answer will be offered in the conclusion of this book.

Of the few critical works on Iqbal two main stances towards Iqbal can be distinguished. The first type of critical stance includes approaches in which the value of Iqbal's philosophical thought is highlighted. An example of this kind of approach can be found in Fazlur Rahman's two short articles 'Iqbal's Idea of Progress'²³ and 'Iqbal's Idea of the Muslim'.²⁴ Rahman claims that Iqbal is a thinker who is highly misunderstood and misinterpreted, and regards this as the 'post-humous tyranny of interpretation'.²⁵ As a result of being misunderstood, Rahman believes, Iqbal's thought has become representative of various types of ideologies ranging from 'naked Communism' to a 'crass conservatism'.²⁶ The main reason for Iqbal's readers' interpreting his thought in different and even opposite directions is, for Rahman, the difficulty of formulating the main issue of his thought, that is, the creation of a new understanding of the ideal Muslim who is aware of his capabilities.²⁷ 'Otherwise' he writes, 'it does and has appeared to people not only mutually inconsistent but downright contradictory'.²⁸ From Rahman's point of view a further reason for Iqbal's philosophy appearing to be a collection of contradictions is that Iqbal 'operates by "*ishq*" [love] rather than by "*aqal*" [reason]'.²⁹ This means that Iqbal produces his philosophy in the light of his deep emotions and inspirations rather than his reason. Only when Iqbal's readers grasp Iqbal's genuine and actual thesis, Rahman claims, will they realize that the contradictions are not genuine contradictions but only apparent contradictions:

Only when his central thesis is worked out clearly and stated satisfactorily will every statement that he made on every individual subject fall into a true perspective and receive its due importance and meaning. Otherwise his utterances are likely to appear and have, indeed, appeared to many, a juxtaposition of contradictions.³⁰

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Thus, what Rahman suggests is that Iqbal's readers are responsible for the problems and contradictions in Iqbal's philosophy, but not Iqbal himself. In other words, it is not Iqbal's task to be clear and understandable: 'Such a statement of Iqbal's pivotal thesis cannot be expected to be found in Iqbal himself.'³¹ Rahman admits that Iqbal's philosophy lacks clarity of formulation, but accuses Iqbal's readers of not understanding him correctly, and misinterpreting him, and therefore making his philosophy appear to be contradictory. By saying '[t]he primary reason is that Iqbal is a thinker and not an interpreter',³² he ignores Iqbal's role in this problem. Furthermore, Rahman does not go on to consider how Iqbal's lack of clarity and the false interpretations it produces might be corrected and how his philosophy should be approached. The attempt to clarify Iqbal's thought and identify the problematic lines in it will be one of the aims of this book.

Fazlur Rahman's defensive approach to Iqbal's philosophy can be contrasted with a further type of stance towards Iqbal. These critics hold that the problems in Iqbal's philosophy arise from the weaknesses of his intellectual and philosophical character since Iqbal is a poet rather than a philosopher. An example of this kind of criticism can be found in Wilfred Cantwell Smith's two sections on Iqbal in his work *Modern Islam in India*,³³ entitled 'Iqbal the Progressive' and 'Iqbal the Reactionary'. He explains his reasons for dealing with Iqbal in these terms and approaching him from two opposite angles as follows:

This is because to integrate his divergences would be misleading. His influence has not been single. The progressives read and follow only his progressiveness. The conservatives read, and can understand, only what urges them to more vigorous conservatism, or to overt reaction. *In Iqbal's uncoordinated effusions, one can find whatever one wills – except static contentment.*³⁴

The last sentence above can be regarded as the central point in Cantwell Smith's critique of Iqbal. For him, Iqbal's philosophy lacks a constant and consistent direction. Throughout his study Cantwell Smith regards the contradictory points of Iqbal's philosophy not as ordinary 'divergences' but as an outcome of his way of presenting his ideas. This is because for Cantwell Smith, Iqbal is, before anything else, a poet, not a philosopher. He writes: 'He [Iqbal] was a poet, not a systematic thinker; and he did not hesitate to contradict himself.'³⁵ Cantwell Smith implies by his view that Iqbal is a poet who is under the influence of his emotions rather than his reason, and on this point he agrees with Rahman. Another reason for Iqbal's intellectual failure, for Cantwell Smith, is that Iqbal's economic and sociological solutions to the problems faced by the Muslim world are not based on any knowledge of economics and sociology.³⁶ For Smith, Iqbal directs his readers on subjects in which he does not have any expertise. Inevitably Iqbal's readers or followers will sooner or later fail to understand him. Cantwell Smith writes:

Iqbal stirred the Muslims and pointed out to them the goal; but not being aware of the path to it, he left himself and his followers open to being

misled by anyone interested in misleading them provided he could talk the same jargon.³⁷

Cantwell Smith's critique of Iqbal should be considered in the light of the fact that he regards Iqbal as a poet rather than a prose writer, and that he implies that the logic of poetry allows for making bold contradictions. However, it is clear that, either because of Iqbal's readers or his literary style, Fazlur Rahman and Wilfred Cantwell Smith both agree that Iqbal's philosophy appears to be contradictory, and that Iqbal does not formulate his thought with sufficient clarity. They both also believe that Iqbal's method is more emotion-based than rational. However, whereas Rahman blames Iqbal's readers for creating the contradictions in his thought as a result of misunderstanding him, and, therefore, presents a defensive critique of Iqbal, Cantwell Smith believes that the contradictions and ambiguities in Iqbal's philosophy were mainly because of Iqbal's dominant poetic character and lack of philosophical skills, as well as his ignorance of sociology and economics, i.e. it is a criticism of neglect. These criticisms of Iqbal are not entirely right although they are correct on some points. Rahman is correct in stating that Iqbal's central theme is difficult to formulate. He also rightly considers that his thought appears to be a 'juxtaposition of contradictions'. However, his accusations that it is Iqbal's readers rather than Iqbal himself who are guilty of misunderstanding Iqbal are highly debatable. Rahman, by blaming Iqbal's readers, ignores Iqbal's role in these misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Rahman overlooks the fact that it is usually Iqbal's philosophical stance that directs his readers to different and inconsistent directions, and leads them away from his central theme.

Cantwell Smith is correct in his claim that Iqbal was neither an economist nor a sociologist, and that Iqbal was unable to provide solutions in these areas to his readers. However, contrary to what Cantwell Smith holds, Iqbal's philosophical character is more dominant than his poetic aspect, despite the fact that he is not a systematic philosopher. Iqbal claims that he writes poems not merely for artistic reasons or for aesthetic pleasure, as will be examined more closely later, but as a means of expressing his philosophical thought in a way which Indian society would be more interested in reading. Moreover, in his letters, as reported by Faruqi, Iqbal himself says that poetry has a secondary position in his intellectual career, and even he has nothing to do with poetry.³⁸ Moreover, Cantwell Smith is not completely correct in claiming that Iqbal showed his followers a way which he did not know. Actually, Iqbal did not show a clear way to his followers. Consequently, the reason for the problems of Iqbal's philosophical thought is more serious and more hidden than Cantwell Smith imagines. Cantwell Smith approaches Iqbal from one aspect, namely from the sociological point of view, but, from this point of view he goes on to make judgements about the whole of Iqbal's philosophy.

Neither of these works discussed deal with the problems of Iqbal's thought in detail, nor do they attempt to dispel the contradictions of his thought. They identify the tensions in Iqbal's philosophy but make no attempt to resolve these

tensions. How such a resolution could be achieved is one of the concerns of this book. To achieve this, it will be necessary to apply an insight from Kierkegaard to Iqbal's thinking.

The review of the literature on Iqbal and Kierkegaard

The literature dealing with Iqbal and Kierkegaard can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of works which make a direct comparison between Iqbal and Kierkegaard. In this group can be included Ghulam Sabir's book *Kierkegaard and Iqbal: Startling Resemblances* and Abraham Khan's two articles 'Kierkegaard and Iqbal on Becoming a Genuinely Existing Self' and 'Muhammad Iqbal and Kierkegaard's "Judge William"'. The second group consists of the studies dealing with Iqbal and Kierkegaard indirectly, namely through Iqbal's relation to existentialism. Erfan's *Iqbal, Existentialism and Other Articles* and Syed Latif Hussain Kazmi's *Philosophy of Iqbal (Iqbal and Existentialism)* fall into this group. These two works also include comparative accounts on Kierkegaard and Iqbal; however, their main content is the comparison between Iqbal's thought and Western existentialism.

Ghulam Sabir's work is particularly significant for the present research because it is the only full-length study on Iqbal and Kierkegaard. Despite the fact that it is the only extensive study in the field it suffers from serious problems. The author does not point out the purpose of his study, but says in the preface that it is an expression of his love of Kierkegaard and Iqbal.³⁹ Moreover, as he suggests throughout the book, he aims to eliminate the differences between different cultures and religions in order for them to live peacefully. Sabir writes: 'We can illuminate our hearts, remove our differences, convert our disintegration into integration, understand the conception of *self* as taught to us by both of them, and thus live a life of unity within plurality.'⁴⁰

His belief that in order to live peacefully the differences between different cultures should be removed is open to debate. However, it is not acceptable to distort both Iqbal and Kierkegaard for the sake of his understanding of living 'a life of unity within plurality', as Sabir does:

The mission of Kierkegaard and Iqbal, to put it simply, is to unite the humanity and to make it understood that the human beings on earth belong to one single family. The purpose behind our creation is one, our destiny is one, our God is one and the teaching of religion is one.⁴¹

Anyone who is familiar with the thought of Kierkegaard or Iqbal can see that Sabir's statements above must be a misreading and misinterpretation of both. Both Iqbal and Kierkegaard were extremely religious persons. Kierkegaard believed that Christianity is the ultimate truth, and the human being's task is to become a genuine Christian, and Iqbal believed in Islam, and that the ultimate task of the human being is to become a genuine Muslim self. Actually both Iqbal and Kierkegaard can be regarded as conservative religious personalities in this

respect. It is impossible for them to suggest that the god of different religions is the same or the teachings of all religions are one. Even if it is assumed that the author tries to imply that both Iqbal and Kierkegaard believe that the various religions could be regarded as different stages on the journey towards one and the same God, this would not be a correct claim. In Kierkegaardian terms the only way to the real God is to acknowledge the paradox of the incarnation. Islam falls into the category of a kind of general religiousness, 'Religiousness A', which does not acknowledge the paradox of incarnation. On the other hand, Christian belief in the paradox cannot be reconciled with Islamic faith, which puts, in the centre of its teaching, the belief of the 'oneness of God' (*tawhid*), a doctrine which Iqbal emphasizes repeatedly in his prose works and poems.

A similar distortion can be found in Sabir's claim that 'Kierkegaard agrees with Socrates that every man is in possession of Truth'.⁴² Sabir fails to understand that although Kierkegaard's pseudonym Johannes Climacus takes this proposition as the starting point for his discussion, he does so in order to show that human beings ultimately discover through their failed attempts to recover this supposedly innate truth that they are in reality in the *untruth*. This is actually a central issue in Kierkegaard's understanding of genuine Christianity, and Sabir's claim arises from a superficial reading of Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments*.

Again Sabir says:

One, however, can begin with the 'endeavour to know one self and this is beginning of the dialectic of ethical existence, not its goal'. With this beginning he discovers the *self* within him; he discovers the possibility within him and can proceed forward to actuality, provided he has courage enough. According to Kierkegaard this is self-reflection.⁴³

Here, it is difficult to identify whether the notion of 'self-reflection' is the author's own term or a Kierkegaardian term. 'Self-reflection' is indeed a Kierkegaardian notion, but he does not use it in terms of Sabir's discussion above. Kierkegaard's pseudonym Climacus discusses the notion in terms of 'pure thinking' and 'thought', and the notion generally refers to human thought's thinking about thinking.⁴⁴ On the other hand, in the above-mentioned paragraph 'self-reflection' refers broadly to the individual's reflecting on his self and it is difficult to say that Kierkegaard calls this 'self-reflection'. The problem is that Sabir does not usually make references to Kierkegaard's works and seldom provides footnotes or endnotes, so this makes it difficult to substantiate.

After those statements, Sabir continues:

Once the individual assumes responsibility it is the courage in him and the force of his passion that carry him towards the final goal, and the final goal of [the] Ego is the individual's direct relationship with the Divine Ego.⁴⁵

It is highly debatable, however, whether Kierkegaard subscribes to the notion of the human being's *direct relationship* with the Divine Ego. Kierkegaard's

emphasis on indirect communication, his rejection of objective conceptions of God, his understanding of the incarnation as a paradox that shatters human reason, and his conception of faith as ‘movement by virtue of the absurd’ place in question Sabir’s description of the individual’s goal as being that of sustaining a *direct* relationship with the Divine Ego.

Another problem regarding Sabir’s study is that his work includes too many superficial comparative remarks and as a result lacks critical insight. It is difficult to quote all of the remarks of this kind since his study includes too many of them, however, the examples below which Sabir writes in a section entitled ‘Ideological Kinship among Kierkegaard & Iqbal’ illustrate the point clearly:

Kierkegaard and Iqbal remained apart from the girls whom they really loved. They actually had sacrificed their personal desires since both of them had a greater task ahead and did not marry the girls whom they once loved so deeply.⁴⁶

Both [i.e. Kierkegaard and Iqbal] possess unshaken power of faith and never cared if the whole world stood against them.⁴⁷

Both of them are staunch religious persons and reformers. Whatever Kierkegaard has done for Christianity Iqbal has done the same for Islam. Their approach to religion and God is realistic.⁴⁸

The quotations above epitomize Sabir’s main stance throughout his work. He presents a very broad approach, does not enter into any deeper discussion of the thought of Iqbal and Kierkegaard, and does not engage in any detail with Iqbal and Kierkegaard. The underlying reason for this problem is that, for Sabir, Iqbal and Kierkegaard are great thinkers and, for him, being great means that they are not subject to criticism. An illustration of this deferential approach is provided by a passage in which Sabir discusses Hegel and Kierkegaard:

It is also not our contention to criticize one or the other, or make one of them as our hero. To us both Hegel and Kierkegaard are great philosophers of the world. As to the greatness of their thought both of them devoted their whole lives to the reform of mankind and have left a treasure, the essence of their intellect, for the guidance of our generations to come.⁴⁹

This quotation is interesting in so far as it discloses Sabir’s criteria of what constitutes a great philosopher: great philosophers are those who devote themselves to the reform of humankind and help the next generations. Those thinkers accorded the title of ‘great philosopher’ appear for Sabir to be immune from criticism. The resulting superficiality of Sabir’s treatment of Kierkegaard and Iqbal highlights the need for a more sustained *critical* engagement with the thought of these two thinkers, which is the aim of this book.

Fortunately, there is another comparative work on Iqbal and Kierkegaard, which avoids the problems of Sabir's approach and which makes a contribution to understanding the relation between Iqbal and Kierkegaard. A more rigorous approach is apparent in Abraham H. Khan's recently published article 'Muhammad Iqbal and Kierkegaard's "Judge William"'. The author examines Iqbal's *The Secrets of the Self, Mysteries of the Selflessness*, and the last lectures of *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* on the one hand, and the second volume of Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* on the other. Unlike the works reviewed previously, Khan makes a clear statement at the beginning of his article, and says that his aim is 'to begin a conversation between the two men by examining a couple of their earliest works that deal with the concept of the responsible self'.⁵⁰ He begins with an investigation of the signs of three elements in Iqbal's former poem *The Secrets of the Self*, namely romantic, Hegelian, and mystical implications. Khan's article is a significant study in the fields of Iqbal and Kierkegaard studies, because Khan is the first to develop a relation between Iqbal and Kierkegaard in a higher level in terms of his proper use of references, footnotes, etc. So, it should be separated from the works reviewed above. The article analyses Iqbal's notion of the self in Iqbal's works and presents a careful examination of the issue. Khan's articles make an important contribution to the rigorous academic study of Iqbal and Kierkegaard. They thus constitute a significant advance on Sabir's hagiographical approach. Khan's study, however, is naturally limited by the confines imposed on his work by the article format and consequently lacks comprehensiveness. In this book my intention is to build on and take further the type of approach evinced by Khan's work and to provide the first sustained, full-length, academic study of Iqbal in relation to Kierkegaard.

The second group of works on Iqbal and Kierkegaard, namely Erfan's *Iqbal, Existentialism and Other Articles* and Kazmi's *Philosophy of Iqbal (Iqbal and Existentialism)* consist of the studies dealing with these two thinkers through their relation to existentialism. An example of this type of comparison of Iqbal and Kierkegaard is Erfan's *Iqbal, Existentialism, and Other Articles* consisting of three articles, namely 'Points of Resemblance', 'Points of Difference', and 'Iqbal on Social Problems'. By 'Other Articles' the author must have intended 'Iqbal on Social Problems', since this third article has nothing to do with existentialism and Iqbal's relation to it. In relation to the first two articles, which actually connected to each other, while Erfan deals with the 'points of resemblance' in fifty-five pages, he focuses on the 'points of difference' in only nine pages. This is mainly because the author is more focused on finding mutual points between existentialists and Iqbal. However, the problem is that his work includes a number of misleading remarks on existentialist thinkers, particularly on Kierkegaard. He writes: 'Kierkegaard is of the view that direct communication is appropriate for objective thinking and indirect communication is appropriate for objective knowledge.'⁵¹ The purpose of indirect communication for Kierkegaard is actually to lead the human being to subjectivity by making him aware of the invalidity of any kind of objectivity in the realm of existence. One of the reasons for Erfan's misleading remark on Kierkegaard is most probably that

Kierkegaard's theory of indirect communication entails the receiver's subjective involvement in the act of communication whereas Iqbal makes a particular focus on objective knowledge gained through religious experience involving subjectivity, an issue which shall be discussed in Chapter 4. Another reason for Erfan's problematic interpretation might be that the author does not have a sufficient idea of Kierkegaard's view of indirect communication. Erfan's argument here is quite simply erroneous. Another problem with Erfan's work is that while comparing Iqbal with existentialists he refers to such existentialist thinkers as Marcel, Sartre, Jaspers, Heidegger and Kierkegaard, but makes almost no reference to Nietzsche, despite the fact that Iqbal frequently cites Nietzsche in his works, and he states his appreciation of Nietzsche by calling him 'a modern prophet'.⁵²

A further example of this kind of comparison between Iqbal and Kierkegaard can be seen in Kazmi's *Philosophy of Iqbal (Iqbal and Existentialism)*, which includes discussions on the resemblances and differences between Iqbal's philosophy and Western existentialism. A weakness of Kazmi's study, however, is his failure to indicate the *purpose* of his comparison of Iqbal's thought with existentialism. A further problem is the inadequacy of Kazmi's brief comparison of Iqbal and Kierkegaard. He writes:

Iqbal's view regarding the various stages of the development of man can be compared with Kierkegaard's theory of the three stages of life. Iqbal in his *Secrets of the Self* has mentioned three stages: (a) Subordination or obedience to moral law; (b) self-control, which is the highest form of self-consciousness or Ego-hood; and (c) Divine Vicegerency. The first two stages, combined together, represent the ethical stage in Kierkegaard's theory. The third stage may be deemed synonymous with Kierkegaard's religious stage.⁵³

Kazmi, however, is wrong in his claim that the first stage in Iqbal's notion of 'the development of man' is the obedience to *moral law*. Iqbal himself says that the first stage is the obedience to *Islamic law*, including the basic practical principles of Islam such as praying, fasting, pilgrimage and almsgiving.⁵⁴ Later on, Iqbal develops these stages and says that, as will be examined in more detail, the first stage does not include any rational understanding, but only an unquestioned obedience. Following the moral law, on the other hand, may include the individual's obeying the norms of society such as marriage etc., and an example of this kind of obedience to moral law can be found in Judge William, Kierkegaard's representative of the ethical stage.⁵⁵ In none of Iqbal's works does he say that the first stage is the individual's obedience to 'moral law', and since the author did not state where he obtained this idea, it is impossible to know whether he misread or misunderstood Iqbal's words. Islam as a world-view definitely includes moral and ethical teachings, however, Iqbal's first stage does not include the establishment of a world-view yet. Iqbal is interestingly clear and direct at this point and he leaves no room for any misunderstanding. Kazmi

seems to distort Iqbal in order to associate Iqbal's first stage with Kierkegaard's sphere of the ethical, and therefore support his argument. A further problem regarding the statements above can be seen in Kazmi's way of relating Iqbal's stages of 'the development of man' and Kierkegaard's 'theory of the three stages'. He is correct in claiming that Iqbal and Kierkegaard's stages can be compared. This is mainly because all of these categories are concerned with human existence. More needs to be done to identify the underlying principles of the theories of existence advanced by Kierkegaard and Iqbal before a dialogue between the two thinkers can be constructed of the kind envisaged by Kazmi. In short, Kazmi has identified a topic worthy of research, but has not provided the detailed philosophical analysis required to do justice to the topic. This is something that this study will attempt to rectify.

The general problem with the comparisons discussed thus far is that the authors neither indicate the purpose of their studies of Kierkegaard and Iqbal, nor do they make clear the significance of the results that emerge from their studies. Furthermore, their largely hagiographical, deferential, and uncritical style makes it difficult to characterize these studies as genuine academic works. The result is that such treatments provide only superficial studies of Iqbal's thought and make little contribution to grasping the deeper philosophical principles upon which it is based. The importance of Sabir, Erfan and Kazmi in drawing attention to points of contact between Iqbal and Kierkegaard can be acknowledged, but at the same time it must be recognized that going beyond the superficiality of their work is necessary.

In short, the aim of this book is to fill the gap in the literature that has just been reviewed. It shall avoid uncritical and superficial comparisons between Iqbal and Kierkegaard and strive to develop a new form of relationship between them by providing a Kierkegaardian reading of Iqbal's central problem of becoming a genuine Muslim. This book is based on the claim that Iqbal's presentation of his central thesis of becoming a genuine Muslim includes a number of ambiguous notions, inconsistencies and contradictory statements, some of which are only seeming contradictions caused by Iqbal's not talking about his method as will become clear in the analysis of his use of mystical poetry. Also, this book is based on the argument that Kierkegaard's philosophical method provides a powerful tool to clarify and dispel the ambiguities and inconsistencies in Iqbal's discussion. Therefore, the aim of this book includes identifying the problematic aspects of Iqbal's presentation and discussion of his idea of how to become a genuine Muslim self as well as clarifying and uncovering the main features of this central theme of his philosophy in the light of the main principles of Kierkegaard's philosophical thought. Consequently, it is aimed to contribute to three main fields, namely to Iqbal studies which lack critical research on Iqbal; to Kierkegaard studies which require academic work on developing a relationship between Kierkegaard and any Muslim thinker; and to intercultural studies by cultivating a hermeneutical form of relationship between two major thinkers who belong to two different cultures.

Becoming a genuine Muslim self, or what Iqbal more frequently refers to as the development or education of the self particularly in his *The Secrets of the*

Self, is for him the religious ideal and highest achievement of a Muslim individual.⁵⁶ As Diagne nicely comments, it is ‘the alpha and omega of Iqbal’s philosophy’,⁵⁷ and as Nicholson rightly suggests, for Iqbal, only by means of the development of the self can the problems of the modern Muslim world be solved.⁵⁸ He believes that the development of human self is the principal concern of Islam.⁵⁹ It can therefore be claimed that Iqbal’s view of becoming a genuine Muslim self is the core of his whole philosophical thought. Indeed, if Iqbal’s idea of becoming a genuine Muslim self is the most essential aspect of his thought, Kierkegaard’s help will be invaluable in this study, due to both thinkers’ emphasis on human existence and on becoming religious selves.

The Kierkegaardian reading of Iqbal’s theory of becoming a genuine Muslim self involves using Kierkegaardian notions in order to identify, clarify and uncover Iqbal’s understanding of the development of the self. Here it should be noted that cultivating a hermeneutical relationship between Iqbal and Kierkegaard does not imply that this book cannot be regarded as a comparative study, since the topic of this study is based on the comparative judgement that Iqbal and Kierkegaard show certain parallels, such as their concern with the religiousness of their societies and with the question of human existence. However, rather than simply comparing their thoughts, the procedure of moving from the parallels and developing a hermeneutical relationship between them will enable us to dispel the apparent contradictions Iqbal presents and clarify the terminological problems with Kierkegaard’s help. This will enable us to clear away the tensions and inconsistencies in Iqbal’s thought and will help identify what significance, if any, his philosophy of the self still has today. In doing so it will be necessary to attend to the following problems that any researcher making a study of Iqbal’s philosophy faces and where a Kierkegaardian hermeneutics will be applied. These can be summarized as follows:

- 1 Iqbal’s philosophy can be regarded as a philosophy of activism: he establishes his philosophical thought with the aim of producing concrete changes and results in the outer world, which he summarizes in such statements as, ‘it is your task to create the new world’⁶⁰ and ‘hew out a new world to your own desire!’⁶¹ Such results and changes in the outer world or the creation of a new world require the human being’s physical action that help him develop his personality and self, and ‘save it from corruption’.⁶² Iqbal points out the problems of the Muslim world, and highlights the importance of becoming a genuine Muslim self in the creation of the ideal Muslim world. The problem is that he does not provide his followers with a clear statement of how to achieve these goals. In other words, Iqbal is very careful at pointing out *what* to do, but less interested in showing *how* to do it. An example of this can be seen in his emphasis of the notion of ‘action’. Iqbal divides human actions into two groups, namely self-sustaining actions and self-dissolving actions, or ego-sustaining actions and ego-dissolving actions.⁶³ For him, the ideal of the human being is to develop his self through self-sustaining actions, which will help him in the creation of a new world.

However, Iqbal does not provide his readers and followers with a clear roadmap of how to act in a self-sustaining way or transform actions into self-sustaining actions and avoid self-dissolving actions. Action is also a significant part of Kierkegaard's view of becoming a Christian. It is among the notions Kierkegaard develops that lead the individual to become a Christian. Although making an external effect is not one of Kierkegaard's concerns, the Kierkegaardian notion of 'action' and its different types enable an opportunity to clarify and interpret Iqbal's notion of becoming a genuine Muslim self through self-sustaining actions. Another example of this can be found in Iqbal's three steps in the development of the self. In his *The Secrets of the Self*, he introduces three steps to becoming a Muslim self, namely obedience to law, self-control, and divine vicegerency, and makes summaries of them in less than three pages. However, the problem is that he does not make any further discussion on these steps in any of his later works. This means that he feels the need to show his reader a way of how to become genuine Muslim selves, but for some reason he does not develop it any further.

- 2 The problem that Iqbal does not provide a scheme of how to achieve the aforementioned goals stems from the lack of a consistent terminology in his philosophy. This is not a major problem at first sight, because in order for a thinker to challenge current ideas, he does not have to develop his own terminology. However, in Iqbal, anyone can come across the attempt to develop a philosophical terminology. He does this by attributing new meanings to classical concepts. For instance, he invents the notion of the Persian word of '*khudi*', which he applies to the notions of self and ego. In other words, he introduces the notion of '*khudi*' where he could make use of the traditional and most common Arabic/Persian notion of '*nafs*', which also means 'self' in English. The word '*khudi*' actually means 'selfishness' in common usage of the word in Persian and Urdu. Iqbal, however, stresses that he does not refer to the actual meaning of the term, but attributes to it a new meaning. Schimmel cites from one of Iqbal's letters, which she translated from Urdu:

In my writings the word *khudi* is used in two meanings, ethical and metaphysical ... If you have found any of my poems in which the concept of *khudi* is used in the meaning of pride or haughtiness, then please inform me about it ... I have shown only that side of the problem of self the knowledge of which was, according to my ideas, necessary for the Indian Muslims of this age, and which everybody can understand.

(M II 238ff)⁶⁴

This indicates that Iqbal attempts to establish his own terminology even if it is not his primary concern. The main reason for the lack of a consistent terminology in Iqbal's philosophy, which would help his readers understand his genuine implications, arises from the general problem that he does not present his

concepts in a clear way. As a result of this, a further problem arises, namely his philosophy occasionally presents contradictory and ambiguous notions and statements. An example of this can be found in Iqbal's discussions of the objectivity and non-objectivity of the nature of religious experience. He conflates the terms objectivity and subjectivity, by avoiding using the notion of 'subjective' and claiming that religious experience is both objective and not objective as will be discussed in the following chapters. Again, Kierkegaard's principle of making distinctions and his notion of the qualitative distinction will allow for the interpretation and clarification of the notions of subjectivity and objectivity that are conflated by Iqbal.

Notes

- 1 Kierkegaard occasionally mentions Muhammad and sometimes alludes to Averroes. In his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard makes two brief references to Islam, but does not develop his discussion in any depth. His journals also include entries on 'Mohammedanism'. See Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 47, 578 (hereafter referred to as *CUP*). Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (eds. and trans.), *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, vol. 3 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), pp. 205–206, Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 429.
- 2 This apparent lack of knowledge of Kierkegaard's thought on Iqbal's part may have been due to the fact that Kierkegaard's works, which he wrote in Danish, were not translated into English until 1923, and Stephen Evans maintains that Kierkegaard was not widely read in the English-speaking world until the mid-twentieth century. See C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 1. The first German translations had appeared in the 1860s. But the first systematic translation of Kierkegaard's works did not begin until 1909 when Christoph Schrempf undertook to translate Kierkegaard's published writings. Iqbal, however, whose knowledge of German was limited, does not seem to have encountered these translations. That Iqbal had some knowledge of German is evident from his mentioning in a letter that he had been reading Goethe's poems in their original language. See M. A. H. Hobohm, 'Muhammad Iqbal and Germany "A Correspondence of the Heart"', *Iqbal Review*, 41, no. 4 (2000) www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct00/08.htm [Accessed on 21 September 2017].
- 3 For analyses of Iqbal's relation to Western philosophers and Nietzsche see Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), pp. 316–376; Nazir Qaiser, *Iqbal and the Western Philosophers* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2001), pp. 35–87; Bilal Ahmad Dar, 'Iqbal and Nietzsche's Concept of Eternal Recurrence', *Intellectual Discourse*, 19, no. 2 (2011): 281–305.
- 4 There are only a couple of works have been found cultivating a dialogue between Kierkegaard and the Muslim world except the studies on Iqbal and Kierkegaard. For example see Husain Kassim, 'Existentialist Tendencies in Ghazzali and Kierkegaard', *Journal of the Islamic Research Institute*, X, no. 2 (1971): 103–128; Muhammad Hasan Askari, 'Ibn-e Arabi and Kierkegaard (A Study in Method and Reasoning)', *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, 19 (2004): 311–335; Safet Bektovic, 'The Doubled Movement of Infinity in Kierkegaard and in Sufism', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 10, no. 3 (1999): 325–337.

- 5 Ghulam Sabir, *Kierkegaard and Iqbal: Startling Resemblances* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2003).
- 6 Abraham H. Khan, 'Kierkegaard and Iqbal on Becoming a Genuinely Existing Self', in *Kierkegaard and Religious Pluralism*, ed. Andrew Burgess (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007).
- 7 Abraham H. Khan, 'Re: A Request', e-mail message to the author, 22 August 2013. Abraham H. Khan, 'Muhammad Iqbal and Kierkegaard's "Judge William"', in *Kierkegaard: East and West, Acta Kierkegaardiana*, vol. 5, ed. Roman Kralik and Abraham H. Khan (Sala Slovakia: Kierkegaard Society in Slovakia, 2011), pp. 57–77.
- 8 For a discussion of culture Protestantism see George Rupp, *Culture-Protestantism: German Liberal Theology at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977).
- 9 Abraham H. Khan, 'Kierkegaard and Iqbal on Becoming a Genuinely Existing Self', p. 67.
- 10 Ebrahim Moosa, 'The Human Person in Iqbal's Thought', in *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought*, ed. H. C. Hillier and Basit Bilal Koshul, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 20.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Charles Taylor, 'Preface', in Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *Islam and Open Society, Fidelity and Movement in the Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal* (Dakar, SEN: Counsel for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2011), p. xi.
- 13 Iqbal himself does not make any reference to Hegel, however, his arguments display some resemblances to Hegel's discussion of action. See Michael Quante, *Hegel's Concept of Action*, trans. Dean Moyar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- 14 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 113 (hereafter cited as *The Reconstruction* followed by page number).
- 15 For a recent study on philosophy of action see Timothy O'Connor and Constantine Sandis (eds.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Action* (Singapore: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). The last part of this work surveys the ideas of different thinkers who talk about action from Plato to Indian philosophers but does not make any reference to any Muslim thinker.
- 16 Here, it should be noted that Keith Ward, a Christian theologian, includes a discussion on Iqbal's philosophy (particularly his understanding of God with a comparison to Christian understanding of God) in his work *Religion and Creation*, and therefore represents an attempt to rekindle Iqbal's relevance in the English-speaking world. See Keith Ward, *Religion and Creation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 59–76.
- 17 This idea can be traced back to Muhsin al-Mulk (1837–1907) who was one of the forerunners of the Aligarh Movement and who rejected any political power over India. See Ibrahim Kalin, 'Aligarh Movement: Story of a Generation and Some Observations on the Islamic Modernism', *Iqbal Review* 44 (April 2003), www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr03/index.html. [Accessed on 21 September 2017].
- 18 A. K. Brohi, 'Iqbal as a Philosopher-Poet', *Iqbal Review*, 2, no. 1 (April 1961), www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr61/index.htm [Accessed on 21 September 2017].
- 19 Mumtaz Hasan, 'Iqbal as a Seer', in Verinder Grover (ed.), *Mohammad Iqbal: A Biography of His Vision and Ideas* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1998), p. 298.
- 20 Ibid, p. 302.
- 21 Muhammed Iqbal, *İslam'da Dini Düşüncenin Yeniden İnşası*, trans. Rahim Acar (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2013).
- 22 For Ali Shariati's views on Iqbal, see Ali Shariati, 'Iqbal: Manifestation of the Islamic Spirit', in Mahliqa Qarai and Laleh Bakhtiar trans., *Iqbal, Manifestation of the Islamic Spirit, Two Contemporary Muslim Views: Sayyid Ali Khamenei and Ali Shariati*

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- (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 2008), pp. 27–113. Also for a detailed analysis of Ali Shariati's thought and his influence see Ali Rahnama, *An Islamic Utopian: A Political Biography of Ali Shariati* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000).
- 23 Fazlur Rahman, 'Iqbal's Idea of Progress', in Verinder Grover (ed.), *Mohammad Iqbal: A Biography of His Vision and Ideas*, pp. 320–323.
- 24 Fazlur Rahman, 'Iqbal's Idea of the Muslim', *Islamic Studies*, 2, no. 4, (1963), pp. 439–445.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 439.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 *Ibid.*, pp. 442–445.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 439.
- 29 Fazlur Rahman, 'Iqbal's Idea of Progress', p. 323.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 Fazlur Rahman, 'Iqbal's Idea of the Muslim', p. 439.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 440.
- 33 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (Lahore: Minerva Book Shop, 1943), pp. 109–180.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 112. Italics added.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 155, 156.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 155.
- 38 Faruqi reports two letters of Iqbal written in 1919: 'Poetryness in my poems had but a secondary place. I don't at all have aspirations to be counted among the poets of this age.'; 'It's a wonder that people regard me as a poet and press me to recite my poems to them, although I have nothing to do with poetry.' Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, 'How to Read Iqbal', *The Annual of Urdu Studies*, 20, (2005), p. 7 (f.n.).
- 39 Ghulam Sabir, *Kierkegaard and Iqbal: Startling Resemblances*, p. 11.
- 40 *Ibid.*, p. 138. Italics original.
- 41 *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 140.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 See Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, pp. 335–337.
- 45 Ghulam Sabir, *Kierkegaard and Iqbal: Startling Resemblances*, p. 140.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 69.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *Ibid.*
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 137.
- 50 Abraham H. Khan, 'Muhammad Iqbal and Kierkegaard's "Judge William"', p. 57.
- 51 Niaz Erfan, *Iqbal, Existentialism and Other Articles* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1997), p. 7.
- 52 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 108.
- 53 Syed Latif Hussain Kazmi, *Philosophy of Iqbal (Iqbal and Existentialism)* (New Delhi: A. P. H. Publishing, 1997), p. 111.
- 54 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, trans. R. A. Nicholson and Arthur Arberry, pp. 18–20, <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/640.pdf> [Accessed on 25 September 2017].
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2 The construction of a Kierkegaardian hermeneutics

Introduction

This chapter aims at constructing the Kierkegaardian hermeneutics which will be applied to Iqbal's view of becoming a genuine Muslim self. But first, the meaning of the idea of 'hermeneutics' in the title of this chapter should be identified. First, the notion of 'hermeneutics' comes from Aristotle, and denotes a tool of interpretation, a key to understanding, and a methodological aid for something. Second, with the emergence of German idealism and romanticism, the term started being used as a philosophical concept which implies

an interrogation into the deepest conditions for symbolic interaction and culture in general, that hermeneutics has provided the critical horizon for many of the most intriguing discussions of contemporary philosophy, both within an Anglo-American context (Rorty, McDowell, Davidson) and within a more Continental discourse (Habermas, Apel, Ricoeur, and Derrida).¹

It is the first form of the notion that is to be followed throughout this book, namely hermeneutics as a key to understanding and as a tool of interpreting Iqbal's idea of becoming a self.

The construction of a Kierkegaardian hermeneutics takes as its basis the principles of Kierkegaard's 'philosophical method'. Any attempt to identify Kierkegaard's method comes across a number of difficulties. First, Kierkegaard criticizes and rejects any kind of method or system. Thus, attempting to identify Kierkegaard's philosophical method might lead to interpreting him in exactly the way that he wishes to refute. The second difficulty is that Kierkegaard is an unsystematic thinker. He rarely defines his terms because he believes that direct communication is invalid when dealing with the fundamental question of what it means for each human being to be a self. Kierkegaard wishes to awaken in his reader a sense of subjectivity by means of what he calls 'double reflection'. This requires a dialectical and indirect form of communication, which demands of the reader a creative engagement with the text that parallels the creativity of the author. The third difficulty is that Kierkegaard's use of pseudonyms makes it

difficult to determine whether there is genuinely a Kierkegaardian hermeneutic or a cacophony of disparate voices in his works.

Despite all of these difficulties, it is possible to construct a Kierkegaardian hermeneutics, which can be used to approach Iqbal's idea of becoming a Muslim self. First of all, Kierkegaard's denial of any system and method does not mean that a Kierkegaardian method cannot be constructed. On the contrary, Kierkegaard's critique of systems can be regarded as a part of Kierkegaard's own philosophical method. Particularly, his critique of Hegelianism, the underlying reason of his critique of systematic philosophy, plays a significant role in the development of Kierkegaard's method of communication with his readers. Likewise, the fact that Kierkegaard is not a systematic thinker, his avoidance of defining his notions, and his interest in indirect communication, as will be seen later, should be considered as the cornerstone of his philosophical method. Finally, his use of pseudonyms does not mean that he does not agree with his pseudonymous characters. His pseudonymous character Johannes Climacus, and the two works Kierkegaard wrote under this pseudonym; *Philosophical Fragments* and its sequel *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*; which play a central role in the construction of the Kierkegaardian hermeneutics, occupy a central place among all of his pseudonymous works. There are significant parallels between Climacus' views in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* on becoming a genuine Christian self in Christendom, his critique of modern Christianity, and his views on indirect communication and subjectivity and Kierkegaard's discussions in his *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* and *The Moment and Late Writings* that he wrote under his real name.² Moreover, Kierkegaard regards *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* as the turning point in his whole authorship, because this work was to be the conclusion of his authorship.³ This is why Climacus' approaches and concepts will be treated as representing Kierkegaard's own ideas despite the fact that he asks his readers not to use his real name.⁴

This chapter begins with the identification of the problems of modern Christianity for Kierkegaard, and moves on to Kierkegaard's development of a solution to these problems, namely his attempt to re-educate his readers particularly in becoming genuine Christian selves.

The problem

The first task in this section is to outline the problems that prompted Kierkegaard to develop his philosophical method, prior to a discussion of his solution. First, the social conditions and common religious understanding in Kierkegaard's Denmark will be briefly presented. As will be seen, the dominant religious character of the era is determined by the idea of 'Christendom', a pejorative term by which Kierkegaard denotes, as Law puts it, 'the un-Christian conflation of the church with the state and its interests' and 'the craven capitulation to un-Christian values that threatens to destroy the life of the spirit'.⁵ The focus in the present section will be on Kierkegaard's critique of Christendom and why he believes it to be so pernicious to genuine Christianity.

Kirmmse points out the conflicting and contradictory character of Denmark in Kierkegaard's era (1808–1855) in his *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*.⁶ He writes that Denmark in Kierkegaard's time, in the first half of the nineteenth century, was in a period of transformation and change in various fields. It was a period of economic and diplomatic decline, and also a period when Denmark was transformed from an agrarian and feudal society to a modern industrialized and democratic state. This transformation of Danish society was accompanied by a number of achievements in artistic, literary and ecclesiastical life in what has come to be called Denmark's 'Golden Age'.⁷ As Kirmmse puts it,

The fascinating thing ... about Denmark in the first half of the nineteenth century is the increasingly evident contradiction between changing social and economic realities, on the one hand, and the brilliant but blithely 'conservative' apolitical, really cultural productions of the period, which are still revered under the name of the Golden Age.⁸

Danish religious life was also undergoing important changes. 'Lutheran Christianity had been the official' religion in Denmark 'since the Reformation'. During the Absolutist Period (1660–1849), only 'baptized and confirmed members of the Lutheran State Church' were considered citizens of Denmark, and only they could be considered as 'Danish'.⁹ This shows that there was a direct link between citizenship and religious identity. Although freedom of worship was introduced in 1849, Lutheran Christianity continued to be the state religion and the vast majority of Danes considered themselves – with little self-reflection – to be Lutheran Christians.¹⁰

Kierkegaard points out three issues regarding the religious situation of contemporary Danish society, which was still experiencing changes in its political, religious and intellectual life. These issues are:

- 1 Contemporary Danes considered themselves to be Christians as a matter of course. Simply being born in Denmark was sufficient to make them automatically Christians. In a journal entry Kierkegaard points out this issue and writes:

In these times the majority of people (thousands upon thousands) are automatically Christians simply by being human beings. The greatest possible exception to this would be a demon who with the aid of Christianity aspired to become a human being. He might advantageously revise the illusions in established Christendom.¹¹

- 2 Contemporary Danes confused following the social norms of society with being a Christian. Climacus makes the point vividly when he asks us to imagine a conversation between a wife who undoubtedly believes that simply being born in the Lutheran Denmark is sufficient for being a Christian

and her civil servant husband who is going through a crisis of faith. In her attempts to dispel her husband's doubts, the wife assures her husband:

Hubby, darling, where did you ever pick up such a notion? ... Don't you tend to your works in the office as a good civil servant; aren't you a good subject in a Christian nation, in a Lutheran-Christian state? So of course you are a Christian.¹²

- 3 Christianity had been transformed into a doctrine, a teaching. It had been regarded as an inferior form of philosophy, and confused with a set of objective propositions, which the individual was called upon to give his intellectual assent. Kierkegaard complains that, 'the point of view of Christianity and of what Christianity is has been completely shifted, has been cast in terms of the objective, the scholarly, and differences such as genius and talent have been made crucial'.¹³

All of these outcomes show that, for Kierkegaard, Christianity had been transformed from being a way of life into merely a teaching and a doctrine, and that what it meant to be a Christian had been forgotten.¹⁴ The result is that Christianity no longer existed in contemporary Denmark. True Christianity, which for Kierkegaard is the Christianity of the New Testament, had been supplanted by a comfortable, undemanding parody of Christianity which instead of transforming human beings in discipleship of Christ allowed them to remain exactly as they were – worldly, self-centred and hedonistic. For Kierkegaard, Christianity had been transformed into the opposite of what it was in the New Testament, and consequently Christianity had been abolished.¹⁵

The transformation of genuine Christianity into a mere teaching includes contemporary Christians' neglecting and forgetting the existential task of every human being, namely becoming genuine Christians. The result is that everyone knows what Christianity is, but no one lives genuinely Christian lives. In short, what has been happening in the contemporary Christian world is a confusion of being a Christian with something else, a confusion of categories, a shift back into the aesthetic from the ethical and religious, into the objective from the existential. Kierkegaard's discussions show that he focuses on two major causes of the contemporary malaise in Danish Christianity, namely philosophy and the church.

The role of philosophy

In the early phase of his writing Kierkegaard identifies philosophy, particularly Hegelianism, as the main threat to Christianity. He blames the Danish Hegelians for playing a crucial role in turning Christianity into exactly the antithesis of New Testament Christianity. The problem with Hegelianism, indeed all philosophical approaches to Christianity, is that it treats Christianity as merely a body of knowledge which the individual is called upon to *think* about in order to arrive

at an objective evaluation of its truth or falsity. For Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms, however, Christianity is a mode of existence, an ‘existence-communication’ or an ‘existence-possibility’, as Climacus calls it, as will be seen in detail later. The truth of existence-possibilities, however, cannot be established merely by thinking about them but only by actualizing them in one’s own existence. In the case of Christianity, this means that for Kierkegaard the task is not, as Hegel says, to translate it into a supposedly more adequate philosophical conceptuality, but to live out one’s life according to one’s commitment to the Christian faith. By deflecting attention from the existential to the philosophical, from faith to knowledge, Hegelianism hinders precisely that which is decisive for becoming a Christian: the existential.

The outcomes of the influence of Hegelian philosophy on Christianity will be examined in more detail later. Jon Stewart suggests, however, that Hegel’s philosophy reached Denmark in the 1820s and points out that there has been a tendency in Kierkegaard scholarship to take the idea that Hegel’s philosophy represented the academic situation of Denmark in the early nineteenth century, and that the Danish academy was dominated by Hegelians. Stewart suggests, however, that Hegel’s philosophy never owned a position of uncritical domination in Denmark: ‘A number of Danish intellectuals passed through a brief Hegelian phase, but these phases were usually fairly short-lived, and the individuals involved never formed an organized or coherent school.’¹⁶ This raises the question as to why Kierkegaard dedicated a great deal of his authorship and intellectual career to the criticism of Hegelian philosophy and Danish Hegelians. It is most probably because Hegelian philosophy has been highly influential on contemporary Christian society through some of the important Christian scholars and professors of theology faculties from which many of the clergy graduated.

The role of the Church

Christendom and the clergy, for Kierkegaard, play perhaps the most significant role in the misrepresentation of Christianity. His critique of Christendom can be traced back to his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* published in 1846. This critique increases in intensity in such works as *Judge for Yourself!* (1851, published posthumously in 1876) and *Practise in Christianity* (1848), and becomes an all-out attack on the Church in Kierkegaard’s articles in *The Fatherland* (1854–1855) and *The Moment* (1855). In these works he accuses Christendom of being ‘a baptized paganism’,¹⁷ an imaginary Christianity,¹⁸ ‘the decay of Christianity’,¹⁹ ‘an enormous illusion’,²⁰ a kind of security tool,²¹ of shifting Christianity back into the aesthetic,²² and of playing at Christianity.²³ Among his works referring to the fallacies of Christendom, his articles published in the Danish newspaper *Fatherland* and his own journal *The Moment* stand out with their highly negative and even offensive language.²⁴ Far from taking up their cross and following Christ the clergy are interested only in their own comfort and in securing good livings, as Kierkegaard discusses in these works. Kierkegaard condemns the clergyman as

a half-worldly, half ecclesiastical, totally equivocal officeholder, a person of rank with a family, who (in the hope of promotion by seniority and automatically becoming a knight – how entirely in the spirit of the New Testament!) ensures himself a livelihood, also, if necessary, with the help of the police ... ensures a livelihood for himself ...²⁵

He even goes so far as to describe the clergy as ‘cannibals’, who feed off the suffering of the genuine Christians of the past.²⁶ None of the state’s well-educated clergy, he claims, is in the character of New Testament Christianity.²⁷ On the contrary, they live in exactly the opposite way to what the New Testament requires. They exploit Christianity for their own personal financial gain and to strengthen their political and social power. In order to achieve these self-serving aims the clergy – in collaboration with the state – have endeavoured to create the impression that everyone is a Christian. For this purpose they invented a watered-down version of Christianity and created a confused, sub-Christian conception of Christianity among the people. Kierkegaard’s statements below point out the issue clearly:

the state employs 1000 officials who – in the name of proclaiming Christianity ... are financially interested in (a) having people call themselves Christians – the larger the flock of sheep the better – take the name ‘Christians’, and in (b) letting the matter rest there, so that they do not come to know what Christianity in truth is ... ‘The pastor’ has a pecuniary interest in having people call themselves Christians, since every such person is of course (through the state as commission agent) a contributing member and also contributes to giving the whole profession visible power – but nothing is more dangerous for true Christianity, nothing is more against its nature, than getting people light-mindedly to assume the name ‘Christians’, to teach them to have a low opinion of being a Christian, as if it were something that is so very easy.²⁸

Far from preaching Christianity, then, the clergy obscure the true nature of Christianity by deliberately propagating the confusion of the state and Church, the temporal and eternal. Christianity is thus in crisis. Anti-Climacus sums up the challenge in the following words: ‘if something must be done, one must attempt again to introduce Christianity into Christendom’.²⁹ To achieve this, Kierkegaard sets himself the task of re-educating people to distinguish Christianity from all the phenomena with which it has been confused in contemporary Denmark, and thereby help them become genuine Christians.

The solution: re-education

Kierkegaard not only highlights the problems but also struggles to provide solutions to these problems. This involves his self-imposed task of removing confusions and assisting human beings to embark on the task of becoming genuine

selves. He develops his own dialectics in order to fulfil his self-imposed mission. This dialectics involves two major principles, namely making distinctions between the notions that the society has confused, and cultivating existential appropriation on the part of the reader.

Making distinctions

As was seen on the previous section, Kierkegaard believed that Christianity had been transformed into a mere doctrine and teaching. The reason for this was that society had confused Christianity with a number of non-Christian phenomena such as philosophy and politics. Consequently, what must be done in order to dispel the confusion is to distinguish Christianity from these non-Christian phenomena. This is possible, for Kierkegaard, by means of a new way of thinking that sharply separates from each other the spheres and categories that society has confused. Kierkegaard calls this new kind of dialectics ‘qualitative dialectics’.³⁰ Qualitative dialectics is a principle which must be kept in mind ‘continually’ and applied to everything related to Christianity.³¹ Qualitative dialectics separates the spheres and categories from each other by means of what Climacus calls the ‘qualitative disjunction’ or ‘qualitative distinction’.³² Examples of the employment of the qualitative disjunction can be found in Climacus’ distinctions between objectivity-subjectivity, abstract-concrete, possibility-actuality, etc. Although it is a notion which must be applied to every concept in relation to religion, here the focus is on the main confusions, to which Kierkegaard paid particular attention, namely distinguishing Christianity from philosophy, non-Christian modes of existence, and Christendom.

Distinguishing Christianity from philosophy

In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Climacus has a great deal to say about how Christianity has been reduced to philosophy. Among his critique of people’s confusion of Christianity with philosophy in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Hegel’s philosophy and Danish Hegelianism occupy a central position. Even the title of the work arises from his opposition to Hegelian interpretations of Christianity. The notion of ‘science’ in Kierkegaard’s era did not refer to natural science as it does today, and it was a term used by Hegelians and theologians with reference to scholarly works.³³ His use of this notion in the title of *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* points out the role of Hegelianism in his arguments in the work. An adequate discussion of Kierkegaard’s polemical approach towards Hegel’s philosophy and his defence of Christianity would require a separate chapter.³⁴ Here, how Kierkegaard distinguishes between Christianity and philosophy will be explored through his critique of Hegelianism in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. For Climacus, the major error of Hegelianism is that it disregards the existential nature of Christianity by treating Christianity as a form of philosophical knowledge. This approach makes two fundamental mistakes. First, the philosophical approach to Christianity fails to

recognize the *paradoxical* character of Christianity. Second, Hegelianism disregards the necessity of sustaining a *subjective* relation to Christianity. These two mistakes of Hegelianism shall now be analysed in detail.

Distinguishing the Christian God from the pagan God

In relation to Kierkegaard's critique of Hegelianism's failure to recognize the paradoxical character of Christianity, it is necessary to consider Kierkegaard's pseudonymous character Climacus' discussion of the 'thought project' in *Philosophical Fragments*. Climacus establishes his discussion around the Socratic maieutic view and the Socratic teacher. Socrates is an important figure for Kierkegaard, because of his influence on Hegel's philosophy, particularly on his concept of truth as an immanent element in every individual.³⁵ Climacus explains that he resorts to paganism and Socrates because speculative philosophy has made paganism a part of Christianity.³⁶ As Law puts it 'By focusing on Socrates, Climacus can show that the origins of modern philosophy are not Christian, but *pagan* ... For Climacus Hegel is a Greek as far as his religion is concerned, albeit an existentially superficial Greek.'³⁷

The Socratic view suggests that every individual possesses the truth innately. This claim, namely that the truth is immanent in every human being, cannot be compatible with Christianity because such an approach is unable to do justice to the unique elements of Christianity, such as incarnation, revelation and atonement. The Socratic/Hegelian approach would treat these aspects of Christianity as parts of the process of the development of the truth and human history, thereby reducing them to simple historical events.³⁸ In order to avoid the aforementioned results of such an understanding of the truth, and to clarify the distinction between Christianity and philosophy, Climacus develops an alternative view to the Socratic truth in the 'thought project'. The project begins with the Socratic question of whether the truth can be learned. Since Kierkegaard's Climacus seeks an alternative to Socrates' approach, he goes on to consider what the consequences would be if the starting point were the opposite proposition to that of the Socratic position, namely the view that the human being *does not* possess the truth, he is actually outside the truth, he is untruth: 'This is the way we have to state the difficulty if we do not want to explain it Socratically.'³⁹

If the learner does not possess the truth, then the teacher must bring the truth to the learner. Furthermore, because the learner is outside the truth, he cannot discover the truth by himself. Consequently, the teacher must also provide the learner with the 'condition' by means of which the learner is able to grasp the truth the teacher offers. If this is not the case, the individual reverts to the Socratic:

Now, if the learner is to obtain the truth, the teacher must bring it to him, but not only that. Along with it, he must provide him with the condition for understanding it ... (If this is not the case, then the moment is to be understood only Socratically).⁴⁰

However, the one who provides the condition for the human being cannot be an ordinary teacher, because the condition is not something which a human being can provide for the other: 'But no human being is capable of doing this.'⁴¹ Climacus thus reaches the conclusion that the one who gives the truth and provides the condition for the human being must be someone who is beyond the merely human; the teacher must be 'the god':⁴²

Ultimately, all instruction depends upon the presence of the condition; if it is lacking, then a teacher is capable of nothing, because in the second case, the teacher, before beginning to teach, must transform, not reform, the learner. But no human being is capable of doing this; if it is to take place, it must be done by the god himself.⁴³

There are, then, significant distinctions between the Socratic teacher and the god as a teacher. The Socratic teacher works on the assumption that the human being is in innate possession of the truth, whereas the god teaches the learner first by revealing to the learner that the latter is outside the truth, and second by giving the learner the truth for the very first time. This fundamental difference results in the positing of a set of concepts distinct to the god, which are not applicable to the Socratic teacher.

The teacher, then, is the god himself, who, acting as the occasion, prompts the learner to be reminded that he is untruth and is that through his own fault. But this state – to be untruth and to be that through one's own fault – what can we call it? Let us call it *sin*.⁴⁴

A further concept that is distinctive to the god as teacher is *faith*. If the learner is in untruth and needs the god to give him the truth, 'How, then, does the learner become a believer or follower?'⁴⁵ Climacus answers this question as follows:

It occurs when the understanding and the paradox happily encounter each other in the moment, when the understanding steps aside and the paradox gives itself, and the third something, the something in which this occurs (for it does not occur through the understanding, which is discharged, or through the paradox, which gives itself – consequently *in* something), is that happy passion to which we shall now give a name, although for us it is not a matter of the name. We shall call it *faith*. This passion, then, must be that above-mentioned condition that the paradox provides.⁴⁶

What Climacus' introduction of sin and faith makes clear is that Christianity is radically different from philosophy, knowledge and reason. As the affirmation of the paradoxical irruption of the eternal into time in the person of the God-man Jesus Christ, Christianity is not subject to reason, but transcends the rational capacity of human beings to understand it. Consequently, the means by which human beings relate to Christianity cannot be by means of reason. Similarly,

Christianity cannot be interpreted, as Hegel would have us believe, as inadequately formulated philosophical knowledge, which needs to be translated by the astute philosopher into a more acceptable philosophical conceptuality. The fact that all human beings are in untruth or, in Christian terminology, *sin*, means that no one – not even the most accomplished philosopher – can grasp the truth by means of his own power. It is for this reason that human beings need a teacher who gives them the truth. That is, in Kierkegaard's theological terms, the learner needs a *saviour*, to whom the correct response is not reason or knowledge, but *faith*.

Distinguishing subjectivity from objectivity

A further problem with Hegelianism and Hegelian thinkers is that they contribute to the confusion of objectivity and subjectivity in the realm of religion by reinterpreting Christianity in objective terms, and teaching that 'becoming objective is the way'.⁴⁷ This has led Kierkegaard to discuss the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity, and the invalidity of objective approaches to Christianity. A close reading of Climacus' discussion of subjectivity in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* shows that he does not develop his notion of subjectivity as an alternative to the objective relation to Christianity and Hegelian philosophy, but regards it as a kind of return to the genuine understanding of Christianity. In other words, Climacus does not deal with subjectivity as a new concept, but as a religious term, which has been forgotten. In order to dispel the confusion, what must be done is to highlight the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity, philosophical understanding and religious understanding, and separate these notions from each other. This is possible by employing the qualitative distinction to highlight the difference between these two notions.

Climacus discusses the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity in terms of their relation to the truth. The philosophical definition of the truth, as Evans rightly suggests, is not among Climacus' main concerns.⁴⁸ He is more interested in the human being's relation to the truth of Christianity, which is possible only through subjectivity, and how this relation affects his existence. He writes of the relation between the truth of Christianity, subjectivity, and objectivity that Christianity protests against all objectivity, and subjectivity is the truth of Christianity. It wants the human being 'to be infinitely concerned about himself', because 'objectively, it is not at all'.⁴⁹ An objective relation to Christianity does not provide the human being with the truth of Christianity. The distinction between objectivity and subjectivity becomes clearer in the difference between the individual's *appropriating* the truth and *knowing* the truth. Appropriating the truth entails the subject's existential adoption of his/her relation to the truth with passion and inwardness. The truth depends on the human being's relation to it. If the human being relates himself to the truth with passion, it is this relation that makes it the truth. If there is no passion in the human being's relation to the truth, and he does not exist in the truth subjectively, then, the truth is no more than an object.⁵⁰ This is the main distinction between knowing the

truth and living the truth. In order to make the issue clearer Climacus' example of the knowledge of God can be quoted. He writes: 'Objectively, what is reflected upon is that this is the true God; subjectively, that the individual relates himself to a something *in such a way* that his relation is in truth a God-relation.'⁵¹ In relation to this example, Climacus asks whether the truth is on the side of the person 'who only objectively seeks the true God' or the person who is 'concerned that he in truth relate himself to God with the infinite passion of need', Climacus does not even need to answer this question. He writes, 'there can be no doubt about the answer for anyone who is not totally botched by scholarship and science'.⁵²

Since an existing person is a thinking person,⁵³ in order for the human being to relate himself subjectively to the truth and Christianity a form of thinking and reflection is required. Climacus calls this subjective reflection and thinking. Subjective reflection and thinking are the notions which Kierkegaard develops as alternative ways of thinking to Hegelian philosophy. Whereas the individual's subjective involvement in Christianity can be regarded as a return to a genuine understanding of Christianity, Kierkegaard develops the notions of subjective thinking and reflection as alternatives to Hegelian ways of thinking and reflection with their emphasis on the notions of objective, speculative, abstract, and pure thinking, reflection and thought. The distinction between objective thinking and subjective reflection again arises from their relation to the truth. Climacus writes: 'To objective reflection truth becomes something objective, an object, and the point is to disregard the subject. To subjective reflection, truth becomes appropriation, inwardness, subjectivity, and the point is to immerse oneself, existing, in subjectivity.'⁵⁴ The objective thinker is not interested in, for instance, existing in the belief in God, whereas the subjective thinker is interested in existing in his belief through appropriation, inwardness and subjectivity.⁵⁵ Consequently, whereas objective thinking leads the human being to objectivity and an objective relation to Christianity, subjective thinking directs him/her to a subjective relation to Christianity, to a genuine relation to the truth. Objective reflection is the means by which human beings make sense of the world. It is a process of abstracting from empirical experience and arriving at a conceptualization and classification of reality, as well as providing us with a range of possibilities for human existence. Objective reflection provides the individual with a range of abstract possibilities or life-views for her/his own existence. Objective reflection on its own, however, is a mere intellectual exercise. If the concepts, categories and possibilities identified by objective reflection are to acquire significance for the single individual they must be applied to the existence of that single individual. The means by which this existential application of the notions posited by objective reflection is achieved is *subjective* reflection. Christianity wants the existing individual to establish a subjective relationship with it due to the fact that Christianity is an existence-communication and an existence-possibility. Consequently, a mode of thinking which involves applying Christianity as an existence-possibility to one's own life is required. Climacus develops such a mode of thinking in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, where he advances the notion of 'double reflection'. As its

name indicates, double reflection has a twofold character. It basically involves two steps, the first of which is ‘the reflection in which the communication is made, and the second is that in which it is recaptured’.⁵⁶ More clearly:

When a thought has gained its proper expression in the word, which is attained through the first reflection, there comes the second reflection, which bears upon the intrinsic relation of the communication to the communicator and renders the existing communicator’s own relation to the idea.⁵⁷

These two types of reflection are described by Climacus as objective and subjective reflection respectively. This indicates that Kierkegaard does not exclude objective reflection or thinking in the realm of existence, but he argues that objective reflection on its own is not sufficient, and is even functionless in the realm of religion and existence.

In relation to Hegelian philosophy, Climacus writes that it explains existence in terms of pure thinking and therefore conflates them.⁵⁸ Hegelianism and scholarly approaches towards Christianity have obscured the mind of society by dismissing the genuine character of Christianity, which is the paradox, the idea of God-man, and introducing a non-Christian relation to it, namely objectivity. What needs to be done is to separate these non-Christian elements from Christianity. Kierkegaard does this by pointing out the distinctive character of Christianity as was seen. First, Christianity and philosophical understanding cannot be compared, since they belong to different realms. Second, contrary to Hegelian philosophy, Christianity expects the human being to establish a subjective relation to it, to exist in it, through inwardness and subjective thinking.

Distinguishing Christianity from non-Christian modes of existence

One of the distinctive features of Kierkegaard’s thought is his discussion of the spheres or stages of existence, namely the *aesthetic*, the *ethical*, and the *religious*. For Kierkegaard, another reason for contemporary misconceptions of Christ is the misunderstanding and confusion of the relationship between each of these existence modes and genuine Christianity. Moreover, the problem is not only the confusion of Christianity with these existence modes, but the confusion of the spheres with each other as well. Climacus writes: ‘In our day everything is mixed together; one responds to the esthetic ethically, to faith intellectually, etc. ... yet scant attention is given to which sphere it is in which each question finds its answer.’⁵⁹ The problem Kierkegaard is concerned to address is that these spheres have been conflated in contemporary Danish philosophy and theology, which has had devastating consequences for Christianity. The problem, then, is the conflation of different existence spheres. Hence, only separating these modes from each other and identifying the character of genuine Christianity can dispel the confusion. This is possible by employing the qualitative distinction to highlight the difference between each sphere.

Climacus' discussion of the spheres of existence in terms of their relation to eternal happiness in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* provides an identification of the distinction between each of the spheres. Climacus uses the notion of eternal happiness, the absolute end or goal, as the highest good which the human being can achieve in religious terms.⁶⁰

Since the eternal happiness is the highest good the human being can achieve, how can he relate himself to it? Climacus introduces the notion of 'pathos', a term that refers to the human being's relation to the eternal happiness. In other words, the human being establishes a relation to the eternal happiness through what Climacus regards as pathos. There are different types of pathos, and the kind of pathos with which the subjective thinker should relate himself to the eternal happiness is an 'existential pathos'. An existential pathos transforms the existence of the human being in relation to the absolute goal or eternal happiness.⁶¹ This means that when the individual relates himself to an eternal happiness through an existential pathos, this relation changes his whole existence, his world-view, and his perception of the outer world in accordance with the absolute goal. The human being who relates himself to the eternal happiness through existential pathos lets his relation to eternal happiness transform his existence, so that his existence expresses this relation. In Climacus' words, 'in his acting the finite elements are once and for all reduced to what must be surrendered in relation to the eternal happiness'.⁶² If it does not transform the individual's existence in relation to eternal happiness, and his existence does not express the relation, then, there are two possibilities. He is either not relating himself to an eternal happiness or he is not relating himself to an eternal happiness with an existential pathos but an aesthetic pathos.⁶³ The possibility that it is not an eternal happiness to which the individual relates himself through an existential pathos indicates that a relation to something other than eternal happiness can also transform the individual's existence.⁶⁴ However, this transformation is not in relation to an eternal happiness, to an absolute goal, so the individual is not in the ethical or religious spheres, but in the aesthetic sphere.

Whereas there is an apparent difference between Kierkegaard's spheres of the aesthetic and the ethical, the difference between the ethical and the religious is not that clear. The individual who exists in the ethical and religious spheres is not different from other people around him because he lives his life like other people. However, there is a significant difference in his relation to the outer world, namely in his world-view. In other words, the human being who lives in the ethical and religious spheres, namely who relates himself to the eternal happiness through an existential pathos 'may very well live in the relative ends'.⁶⁵ However, his relation to the relative goals and ends is also relative, whereas an individual existing in the aesthetic sphere relates himself to the relative goals absolutely.⁶⁶ Since, the point is to relate oneself to absolute goals absolutely, and to relative goals relatively,⁶⁷ then, how can the individual relate himself to the outer world relatively? It is one of the significant aspects of Kierkegaard's philosophy that when he points out a task that he believes the human being should fulfil in order to become a genuine Christian, he also shows

how to fulfil it. In relation to the individual's relation to the world and eternal happiness, he introduces three notions, namely renunciation or resignation, suffering, and guilt-consciousness, which are initial, essential, and decisive expressions of existential pathos respectively. Resignation is a kind of 'safeguard' of the individual's absolute goal.⁶⁸ With the help of resignation, the individual maintains his relation to the absolute goal while living according to relative ends like anyone else in the world. The human being who resigns from his relative ends is like 'the person who walks in a stranger's borrowed clothes'.⁶⁹ The individual's task is repeating resignation or renunciation continually in order to maintain his absolute relation to eternal happiness.⁷⁰ Suffering is the essential expression of existential pathos,⁷¹ and the highest action in the inner world.⁷² It must be distinguished from suffering for relative ends. Religious suffering arises from the human being's continual renunciation of relative goals.⁷³ The religious person continually has suffering with him, and wants suffering like the individual who exists in the aesthetic sphere and wants good fortune.⁷⁴ Guilt is the decisive expression of existential pathos.⁷⁵ This type of guilt is the human being's consciousness of the fact that in Evans' terms 'there is no "solution" within our human powers. There is ultimately nothing humans can do that perfectly repairs their relation to God, and therefore their relation to their own task.'⁷⁶

Kierkegaard's discussion of different existential spheres raises a number of questions regarding their relation to each other. First, how can the human being move from one stage to another? Collins rightly suggests that the individual's movement towards another stage does not mean that the previous stage is transformed into another stage or the next stage is a combination of previous stages, but it is the individual's 'leap' from one stage to another.⁷⁷ This addresses two issues. First, Kierkegaard's stages must not be regarded in terms of mathematical process, since, for instance, his religious sphere cannot be regarded as a synthesis of the aesthetic and ethical spheres. Second, the individual jumps from one stage to another only by means of his free decision. This raises the question whether the stages can include elements from each other. As has been mentioned, Climacus claims that the individual who relates himself to the eternal happiness through an existential pathos lives in relative ends. This shows that Kierkegaard's ethical and religious spheres can include elements from the aesthetic sphere. However, here the nature of the individual's relation to these aesthetic elements is crucial. As Evans rightly points out, the choice between the aesthetic and ethical stages is an either/or.⁷⁸ This means that when the individual jumps into one stage from another, the previous stage is 'dethroned' and the individual cannot exist in two stages and assimilate two different world-views at the same time.

Distinguishing Christianity from Christendom

A major concern of Kierkegaard, particularly in the last years of his life, was to draw his contemporaries' attention to the radical misunderstanding of Christianity that had arisen from the church's unhealthily close relation with the state. For

Kierkegaard, the notion of a state church is a confusion of two utterly separate and distinct concepts, namely worldliness and Christianity, God and humanity. The confusion of the state and church is 'Christendom', and this confusion includes two different but tightly linked confusions, namely the confusion of quality and quantity, and the eternal and temporal.

The confusion of quality and quantity

The confusion of quality and quantity is most evident in the belief that all citizens living in the Christian state are Christians. Kierkegaard says:

What does it mean, after all, that all these thousands and thousands as a matter of course call themselves Christians! ... People who perhaps never once go to church, never think about God, never name his name except when they curse! People to whom it has never occurred that their lives should have some duty to God, people who either maintain that a certain civil impunity is the highest or do not find even this to be entirely necessary! Yet all these people, even those who insist that there is no God, they all are Christians, call themselves Christians, are recognized as Christians by the state, are buried as Christians by the Church, are discharged as Christians to eternity!⁷⁹

The assumption that all citizens of the Christian state are automatically Christians caused people to believe that eternal happiness was also given them automatically when they prove themselves to be good citizens. Being a citizen has been regarded as, in Collins words, 'a passport which assures effortless entry'⁸⁰ to eternal life. However, what Kierkegaard attempts to remind Christians of is that Christianity and eternal happiness are not something one can easily gain, and this belief is an illusion created by the idea of Christendom. The main reason for the illusion is that quantity has become so important that people confuse the number of Christians and the value of being a Christian. As Kierkegaard puts it:

We are, as it is called, a Christian nation – but in such a way that not a single one of us is in the character of the Christianity of the New Testament ... The illusion of a Christian nation is certainly due to the power that numbers exercise over the imagination ...⁸¹

What Kierkegaard means by the exercise of numbers over the imagination is that the contemporary Danes and clergy believe that, as is the case with the relationship between the number of the citizens of a state, the greatness of the number of Christians in the world is synonymous with its strength. Christianity, however, is a matter of inwardness, subjectivity, commitment, passion and appropriation. People do not become Christians merely by virtue of their membership of a group, but through making an individual leap of faith by which they passionately commit themselves to the paradox of the God-man. Christendom, however, is

based on the illusion that Christianity is a matter of numbers. In the case of the state it is indeed true that its strength is indicated by the size of its population and that it becomes weak if the number of its citizens falls. Hence there is a direct relationship between the state and the numerical: “State” is related directly to number (the numerical); therefore, when a state dwindles, the number can gradually become so small that the state has ended, the concept has dropped out.⁸² Kierkegaard emphasizes that Christianity is also related to the numerical but in a different way from that of the state. However, contrary to the contemporary understanding, Christianity is related inversely to the numerical, which means when the number of Christians becomes bigger, the number of genuine Christians is smaller:

Christianity is related to number in another way: one single true Christian is enough for it to be true that Christianity exists. Yes, Christianity is related inversely to number – when all have become Christians, the concept ‘Christian’ has dropped out.⁸³

To illustrate the illusion of numbers and how numbers ‘exercise over the imagination’ Kierkegaard tells his story of a saloon-keeper:

He is said to have sold his bottled beer for a cent under the purchase price, and when someone said to him: ‘How does that pay? Indeed, you are losing money,’ he answered, ‘No, my friend, it is the quantity that does it’ – the quantity which warns against the power that numbers exercise over the imagination. In other words, there can be no doubt that the saloon-keeper realized very well that to sell for three cents a bottle of beer that costs him four cents means a loss of one cent. Also, when it is a matter of ten bottles the saloon-keeper will be able to maintain that it is a loss. But, but 100,000 bottles ... it becomes a profit, he says, because the quantity does it. So it is also with the reckoning that gets a Christian nation by combining the ones who are not Christians, gets it by way of ‘It is the quantity that does it’.⁸⁴

The saloon-keeper, ludicrously, ignores his loss on each bottle and focuses on the number of the bottled beers he has sold. He is not aware of the fact that the more bottles he sells, the bigger his loss is, and the point of his job is to make profit, otherwise he goes bankrupt. Contemporary Christians, particularly Danish citizens, like the saloon-keeper in the story, think that the bigger the number of the Christians, the bigger the profit is as well, but the fact is that the bigger the number the greater the loss is, because the point in New Testament Christianity is not quantity, but quality, not the number of Christians but to become a single genuine Christian.

For true Christianity this is the most dangerous of all illusions, and of all illusions it is also the very one to which every human being is most disposed, because the number [...] and the imagination suit each other

completely. But from the Christian point of view, the reckoning is obviously wrong, and a Christian nation composed of ones who honestly confess that they are not Christians, likewise honestly confess that their lives by no means can be called a striving toward what the New Testament understands by Christianity – a Christian nation such as that is an impossibility.⁸⁵

In summary, to recover an understanding of Christianity's true nature and to be able to present human beings with the choice with which Christianity confronts every human being, it is imperative to distinguish between the crowd and the single individual. Mere force of numbers does not support but undermines Christianity, for the character of Christianity resides not in the extensive but the intensive. The qualitative disjunction must therefore be employed to make this distinction, so that human beings can once again become aware of the choice with which Christianity presents each and every one.

The confusion of the eternal with the temporal or the infinite with the finite

Another significant element of the confusion created by Christendom is the confusion of the eternal with the temporal, the finite with the infinite. For Kierkegaard, state and Christianity cannot be merged, and are not even comparable due to the fact that they are qualitatively and functionally different. He writes:

To place state and Christianity together in this way makes just as much sense as talking about a yard of butter, or there is, if possible, even less sense in it, since butter and the yard measure are nevertheless simply entities that have nothing to do with each other, whereas state and Christianity are inversely related to or, indeed more correctly, away from each other.⁸⁶

The reason for this is that whereas, for Kierkegaard, Christianity is eternal and it treats matters that are eternal, the state belongs only to the world, and is temporal and finite, and treats matters that are finite. In other words, religion and the state are naturally and functionally different due to the fact that religion is concerned with the eternal and divine, and naturally eternal, whereas the state is temporal and finite. The only kingdom valid for Christianity is the kingdom of God, as expressed in Jesus' remark to Pontius Pilate 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:36).

Previously it was seen that in order for the human being to become a genuine religious individual, he must give up on this world, and that Kierkegaard's notion for this act is 'resignation' and 'renunciation'. Kierkegaard also uses the theme of 'heterogeneity with this world' to explain the character of Christian choice.⁸⁷ Christianity wants the individual to die to the world. This means that the individual has two choices, he can choose *either* this world *or* eternal happiness, and there is nothing in between.⁸⁸ Christianity expects the individual to choose eternal happiness by dying to the world. The ultimate goal and task of a

state is, on the other hand, to satisfy the needs of its citizens, and make the life as comfortable as possible in this world. It is not capable of providing its citizens with eternal happiness. Kierkegaard ironically writes of Christendom's purpose of providing its citizens with comfort in the hereafter:

Among the many different things that people need in a cultured mode of life and that the state tries to provide for its citizens as cheaply and comfortably as possible, among these many different things, such as public security, water, lighting, roads, pavement, etc. etc., there is in addition – an eternal happiness in the life to come, a necessity that the state likewise ought to satisfy – how generous! – and in as inexpensive and comfortable a way as possible.⁸⁹

Moreover, it is an advantage to be a Christian in the contemporary Christian state, because being a Christian is like a life insurance. Kierkegaard writes: 'But this is the way it always is with secular-mindedness – you win in two ways: first security and comfort and a good income and assured advancement – and then in addition honor and reputation as a genuinely earnest person.'⁹⁰

The problem is that this is exactly the opposite of what New Testament Christianity wants from an individual. The condition of being a genuine Christian is not to have a high standard of living; on the contrary, it is to *suffer* which includes the individual's *resignation* of 'earthly goods' such as comfort and reputation.⁹¹ Despite all these qualitative and fundamental differences between Christianity and the state, contemporary Christians have merged them under the name of Christendom by conciliating them, and creating an official Christianity. Consequently, they have created huge confusion and a ludicrous phenomenon. This result is the separation of Christianity from its truth. For Kierkegaard, these two qualitatively different concepts – the state and Christianity – must be separated from each other, not only theoretically and existentially through the qualitative disjunction, but also practically.

Cultivating existential appropriation on the part of the reader

One of Kierkegaard's ways of addressing the confusion predominant in contemporary Christian society is to cultivate existential appropriation on the part of the reader. As Kierkegaard makes clear in many of his works and in several journal entries, it is not sufficient for human beings merely to know the truth; they must also *appropriate it for themselves*. They must make the truth part of their very being and act upon it. To recover a comprehension of what Christianity truly is, it is therefore necessary to recover its existential character and the demands it places upon everyone who would become a Christian. To achieve this aim what Kierkegaard does is to apply a number of strategies in order to develop an existential consciousness in the reader so that he can discover the existential potential in himself. This section will focus on Kierkegaard's three main strategies that he uses in cultivating existential appropriation on the part of his reader.

The Socratic method

Kierkegaard believes that what contemporary society needs in order to address its current malaise is a new Socrates. He writes:

Can there be a slightest doubt that what Christendom needs is another Socrates, who with the same dialectical, cunning simplicity is able to express ignorance or, as it may be stated in this case: I cannot understand anything at all about faith, but I do believe.⁹²

A number of reasons for Kierkegaard's admiration of Socrates can be identified. First, Socrates practised what he preached. He was not a philosopher who reflected on life from the comfort of his study, but went out into the market-places of Athens and lived out his philosophical convictions in relation to his fellow human beings. Second, Socrates' dialectical method aimed at prompting the learner to discover and appropriate the truth for himself. Socrates does not simply present the truth in an objective way to the learner, but in a way that demands existential appropriation on the part of the learner. Third, through his probing questions Socrates exposes the delusion of his contemporaries that they possess the truth. For Kierkegaard these three principles of the Socratic method provide a means of critiquing Christendom and awakening his contemporaries to the true character of Christianity. It is for this reason that he takes Socrates as his guide.⁹³ As he puts it in the tenth number of *The Moment*: 'The only analogy I have before me is Socrates; my task is a Socratic task, to audit the definition of what it is to be a Christian.'⁹⁴ Kierkegaard's relationship with Socrates can be traced back to his dissertation called *Om Begrebet Ironi med stadigt Hensyn til Socrates* (The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates). What is important for this section is Kierkegaard's use of Socrates' maieutic method, i.e. Socrates' view of himself as an imaginary 'midwife' who helps the learner to bring to birth the truth that he believes to be innate within him. Before considering how Kierkegaard adopts the Socratic method, it is first necessary to give some account of Socrates' midwifery.

Socrates, as the son of a midwife, claims himself to practise midwifery like his mother, but with some fundamental differences, in Plato's *Theaetetus* in a conversation with Theodorus and Theaetetus.⁹⁵ The difference between Socratic midwifery and ordinary midwifery is that what Socrates practises is a kind of intellectual and abstract midwifery by applying his dialectical art to human souls. He explains his task: 'Now my art of midwifery is just like theirs in most respects. The difference is that I attend men and not women, and that I watch over the labour of their souls, not of their bodies.'⁹⁶ Socrates' point of departure in this is the presupposition that human beings innately possess the truth but have forgotten it. They, therefore, need to be reminded by someone in order to become aware of the 'beautiful things' in them in time and with the help of God. Thus, Socrates' role as a midwife is to help his listeners recollect the truth, which he presumes is already present within themselves:

At first some of them may give the impression of being ignorant and stupid; but as time goes on and our association continues, all whom God permits are seen to make progress – a progress which is amazing both to other people and to themselves. And yet it is clear that this is not due to anything they have learnt from me; it is that they discover within themselves a multitude of beautiful things, which they bring forth into the light.⁹⁷

Socrates emphasizes that he is not the one who gives the truth to the individual; on the contrary, he does not possess wisdom, but is only a facilitator of the learner's discovery of a truth he already possesses: 'For one thing which I have in common with the ordinary midwives is that I myself am barren of wisdom.'⁹⁸ It is also important to highlight that the Socratic maieutic method does not approach the individual directly, but indirectly. Socrates' way of approaching the learner indirectly involves asking questions that may awaken a consciousness in the individual. While defending his approach against those who claim he has many questions but no answers, he gives the impression that he is not aware of what he is actually doing, because as has just been mentioned, he claims himself not to have wisdom in him:

The common reproach against me is that I am always asking questions of other people but never express my own views about anything, because there is no wisdom in me; and that is true enough. And the reason of it is this, that God compels me to attend the travail of others, but has forbidden me to procreate.⁹⁹

This leads Socrates to interpret his art only as a mediator which means that he helps the learner on discovering the truth in himself. However, he cannot take part in the process of the discovery, he can only know whether the result is a success or not: 'And the most important thing about my art is the ability to apply all possible tests to the offspring, to determine whether the young mind is being delivered of a phantom, that is, an error, or a fertile truth.'¹⁰⁰ He approaches his target like a midwife, and applies 'all the possible tests', but he cannot change it if the result is not successful, because he is only a mediator. Thus, there are two main characteristics of such an intellectual or Socratic midwife: (1) the Socratic midwife moves from the presupposition that every individual possesses the truth within themselves, and the midwife's role is not to 'procreate' the truth but to help the individual give birth to it because of the fact that s/he does not possess wisdom; (2) the midwife cannot control whether the result is successful or not because it is important to the learner and his free will to take part in discovering the truth, and that he ought to handle the innate truth with an existential appropriation.

It is his emulation of Socrates' maieutic method that accounts for Kierkegaard's composition of what he calls his 'aesthetic' and 'religious' writings. Like Socrates, Kierkegaard holds that educating people into the truth must address people in the situation in which they find themselves and attempt to lead them

out of that situation into a more adequate mode of existence. For Kierkegaard, this means that the communication of Christian truth must take seriously the fact that human beings are rooted in the aesthetic mode of existence. This is the sphere of the naturally human, the governing principle of which is enjoyment. The failure to recognize this has resulted in Christianity being dragged down into aesthetic categories, so that being a Christian is no longer an existential challenge and has become a comfortable and complacent state of being. It is merely the confirmation of the human being as s/he is rather than the transformation of the individual through his dying to the world and his taking up his cross in order to suffer for the Gospel. If Christianity is to be introduced into such people's lives, it is not possible to introduce Christian concepts directly, for they will be assimilated to the aesthetic mode of existence in which human beings find themselves. As Kierkegaard puts it:

No, an illusion can never be removed directly, and basically only indirectly. If it is an illusion that all are Christians, and if something is to be done, it must be done indirectly, not by someone who loudly declares himself to be an extraordinary Christian, but by someone who, better informed, even declares himself not to be a Christian.¹⁰¹

To avoid Christianity being dragged down into aesthetic concepts, it is first necessary to educate the individual out of the aesthetic mode of existence. It is this purpose that lends Kierkegaard's approach its maieutic and Socratic character. He writes:

The maieutic lies in the relation between the esthetic writing as the beginning and the religious as the τέλος [goal]. It begins with the esthetic, in which possibly most people have their lives, and now the religious is introduced so quickly that those who, moved by the esthetic, decide to follow along are suddenly standing right in the middle of the decisive qualifications of the essentially Christian, are at least prompted to become aware.¹⁰²

Kierkegaard carries out this maieutic purpose by means of his aesthetic writings. In these works he takes the aesthetic mode of existence as his starting point and demonstrates that ultimately it must fail as a viable mode of existence for the human being. The reader's discovery of the aesthetic sphere's inadequacy is the first stage on the road to the religious existence into which Kierkegaard wishes to educate his reader. Kierkegaard aims, he admits, to 'deceive' people into the truth.

Kierkegaard is well aware of the limits of his maieutic method and that his maieutic approach may fail by admitting that the individual's becoming a Christian is not in his power. The success of his indirect communication first of all depends on the reader's/learner's free will. He writes:

A person may have the good fortune of doing a great deal for another, may have the good fortune of leading him to the place to which he desires to lead

him and, to hold to what in essence is continually under discussion here, may have the good fortune of helping that person to become a Christian. *But this is not in my power*; it depends upon very many things and above all upon whether he himself is willing. Compel a person to an opinion, a conviction, a belief – in all eternity, that I cannot do ...¹⁰³

He continues that his task and power is limited to only helping the individual awaken. However, where the awakening of the individual will lead him is unknowable by the communicator. So, Kierkegaard's task includes risk and requires courage. He writes:

But one thing I can do, in one sense the first thing [...], in another sense the last thing if he refuses the next: *I can compel him to become aware*. That is a good deed, there is no doubt, but neither must it be forgotten that this is a daring venture. By compelling him to become aware, I succeed in compelling him to judge. Now he judges. But what he judges is not in my power. Perhaps he judges the very opposite of what I desire.¹⁰⁴

This is the core of Kierkegaard's Socratic method – he aims to make people aware of the issues, so that they at least know what choice confronts them in Christianity. Kierkegaard cannot force people to become Christians, nor does he wish to do so, for becoming a Christian is an *existential* choice that each individual human being must make for him or herself. What he can do, however, is help his contemporaries to recover an understanding of what Christianity is by educating them out of their confused, aesthetic understanding of Christianity.

Christianity as an 'existence-communication'

As was seen previously, Kierkegaard's pseudonymous author Climacus blames Hegelianism and Christendom for reducing religion to a philosophical doctrine by approaching Christianity objectively. Kierkegaard's critique arises from his understanding of genuine Christianity. For him, Christianity is neither a philosophical doctrine nor can it be understood objectively. The belief that Christianity is a mere doctrine results in only an intellectual relationship with it, and therefore prevents the individual from establishing a faith relationship with it.¹⁰⁵ Christianity is, for Kierkegaard and Climacus, an *existence-communication*.¹⁰⁶ Christianity as an 'existence-communication' is one of the issues Kierkegaard emphasizes in order to develop existential appropriation on the part of his reader. What this notion implies is that Christianity is not a doctrine or a set of philosophical propositions, but an existential issue. To present the reader with Christianity as a possibility for his own existence, it is necessary: (1) to distinguish it from other existence-possibilities and existence-communications; and (2) to communicate Christianity in a way that can make it an *existential* issue for each human being. Consequently, 'One does not prepare oneself to become aware of Christianity by reading books or by world-historical surveys, but by immersing

oneself in existing.¹⁰⁷ Christianity is an ‘existence-communication’ because it requires the individual to become a Christian through making an inward connection with it which means that in order to understand it, one must exist in it. Because, as Kierkegaard suggests, the aim of Christianity is not to be understood but ‘to be existed in’.¹⁰⁸ The fact that Christianity is an existence-communication entails the individual’s constant relation to Christianity, not only when he needs it but during his entire lifetime.¹⁰⁹ Climacus’ discussion of Christianity as an existence-communication ties in with a number of notions such as subjectivity, appropriation and double reflection which have been introduced. It is, first of all, related to Kierkegaard’s spheres of existence and existence modes. Moreover, precisely because Christianity is an existence-communication, an objective approach is a fundamental misunderstanding. To grasp Christianity means to live it. This can be achieved not merely by thinking about Christianity but by subjectively appropriating it, making it one’s own, and existing in it. All of these show that Kierkegaard’s arguments introduced so far, including his notion of existential pathos and subjectivity, actually arise from his conviction that Christianity is an ‘existence-communication’.

Respect for the reader’s autonomy: pseudonymous production

Kierkegaard’s solution of re-education and indirect communication involves helping the learner become a Christian self. This requires the teacher not to dominate but to serve the learner, because his re-education method is to begin from where the learner is:

The helper must first humble himself under the person he wants to help and thereby understand that to help is not to dominate but to serve, that to help is not to be the most dominating but the most patient, that to help is a willingness for the time being to put up with being in the wrong and not understanding what the other understands ... In order truly to help someone else, I must understand more than he – but certainly first and foremost understand what he understands. If I do not do that, then my greater understanding does not help him at all.¹¹⁰

Kierkegaard’s principle of respect for the reader’s autonomy leads him to his use of pseudonyms. The variety of these characters comes from his belief that existence-possibilities should not be forced on human beings, and the reader or the learner must be free to choose one of them, the one which he thinks the most suitable for him. Kierkegaard wants to protect his reader from his own personality and views in order to allow him to decide which form of existence he wishes to appropriate without the interference of the personal views of the author.

Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms are not merely pen names but are also personalities possessing individual identities. These pseudonyms should not be confused

with Kierkegaard's own views. Indeed, one of the purposes of the pseudonyms is to protect the reader from Kierkegaard's personality, so that the reader can focus wholly on the world-view and existence-possibilities represented by the pseudonyms. As Kierkegaard puts it in the 'First and Last Explanation' with which he brings *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* to a close:

Thus in the pseudonymous books there is not a single word by me. I have no opinion about them except as a third party, no knowledge of their meaning except as a reader, not the remotest private relation to them.¹¹¹

Each of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous characters represents different personalities, world-views and life styles. While some live their lives in aesthetic categories, some live their lives in ethical categories and even ethico-religious categories. The character does not say that he lives his life aesthetically or ethically, but the reader recognizes his world-view as he engages with the text. For instance, although Climacus emphasizes that he is not a Christian, the reader can easily distinguish his search for a way to make a connection with the eternal from the world-view of the hedonist who lives for only temporary pleasure and aesthetic joy like the writer of *A Seducer's Diary*, Johannes the Seducer. As Evans nicely puts it, the pseudonyms are 'independent (thought fictitious) characters, with the possibility of holding views and convictions, moods and attitudes that Kierkegaard did not personally share'.¹¹² Here, it should be highlighted that although Kierkegaard uses different pseudonymous characters with different world-views in his works, therefore enables the reader to choose one of them, the particular aim of each work is the same, namely to help the reader become a genuine Christian as understood by Kierkegaard.

In conclusion, Kierkegaard's respect for the reader's autonomy and free will prompts him to adopt an indirect method of communicating the true character of the Christian faith to his confused contemporaries. The importance of his pseudonymous products lies here. His different works written under a variety of pseudonyms enables his reader to choose one of the existence-possibilities presented in each work. The ultimate aim of Kierkegaard's presentation of different world-views and existence-possibilities is to wean his readers away from their confusion of Christianity with other modes of existence in order thereby to introduce Christianity to Christendom. Only then will it be possible to help the individual become a genuine self, a genuine Christian.

Conclusion: the construction of a Kierkegaardian hermeneutics

This chapter has discussed Kierkegaard's highly critical attitude towards the religious understanding of his era including the dominant thought forms in modern Denmark, contemporary Christianity, and the manner in which people were living in a supposedly Christian way. It has illustrated that Kierkegaard's solution to the problems of contemporary Christianity is what he terms as 'to

reintroduce Christianity into Christendom', particularly to the people of Denmark who were under the 'illusion' that they were Christians.¹¹³ It has been argued that in order to reintroduce Christianity into the Christian world Kierkegaard establishes a method of re-education on the basis of his own understanding and interpretation of genuine Christianity. In the light of his critique of contemporary Christianity and his application of the method of re-education, a Kierkegaardian hermeneutics, the principles of which are the employment of the 'qualitative dialectics' to the concepts society has confused, the cultivation of existence-appropriation on the part of the reader, and respect for the human being's autonomy can be cultivated. As was noted in the introduction to this chapter, it is not Kierkegaard's primary aim to create a philosophical method, since he criticizes system and method in the realm of existence and religion. His aim is rather to communicate with his reader in a way that helps the single individual awaken to a sense of genuine religious consciousness, and become a genuine self from the beginning of his authorship. In order to achieve his purpose Kierkegaard introduced his own tool of re-education: indirect communication. The reason for his attempts to re-educate his readers is that he believed that contemporary society had forgotten what it is to be a Christian, and confused Christianity with non-Christian thought forms and modes of existence. What must be done was to re-educate contemporary Christian society in the light of New Testament Christianity, and thereby reintroduce Christianity into Christendom.

Although living a century later than Kierkegaard and belonging to a different religious tradition, Muhammad Iqbal was faced by a parallel challenge. Just as Christianity in Kierkegaard's day had been conflated with non-Christian thought forms and modes of existence, so too was Iqbal convinced – as will be seen in the next chapter – that Islam's distinctive character had been enervated by its confusion with non-Islamic elements. Similarly, just as Kierkegaard had become aware that the so-called 'Christians' of mid-nineteenth-century Denmark were merely nominal Christians who failed to live up to the demands of the Gospel, so too had Iqbal identified complacency and lack of commitment as a threat to the integrity of Islam. Both thinkers believed that the ultimate task of human beings is to become genuine religious selves. However, Iqbal's attempts to achieve this goal of helping Muslims to become genuine Muslim selves are undermined due to his problematic presentation of his thought and terminology. Precisely because Kierkegaard devoted detailed attention to the problem of religious backsliding in nineteenth-century Denmark and both identified the causes and proposed a method for rectifying the parlous state of Danish Christianity, he can provide the basis of a hermeneutic that can be employed to identify and articulate the distinctive features of Iqbal's development of the concept of Muslim self and his view of becoming a genuine Muslim. This chapter, which provides the methodology of this study, has required the consideration of two points: moving from the main characteristics of Kierkegaard's philosophical method, and highlighting the points which could be applied to Iqbal's view of becoming a self. This means that although Kierkegaard's dialectics provides the

methodology of this study, it is necessary to consider the main paradigms of Iqbal's view of becoming a genuine Muslim during the construction of the Kierkegaardian hermeneutics. The main concern here has been to highlight the points in Kierkegaard's methodology that are capable of being applied to Iqbal's thought and of clarifying his terminology. This is why this chapter is entitled 'The Construction of *a* Kierkegaardian Hermeneutics' rather than 'The Construction of *the* Kierkegaardian Hermeneutics', since it is possible to construct different Kierkegaardian hermeneutics with different questions. Two of Kierkegaard's works written under pseudonyms, *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, and two of his works published under his own name, namely *The Point of View*, in which he discussed the purpose of his authorship, and *The Moment and Late Writings*, in which he presented his major critiques of Christendom and the clergy, provided the resources to construct a Kierkegaardian hermeneutics which could be applied to Iqbal's thought. As a result of such a concern, two crucial principles and concerns of Kierkegaard's dialectical method will be employed to elicit and shed light on Iqbal's view of becoming a genuine Muslim self.

Qualitative dialectics or making distinctions

Kierkegaard's qualitative disjunction and distinction can be employed in order to identify and clarify Iqbal's notions. The application of Kierkegaard's qualitative disjunction to Iqbal's terminology will serve in two ways. First, it will help to clarify Iqbal's terminology, and second, the clarification of Iqbal's terminology will help to understand Iqbal's perception of the existential character of Islam. Kierkegaard's method of making distinctions between the notions will be used as a means of shedding light on how Iqbal strives to distinguish Islam from on the one hand philosophy and on the other non-Islamic modes of existence.

Cultivating existential appropriation on the reader

Iqbal's method of communicating the truth to his contemporaries and weaning them off the delusions they confuse with Islam will be examined by considering Iqbal's literary technique in the light of Kierkegaard's use of the maieutic method and indirect communication. Kierkegaard's notion of the existence-communication will be employed in order to throw light on Iqbal's attempts to recover the existential character of Islam. Moreover, Kierkegaard's distinction between objective and subjective reflection will be used as a tool to unpack Iqbal's views of how the tenets of Islam can and should be actualized as a distinctive, concrete mode of existence.

Before applying the Kierkegaardian hermeneutics to Iqbal, however, the next task is to provide a study of the context in which Iqbal developed his thought, his main motivations for developing an understanding of the self, and the main features of his conception of the self.

Notes

- 1 Bjørn Ramberg and Kristin Gjesdal, 'Hermeneutics', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, Available at <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/hermeneutics/> [Accessed on 29 September 2017].
- 2 For a discussion of the coherence of Kierkegaard's authorship see David R. Law, 'Irony in the Moment and the Moment in Irony: the Coherence and Unity of Kierkegaard's Authorship with Reference to the *Concept of Irony* and the Attack Literature of 1854–1855', in Robert L. Perkins (ed.), *International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Moment and Late Writings* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), pp. 71–100.
- 3 Kierkegaard, *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), hereafter cited as *POV*, pp. 8–9.
- 4 See Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, pp. 626–627.
- 5 David R. Law, 'Kierkegaard's Anti-Ecclesiology: the Attack on "Christendom", 1854–1855', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 7, no. 2 (2007): 86–108; p. 103 n. 15.
- 6 Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 1–64.
- 7 It should be noted about the Golden Age that, as Kirmmse maintains, it belonged to a very narrow social group. It was 'a culture of the capital and its conservative, apolitical, academically educated upper bourgeoisie...'. The peasants, constituting approximately three-quarters of the population, were not a part of the Golden Age literature. Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, p. 79.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 27–40.
- 11 Kierkegaard, *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, 5 vols, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967–1978), hereafter cited as *JP*, 1: 391.
- 12 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, pp. 50–51.
- 13 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 286.
- 14 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 129, Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, pp. 42, 51–52, Kierkegaard, *Practise in Christianity* (1850), ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), hereafter cited as *PC*, p. 36, Kierkegaard, *JP*, 4: 6466.
- 15 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 39.
- 16 Jon Stewart, 'Kierkegaard and Hegelianism in Golden Age Denmark', in Jon Stewart (ed.), *Kierkegaard and His Contemporaries: The Culture of Golden Age Denmark* (New York and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), pp. 131–132.
- 17 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 368.
- 18 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 43.
- 19 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 41.
- 20 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 41.
- 21 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 32.
- 22 Kierkegaard, *JP*, 4: 6466.
- 23 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 133; *JP*, 1: 380.
- 24 For a study of the examination of the language Kierkegaard employs in his attack on Christendom and the Danish theologians in his articles in *The Fatherland* and *The Moment* see David R. Law, 'The Contested Notion of "Christianity" in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Denmark: Mynster, Martensen, and Kierkegaard's Antiecclesiastical, "Christian" Invective in The Moment and Late Writings', in Robert L.

- Perkins (ed.), *International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Moment and Late Writings* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), pp. 43–70.
- 25 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 31.
- 26 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, pp. 321–323.
- 27 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 35.
- 28 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, pp. 95–96.
- 29 Kierkegaard, *PC*, p. 36.
- 30 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 436.
- 31 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 436.
- 32 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 350.
- 33 C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 60, (see footnote).
- 34 For studies of Kierkegaard's critique of Hegelianism see Niels Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*, trans. George L. Stengren (Princeton; Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1980); Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); T. I. S. Sprigge, 'Hegel and Kierkegaard', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 13, no. 4 (2005): 771–778.
- 35 Watts' quotation from Hegel clearly shows the influence of Socrates' understanding of the truth on Hegel: 'human beings have to discover and learn from themselves [...] what is true in and for itself; they must attain truth by and through themselves'; Hegel, *Letters on the History of Philosophy 1825–26 Volume II: Greek Philosophy*, trans. R. F. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 124–125; quoted in Daniel Watts, 'Subjective Thinking: Kierkegaard on Hegel's Socrates', *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 61 (2010): 31.
- 36 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 368.
- 37 David R. Law, *Kierkegaard's Kenotic Christology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 161. Italics original.
- 38 David R. Law, *Kierkegaard's Kenotic Christology*, p. 156.
- 39 Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments* (1844), ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), hereafter cited as *PF*, p. 13.
- 40 Kierkegaard, *PF*, p. 14.
- 41 Kierkegaard, *PF*, pp. 14–15.
- 42 In *Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard often uses the phrase 'the god' instead of 'God'. According to Law, there might be two reasons for this. First, as also defended by Hirsch, and by Hong to some extent, the reason for Kierkegaard's using the phrase is his intention of reminding the reader of the relation of his work to Greek thought, as the Greek language uses the phrase 'the god'. The second possible reason Law raises for Kierkegaard's use of the phrase is his aim to distance the Greek term from the Christian God. (See David R. Law, *Kierkegaard's Kenotic Christology*, pp. 160–161). Moreover, it can be said that Kierkegaard intends to raise a general and neutral concept of god. As Howland puts it: 'In speaking of "the god" Climacus thus manages to adopt an initially neutral stance with respect to the two hypotheses, while at the same time provoking thought about the relationship between Socrates' god and the god of the religious hypothesis.' Jacob Howland, *Kierkegaard and Socrates: A Study in Philosophy and Faith* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 29.
- 43 Kierkegaard, *PF*, pp. 14–15.
- 44 Kierkegaard, *PF*, p. 15.
- 45 Kierkegaard, *PF*, p. 64.
- 46 Kierkegaard, *PF*, p. 59.
- 47 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 131.
- 48 C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard: An Introduction*, p. 59.

- 49 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 130.
- 50 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 199.
- 51 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 199. Italics original.
- 52 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 201.
- 53 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 314, 316.
- 54 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 192.
- 55 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, pp. 72–73.
- 56 Kierkegaard, *JP*, 1: 21.
- 57 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 76.
- 58 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, pp. 313–314.
- 59 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 324.
- 60 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 15. For a detailed study of Kierkegaard’s notion of ‘eternal happiness’ see Abraham H. Khan, ‘*Salighed*’ as Happiness? *Kierkegaard on the Concept Salighed* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press), 1985.
- 61 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 387.
- 62 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 391.
- 63 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 393.
- 64 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 393.
- 65 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 405.
- 66 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 407.
- 67 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, pp. 407, 431, 525.
- 68 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 400.
- 69 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 410.
- 70 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 411.
- 71 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 431.
- 72 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 433.
- 73 David R. Law, ‘Making Christianity Difficult: The “Existentialist Theology” of Kierkegaard’s Postscript’, in Rick A. Furtak (ed.), *Kierkegaard’s Unscientific Postscript: A Critical Guide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 229.
- 74 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, pp. 434–435.
- 75 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 525.
- 76 C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard: An Introduction*, p. 137.
- 77 James Collins, *The Mind of Kierkegaard* (Princeton; New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 44.
- 78 C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard’s Fragments and Postscript, the Religious Philosophy of Johannes Climacus* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1989), p. 47.
- 79 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 41.
- 80 James Collins, *The Mind of Kierkegaard*, p. 219.
- 81 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 36.
- 82 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 143.
- 83 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 143.
- 84 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, pp. 36–37.
- 85 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 37.
- 86 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 143.
- 87 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, pp. 10–11, 125.
- 88 David R. Law, ‘Kierkegaard’s Anti-Ecclesiology: The Attack on “Christendom”, 1854–1855’, p. 89.
- 89 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 109.
- 90 Kierkegaard, *JP*, 1: 376. Also see Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 32.
- 91 For a detailed analysis of the Kierkegaardian notions of ‘resignation’, ‘suffering’, and ‘guilt’ see David R. Law, ‘Resignation, Suffering, and Guilt in Kierkegaard’s Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments’, in Robert L. Perkins (ed.), *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Concluding Unscientific Postscript to*

- '*Philosophical Fragments*' (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997), pp. 263–289.
- 92 Kierkegaard, *JP*, 1: 373.
- 93 For a detailed study of Kierkegaard's relation to Socrates, see Jacob Howland, *Kierkegaard and Socrates: A Study in Philosophy and Faith*.
- 94 Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Late Writings*, p. 341.
- 95 Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. M. J. Levett (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publications, 1992), p. 10.
- 96 *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.
- 97 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- 98 *Ibid.*
- 99 *Ibid.*
- 100 *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.
- 101 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 43. An example of this can be found in Kierkegaard's pseudonymous author's claim that he ceased to be a Christian, so he is not a Christian, but only an outsider. See especially Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 617.
- 102 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 7.
- 103 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 50.
- 104 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 50. Italics added.
- 105 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 326.
- 106 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, pp. 380, 560, 564, 570, 608.
- 107 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 560.
- 108 Kierkegaard, *JP*, 3: 3084.
- 109 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 167.
- 110 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 45.
- 111 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, pp. 626–627.
- 112 C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard's 'Fragments' and 'Postscript': The Religious Philosophy of Johannes Climacus*, p. 7.
- 113 Kierkegaard, *PC*, p. 36.

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3 Iqbal in context

Introduction

In this chapter, consisting of two sections, the primary aim is to provide a contextual exposition of Iqbal's conception of the self, to which, in the following chapters, the Kierkegaardian hermeneutics developed in the previous chapter will be applied. The previous chapter explored Kierkegaard's concerns under two main headings, namely, the problem and the solution. This chapter shall follow a similar structural method. This means the background of Iqbal's construction of his conception of the Muslim self will be dealt with under two headings: his identification of the problem, and the solution he thinks that will solve this specific problem. In the process, the problems of Iqbal's era that prompted him to construct and develop an alternative philosophy, namely the philosophy of the self/ego, will be examined. First a brief introduction to modern Islam in the Indian Subcontinent in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will be given in order better to observe the critical and turbulent situation of the Muslim world in Iqbal's time. This will also help to understand Iqbal's perception of and approach to the modern problems of his time. It will further show that Iqbal's identification and interpretation of the problems of the Muslim world are not altogether different from those of his predecessors and of modernist intellectuals. Iqbal's approach to and interpretation of the modern problems of the Muslim world are not completely original and unique. Hence, it is not possible to deal with the theory of such a thinker separated from its own context, namely the dilemma of Islamic modernism. Hence, Iqbal's approach to these problems will be considered in terms of the common discourse of the era, namely 'Islamic decline'. Then, the second section will identify the principles of Iqbal's idea of the self, and its significance for Iqbal as the ultimate solution to the problems of Islam in the modern era.

The problem: 'Islamic decline'

The transformation of Europe and the rise of modernity beginning with the Enlightenment, were partly responsible for the emergence of the discourses of 'modern Islam' and 'Islamic modernism' in the Islamic world. However, it

should be noted that Islamic modernism followed a different path from the kind of transformations that took place in Europe. As Kalin puts it, ‘Islamic modernism was [rather] an outcome of Islam’s encounter with [European] modernity’.¹ In other words, Islamic modernism is a movement of paradoxes connected to the very question of what Bernard Lewis terms as, ‘What went wrong’ in the Islamic world, which itself rests on the presupposition that indeed something went wrong.² A full discussion of the emergence of this idea would require a separate study. However, it can be said that the emergence and consequences of Islamic modernism can be traced back to as early as the eighteenth century. The gap between European and Muslim countries, particularly the economic gap, caused a general impression of ‘backwardness’ in Muslim societies, particularly among intellectuals.³ The word ‘backward’ became a technical term which many Muslim intellectuals today avoid using. The impression of being ‘backward’ played a significant role in the development of the tradition of modernist Islamic thought. Islamic modernism is a tradition in so far as there are common characteristics in almost all modernist Muslim thinkers including Iqbal, such as modernists’ attacks on *taqlid* (imitation without reflection), their opposition to Islamic mysticism, their emphasis on the need for *ijtihad* (independent reasoning in religious issues) and their criticism of traditional Islamic law, and lastly their self-criticism and self-advice.⁴ It is also one of the most essential characteristics of modernist Muslim intellectuals that, in Kalin’s words, ‘their conviction that the same principles which had brought the Islamic civilization to its pinnacle were lost to Muslims but discovered by and transmitted to the West’.⁵ Iqbal makes the point vividly when he says:

There was a time when European thought received inspiration from the world of Islam. The most remarkable phenomenon of modern history, however, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the West. There is nothing wrong in this movement, for European culture, on its intellectual side, is *only* a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam.⁶

In terms of the Indian Subcontinent, as Brown nicely puts it,

Islamic modernism took early root in the Subcontinent and nowhere else did the modernist venture find as fertile a soil or flourish with such vigor and variety. In originality, at least, South Asian modernists have been unequalled.⁷

The conquest of India by the British colonial powers started in 1757 and continued with the suppression of the Great Revolt in 1857.⁸ Along with British dominance, the role of British rule had become dominant in the Subcontinent in various fields, from government positions to educational institutions, and the Indian Muslims, who rejected the Western style of education, culture and institutions, were almost always excluded in the new British ruling system in India.⁹

This caused different religious and political movements to grow as responses to the growing British presence in the Subcontinent, which had become more visible after the Great Revolt. Thus, the growth of Western power in the Subcontinent played its role not only in governmental, administrative and educational fields, but also stimulated the emergence of intellectual activities in almost all religious groups of India. This point was made by Farquhar's extensive work, which provides a thorough (though prejudiced) examination of the modern religious movements in India, particularly in respect of the ancient Indian religious traditions including Hinduism and Buddhism.¹⁰ Among Indian Muslim intellectuals with radical ideas a few names stand out, particularly that of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898), who was the forerunner, and probably the most distinctive of them. He believed that participation in the British system was the only way for a better future for the Muslims of India. He is also distinctive in his reformist ideas in the realms of politics, education, religion and society.¹¹ The most extreme example of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's loyalty to the British presence in India was his defining it as the most wonderful phenomenon the world had ever seen.¹² He was for Iqbal:

the first modern Muslim to catch a glimpse of the positive character of the age which was coming ... But the real greatness of the man consists in the fact that he was the first Indian Muslim who felt the need of a fresh orientation of Islam and worked for it.¹³

The point of departure of modernist and reformist movements of Islam was the conviction that the Islamic world was in decline. Iqbal was also one of those modernist thinkers who assimilated this idea, and made it the point of departure of their intellectual activities. His thought presents certain resemblances with the modernist and reformist discourse both in the language he uses when dealing with modern problems, and the issues he highlights such as change, reform, science and modernity. As Jawed nicely puts it,

Both his handling of the subject and the title he gave to his lecture can be seen as an index to a significant trio of the modernist Muslim's psychological commitments – religiosity, modernity and change – that has characterized the modernist Muslim as much after Iqbal's time as before him.¹⁴

An analysis of Iqbal's works indicates that there is a significant difference between his intellectual thought before and after his time in Europe. The first manifestation of this change in his thought comes in his growing interest in the urgent problems of the Islamic world, namely the alleged Islamic decline. Iqbal deals with the decline in two different but closely linked categories, namely spiritual and material decline. Whereas spiritual decline includes moral and intellectual issues, material decline is the result of economic, political and technological problems. However, study of his approach to both the spiritual and material

forms of decline suggests that the spiritual decline is the main reason for the decay of Muslim societies. Therefore, in order better to understand Iqbal's perception of Islamic decline attention will be given to the spiritual aspect of the decline, namely the moral and intellectual decay in the Islamic world, in order to appreciate his account of the underlying reason of the material decline.

After his return from Europe in 1908, Iqbal read out his Urdu poem *Shikwa* (The Complaint) to the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i Islam, a modern educational institute of the time, at the Islamia College in Lahore in 1911. In the following year he read the second part of *Shikwa*, *Jawab-i Shikwa* (The Answer to the Complaint). The subjects of both *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i Shikwa* were not original, as the two works discussed the decline of the Muslim world from its former healthy state and dealt with a question that had already been asked many times before: why were Muslim societies declining in this way? However, it was probably the first serious sign of Iqbal's involvement in the supposed problems of his time and community. Iqbal's views on Islamic 'decline' and the power of European institutions presented in the two poems show strict parallels with most of the modernist Muslim thinkers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For instance, a few decades before Iqbal wrote *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i Shikwa*, the Indian poet Altaf Hosain (1837–1914), whose pen-name was Hali, referred to the first generation of Muslims, complaining about the decline of the Muslim world and its departure from the former successes of Islam, in his famous *Musaddas*: 'Nothing remains of that proud folk but this: That we still give ourselves the Muslim name!'¹⁵ Iqbal's works show certain resemblances to Hali's poem in his belief that modern Muslims are not genuine Muslims. Iqbal acts as a mouthpiece for Muslim frustration and disappointment in *Shikwa*, and as Iqbal says at the beginning of *Shikwa*, the addressee of his complaint is God.¹⁶ In *Shikwa*, Iqbal plays the role of a Muslim man believing that he is a genuine Muslim but at the same time trying to understand why God behaves towards today's Muslims differently from the way he treated them in the past, despite the fact that nothing has changed since the Prophet.¹⁷ He writes, 'Still the fire of "God is Greatest" in our hearts we keep ablaze', and asks 'What denotes it, that Thine eye is turned in wrath upon Thy own?'¹⁸ He investigates the reason why Muslims have failed in worldly affairs, complaining all they have is 'jeers from strangers, public shame, and poverty'.¹⁹ He says to God:

So; it is on others only that the world its love bestows;
We, who walk Thy chosen path – to us a phantom world is left.²⁰

He compares Muslims with the 'others' in terms of worldly advantage and concludes that God behaves toward the 'others' in a more compassionate manner. He emphasizes that God has given non-Muslims victory and success, although there have been sinners and disloyal people among them, in a language that seems to be beyond a complaint and that resembles more a protest or rebellion. The following verses present the point clearly:

God, give ear to the complaint of us, Thy servants tried and true;
Thou art used to songs of praise; now hear a note of protest too.²¹
If disloyal we have proved, hast Thou deserved to win our heart?
Other creeds claim other peoples, and they have their sinners too;
There are lowly men among them, and men drunken with conceit;
Some are sluggards, some neglectful, some are vigilant and true;
Multitudes disdain Thy Name in loathing utter and complete;
But the showers of Thy mercy other thirsting souls assuage,
Only on the hapless Muslims falls the lightning of Thy rage.²²

Iqbal's views on the 'decline' of the Islamic world become clearer in *Jawab-i Shikwa*, the answer to the complaint. In this part, God is the one who answers the call of the Muslim:

Thanks at least for this, that thy complaint was beautifully phrased,
And the creature to his Maker has in conversation raised.²³

This time, God complains about the situation of Muslims, their ignorance of the Islamic mode of living, and behaving like non-Muslims. God blames them for not being genuine Muslims and says:

Loud the cry goes up, 'the Muslims? They are vanished, lost to view!'
We re-echo, 'are true Muslims to be found in any place?'
Christian is your mode of living, and your culture is Hindu;
Why, such Muslims to the Jews would be a shame and a disgrace.
Sure enough, you have your Syeds, Mirzas, Afghans, all the rest;
But can you claim you are Muslims, if the truth must be confessed?²⁴

The verses above indicate that, in Iqbal's point of view, God is less merciful towards Muslims than he is towards non-Muslims, since today's Muslims are not genuine Muslims. Since non-Muslims live in an Islamic way and God is just, therefore, they deserve the 'reward' more than so-called Muslims. God says,

The Creator's law is justice, out of all eternity –
Infidels who live like Muslims surely merit Faith's reward.²⁵

These two poems are important for three points they involve. First, they represent Iqbal's view of modern Muslims. By playing the role of an ordinary Muslim, he also preaches that the common world-view of Muslims is that they do not criticize themselves but only complain about their situation. The verses cited here in which the Muslim man complains about the situation of the Muslim world without any self-criticism indicate the point. Second, when these two poems are considered in their entirety Iqbal's understanding of Islamic decline becomes clearer. The decline, for him as presented in these two works, is in a number of fields, from the material world to the moral and spiritual character of

Muslims. Among the outcomes of the material decline are poverty and economic problems. Muslims are also in a spiritual decline, which, he says, arises from laziness and lack of courage. This is also the main reason of the decline of Muslims in all fields, and makes the two poems significant for understanding Iqbal. *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i Shikwa* are Iqbal's poetic formulations of the causes of the decline. Iqbal believes that a period of decline has begun because contemporary Muslims have no courage; they have abandoned the example of the Prophet and the Qur'an. God asks, 'Who abandoned the example of the Chosen Messenger?' by implying that Muslims have become alienated from the Prophet.²⁶ Likewise, God also says, 'You, who have abandoned the Qur'an, are spurned and cast away.'²⁷ Muslims have lost their Islamic soul and identity and given up following the first generation of Muslims. What they have been doing is to wait for a successful future without struggling for it while non-Muslims live their lives in an ideal Islamic way, therefore deserve the victory.²⁸ In other words, Iqbal believes that the cause of the decline was not the technological, economic or social developments in the West; rather it was the fault of Muslims themselves, stemming from their careless and neglectful lifestyle, abandoning the pure Islamic teachings and the way of the Prophet and first generation of Muslims. Iqbal asserts that material decline in the Islamic world, in fact, was caused by a spiritual decline, because, according to a verse of the Qur'an which Iqbal frequently cites: 'Verily, God will not change the condition of men, till they change what is in themselves' (13:11).

It should be noted that Iqbal's emphasis in these two works is apparently on the moral aspect of the decline resulting in a number of material outcomes. On the other hand, another urgent problem of the Islamic world is an intellectual decline, which he deals with in a number of articles, poems, and his main prose work *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, including the seven lectures, which were held at Madras, Hyderabad, and Aligarh Universities. In *The Reconstruction*, he points out the intellectual decline and writes, 'during the last five hundred years religious thought in Islam has been practically stationary'.²⁹ Although Iqbal accuses Muslims of being ignorant and neglectful, and, therefore of causing the decline in *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i Shikwa*, in his later works he investigates the problem in a deeper and more sophisticated manner, and points out three major intellectual reasons for the decline he sees as having caused the moral decline in the Muslim world he focuses on in *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i Shikwa*. These three major causes can be dealt with under three headings, namely Greek philosophy, 'Pantheistic Sufism' and traditional Muslim scholars.

The role of Greek philosophy

The influence of Greek philosophy on Islamic thought is a controversial problem among both Muslim thinkers and Western scholars of Islam. According to S. H. Nasr, Islamic thought is completely rooted in the Qur'an and *Hadith*, the acts and sayings of the Prophet, and its principles and many of its questions are inspired by these Islamic sources. He believes that without the Qur'anic revelation,

there would have been no Islamic philosophy.³⁰ On the other hand, Iqbal severely criticizes the role of philosophy, particularly Greek philosophy, in the development of Islamic intellectual thought. He asserts that Greek philosophy not only *influenced* Islamic philosophy but also *dominated* it. It should be noted that when Iqbal says Greek thought or philosophy, he mostly refers to Socrates and Plato, and his criticism arises from its influence or, as Iqbal alleges, the control of Islamic philosophy by Greek philosophy over the centuries. A close examination of Iqbal's criticism of Greek philosophy indicates that it is possible to posit two outcomes of the influence of Greek thought on Islam, although Iqbal does not make a division between these outcomes. First, it has directly influenced the intellectual character of Islam, and indirectly it has affected the moral character of Muslim societies. The intellectual and moral influences of Greek philosophy imply that Greek thought misled Muslim thinkers and caused them to construct an intellectually and morally non-Islamic world-view. The influence of Greek philosophy on both the moral and intellectual character of Islam and Muslims was, according to Iqbal, transmitted via two channels: (1) the classical Muslim philosophers and their teachings,³¹ and (2) Islamic mystical thought, namely Sufism. In the following sections, the moral outcomes of the Muslim world's relation to Greek philosophy will be discussed.

The intellectual influence of Greek thought has mainly been upon the perceptions of the Qur'an of Muslim philosophers and mystics, who have read the Qur'an in the light of Greek thought. According to Iqbal's arguments, Greek philosophy has clouded the Muslim mind and misled them. He writes:

As we all know, Greek philosophy has been a great cultural force in the history of Islam. Yet a careful study of the Qur'an and the various schools of scholastic theology that arose under the inspiration of Greek thought disclose the remarkable fact that while Greek philosophy very much broadened the outlook of Muslim thinkers, it, on the whole, obscured their vision of the Qur'an.³²

However, as Iqbal repeatedly asserts, the Qur'an has an 'anti-classical' nature:³³

This is what the earlier Muslim students of the Qur'an completely missed under the spell of classical speculation. They read the Qur'an in the light of Greek thought. It took them over two hundred years to perceive – though not quite clearly – that the spirit of the Qur'an was essentially anticlassical, and the result of this perception was a kind of intellectual revolt, the full significance of which has not been realized even up to the present day.³⁴

The term 'anti-classical' is a key term in understanding Iqbal's perception of the Qur'an and he emphasizes it a number of times. Although he does not explain his intention with this term, it might refer to two characteristics of the Qur'an: first, by regarding the nature of the Qur'an as 'anti-classical' Iqbal might have wanted to affirm the *universality* of the Qur'an. He suggests that Islam is a timeless message not only to Muslims but also to the whole of humanity in all eras,

and as the main source of Islam, the Qur'an also addresses all mankind.³⁵ Second and more probably, he might have referred to the conflict of the main theme of the Qur'an with classical Greek thought.

What, then, is the result of the Muslims' reading the Qur'an in the light of Greek philosophy? First of all, for Iqbal, it affected and limited Muslims' relationship with their environment. His critique is mostly aimed at Socratic and Platonic approaches to the universe. For him, Greek thought represents a narrow view of the universe by merely focusing on the human being, and by ignoring the natural world that exists around the human being, as he says in *The Reconstruction*:

Socrates concentrated his attention on the human world alone. To him the proper study of man was man and not the world of plants, insects, and stars. How unlike the spirit of the Qur'an, which sees in the humble bee a recipient of Divine inspiration and constantly calls upon the reader to observe the perpetual change of the winds, the alternation of the day and night, the clouds, the starry heavens, and the planets swimming through infinite space!³⁶

Likewise, Plato, one of the Greek philosophers who had been influential on the development of Islamic philosophy misled Muslims by focusing on theory rather than reality, ideas rather than the senses. Iqbal writes:

As a true disciple of Socrates, Plato despised sense-perception which, in his view, yielded mere opinion and no real knowledge. How unlike the Qur'an, which regards 'hearing' and 'sight' as the most valuable Divine gifts and declares them to be accountable to God for their activity in this world.³⁷

According to Iqbal, the spirit of Islamic culture focuses on sense perception, the concrete and finite, and this constitutes the basis of modern scientific experimental and empirical method,³⁸ whereas Plato's philosophy is interested in abstract theory and idea.

For Iqbal, a further outcome of the contact of Islamic thought with Greek philosophy is that it resulted in the emergence of the idea of a static universe. Whereas according to the Qur'an the nature of the universe is dynamic and capable of change, Greek philosophy regards the universe as a static phenomenon. Iqbal writes:

This appeal to the concrete combined with the slow realization that, according to the teachings of the Qur'an, the universe is dynamic in its origin, finite and capable of increase, eventually brought Muslim thinkers into conflict with Greek thought which, in the beginning of their intellectual career, they had studied with so much enthusiasm.³⁹

In spite of such conflicts between Islamic and Greek philosophy, Muslim philosophers of the medieval era tried to interpret the teachings of the Qur'an in the light of Greek philosophy. Hence, it can be concluded that, for Iqbal, it is wrong

to claim that genuine Islamic thought is merely a different form of Greek philosophy. What is developed under the Greek influence, as Iqbal attempts to clarify, is only a distorted version of Islamic thought. Although Iqbal analyses the influence of Greek philosophy on Islamic philosophy, Iqbal's way of holding the issue implies that Greek philosophy controlled the whole of Islamic thought which includes a number of other disciplines. In his criticism, it seems that Iqbal overlooks the fact that there have been a number of Islamic disciplines which have never been in contact with Greek philosophy and are based on the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, such as *Hadith*, Qur'anic exegesis and a significant part of Islamic theology. There had also been a huge theological literature, which had been developed against philosophy in Islam.

Iqbal's critique of Greek thought shows a bitter tone in his philosophical poem *Asrar-i Khudi* (The Secrets of the Self) in which his attack is particularly on Plato, 'the prime ascetic and sage', and his influence on the moral aspect of Muslim man.⁴⁰ However, in the introduction to the work, Iqbal explains his criticism of Plato further, and suggests that his critique is addressed to any thought form that is similar to Plato's thought in which death is emphasized, and life is negated. Plato is chosen by Iqbal as a representative of such non-Islamic world-views. He says in the introductory note on *The Secrets of the Self*:

My criticism of Plato is directed against those philosophical systems which hold up death rather than life as their ideal – systems which ignore the greatest obstruction to life, namely, matter, and teach us to run away from it instead of absorbing it.⁴¹

Under the heading of 'Negation of the Self', Iqbal depicts an analogy of a sheepfold and tigers, a story of which 'the moral is that negation of the Self is a doctrine invented by the subject races of mankind in order that by this means they may sap and weaken the character of their rulers'.⁴² In order to defend themselves, one of the sheep in the story claims himself to be sent as an apostle for the tigers attacking the sheepfold, and convinces the tigers to eat grass instead of meat, and so spoils their 'tigerish nature'. The result is:

Their souls died and their bodies became tombs.
Bodily strength diminished while spiritual fear increased:
Spiritual fear robbed them of courage.
Lack of courage produced a hundred diseases –
Poverty, pusillanimity, lowmindedness.
The wakeful tiger was lulled to slumber by the sheep's charm:
He called his decline Moral Culture.⁴³

Later on, it becomes clear that the sheep in the analogy stands for Plato:

Plato, the prime ascetic and sage,
Was one of that ancient flock of sheep.⁴⁴

Hence, Muslims must be careful with the teachings of Plato: ‘To the effect that Plato, whose thought has deeply influenced the mysticism and literature of Islam, followed the sheep’s doctrine, and that we must be on our guard against his theories.’⁴⁵ The reason for Iqbal’s particular use of Plato as the representative of Greek philosophy and other non-Islamic thought forms, and his attack on him, is most probably due to the fact that Platonism and Neo-Platonism have been highly influential on Islamic philosophy and Sufi schools as well as his role in Greek thought. In his doctoral thesis, Iqbal points out the influence of Greek thought, particularly Platonic thought, on Islamic mysticism through Persian thought and Hellenism.⁴⁶ Along with the wrong interpretations of Islamic teaching, the influence of Greek philosophy played its greatest role on the Muslim self for Iqbal through its particular influence on Islamic mysticism.

The role of ‘pantheistic Sufism’

Iqbal refers to two types of Sufism, one of which is a non-Islamic mysticism, and the other is Islamic mysticism. He does not deny the mystical character of Islam; on the contrary, he believes mystical experience is one of the sources of gaining knowledge for Islam. However, it should be noted that what he understands from ‘mystic experience’ is only a kind of religious experience, which is also one of the particular fields of modern psychology. He calls this type of genuine Islamic mysticism higher Sufism.⁴⁷ For Iqbal, genuine Sufism or higher Sufism is rooted in the original Islamic sources. However, it was clothed in a non-Islamic form in the course of history, therefore, became a non-Islamic form of Sufism, and became dominant in the Islamic world.⁴⁸ He says in the preface to his *The Reconstruction*:

The more genuine schools of Sufism have, no doubt, done good work in shaping and directing the evolution of religious experience in Islam; but their latter-day representatives, owing to their ignorance of the modern mind, have become absolutely incapable of receiving any fresh inspiration from modern thought and experience. They are perpetuating methods which were created for generations possessing a cultural outlook differing, in important respects, from our own.⁴⁹

Whereas genuine Sufism is rooted in the Islamic teachings, the ‘latter-day representatives’ depended mostly on a number of non-Islamic political, social and intellectual elements. These elements which play roles in the emergence of the latter-day Sufism are basically Neo-Platonism, Aryanism, Christianity, Indian Vedanta and Buddhism as he discusses in his PhD thesis.⁵⁰ Under the influence of the Indian Vedantist, he believes, the tendencies of the denial of human will emerged in Persian Sufism.⁵¹ Moreover, by assimilating the Buddhist idea of the Nirvana and seeking to build a metaphysical system in the light of it, Persian Sufism adapted the idea of annihilation.⁵² As a result of these non-Islamic influences, Iqbal says:

The masses of Islam were swayed by the kind of mysticism which ... enervated the people and kept them steeped in all kinds of superstition. From its high state as a force of spiritual education mysticism had fallen down to a mere means of exploiting the ignorance and the credulity of the people. It gradually and invisibly unnerved the will of Islam and softened it to the extent of seeking relief from the rigorous discipline of the law of Islam.⁵³

For Iqbal, the mundane Sufi world-view of the later generations, particularly Persian Sufism, which has become one of the dominant characteristics of Muslim societies, has weakened the will and self of the Muslim man. The Sufi school that Iqbal regards as a false Sufism is the school of *Wahdatu'l-Wujud* (Unity of Existence or Oneness of Being), of which the forerunner is Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240), the well-known Andalusian Sufi. It is interesting that Iqbal mostly uses the Western term 'pantheism' or 'pantheistic Sufism' with reference to *Wahdatu'l-Wujud*.⁵⁴ There might be two reasons for this. First, he may want to emphasize the alleged Greek character of the school due to the fact that he believes that it is a non-Islamic movement. Second, he might be influenced by the European scholars of Islam who often confuse Pantheism and *Wahdatu'l-Wujud*.⁵⁵ Muhammad Suheyl Umar claims that Ibn 'Arabi is one of the figures Iqbal strictly criticizes, and despite that, Umar points out, there is no evidence that Iqbal had an opportunity to study Ibn 'Arabi's works during his life except for the study circle that was held in their house when he was a child:

nor do we find any evidence that he had the chance to study the works of Ibn 'Arabi under the guidance of an orthodox master or with the help of traditional commentaries which are indispensable for an understanding of such works of gnostic and esoteric natures.⁵⁶

However, Iqbal claims in one of his articles that he studied one of Ibn 'Arabi's most significant works *Futuhat* by writing, 'I am convinced from a careful study of the relevant passages of the *Futuhat* ...'.⁵⁷ Iqbal seems to have enough intellectual capability to understand any of Ibn 'Arabi's works without the help of 'guidance', and, although what Iqbal means by 'a careful study' is not clear enough, his own statements show that it is difficult to claim that Iqbal has never studied Ibn 'Arabi's works. Moreover, a careful study of Iqbal's works shows that Iqbal does not imply that he is an opponent of Ibn 'Arabi, and he does not refer to Ibn 'Arabi in his criticism of Sufism. Iqbal's attack on Sufism is actually limited to later Sufi circles, movements and Sufi leaders. He even accuses those Sufi leaders of ignoring their religious duties with a contemptuous manner, and calls them 'traffickers in religion':

Every long-haired fellow wears the garb of a dervish –
Alas for these traffickers in religion!
Day and night they are travelling about with disciples,
And ignoring their religious duties.

Their eyes are without light, like the narcissus,
 Their breasts devoid of spiritual wealth.⁵⁸

His attack on Sufism becomes more bitter in his approach to Hafiz (d. 1390), the well-known Persian Sufi who followed Ibn ‘Arabi’s school, and in Schimmel’s words, ‘as an exponent of the state of mystical intoxication, Hafiz became anathema in Iqbal’s work’.⁵⁹ Schimmel also reports that in the first edition of *The Secrets of the Self*, Iqbal attacks Hafiz, however, following editions of the work do not include the verses in which he attacked him.⁶⁰ Iqbal warns his readers against Hafiz, ‘the drinker’ of ‘the poison of death’, in one of his poems, and implies that what he preaches is ‘unbelief’.⁶¹ Stephan Popp nicely characterizes Iqbal’s attitude towards Hafiz as a ‘long-standing love-hate relationship’.⁶² Indeed, Iqbal’s approach to Hafiz is quite contradictory. His close friend Atiya Fyzee writes in one of her diary entries of 1907 that in one of their conversations Iqbal said to her: ‘When I am in the mood for Hafiz his spirit enters into my soul, and my personality merges into the poet and I myself become Hafiz.’⁶³ This can be regarded as a part of Iqbal’s intellectual development, since it is natural to see in a thinker such contradictions in the process of the development of their philosophical thought. There is a significant difference between Iqbal’s attitudes towards Islamic mysticism before and after his time in Europe. His most aggressive attitude towards Islamic mysticism is to be seen in his *The Secrets of the Self*. After this poem, which he wrote after his return from Europe, his views on Islamic mysticism followed a constant tone until his death. However, it is also quite contradictory that while Iqbal admired Goethe’s work *West-Oestlicher Divan* (West-Eastern Divan), which was written under the influence of Hafiz’s *Divan*, even in Iqbal’s latest works he attacked Hafiz and his poetry. Hence, Iqbal seems to have loved the fact that a thinker from the Muslim tradition influenced a Western thinker, whereas he was appalled by the fact that the same thinker had influenced Muslim societies.

The role of the traditional Muslim scholars

The end of the eighteenth century through to the beginning of the nineteenth century was an era of decline for the *ulama* (traditional Muslim scholars), mainly because of the emergence of a new group of Muslim intelligentsia, comprising modernists and reformists. Facing expanding European power, in Esposito’s words, ‘the old style *ulama* proved to be unable to provide inspiration or help for the emerging modern-educated Muslims in the context of the rising influence of secularism’.⁶⁴

One of the reasons for the Islamic decline is the alleged ‘immobility’ of Islamic law during the last 500 years, which hinders Iqbal from finding solutions to the modern problems of the era. The fixed structure of the law contradicts the principle of ‘movement’ in Islam, which Iqbal characterizes as *ijtihad*. *Ijtihad* is a common technical term used mostly in Islamic law meaning, according to Iqbal, ‘to exert with a view to form an independent judgment on a legal question’.⁶⁵ Traditional

Muslim scholars, *ulama* or *mullah*, played the biggest role in the process of immobilization of Islamic law, and the removal of *ijtihad*. He says:

The ulama have always been a source of great strength to Islam. But during the course of centuries, especially since the destruction of Baghdad, they have become extremely conservative and would not allow any freedom of *Ijtihad*, i.e., the forming of independent judgments in matters of law.⁶⁶

The destruction of Baghdad, the centre of the intellectual life of the Islamic world, was in the thirteenth century, and Iqbal believes that, since then, *ulama* have been conservative. Iqbal presents conservatism as a highly destructive and negative concept when it is considered in the light of his verses about Muslim scholars. This term includes, in his poetic expression, darkness, shortness of vision which means narrow-mindedness, blindness, and corruption as can be seen in his verses he writes of the traditional Muslim scholars:

The religion of God is more shameful than unbelief,
because the mullah is a believer trading in unfaith;
...
His heart is a stranger to what lies beyond the sky,
for him the Archetype of the Book is but a fable;
having no share of the wisdom of the Prophet's religion,
his heaven is dark, being without any star.
Short of vision, blind of taste, an idle gossip,
his hairsplitting arguments have fragmented the Community.
Seminary and mullah, before the secrets of the Book,
are as one blind from birth before the light of the sun.
The infidel's religion is the plotting and planning of Holy War;
the mullah's religion is corruption in the Way of God.⁶⁷

The destruction of Baghdad caused Muslim scholars to focus on preventing a further disintegration in the Islamic world, and they consumed all their energy in the protection of the social order. Iqbal says:

the conservative thinkers of Islam focused all their efforts on the one point of preserving a uniform social life for the people by a jealous exclusion of all innovations in the law of Shari'at as expounded by the early doctors of Islam.⁶⁸

According to Iqbal, the *ulama* were right in attempting to protect the social order to some extent, due to the fact that organization can work against the decay. However, they ignored one main point, which is that 'the ultimate fate of a people does not depend so much on organization as on the worth and power of individual men'. Iqbal writes: 'In an over-organized society the individual is altogether crushed out of existence. He gains the whole wealth of social thought

around him and loses his own soul.⁶⁹ Hence, the *ulama* unconsciously caused the annihilation of the single individual or the human being's individuality in society. Such a tendency contradicts 'the inner impulse of Islam' for Iqbal, and does not provide any solution to the decay, because it is not the society which fights with the decay but the cooperation of the conscious act of the single individuals:

The only effective power, therefore, that counteracts the forces of decay in a people is the rearing of self-concentrated individuals. Such individuals alone reveal the depth of life. They disclose new standards in the light of which we begin to see that our environment is not wholly inviolable and required revision.⁷⁰

In the light of Iqbal's statements, it can be said that the decline in the Muslim world starting with the destruction of Baghdad has made its first and major harm on the Muslim individual by destructing the human self/ego, and propagating the negation of the self. Only 'self-concentrated individuals' who reveal the depth of life can reverse the decline which is the outcome of a number of causes such as Greek philosophy, pantheistic Sufism and conservative Muslim scholars. Iqbal seems to have a clear vision of the causes of the decline. He bitterly criticizes almost all of the dynamics of contemporary Islam including *Tasawwuf* (Sufism), *Fiqh* (Islamic law), *Tafsir* (the interpretations of the Qur'an), and Islamic philosophy. In other words, Iqbal condemns the whole of Islamic intellectual tradition except the Qur'an and *Hadith*, the acts and sayings of the Prophet.

The solution

Iqbal does not only raise the causes of the decline, he also talks about a number of ways to solve the problems of Islam in the modern world, from education to politics, and he refers to these solutions as 'the reawakening of Islam'⁷¹ and 'a fresh orientation of faith'.⁷² Iqbal's presentation of his solutions for reversing the decline can be considered in two aspects, namely, in the theoretical aspect that determines what should be done, and the practical aspect that identifies how it should be done. As was argued in the introduction to this book, although Iqbal's philosophy places particular emphasis on physical action and activity, he is not effective in practical issues as much as he is in theoretical issues. This problem is encountered in his failure to provide his readers and followers with a roadmap which will reverse Islamic decline. Although he does not provide a systematic and consistent solution, he offers a basis for one. He raises a number of ways to a solution, but develops one of them in particular, namely the idea of the self. For Iqbal, in order for Muslims to reverse the decline, they must, first of all, start with constructing a genuine Muslim self. This section will focus on the theoretical aspect of Iqbal's solution of the development of Muslim self, and will proceed in the following chapters to the practical aspect, which he himself fails to develop, in the light of the Kierkegaardian hermeneutics.

The reconstruction of Islamic thought

Iqbal's answer to the question of what should be done to reverse Islamic decline is to 'reconstruct' Islamic thought. The work he deliberately titled *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, consisting of seven lectures he gave at different places and including his main philosophical discussions regarding the problems and solutions of modern Islamic world and thought, also indicates this. Thus, all of his suggestions about the Muslim world should be considered in the category of the reconstruction of Islamic thought.

What, then, are the characteristics, scope and limits of Iqbal's suggested reconstruction of Islamic thought? In Iqbal's idea of reconstruction European thought occupies a central space. According to Iqbal, any solution for the problems of contemporary Islam requires a careful examination of Western developments, and similarly it requires revision and interpretation of the teachings of Islam in the light of the modern developments of Europe in a number of fields from science to politics. In *The Reconstruction* he repeatedly points out the need for the reawakening of Islam, and writes of the significance of European thought:

The only course open to us is to approach modern knowledge with a respectful but independent attitude and to appreciate the teachings of Islam in the light of that knowledge, even though we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us.⁷³

With the reawakening of Islam, therefore, it is necessary to examine, in an independent spirit, what Europe has thought and how far the conclusions reached by her can help us in the revision and, if necessary, reconstruction, of theological thought in Islam.⁷⁴

According to these passages, modern knowledge which has been developed by European thought, for Iqbal, can help address the modern problems of Islam in two ways, namely to interpret the teachings of Islam in the light of modern thought, and to reconstruct modern independent Islamic thought. Moreover, such a tendency towards Europe can come up with two results. First, due to the fact that, Iqbal claims, the modern European thought is only a different form of Islamic thought, and that 'European culture, on its intellectual side, is *only* a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam',⁷⁵ there is no problem with Islam's movement towards Europe. Hence, such a movement would actually enable the Islamic world to retrieve what Europe has inherited from it. This is a highly questionable claim, and can be interpreted in two ways. First, as is seen in the above-mentioned paragraph, his statement 'even though we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us' indicates that Iqbal is well aware of the traditional character of the Muslim world, and of the risk of coming into conflict with this character in his suggestion of the reconstruction of Islamic thought or any reform ideas. Hence, his

claim can be regarded as an attempt to legitimize his suggestion of using European thought as a means of interpreting and understanding Islam. Therefore, traditional Muslims cannot object to Iqbal's suggestion of approaching the teachings of Islam in the light of European thought, because it is already Islamic in nature. The other possibility is that Iqbal himself also believes that modern European thought is only a different form of Islamic thought. In other words, he approaches European thought from an 'Islamocentric' standpoint and presents a highly apologetic approach. Fazlur Rahman characterizes an apologetic approach as 'a glorification of the past with a selective presentation of Islamic history'.⁷⁶ A number of different forms of apologetics can be found in the history of modern Islamic thought, and Iqbal's approach can be mentioned among them. He makes a selective reading of the history of Muslim-Christian, or Muslim-European relations, ignores the whole experience and paradigms of modern Europe, and, therefore, reaches the conclusion that modern European thought is a different form of Islamic thought.

The second result of the movement towards the West is that Iqbal is concerned with the possibility that this can lead Muslims in the wrong direction. He says:

Our only fear is that the dazzling exterior of European culture may arrest our movement and we may fail to reach the true inwardness of that culture.⁷⁷

Iqbal is referring, in the passage above, to the necessity of recovering the underlying Islamic character of Western thought, while avoiding the harmful external manifestations it has acquired. Thereby it becomes possible to draw on Western thought as a resource for reversing Islamic decline without succumbing to westernization. The modern Muslim's task is very difficult: while moving towards Europe, he has to 'rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past'.⁷⁸ The reawakening of Islam is, then, possible through the revision of Islamic principles, and returning to the pure Islamic social teachings (which are also modern Western concepts) such as freedom, equality and solidarity:

The only alternative open to us, then, is to tear off from Islam the hard crust which has immobilized an essentially dynamic outlook on life, and to rediscover the original verities of freedom, equality, and solidarity with a view to rebuild our moral, social, and political ideals out of their original simplicity and universality.⁷⁹

The discussions above lead to the question whether Iqbal's understanding of the reconstruction of religious thought is a suggestion of *recreation* of Islamic thought from the very beginning or simply the *recovering* of it. An answer to this question will also provide an insight into the character of his idea of the self and development of it. Although Iqbal's idea of reconstruction includes healing original Islamic thought from its illnesses, it does not simply consist of recovery.

It is also a kind of reinterpretation of it in the light of modern achievements. Iqbal suggests a deep-rooted change. However, it is difficult to call this a process of recreation. The terms he uses to describe the act of reconstruction such as 'revision' and 'rediscover', as was seen in the above quotations, show that his suggestion is not a recreation of Islamic thought from nothing but a reinterpretation of it through revision and rediscovery. Iqbal's proposition is to return to the original Islam in the Prophet's era, to get rid of 'alien' elements such as 'pantheistic Sufism' and Greek philosophy, and reinterpret Islamic teachings in the light of modern European achievements.

In the reawakening of Islam, the role of the notion of the self/ego is immense. As was discussed in the previous section, it was one of the outcomes of the non-Islamic tendencies that the self was destroyed. However, Iqbal says: 'The moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation but self-affirmation, and he attains to this ideal by becoming more and more individual, more and more unique.'⁸⁰ Hence, the reawakening of Islam, for him, must include the re-education and reconstruction of the Muslim self, and, therefore, involve the strengthening of the individuality of man. For Iqbal, as Nicholson nicely puts it in the introductory note of his translation of *The Secrets of the Self* and as was also mentioned before, 'only by self-affirmation, self-expression, and self-development can the Moslems once more become strong and free'.⁸¹

Iqbal's understanding of the 'human being'

Iqbal has a great deal to say about the nature and character of the human being in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. His paragraph below points out and summarizes his own view of the human being:

And how do we find him in this environment? A 'restless' being engrossed in his ideals to the point of forgetting everything else, capable of inflicting pain on himself in his ceaseless quest after fresh scopes for self-expression. With all his failings he is superior to nature, inasmuch as he carries within him a great trust which, in the words of the Qur'an, the Heavens and the earth and the mountains refused to carry.⁸²

Iqbal emphasizes that the human being is the central issue of the Qur'an. The problem for Iqbal is that, despite the fact that the human being occupies a central place in the Qur'an, Muslim thinkers have never paid enough attention to the human self or ego.⁸³ Iqbal's idea of the reconstruction of Islamic thought involves the reconstruction or, perhaps, construction of the idea of the self in Islam as well.

There are two main distinctive features of the self or ego for Iqbal. First, 'the ego', Iqbal writes, 'reveals itself as a unity of what we call mental states'.⁸⁴ Iqbal also calls the unity of mental states that constitute the ego 'mind'.⁸⁵ The main characteristic of the unity of mental states or mind is that they 'do not exist in mutual isolation'.⁸⁶ What this means is that they are continuous and there is no

interruption between the mental states, so they do not depend on space and time. For example, my appreciation of Blue Mosque does not change or differ with my distance from Istanbul. Mind or the unity of mental states differs from the unity of material things with not being spatio-temporal. Second, every ego is private and unique. This means that the experience of my ego cannot be transmitted to another ego. Iqbal writes:

My pleasures, pains, and desires are exclusively mine, forming a part and parcel of my private ego alone. My feelings, hates and loves, judgments and resolutions, are exclusively mine ... Similarly, in order to recognize you, I must have known you in the past. My recognition of a place or person means reference to my past experience, and not the past experience of another ego. It is this unique inter-relation of our mental states that we express by the word 'I'.⁸⁷

Thus, the main features of the ego are: it is independent of the spatio-temporal order, and each ego is unique and private. These features constitute the general character of the ego in the philosophical sense. However, the human ego or self possesses more specific characteristics, namely *freedom* and *immortality*, as it is said in the Qur'an. These characters of the human self also present the place that the human being occupies among other creatures of God in the universe, and the human being's power and limits which are crucial in the development of the self. It is now appropriate to consider these two characteristics of the ego in the light of Iqbal's arguments in his *The Reconstruction*.

Freedom

Iqbal bases his discussion of the freedom of man on the Qur'anic verse: '... and they ask thee of the soul. Say: the soul preceedeth from my Lord's "Amr" [Command]: but of knowledge, only a little to you is given' (17:87). The Arabic word '*amr*' here is the key point in Iqbal's understanding of the freedom of man. He emphasizes the fact that in English there is only one word that refers to the relation of God, universe and the human being, namely the word 'creation'. On the other hand, in Arabic there are two different words one of which refers to the relation of God and the universe, and the other refers to the relation of God and the human ego, namely *khalq* and *amr*. Iqbal translates *khalq* and *amr* into English as 'creation' and 'direction' respectively.⁸⁸ According to this, Iqbal claims, the verse can be interpreted as follows: '... the essential nature of the soul is directive, as it proceeds from the directive energy of God; though we do not know how Divine '*amr*' functions ...'.⁸⁹ Another point that should be noted here is that Iqbal regards soul and self as identical notions without any further explanation.

As was mentioned previously, for Iqbal, the ego is independent of space and time. This raises the question of how the ego appears in the spatio-temporal order. Iqbal's answer to this question is clear: as a physical organism.⁹⁰ This

raises a significant question, which was raised by Descartes centuries ago, namely the question whether the soul and physical organism (or body) are separated or united. For Iqbal, there is no such thing as the body-soul dichotomy. In other words, body and soul must be related to each other somehow, and the human act is the location of the body and soul coming together. He writes:

When I take a book from my table, my act is single and indivisible. It is impossible to draw a line of cleavage between the share of the body and that of the mind in this act. Somehow they must belong to the same system, and according to the Qur'an they do belong to the same system. 'To Him belong "Khalq" (creation) and "Amr" (direction).'⁹¹

Thus, for Iqbal, body and soul or ego become one and cooperate in action, and they belong to the creative activity of God.⁹² Here, he agrees with Kierkegaard on the distinction between thought-existence and actual-existence, which will be applied to Iqbal's thought in order to clarify his notion of action.

Iqbal's conviction that body and soul become one in action raises the question whether the ego determines its own activity. Iqbal follows the German psychological school of Configuration Psychology, more frequently known as Gestalt Psychology, in this. He writes:

This newer German psychology teaches us that a careful study of intelligent behaviour discloses the fact of 'insight' over and above the mere succession of sensations. This 'insight' is the ego's appreciation of temporal, spatial, and causal relation of things – the choice, that is to say of data, in a complex whole, in view of the goal or purpose which the ego has set before itself for the time being. It is this sense of striving in the experience of purposive action and the success which I actually achieve in reaching my 'ends' that convince me of my efficiency as a personal cause.⁹³

This is, for Iqbal, the scientific justification of the freedom of the ego. 'The element of guidance and directive control in the ego's activity' which he tries to explain in the light of the notion of 'insight' and Configuration Psychology, shows the freedom of the human ego.⁹⁴ The element of guidance and directive control of the ego shows that it is also capable of making decisions and choices. For Iqbal, this can be found in the story of Adam in the Qur'an. Adam's act of following his 'instinctive appetite' is his first action of free choice. The main theme of the story is to tell us about neither the first appearance of the human being in the world nor his first sin. The Qur'an's purpose with telling this story is to show the human being's first action of free choice. This is actually the human being's rise from a primitive state to conscious choice. Iqbal writes:

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. The fall does not mean any moral depravity; it is man's

transition from simple consciousness to the first flash of self-consciousness, a kind of waking from the dream of nature with a throb of personal causality in one's own being ... Man's first act of disobedience was also his first act of free choice; and that is why, according to the Qur'anic narration, Adam's first transgression was forgiven.⁹⁵

By interpreting the story in this way Iqbal not only distinguishes between the Islamic understanding of Adam's story and the Christian understanding of hereditary sin, but he also departs from the traditional dogmatic view of Muslim scholars about Adam's story which regards it as a story of man's first appearance on the Earth. Iqbal's main emphasis here is that the human being is capable of making free decisions as it is clearly confirmed by the Qur'an, and this is one of the main characteristics that distinguishes him from other creatures.

Immortality

Immortality is another issue Iqbal discusses regarding the quality of the self. He writes, 'no age has produced so much literature on the question of immortality as our own'.⁹⁶ However, the problem for Iqbal is that there have not been enough satisfying approaches to the issue despite its importance. Iqbal does not discuss whether immortality is possible for a human being or not. This is because immortality and resurgence are unquestionable Islamic facts repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an. Besides summarizing the discussions of modern Western philosophers on immortality, the issues Iqbal raises regarding immortality are questions of how it becomes possible and of how the human being experiences it. The most significant aspect of Iqbal's conception of immortality is that it is not ours as of right, but an achievement of the human being. He writes: 'Personal immortality, then, is not ours as of right; it is to be achieved by personal effort. Man is only a candidate for it.'⁹⁷ Immortality becomes possible for the human being only through his own free choices and acts. There are two types of conscious action of the human being, as was briefly introduced in the introduction to the book, namely ego-sustaining acts and ego-dissolving acts or self-sustaining acts and self-dissolving acts. The human being can only achieve immortality by means of ego-sustaining acts that 'discipline [...] him for a future career'. Iqbal writes: 'There are no pleasure-giving and pain-giving acts; there are only ego-sustaining and ego-dissolving acts. It is the deed that prepares the ego for dissolution, or disciplines him for a future career.'⁹⁸ What Iqbal implies by 'future career' is not clear, but he seems to mean the human being's life after death. The individual who acts in an ego-sustaining way achieves immortality. However, if immortality is something to be achieved, then it may be asked, what happens to those who have not achieved immortality after death? For Iqbal, death is only a kind of gate to the place the Qur'an calls *barzakh*.⁹⁹ *Barzakh* is a technical Qur'anic term interpreted in different ways by Muslim scholars which is translated into English as 'barrier' or 'partition' or 'isthmus'. The verse to which Iqbal refers is:

When death overtaketh one of them, he saith, 'Lord! Send me back again, that I may do the good that I have left undone!' By no means these are the very words which he shall speak. But behind them is a barrier (*barzakh*), until the day when they shall be raised again.

(23:99–100)

Iqbal interprets the notion of *barzakh* in the verse as a state of some kind of suspense between death and the resurrection.¹⁰⁰ From his writings it can be concluded that, for Iqbal, *barzakh* is not a place but an experience. The individual's struggle to achieve immortality does not end with death for Iqbal, but continues in *barzakh* until the time of the resurrection as well. He writes:

However, the ego must continue to struggle until he is able to gather himself up, and win his resurrection. The resurrection, therefore, is not an external event. It is the consummation of a life process within the ego. Whether individual or universal it is nothing more than a kind of stock-taking of the ego's past achievements and his future possibilities.¹⁰¹

By regarding the resurrection as an internal event, Iqbal differs from traditional Muslim scholars who claim that the resurrection is an external event, and that the re-emergence of the human being involves the re-emergence of his physical organism. Iqbal believes that there is no information on whether the resurrection involves re-emergence of the physical organism in the Qur'an. He emphasizes that the verses of the Qur'an regarding the resurrection do not reveal the nature and character of this fact.¹⁰²

It is the human being's capability of freedom of choice and immortality that makes him superior to other creatures of God. Immortality is the highest achievement the human being can attain, and it is only possible by becoming a genuine Muslim self. However, first, Iqbal's statements show that he wants to teach his readers about the capabilities of the human being. Iqbal writes of the character of the human being:

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 other things around him. Of all the creations of God he alone is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of his Maker. Endowed with the power to imagine a better world, and to mould what is into what ought to be, the ego in him aspires, in the interests of an increasingly unique and comprehensive individuality, to exploit all the various environments on which he may be called upon to operate during the course of an endless career.¹⁰³

By highlighting the superiority of the human being and that he occupies an important place among other creatures with the enthusiastic statements above, particularly the kind of statements claiming that the human being participates 'in

the creative life of his Maker', it can be concluded that Iqbal aims to attract his readers' attention. By this, he encourages his readers to contemplate their capabilities, which may awaken an interest in becoming a genuine Muslim self in order to achieve immortality.

Before moving onto the conclusion, a question that may arise in the mind of the reader should be addressed, namely whether immortality is possible only to Muslims or whether it is achievable also by non-Muslims. Iqbal develops his discussion regarding the immortality of the human being on the basis of the Qur'an, and therefore, he is speaking directly to Muslims. However, in discussing Heaven and Hell, he also points out their infiniteness, and writes:

Heaven and Hell are states, not localities. The descriptions in the Qur'an are visual representations of an inner fact, *i.e.*, character. Hell, in the words of the Qur'an, is 'God's kindled fire which mounts above the hearts' – the painful realization of one's failure as a man. Heaven is the joy of triumph over the forces of disintegration.¹⁰⁴

Iqbal's view, again, differs from the traditional Islamic understanding of Heaven and Hell in claiming that they are not concrete places but only states or experiences. He continues:

There is no such a thing as eternal damnation in Islam. The word 'eternity' used in certain verses, relating to Hell, is explained by the Qur'an itself to mean only a period of time (78:23). Time cannot be wholly irrelevant to the development of personality ... Hell, therefore, as conceived by the Qur'an, is not a pit of everlasting torture inflicted by a revengeful God; it is a corrective experience which may make hardened ego once more sensitive to the living breeze of Divine Grace.¹⁰⁵

Iqbal, then, believes that Hell is not a torture chamber, but is a finite experience of 'the painful realization of one's failure as a man'. He does not talk about the nature of the human being's 'failure as a man'. However, it is due to the human being's failure to achieve immortality while he was still alive by developing his self. The finiteness of Hell shows that, after realizing his failure of not developing his personality and self, every human being can achieve immortality. This is mainly because Hell, for Iqbal, is not a place that can never be returned from, but only a 'corrective experience'.

Conclusion

There have been two main issues in this chapter, namely Iqbal's perception of his era together with the problems of the modern Muslim world, and his suggestion of the reconstruction of Islamic thought together with his view of the 'human being' that plays a central role in the reconstruction of Islamic thought. Like Kierkegaard, Iqbal is also highly critical of the religious situation of his

society. He believes that the whole Muslim world is in decline, and that what needs to be done is to reverse the decline. Like Kierkegaard, who set himself the task of reintroducing Christianity to Christendom, Iqbal set himself the project of the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. In Chapter 2 it was observed that, for Kierkegaard, Hegelianism and the clergy played the major roles in leading Christian society into religious corruption. Similarly, in this chapter, Iqbal is seen to focus on three major causes of the decay in the Muslim societies, namely Greek philosophy, ‘pantheistic Sufism’ and traditional Muslim scholars. Kierkegaard and Iqbal both believe that religion must be separated from these elements. Their self-appointed missions include purification of religion and returning to the genuine religiousness of Christ and Muhammad. This is possible, for both, by becoming genuine religious selves. In the following chapters, Iqbal’s view of becoming a genuine Muslim self will be examined in the light of the Kierkegaardian hermeneutics constructed in Chapter 2. This will include the application of two of the major principles of Kierkegaard’s philosophical method that he employed in order to reintroduce Christianity into Christendom by helping so-called Christians become genuine Christian selves, namely making distinctions by means of the qualitative distinction, and cultivating existential appropriation on the part of the reader.

Notes

- 1 Ibrahim Kalin, ‘Aligarh Movement: Story of a Generation and Some Observations on the Islamic Modernism’, *Iqbal Review*, 44, no. 2 (2003); Available at www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr03/07.htm [Accessed on 14 September 2017].
- 2 See Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong: The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- 3 Fazlur Rahman, ‘Islamic Modernism: Its Scope, Method and Alternatives’, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 1, no. 4 (1970): 318.
- 4 For analyses of the characteristics of Modernist and Reformist Muslim intellectuals, particularly the modernists of the Indian Subcontinent, see Nasim Ahmad Jawed, ‘Religion and Modernity: Some Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Indo-Pakistani Ideas’, *The Muslim World*, 61, no. 2 (1971): 73–89; Francis Robinson, ‘Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 42, no. 2–3 (2007): 259–281; Fazlur Rahman, ‘Muslim Modernism in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 21, no. 1/3 (1958): 82–99; Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India* (Lahore: Minerva Book Shop, 1943).
- 5 Ibrahim Kalin, ‘Aligarh Movement’.
- 6 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 6–7. Italics added.
- 7 Daniel W. Brown, ‘Islamic Modernism in South Asia: A Reassessment’, *The Muslim World*, 87, no. 3–4 (1997), p. 258.
- 8 The Great Revolt is the war between the Indians, including Muslims and some Hindu groups, and the British for the independence of the land. It started on 10 May 1857 and ended in 1859. See M. N. Safa, ‘The War of Independence, 1857–59’, in Board of Editors, *A History of the Freedom Movement (I)*, vol. II part I (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1960), pp. 270–296.
- 9 Belkacem Belmekki, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and the Muslim Cause in British India* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2010), pp. 13–29.

- 10 John N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915).
- 11 Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim Modernization in India and Pakistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 222.
- 12 Address presented to the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, in *Speeches and Addresses relating to Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College* (Aligarh, 1888), pp. 24–31, quoted in Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857–1964* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 33.
- 13 Iqbal, *Islam and Ahmadism* (Multan: Aalami Majlis-e Tahaffuz-e Khatam-e Nubuwwat, [n.d.]), p. 29.
- 14 Nasim Ahmad Jawed, ‘Religion and Modernity’, p. 73.
- 15 Cited in Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), p. 200.
- 16 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, trans. A. J. Arberry (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 2006), p. 11.
- 17 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, pp. 30–31.
- 18 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, pp. 30–31.
- 19 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, p. 27.
- 20 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, p. 28.
- 21 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, p. 12.
- 22 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, pp. 23–24.
- 23 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, p. 49.
- 24 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, p. 61.
- 25 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, p. 56.
- 26 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, p. 58.
- 27 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, p. 64.
- 28 Iqbal, *Complaint and Answer*, p. 56.
- 29 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 7.
- 30 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ‘The Qur’an and Hadith as Source and Inspiration of Islamic Philosophy’, in Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (eds.), *History of Islamic Philosophy* (USA, Canada: Routledge, 1996), p. 68.
- 31 For a study on Iqbal’s approach to classical Muslim philosophers in his two major prose works, see Alessandro Boussani, ‘Classical Muslim Philosophy in the Work of a Muslim Modernist: Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938)’, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 42, no. 3: 272–288.
- 32 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 3.
- 33 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 4, 66, 122, 135.
- 34 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 4.
- 35 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 8.
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- 38 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 16.
- 39 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 121–122.
- 40 Iqbal, ‘Secrets and Mysteries’, in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, trans. R. A. Nicholson and Arthur A. Arberry (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2014), p. 15, <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/640.pdf> [Accessed on 25 September 2017].
- 41 Iqbal, ‘Secrets and Mysteries’, p. 4.
- 42 Iqbal, ‘Secrets and Mysteries’, pp. 14–15.
- 43 Iqbal, ‘Secrets and Mysteries’, p. 15.
- 44 Iqbal, ‘Secrets and Mysteries’, p. 15.
- 45 Iqbal, ‘Secrets and Mysteries’, p. 15.
- 46 Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, A Contribution to the History of Muslim Philosophy* (East Lansing, Michigan: H-Bahai, 2001), pp. 21–37.
- 47 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 125.

- 48 It is interesting to see that while Iqbal talks about ‘the more genuine schools of Sufism’, Umar reports that Iqbal says in another place: ‘No doubt, the very phenomenon of Sufism is a foreign thing implanted on the body of Islam and nurtured by the Persians.’ (S. Ataulah and Iqbal Namah, op. cit., vol. I, p. 78; quoted in Muhammad Suheyl Umar, ‘Contours of Ambivalence, Iqbal and Ibn ‘Arabi: Historical Perspective, Part 1’, *Iqbal Review*, 34, no. 1 (1993), available at www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr93/2.htm [Accessed on 9 October 2017]).
- 49 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. v.
- 50 Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, pp. 76–84.
- 51 Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, pp. 82–83.
- 52 Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, p. 83. Sakina Khan analyses the concept of annihilation in Persian Sufism, and shows that, contrary to Iqbal’s claim, ‘when the Persian Sufi is talking of annihilation he still admits the fact of the existence of the individual, for the whole journey brings him back to himself’. See Sakina Khan, ‘Iqbal and Sufism’, *The Dialogue*, 5, no. 4: 330–348.
- 53 Iqbal, ‘The Muslim Community: A Sociological Study’, in Latif Ahmad Sherwani (ed.), *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 133.
- 54 For an analysis of the notion of *Wahdatu'l-Wujud* with reference to the Western approaches to the notion, see William C. Chittick, ‘Rumi and wahdat al wujud’, in Amin Banani, Richard Hovannisian and Georges Sabagh (eds.), *Poetry and Mysticism in Islam: the Heritage of Rumi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 70–111.
- 55 For a study exploring the difference between Pantheism and Sufism, see Titus Burckhardt, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine* (Canada: World Wisdom, Inc., 2008), see esp. pp. 17–19.
- 56 Muhammad Suheyl Umar, ‘Contours of Ambivalence, Iqbal and Ibn ‘Arabi: Historical Perspective, Part 1’.
- 57 Iqbal, *Islam and Ahmadism*, p. 17.
- 58 Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (n.p.: Forgotten Books, 2008), p. 71.
- 59 Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel’s Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), p. 340.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p. 339.
- 61 Iqbal, Rakhti-i Safar, compiled by Muhammad Anwar Harith, pp. 117–119 quoted in Abu Sayeed Nur-ud-Din, ‘Attitude toward Sufism’, in Hafeez Malik (ed.), *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 294.
- 62 Stephan Popp, ‘Iqbal Replying to a Ghazal of Hafiz’, *Iqbal Review*, 43, no. 1 (April, 2002), available at www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/apr02/10-Iqbal%20Replying%20to%20a%20Ghazal.htm [Accessed on 14 September 2017].
- 63 Atiya Begum, *Iqbal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 8.
- 64 John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 15–16.
- 65 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 141.
- 66 Iqbal, ‘The Muslim Community: A Sociological Study’, p. 132.
- 67 Iqbal, ‘Javidnama’, p. 305.
- 68 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 143–144.
- 69 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 144.
- 70 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 144.
- 71 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 7.
- 72 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 7.
- 73 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 92.
- 74 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 7.
- 75 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 7. Italics added.

- 76 Fazlur Rahman, 'Muslim Modernism in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent', p. 85.
 77 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 7.
 78 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 92.
 79 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 149.
 80 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 3.
 81 Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, p. 3 (Forgotten Books version).
 82 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 10–11. Iqbal refers to the verse of the Qur'an, 'Verily We proposed to the Heavens, and to the Earth, and to the mountains to receive the "trust", but they refused the burden and they feared to receive it. Man undertook to bear it, but hath proved unjust, senseless!' (33:72).
 83 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 90–91.
 84 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 93.
 85 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 93.
 86 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 94.
 87 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 94–95.
 88 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 97.
 89 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 97.
 90 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 98.
 91 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 100. For the verse Iqbal quotes, see Qur'an, 7:54.
 92 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 100.
 93 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 102.
 94 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 102.
 95 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 80.
 96 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 105.
 97 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 113.
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 101 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 114.
 102 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 116.
 103 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 68–69.
 104 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 116.
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4 Making distinctions

Introduction

In the introductory chapter of this book it was argued that some aspects of Iqbal's philosophy appear to be contradictory and ambiguous, and that one of the reasons for this is that Iqbal is not a systematic philosopher in the technical sense of the word. However, it can perhaps be said that he attempts to become one by trying to invent new terms although this is not his primary concern. As a result of his disinterest in developing his terminology further, Iqbal does not provide his reader with a detailed account of his idea of becoming a genuine Muslim which he presents as the central issue of his philosophy. This is mainly because of the lack of clarification of the distinction between the terms he introduces. In order to grasp Iqbal's understanding of the development of the self what needs to be done, in Kierkegaardian terms, is to separate his terms from each other, identify his usage of the terms, and thereby clarify his terminology. In order to do this, in this chapter, Kierkegaard's method of *making distinctions* between the notions, namely his *qualitative disjunction* will be applied to the concepts that play a crucial role in Iqbal's idea of becoming a genuine Muslim.

As was previously seen, Kierkegaard believes that the main reason for the alleged illusion that all are Christians is that people confuse Christianity with something else. This illusion involves the confusion of a number of concepts such as objectivity and subjectivity, and philosophy and religion. In order to dispel the confusion, and therefore the illusion that everyone is a Christian as a matter of course, the distinction between the terms that Danish society confuses must be clarified. Kierkegaard's method here, as was seen in Chapter 2, is to make distinctions through a new form of dialectic that he calls the qualitative disjunction of which the main principles are distinguishing Christianity from non-Christian concepts, perceptions, and modes of existence. The Kierkegaardian method of making distinctions, then, will

- 1 clarify Iqbal's key terms by highlighting the differences between his terms, and separating them from each other, and therefore grasp the real nature of Iqbal's intention, and

- 2 uncover the nature of his concepts such as religious experience, love and action.

In Chapter 5, the question of how these concepts play a role in the individual's becoming a self will be examined.

Hence applying Kierkegaard's qualitative disjunction to Iqbal's terminology will enable a clarification of the key terms Iqbal employs in his discussion of the self, which Iqbal, in Fazlur Rahman's words, expresses 'rather than neatly formulates'.¹ In order to do this, first, Kierkegaard's well-known distinction of objectivity and subjectivity will be applied to Iqbal's division of two ways in which the individual connects with reality. It is contended that although Iqbal does not regard his division as subjective and objective, Kierkegaard's distinction between objective and subjective reflection can shed light on his discussion. This leads to Iqbal's central term 'religious experience', which he regards as one of the ways of connecting with reality. Here another problem with his terminology is encountered, namely his conflation of the concepts of objectivity and subjectivity. This is another point where Kierkegaard's distinction between objectivity and subjectivity can shed light on Iqbal's thought.

Second, the Kierkegaardian method will be applied to Iqbal's distinction between self-sustaining acts and self-dissolving acts. This will entail making use of a number of Kierkegaardian concepts such as 'action', 'actuality' and 'pathos'. The confusion Iqbal creates in his use of the key terms 'action' and 'love' must be dispelled since these are keys to determining the quality of the individual's acts. In Iqbal's idea of becoming a self, it is necessary to clarify the functions of these concepts in the light of Kierkegaardian concepts.

Third, Kierkegaard's distinction between religion and philosophy will be applied to Iqbal's understanding of reason and religion with a particular focus on his attempt to identify the place religion occupies in the individual's connection to reality. This will include Iqbal's endeavour to dispel the misconceptions regarding the relationship between religion, reason and philosophy, and also include clarification of the distinction between these terms through Kierkegaard's qualitative disjunction.

The aim of this chapter is thus to show that one of the reasons for the inconsistencies in Iqbal's thought stems from the lack of clarification in his terminology which can be resolved by distinguishing the distinction between the terms. It is argued that the vagueness in his thought can be dispelled through Kierkegaard's qualitative disjunction.

Distinguishing subjectivity from objectivity

Although Iqbal does not put a particular emphasis on the objectivity-subjectivity dichotomy as Kierkegaard does, it is clear that these concepts play a significant role in his thought. These concepts and the distinction between them are important for understanding the nature of Iqbal's central concept of 'religious experience'. Religious experience is a highly crucial term in Iqbal's philosophy

and the significance of the term arises from its function of enabling the human being to connect with reality. Iqbal believes that the main purpose of the Qur'an is to awaken in the human being a consciousness of his relation to reality, and that he is related to reality somehow,² and therefore help the human being identify the place he occupies in the universe and before God. The tool by means of which the human being establishes a genuine and perfect relation to reality is 'religious experience'.

The problem to be discussed in this section is that Iqbal conflates the terms objectivity and subjectivity, by avoiding using the notion of subjectivity, and claiming that religious experience is objective and non-objective at the same time. Consequently, he makes his central concept 'religious experience' an obscure term. Kierkegaard's central concepts of objectivity and subjectivity will be applied in order to dispel the confusion and ambiguity in Iqbal's discussion. Since Iqbal emphasizes that religious experience enables the individual to achieve knowledge regarding the inner aspect of reality, and to establish a closer contact with God, the discussion begins with the two ways Iqbal introduces regarding the individual's relation to reality. These terms are considered from a Kierkegaardian point of view, namely in the light of Kierkegaard's objectivity-subjectivity distinction, in order to provide a basis for discussion of the nature of religious experience, a concept which Iqbal connects with objectivity but which he conflates with non-objectivity.

For Iqbal, the Qur'an introduces two ways in which the individual establishes a relationship to reality and achieves knowledge regarding it. These are (1) an indirect relation to the exterior aspect of reality, and (2) a direct relation to the inner aspect of reality. Iqbal writes:

One indirect way of establishing connexions with the reality that confronts us is reflective observation and control of its symbols as they reveal themselves to sense-perception; the other way is direct association with that reality as it reveals itself within.³

Iqbal's statements above raise the question of how these two types of connecting reality are direct and indirect. This question can be answered in the light of Iqbal's understanding of reality. Iqbal himself does not make a clear definition of his understanding of reality, but he says that nature is only a symbol in order to show the human being that there is a hidden fact behind nature, which is the reality itself, and that the human being can reach the inner and outer nature of reality. He writes: 'The immediate purpose of the Qur'an in this reflective observation of Nature is to awaken in man the consciousness of that of which Nature is regarded a symbol.'⁴ In order to grasp his understanding of reality the metaphor of a nicely wrapped gift box is useful here. Nature is like a gift box, which attracts the individual's attention with its colourful wrapping paper. For Iqbal what is hidden in the box of nature is the inner aspect of reality. Its package, namely its appearance, makes the individual think that in the box there might be more to discover, perhaps even more beautiful than the wrapping. However, in

order to see what is hidden in the box, the individual has to open the wrapping paper, first. Then in the light of this understanding of reality the indirect relationship to reality is to establish a direct relationship to nature, namely to its visible aspect, to the wrapping paper. After this, the individual achieves the opportunity to create a direct relationship to what is hidden behind the perceptible sphere. Since the indirect connection to reality is achieved through reflective observation or sense perception, namely objective methods, the outcome of such a connection is also objective. The direct way of establishing a connection to reality is then the individual's encounter with reality itself which is available to everyone, but requires an extra achievement. The two modes of the individual's relation to reality will now be considered in the light of Kierkegaard's understanding of the nature of objectivity and subjectivity.

The exterior/objective relationship to reality

In Chapter 3 it was seen that Iqbal's main point in his critique of the influence of Greek philosophy on Islamic thought is the 'non-Islamic' nature of Socrates' approach and understanding of reality. While Socrates, Iqbal suggests, focuses on the human world alone, Islam tries to direct the human being's attention to nature around him, to the ordinary events happening in his environment.⁵ This shows, for Iqbal, the Qur'an's emphasis on the empirical or scientific method based on sense perception, and this attitude of the Qur'an is what made Muslims 'the founders of modern science'.⁶

So what are the principles of the individual's connection to his environment, namely an external relationship to reality? It is an indirect relationship to reality, and such a relationship can be established through what Iqbal regards as a 'reflective observation' and 'sense perception' as can be seen in Iqbal's quotation above. Consequently, it is available to anyone with sense perceptions without the need for an extra personal endeavour. Such a relationship does not provide the human being with the entire knowledge regarding reality, because it is actually not a perfect connection to reality. This is because the goal of the individual is to achieve a fuller vision of reality, and connecting with reality by means of objective ways does not enable the individual the fuller version of it. This is why, as Iqbal puts it, 'it seems that the method of dealing with Reality by means of concepts is not at all a serious way of dealing with it'.⁷ However, it is a crucial stage in the individual's realizing that there is more to be discovered. An objective or exterior relation to reality is the human being's first step on his journey to the inner nature of reality. While without this first step the individual cannot start his journey to reality, he also cannot continue his journey without further steps. These further steps comprise the individual's subjective or interior relationship to reality. However, here it should be noted that, although Iqbal only focuses on the two ways of relating reality, namely interior and exterior ways, it can be seen in his overall approach that in between an exterior and objective relation to the outer aspect of reality and an interior and subjective relation to the inner nature of reality there is one more step. This step can be regarded as an

objective relation to the inner aspect of reality and the human being's struggle to find answers to his metaphysical questions. As will be examined in more detail later, Iqbal divides the individual's religious life into three stages. The second stage is, for him, where the individual seeks a metaphysical basis for his religious belief. The individual uses his reason and intellect in order to find this metaphysical basis. The individual approaches religion, then, through rational method, or in Kierkegaardian terms 'objective reflection'. Iqbal's understanding shows that it is possible to talk about one more category in which the individual realizes that nature is a symbol and it is not the whole of reality. At this stage he does not yet establish a subjective relationship to reality, however, he is about to establish it. The question that must now be addressed is how can he turn his objective relationship into a subjective one? This is where Iqbal introduces his concept of 'heart': 'In the interest of securing a complete vision of Reality, therefore, sense perception must be supplemented by the perception of what the Qur'an describes as Fu'ad or Qalb, i.e. heart.'⁸

The interior/subjective relationship to reality

Iqbal's point of departure in his reference to 'heart' is the Qur'anic verse '... and [God] gave you hearing and seeing and heart: what little thanks do ye return?' (32:9). Sense perception, for Iqbal, must be supplemented by 'heart' for 'securing a complete vision of Reality'; as was seen in the last quotation. However, after this point heart does not need sense perception any more: '... it is rather a mode of dealing with Reality in which sensation, in the physiological sense of the word, does not play any part'.⁹ Consequently, 'supplement' is not the right word, because the mode of dealing with reality through heart is rather, as Iqbal implies, the human being's *renunciation* of his physical senses. Another point that should be noted here is that Iqbal regards the Qur'anic concept of 'heart' as a kind of experience, since he characterizes it as a way of connecting with reality rather than being merely an organ of perception. Iqbal uses the concepts 'mystic experience',¹⁰ 'mystic consciousness',¹¹ 'intuition',¹² 'psychic phenomena',¹³ or more frequently 'religious experience'¹⁴ as alternatives to 'heart'. His discussion of the nature of these concepts is where Iqbal introduces the concept of 'objective'. The problem with Iqbal's argument is that he tries to explain the nature of religious experience without using the term 'subjective', and, moreover, does not make a clear distinction between objectivity and non-objectivity of something, as will be seen. Therefore, here, in order to unpack the different strands of Iqbal's argument, dispel the confusion he creates, and provide a better account of his understanding of the human being's subjective or interior relationship to reality, it is helpful to apply the Kierkegaardian method to Iqbal's concept of 'religious experience'.

The problem of Iqbal's lack of clarity in distinguishing non-objectivity and objectivity of religious experience can be best observed in his discussion of the main characteristics of the notion of 'religious experience'. In his discussion of the main characteristics of mystic or religious experience Iqbal introduces the

concept of 'the mystic state' and claims that 'the mystic state' is highly objective considering its content. He writes:

to the mystic, the mystic state is a moment of intimate association with a unique other Self, transcending, encompassing, and momentarily suppressing the private personality of the subject of experience. Considering its content the mystic state is highly objective and cannot be regarded as a mere retirement into the mists of pure subjectivity.¹⁵

The mystic state is a crucial part of the whole religious experience involving the individual's immediate experience of God. In a sense, it is the moment the individual himself encounters God. In this respect, Iqbal claims, its content shows that the mystic state is *highly* objective. On the other hand, he also claims that 'the content of religious experience' and 'mystic state' cannot be communicated in objective terms. Iqbal writes:

Since the quality of mystic experience is to be directly experienced, it is obvious that it cannot be communicated. Mystic states are more like feeling than thought. The interpretation which the mystic or the prophet puts on the content of his religious consciousness can be conveyed to the others in the form of propositions, but the content itself cannot be so transmitted.¹⁶

In the passage above, as can be seen, Iqbal appears to use the concepts 'mystic state', 'mystic experience' and 'religious consciousness' as identical terms, and claims that the *content* of these cannot be transmitted to another human being. These passages are not problematic on their own but when we put them together they seem to be ambiguous and to contradict each other. This is because, while Iqbal claims that the *content* of the mystic state or experience is highly objective in the first passage, in the second passage he maintains that the *content* of the mystic state cannot be communicated, because mystic states are more like feelings than thoughts or ideas. If the mystic state, mystical experience or religious consciousness is more like feeling than thought, characterizing the content of the mystic state as highly objective seems to be problematic because this claim ignores the distinction between subjectivity of a feeling and objectivity of the expression of this feeling. This is evident when a close examination of the passages quoted above is made. Iqbal writes, 'The interpretation which the mystic or the prophet puts on the content of his religious consciousness can be conveyed to the others in the form of propositions...' Here, what is to be conveyed is the individual's own interpretation of his experience in words, namely the *form of propositions*, and the non-transmittable part is the *content* of mystic state or religious experience as he puts it, 'but the content itself cannot be so transmitted'. This distinction between the form of propositions and the content of the mystic state is problematic, since in the previous passage Iqbal writes: 'Considering its content the mystic state is highly objective.' Here, Iqbal appears to claim that something objective cannot be conveyed to another human being. If

something cannot be communicated, then, how can it be objective or on what basis can we claim that it is objective? Hence, it can be said that there is a terminological problem in Iqbal's arguments, and, consequently, this results in such contradictory and ambiguous arguments. There can be two different reasons for this problem. First, Iqbal consciously avoids any claim that might create a pantheistic understanding of religious experience. Characterizing the relationship between God and the human being as a subjective relationship could result in God being understood as an immanent reality, which can easily lead to a pantheistic world-view. The fear of pantheism prompts Iqbal to downplay the subjective dimension of religious experience. It is his fear of the subjectivization of the concept of God that motivates him to deny the objective communicability of religious experience. If the contents of religious experience can be communicated objectively from one person to another, then the danger arises that God may be conceived of as a reality innate to the human being.

Second, the apparent lack of clarity in Iqbal's claim that religious or mystic experience can be both objective and non-communicable in objective terms again arises from Iqbal's use of the terms. Kierkegaard's analogy of a married couple can be helpful here to identify Iqbal's lack of clarity. Climacus highlights that the marriage of a couple makes an influence in the outer world, and continues:

But their married love is not a historical phenomenon; the phenomenal is the insignificant, has significance to the marriage partners only through their married love, but looked at in any other way (that is, objectively) the phenomenal is a deception.¹⁷

In this example Climacus tries to show that what is important in an external event is the subjective content of it, not the objective character of it. However, Climacus' example of how an objective and external event such as marriage can also have a subjective content, which is the love between the married couple, can highlight Iqbal's lack of clarity. Iqbal conflates the notions of objectivity and subjectivity because he ignores that these two aspects of an event do not necessarily include each other. In other words, defining religious experience as a subjective event does not harm or change its objective character. What Iqbal appears to be arguing is that there is a mismatch between language and experience. Human language is incapable of grasping the content of religious experience because each individual's relationship with God is a relationship with a reality that is ultimately ineffable. Although this means that language can never grasp what God is in all his fullness, this does not mean that it is impossible to speak about God and that one must therefore fall completely silent. It is indeed possible to speak of the experience of God by formulating it in a set of objective propositions, which can be communicated objectively to others. What cannot be communicated, however, is the religious experience itself.

It is here that again Kierkegaard can be drawn on to articulate more clearly the point Iqbal appears to be making. Iqbal's point can be made with more

clarity if it is reformulated in terms of Kierkegaard's distinction between subjectivity and objectivity. As was discussed in Chapter 2, Kierkegaard holds that the problem in contemporary Denmark was not lack of objective knowledge concerning the *content* of Christianity, but with the way in which people *related* themselves to this content. It was their failure to relate themselves in the appropriate manner to Christianity, namely *subjectively*, that meant that Kierkegaard's contemporaries only *appeared* to be Christians, but in reality were little more than pagans, which he also calls 'baptized paganism'.¹⁸ As was noted in Chapter 2, the remedy for this lamentable state of affairs was for Kierkegaard's contemporaries to commit themselves with passion to the content of Christianity, to make this content their own by subjectively appropriating it, and to allow Christianity to transform their lives so that there was a genuine difference between the real Christian and the nominal Christian. The 'content' of Christianity becomes alive only when the Christian individual existentially commits him/herself to that content and makes it his own. If the individual understands the content of Christianity merely objectively as a set of ideas or form of propositions, then the content is mute and the individual has failed to grasp what Christianity truly is, regardless of how objectively knowledgeable he may be about the doctrinal content of the Christian faith.

This distinction between objectivity and subjectivity offers a way of reading Iqbal's distinction between the form of propositions and content that eliminates some of the problems with Iqbal's account. The form of propositions and the content of the mystic state for Iqbal are taken to refer to two types of objectivity. On the one hand, there is the objectivity of the religious experience. For Iqbal, religious experience is an objective event. God genuinely encounters the human being and the religious experience of the believer is not merely a private experience taking place wholly within the subjectivity of the believer. Due to the uniqueness and ineffability of the religious experience, however, the 'content' of the believer's objective encounter with God cannot be communicated objectively. On the other hand, there is the objectivity of religious propositions. Religious experience can be formulated and communicated in objective propositions and the recipient of the communication can gain some understanding of the nature of religious experience on the basis of these propositions. Nevertheless, these propositions do not capture the uniqueness and ineffability of the religious person's God-relationship and consequently are no substitute for experiencing a God-relationship for oneself.

The reason the objective content of the believer's encounter with God cannot be communicated in objective propositions is because, in Kierkegaardian terms, this content is accessible only by means of *subjectivity*. It has already been seen that religious experience is the human being's interior or subjective relationship to reality which enables him to grasp reality in its entirety. The religious experience described in objective formulations becomes alive and real for the individual only when he appropriates these formulations and makes them part of his very being. Only then does the 'objective content' of religious experience become accessible. It is an objective content, then, that is accessible only by

means of subjectivity. It is precisely this study of the *subjective* appropriation of the objective content of the religious experience that is lacking in Iqbal's treatment of this issue. Once the notion of the *subjective appropriation* of the objective content formulated in objective propositions is introduced, then the contradiction between objective content and the incommunicability of that content falls away. This objective content remains unavailable to the recipient of the objective propositions in which it is formulated until the recipient appropriates the objective content mediated by those propositions, commits himself with passion to it, and makes it the centre of his being. In order to make the point clearer Kierkegaard's example of the experience of death, a more universal term, can be made use of in order to make Iqbal's argument clearer. Kierkegaard's pseudonymous author Climacus writes:

For example, *what it means to die*. On that topic I know what people ordinarily know: that if I swallow a dose of sulfuric acid I will die... however, despite this almost extraordinary knowledge or proficiency of knowledge, I am by no means able to regard death as something I have understood.¹⁹

Climacus points out the subjective nature of living in the knowledge of the fact that everyone must one day die. Anyone can know so many things about death and dying. There is, however, a fundamental difference between relating objectively to this knowledge and relating to it subjectively. The latter entails applying this knowledge of death to oneself personally. The human being must understand that death affects him and confronts him with crucial existential questions concerning how he should live his life and how he should prepare for his ultimate demise. Likewise, an interior and subjective relation to reality requires the individual's subjective commitment to it. Otherwise, it is only an objective relation to the interior reality, and in Kierkegaard's words, 'objectively there is no truth at all'.²⁰

As was suggested at the beginning of this section, Iqbal does not put the notions of objectivity and subjectivity at the centre of his thought as Kierkegaard does. However, these notions are important in understanding Iqbal's concept of religious experience by means of which the individual establishes a genuine and perfect relation to reality. As has been discussed in this section, Iqbal raises two ways in which the individual can establish a relation to reality. The establishment of an ideal relation with reality is possible for him through the notion of religious experience to which he also refers with a number of concepts such as mystic experience, mystic consciousness, mystic state, heart and intuition. Religious experience is not only important for enabling the human being to establish a genuine relation with the inner aspect of reality, but also for its existential role in the development of the self as is to be discussed in the next chapter. Iqbal makes such an important notion obscure by discussing it in terms of objectivity. Kierkegaard's distinction between subjectivity and objectivity has been applied to Iqbal's discussion in order to dispel the conflation in his discussion. It was argued that the problem arises from Iqbal's avoiding using the notion of subjectivity, and

his choice of terms. Religious experience includes an objective content which can only be accessed through subjectivity, namely through the human being's appropriation of its objective content. The existential process of the individual's appropriation of the objective content of religious experience will be examined in the next chapter.

Distinguishing self-sustaining actions from self-dissolving actions

In the fourth lecture of his *The Reconstruction* Iqbal raises the vital question of how to make the self develop and how to save it from corruption, and he answers his question: 'by action'.²¹ It is surprising to see Iqbal telling his reader how to achieve something, because as was said before it is one of the problems of his method that he talks passionately about what to do, but rarely shows or discusses how to do it. However, the answer 'action' is still not a sufficient answer at this stage, as it is a very comprehensive concept. What is needed is an answer to what kind of action can save the self from corruption, and develop it. Iqbal's answer to the question how to develop the self and save it from corruption shows that action, act or deed is the key term in the development of the self. In order to discover what kind of action can help the human being develop his self, Iqbal's understanding of the notion of 'action' should be grasped. For him, as was briefly introduced in the introductory chapter, there are only two kinds of action, namely 'ego-sustaining' or 'self-sustaining' acts or actions and 'self-dissolving' acts or actions: 'It is the deed that prepares the ego for dissolution, or disciplines him for a future career.'²² His division of 'self-affirmation' and 'self-negation' that he makes in *The Secrets of the Self* can also be introduced here. There are 'self-sustaining' actions which lead the individual to 'self-affirmation', and 'self-dissolving' actions which lead him to 'self-negation'. 'The moral and religious ideal of man,' Iqbal writes, 'is not self-negation but self-affirmation.'²³ This is where the problem arises, because although Iqbal introduces a number of self-sustaining and self-affirmative actions and self-dissolving actions such as asking and fear, he does not provide his reader with a *distinctive tool* which can help him determine whether an action is self-sustaining or self-dissolving. If Iqbal did not claim that there are only two types of actions and there is nothing in between these two types, this terminological ambiguity would not be a big problem, because that would mean not every act is necessarily related to the development of the self positively or negatively. However, since every action of the individual possesses a quality of being a self-sustaining act or self-dissolving act, it is necessary for the human being to possess a tool or a concept in order to identify his own actions, and therefore avoid the actions which lead to self-negation while cultivating the ones which direct him to self-affirmation. Once the individual discovers the tool which helps him identify the character of his actions, he can easily distinguish his actions from each other and avoid self-dissolving actions or transform them into self-sustaining actions which develops his self. It is the contention of this section that Kierkegaardian hermeneutics can be helpful

at this point. In this section, the Kierkegaardian concepts ‘actuality’, ‘action’, ‘subjectivity’ and ‘pathos’ will be used in order to separate from each other the terms which lead the individual to self-affirmation and self-negation. Therefore, Kierkegaard’s terminology will help to identify an Iqbalian tool and to make distinctions between the two types of acts, the crucial concepts of Iqbal’s terminology.

The concept of action is also a crucial term in Kierkegaard’s terminology. His pseudonym Climacus makes a particular connection between the notions of subjectivity and action. This connection arises from each concept’s relation to the actuality-possibility dichotomy. Both action and subjectivity are concerned with actuality, whereas all objectivity can provide is a possibility through the act of thinking. To be more specific, for instance, when I think about doing something, until I do it, it is only a possibility in my thought. There are a number of possibilities regarding my idea. I can change my mind, or I may not be able to do what I think somehow. On the other hand, action includes actuality, because it means I did what I thought, and it is not a possibility anymore, it is now an actuality. This is the case with subjectivity as well. He writes: ‘If there is to be a distinction at all between thinking and acting, this can be maintained only by assigning possibility, disinterestedness, and objectivity to thinking, and action to subjectivity.’²⁴ For Climacus, then, an act does not always refer to a genuine action, because there are different types of action such as ‘thought-action’ and ‘actual action’.²⁵ Whereas an actual action must involve subjectivity, a thought-action is objective and possible. Climacus explains this with an example of a ‘religious action’:

To have faith in God – does that mean to think about how glorious it must be to have faith, to think about what peace and security faith can give? ... The individual’s relation to the thought-action is still continually only a possibility that he can give up.²⁶

Climacus’ example of subjectively believing in God and objectively knowing about believing shows us the distinction between a ‘thought-action’ and an ‘actual action’. Consequently, in order for an act to be an actual act it must involve subjectivity as well as actuality. What this means is that the individual must let the act of believing in God transform his own being. This example allows interpreting Iqbal’s notion of action by shedding light on Iqbal’s distinction between an ‘intellectual act’ and a ‘vital act’. Iqbal writes:

The final act is not an intellectual act, but a vital act which deepens the whole being of the ego, and sharpens his will with the creative assurance that the world is not something to be merely seen or known through concepts, but something to be made and re-made by continuous action.²⁷

In the light of this paragraph it can be said that through a vital act the individual (1) deepens the whole being of the ego, and (2) strengthens his will through the fact that ‘the world is something to be made and re-made by continuous action’. What Iqbal appears to intend with his distinction between ‘intellectual action’

and ‘vital action’, about which he does not provide any further explanation, is that a ‘vital act’ must involve actuality and subjectivity by deepening the self, whereas an ‘intellectual act’ only consists of objective concepts which we can obtain through thinking. Therefore, whereas an intellectual act is a possibility and objective, a vital act is an actual action, and there is a distinction between them in being ‘the final act’. A vital act is the final act and it refers to a type of action which includes self-sustaining actions of the human being. A similar distinction can also be found in Climacus. In order to highlight the distinction between an act that only makes an influence on the external world and another act that also makes an influence on the inner being of the individual, he gives examples and writes:

Action in the external does transform existence (as when an emperor conquers the whole world and makes the people slaves), but not the individual’s own existence, ... if the individual is not changed and continually changed within himself, the introducing of Christianity into a country is no more a religious action than the conquering of countries.²⁸

Although the primary aim in this section is not to make a comparison of Iqbal and Kierkegaard, the subtle difference between the two thinkers’ understandings of action and the actuality of an action draws attention to one of the significant aspects of Iqbal’s notion of self-sustaining vital action. Kierkegaard attributes a particular significance to the internal character of the individual’s action by regarding actuality as not an external action but as an interiority in which the individual ends possibility.²⁹ Iqbal, on the other hand, places a particular emphasis on the influence of an action on the external world and environment of the individual as is evident in his suggestion of ‘making and remaking the world’, as well as its internal influence as can be seen in his defining a vital act as a power ‘which deepens the whole being of the ego’. This does not change that for them both an actuality requires the individual to ‘identify himself with what is thought in order to exist in it’,³⁰ and making his action a part of his personality. The result of an action in the external world does not make anything in terms of ‘actuality’ if it does not transform the individual’s own existence. With regards to Iqbal, a vital action, besides transforming the individual’s existence, should also result in a constructive effect on the external world which is possible through making and remaking the world by continuous action.

In the following subsections the distinction between self-sustaining acts and self-dissolving acts will be examined in more detail and the tool, which will help the individual determine the quality of his actions, will be identified in the light of the Kierkegaardian concepts.

Self-sustaining action

The main principles of Iqbal’s notion of ‘action’ have been drawn out in the light of Kierkegaardian terminology. However, the question of how the individual can

decide whether his action is self-sustaining or self-dissolving, or whether his acts lead him to self-affirmation or self-negation still remains unanswered. Chapter 2 showed that for Climacus, the individual achieves an actual action through what he calls 'existential pathos'. Existential pathos is a part of a more general pathos, and the other type of pathos is called 'aesthetic pathos'. The type of pathos depends on whether an act transforms the individual's existence in relation to his highest goal. If it does, then, it is an 'existential pathos', and it includes actuality. However, if it does not transform the individual's existence, and stays at the level of 'possibility', it means that the individual does not relate himself to it with an existential pathos but with an aesthetic pathos.³¹ Thus, it can be said that the Kierkegaardian actuality also includes an 'existential pathos' whereas a 'thought-action' includes an 'aesthetic pathos'. What it is concerned with is the 'existential pathos' through which the individual turns his action into actuality. The Iqbalian concept of 'love' can be introduced at this point. Iqbal does not make any particular reference to different types of 'love'; however, a close examination of his use of the term shows that this notion has two closely related functions in his thought.³² First of all, he uses the concept as an emotional state and he introduces it occasionally when he wants to discuss reason in his poetic works. An example of this kind of use can be found in Iqbal's *Mysteries of Selflessness*. In this poem Iqbal presents reason and love as two opposite concepts, and writes:

Reason is cheap, and plentiful as air;
Love is most scarce to find, and of great price³³

Second, Iqbal introduces love as a 'power'. Iqbal's definition of love, in its widest sense, as 'the desire to assimilate, to absorb'³⁴ is this second type of love. He suggests that the highest form of this desire to absorb is the human being's creation of values and ideals, and his attempt to realize them, which Iqbal also names 'the power of assimilative action'.³⁵ In Kierkegaardian terms, Iqbal's notion of 'love' can be defined as a means through which the individual cultivates a passion of relating himself to his absolute goal, and of transforming his existence in the direction of this goal. Thus, Kierkegaard's concept of 'existential pathos' can help to shed light on Iqbal's notion of 'love', which he uses quite often, particularly in his poems, but he rarely talks about the nature of it. The most important aspect of Kierkegaard's concept of pathos, and particularly his distinction between 'existential pathos' and 'aesthetic pathos', for the purpose of clarifying Iqbal is that it can be used as a tool by which the individual can determine the quality of an action. An existential pathos is not a general concept like subjectivity; it is a religious concept, because it is concerned with the quality of the individual's relation to the 'absolute goal', namely 'eternal happiness'. Even a relative goal can transform a person's existence as Climacus writes,³⁶ and it will become apparent how a self-dissolving act in Iqbal can transform the individual's own being later. However, the point in an 'existential pathos' is to relate one's self to the absolute goal existentially. It can also be said that the quality of

an action is determined according to the quality of its pathos. Iqbal's notion of love can be approached from this point of view. The notion of 'love' has been defined as the individual's relationship to his absolute goal through which he cultivates a passion of relating himself to his absolute goal, and of transforming his existence in the direction of this goal. So the tool that helps the individual determine the quality of his act, whether it is a self-sustaining act or self-dissolving act, namely the quality of the individual's relationship with his absolute goal of becoming a self, is 'love'. Through love, the individual can turn his action into a self-sustaining action, and without love, the actual action of the individual is no more than a self-dissolving act. Hence, love is the distinctive and decisive element of human actions that transforms them into self-sustaining acts.

Self-dissolving action

This section is on Iqbal's notion of self-dissolving action in the light of his two self-dissolving actions, namely 'asking' and 'fear'. Here, the distinctive features of self-dissolving acts, and their destructive role in both the external and internal worlds of the individual will be presented.

Asking

For Iqbal, asking is perhaps the biggest obstacle facing the human being in his movement towards becoming a perfect self. By 'asking', Iqbal means any kind of achievement – both material and spiritual – gained without personal effort. He writes: 'The son of a rich man who inherits his father's wealth is an "asker", or beggar; so is everyone who thinks the thoughts of others.'³⁷ Both wealth gained without working and belief without personal examination is categorized as asking or begging by Iqbal. Iqbal accuses Muslims, particularly Indian Muslims, of assimilating this notion of asking.³⁸ He traces religious and political decay to the phenomenon of asking and its cultivation of the habits of dependence, self-effacement and diffidence. In his article 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal' Iqbal complains:

The decay of the religious spirit, combined with other causes of a political nature over which he [Indian Muslim] had no control, has developed in him a habit of self-dwarfing, a sense of dependence and, above all, that laziness of spirit which an enervated people call by the dignified name of 'contentment' in order to conceal their own enfeeblement.³⁹

Besides religious and political decay, Iqbal places particular emphasis on the relationship between asking and economic decline. He discusses this relationship under the title of 'The Self is Weakened by Asking' in his *The Secrets of the Self*. This is because he believes that the economic dependence that stems from 'asking' is the main reason for many other evils. He writes, 'Truly economic

dependence is the prolific mother of all the various forms of vice.⁴⁰ To combat the evils arising from economic dependence it is therefore crucial to identify the root cause of this dependence, which is why Iqbal makes the notion of 'asking' the centre of his discussion. It is his aim to prevent Muslims from experiencing worse scenarios by pointing out the detrimental effects of asking. The way he conducts this discussion is by drawing his readers' attention to the nature of asking and demonstrating how it undermines Muslim spirituality and strength of character. He aims to show his Muslim reader that asking does not rescue one from poverty, but on the contrary *causes* spiritual poverty. He writes:

By asking, poverty is made more abject;
By begging, the beggar is made poorer.⁴¹

Iqbal's emphasis on the economic weaknesses of society and poverty may raise the question of how Iqbal views the ritual of *zakat* (almsgiving), one of the five pillars of Muslim faith. The main idea in *zakat* is to give a fixed amount of one's own wealth to the Muslims (and/or non-Muslims in some cases) in need. In terms of Iqbal's arguments regarding the notion of asking, namely anything achieved without personal effort, the ritual of *zakat* is, then, a kind of asking. It is also surprising that while Iqbal talks, writes and discusses intellectual movements regarding economic issues, such as capitalism or socialism, he rarely discusses the Islamic principle of almsgiving.⁴² He only writes a couple of verses on the role of *zakat* in the development of the self in *The Secrets of the Self*:

Almsgiving causes love of riches to pass away
And makes equality familiar;
It fortifies the heart with righteousness,
It increases wealth and diminishes fondness for wealth.⁴³

Zakat, then, plays a constructive role both in society and the self, because it cultivates *equality* among people, a popular modern concept. Iqbal is, of course, not arguing against the practise of *zakat*. Where Muslims are in genuine need, it is other Muslims' duty to support them. However, this shows that Iqbal's point needs to be clarified otherwise he conflicts with himself. First, Iqbal is critical of those who exploit the generosity of others to avoid taking responsibility for themselves. In this sense, he regards asking as a habit, a part of one's personality, a life style or a world-view. In other words, when the individual relates himself to the act of asking subjectively and lets it transform his self then his act is a *self-dissolving* act. His point is that asking is not merely a drain on the community's resources, however, but that it also creates a spiritual deficiency in the asker. This is clear in his claim that contemporary Indian Muslims have developed 'a habit of self-dwarfing', 'a sense of dependence' and 'laziness of spirit' in themselves as was seen in the above quotations.⁴⁴ This is why Iqbal attempts to preclude Muslims from asking in any situation, and encourages his Muslim reader not to ask for even bread or water from anyone by citing the example of the Prophet:

Albeit thou art poor and wretched and overwhelmed by affliction,
 Seek not thy daily bread from the bounty of another,
Seek not water from the fountain of the sun,
 Lest thou be put to shame before the Prophet
 On the Day when every soul shall be stricken with fear.⁴⁵

Another point, which needs to be clarified, is that asking can become a genuine social problem as well as a personal disease. A society that consists of individuals who have made asking a part of their personalities is a society in decay, and such is contemporary Indian society according to Iqbal.

Fear

A further characteristic, which awakens a sense of self-negation in the individual, is fear. Iqbal uses the concept of fear in two meanings. First, he employs it in a positive sense, as can also be seen in the above-mentioned verses, to refer to the fear of God or divine judgement. This type of fear depends on the Qur'an as we can see in one of the verses Iqbal cites:⁴⁶ 'Verily, in the alternations of the night and of day and in all that God hath created in the Heavens and in the earth are signs to those who fear Him' (10:6). Second and more frequently, Iqbal employs the term fear in a technical sense. This type of fear is the fear of anything or anyone except God. Whereas fear of God leads the individual to faith, the second type of fear leads him astray. Iqbal writes in his poem *Mysteries of the Selflessness*:

The fear of God faith's only preface is,
 All other fear is secret disbelief.⁴⁷

The object of fear is, then, any kind of fear of anything or anyone besides God. Fear is an action in terms of its results on the individual and the outer world. While fear of God can be a self-sustaining action, fear of anything besides God is a self-dissolving action. The distinction between fear as a self-sustaining act and fear as a self-dissolving act arises from their distinctive elements, namely love. In other words, the individual's relationship to God determines his absolute goal which is to become a genuine self before God, so the nature of his fear of God is different from his fear of anything else. It was concluded in the previous section that in order for a self-dissolving action to become a self-sustaining action, it needs the individual's including love into his action. Since fear of God is described by Iqbal as a superior action to fear of anything else, then it includes an 'existential pathos', namely 'love'.

As was said before, Iqbal does not place a particular emphasis on the object of fear but on the act of fear itself. This might be that he wants to draw his reader's or listener's attention not to the event, person or object which is feared of but to fear itself as a feeling or mode. The most significant reason for this is that he uses the concept of fear in a very wide sense. As a matter of fact fear is a

concept that includes all kinds of evil. For instance, in his article 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal' he points out, 'It is not possible for me to show in the course of this paper how all the principal forms of vice can be reduced to fear.'⁴⁸ Likewise in his poem *Mysteries of the Selflessness*, he writes:

Whatever evil lurks within thy heart
Thou canst be certain that its origin
Is fear: fraud, cunning, malice, lies – all these
Flourish on terror, who is wrapped about
With falsehood and hypocrisy for veil,
And fondles foul sedition at her breast.

...

Who understands the Prophet's clue aright
Sees infidelity concealed in fear.⁴⁹

As can be seen in the verses above, fear is presented as the source of infidelity and a number of immoral characteristics, such as fraud, malice, lying, hypocrisy etc. Furthermore, in his *The Secrets of the Self*, fear is linked to a number of material and spiritual diseases:

Bodily strength diminished while spiritual fear increased;
Spiritual fear robbed them of courage.
Lack of courage produced a hundred diseases –
Poverty, pusillanimity, low mindedness.⁵⁰

Spiritual fear, according to the verses above, causes lack of courage, discouragement or cowardliness, and ends up with material and spiritual evil, poverty and coarseness. Thus, as was said before, for Iqbal, it is not the object of fear that is important, but fear as a mode of existence. However, the problem is that Iqbal does not say anything about why he names all kinds of evil fear, but not a different concept. He does not deny that fear is a fact of human life. In other words, he admits that it is natural for the human being to avoid things that cause him fear.⁵¹ However, he usually focuses on the results of fear rather than talking about why he chooses the concept of fear. Here another problem, namely a terminological gap arises, since if I do not understand what makes fear the origin of all vices, and why fear is evil, why should I pay an extra effort to avoid fearing anything except God? Is it not fear that saves me from the dangers in nature? This gap makes it difficult to understand such an important concept in Iqbal's terminology and his argument of how to become a genuine Muslim self. However, previously it was discussed in the light of Kierkegaard's term of existential pathos that in order to distinguish between a self-sustaining act and a self-dissolving act or turning a self-dissolving act into a self-sustaining act, the individual must include *love* to his action. In other words, the individual's action should be in accordance with his absolute goal, and this is possible by means of love. Then, it can be said that what makes fear a self-dissolving action is the lack of love in the notion.

In conclusion, asking and fear are self-dissolving acts, because they do not include 'love', which identifies the character of the individual's actions. These actions, like self-sustaining actions, transform the individual's existence because they also include actuality. However, this transformation does not result in a constructive contribution to the creation of a new world the need of which Iqbal repeatedly emphasizes. Only when the individual considers the qualitative distinction between self-sustaining actions and self-dissolving actions, can he continue his way to becoming a self.

Distinguishing religion from philosophy

In applying Kierkegaard's qualitative disjunction to Iqbal's understanding of religion and philosophy, it is important to introduce the ways in which the two thinkers understand the role of rational method in religion. Both thinkers hold that reason plays a role in leading the individual to faith. For Kierkegaard's pseudonym Johannes Climacus, the human being must push reason to its very limits, for it is when reason collides with its boundaries that he encounters the unknown that is God.⁵² What Iqbal says at this point is that religion is not satisfied with the outcomes of the rational method, and it needs a higher form of intellect. Whereas this higher form of intellect or reason is gained through a leap of faith for Kierkegaard, it can only be achieved through prayer for Iqbal. The problem, for Climacus, is that modern Danish society has confused religion with philosophy, and chosen philosophy over religion. On the other hand, for Iqbal, the problem is two-sided. For him, it is not philosophy, intellect, thought or more frequently reason that have confused the mind of society, but rather that some Muslims ignore the significance of the search for rational foundations in religion, while others face the problem of the superiority between philosophy and religion. In other words, Iqbal is concerned to address two problems. First, he has to dispel the widespread misconception among Muslims that reason and religion are two opposed forces, and that there is therefore no role for reason in the realm of religion. The concern to dispel this misconception explains the first part of the problem Iqbal wishes to address, namely the *relationship* between reason and religion. In the propagation of this perception, traditional Muslim scholars have played a significant role, particularly in their politically motivated anti-rational approaches towards Islamic law, as was seen earlier. Second, Iqbal has to counteract the influence of what he regards as Western or European reason and intellect on religion. Iqbal discusses the modern Western understanding of reason in his works, particularly in his poetic works. He represents this type of reason as an opponent power against the heart,⁵³ and accuses Europe of 'intoxicating' the Muslim world.⁵⁴ He also criticizes speculative philosophy for not being aware of the 'heart':

Wakeful heart was never given
Europe's scientist by heaven;
All that God has marked him by
Is the speculative eye.⁵⁵

For Iqbal, Western reason is a threat for religion due to its ignorance of the heart and religion. Therefore, while highlighting the significant role of reason, philosophy, intellect, thought and all kinds of faculties of human reason, he warns his reader against the dangers of Western reason and intellect which may lead them to disbelief or wrong perceptions of religion. This determines the second part of the issues Iqbal aims to address, namely the *distinction* between reason and religion. In order to warn his reader against the two problems regarding the different perceptions of 'reason' he tries to highlight the position of reason in human life and religion. The problem is that the conceptual tools Iqbal employs to carry out this aim seem to be insufficient for the task. At key points his argument lacks clarity and creates a false impression of Iqbal's argument. It is here that Kierkegaard's theory of qualitative distinction can be used as a means of shedding light on Iqbal's argument.

A. K. Rashid's article 'Iqbal and the Role of Philosophy in Religion' is perhaps the best example of consciously or unconsciously misunderstanding and misinterpreting Iqbal.⁵⁶ Rashid's view in the article is that philosophy is a useless device used by Muslims for centuries, and that the Qur'an includes everything the human being needs, so there is no need of any other kind of support. The author cites passages from Iqbal in order to confirm his arguments. He writes on the role of philosophy in human life by citing from Iqbal: "Is it then possible to apply the purely rational method of philosophy to religion?" asks Iqbal, and to this he replies thus: "The spirit of philosophy is one of full inquiry. It suspects all authority." Then, just after quoting this passage, he continues:

As a Muslim, I feel that all this is superfluous and is merely entangling man in unnecessary controversies and wasting his valuable time. Ever since man started to philosophise, hundreds of thousands of pages have been written on these problems without arriving at any conclusion. We have thus been wasting our time over imaginary problems. The Qur'an itself is a self-contained book and answers all these questions clearly, and all that is required of man to lead an honest and peaceful life.⁵⁷

Rashid is guilty of selective and misleading quotation, and can be regarded as a part of what Rahman calls 'a posthumous tyranny of interpretation',⁵⁸ since he ignores Iqbal's arguments preceding and following the text he has cited and disregards the main thrust of Iqbal's argument. Moreover, he defends an idea Iqbal rejects by taking Iqbal's own words out of context. Although in this example it is mainly the author's mistake, Iqbal's own role in creating this misunderstanding cannot be ignored. Apart from Rashid's conscious effort of distorting Iqbal, the confusion, first of all, arises from the way Iqbal employs different terms such as 'philosophy' and 'reason'. Particularly in his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* it is difficult to identify his intention when discussing reason, intellect, thought and philosophy, whether he uses these terms in the same sense or regards each one as a different concept. In his poems, his stance towards these terms is even more contradictory. In his poetry Iqbal

employs the terms to denote reason, intellect, thought, science and intelligence etc. Despite the relative clarity of Iqbal's use of the terms 'philosophy' and 'reason' in his poetry, however, a new problem emerges, namely that his poetical treatment of these concepts presents contradictions. At some points, his poetical treatment of the concepts of 'intellect', 'reason' and 'thought' seems to contradict his approach in his other poetical works and his main philosophical prose work *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. An example of this can be found in some of Iqbal's verses in which Iqbal compares reason and love, and reason is presented as the opposite force of love and religion. He writes:

Reason is cheap, and plentiful as air;
 Love is most scarce to find, and of great price.
 Reason stands firm upon phenomena,
 But Love is naked of material robes.
 Reason says, 'Thrust thyself into the fore';
 Love answers 'Try thy heart, and prove thyself.'
 Reason by acquisition is informed of other;
 Love is born of inward grace and makes account with self.
 Reason declares, 'be happy and be prosperous';
 Love replies, 'Become a servant, that thou mayest be free.'⁵⁹

On the other hand, in another work, Iqbal accuses 'Sheikh' and 'Brahmin' of 'debasement' religion, love and reason, and therefore he puts reason, religion and love in the same category. He writes:

Your infidelities have debased reason and religion,
 Your profit-mongerings have cheapened love.⁶⁰

Furthermore, in *The Reconstruction*, as will be seen, religion and love or intuition need reason and philosophy, and reason is actually a complementary part of religion. The apparent contradiction between his prose and poetical treatment of philosophy and reason is due to Iqbal's tendency to conflate concepts that would be better held apart. Since Iqbal regards his poetry as a means of preaching his ideas,⁶¹ one can expect him to be more consistent. The first task in ascertaining his understanding of the relationship between religion and reason or philosophy is to establish some clarity concerning what forms of thinking he has in mind when he employs the terms 'philosophy' and 'reason'. Once this has been achieved, Iqbal's understanding of the relation between reason, philosophy and religion can be grasped. The Kierkegaardian qualitative disjunction will help to identify and clarify Iqbal's notions. An examination of Iqbal's *The Reconstruction* and poems reveal that reason and religion come across in two ways in Iqbal's thought: (1) through their relationship with each other, and (2) through their relationship with reality. This section will deal with these two types of connection between reason and religion under two sub-headings. First, different

forms of reason will be identified by moving from Iqbal's understanding of the relation between religion and reason with each other. This will help in grasping the *relationship* between reason and religion. Then, the relation of religion and reason to reality, which will present the *distinction* between the two concepts, will be explored. To achieve these aims, the different forms of reason Kierkegaard uses in order to uncover Iqbal's notions will also be employed.

The relationship between reason and religion

In Chapter 2 it was seen that for Kierkegaard the truth is the synthesis of thought and being and that the individual comes to sustain a relationship to the truth not merely by thinking the truth, but by subjectively appropriating and existing in the truth. This cluster of concepts and the distinctions Kierkegaard makes between closely related, but subtly different modes of thought provide a set of hermeneutical tools that can help on differentiating between the various strands of Iqbal's argument concerning the relation between reason and religion. In relation to Iqbal's discussion of reason and philosophy, employing the qualitative disjunction will entail the application to Iqbal's argument of the concepts Kierkegaard develops to distinguish between different types of thinking. Once, by this means, the different forms of thinking described as reason and/or philosophy by Iqbal are separated, grasping his understanding of the relationship between religion and reason will be easier.

In the last lecture of *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 'Is Religion Possible?', Iqbal provides an introduction to the levels of religious life. There are certain parallels between his division of the periods of religious life and the three stages in the education of the self he introduces in his *The Secrets of the Self* although he does not make any particular reference to his previous work or connection between the two discussions. He divides religious life into three categories: *faith*, *thought* and *discovery*. Each of these categories or periods establishes different connections with religion. In the first period, the human being accepts religious customs without any examination. This category is not concerned with the individual's existential relation to the religious law. In the second category the individual attempts to establish a rational understanding of the law he has accepted and the source of its authority. In other words, at this stage, 'religious life seeks its foundation in a kind of metaphysics – a logically consistent view of the world with God'.⁶² In Kierkegaardian terms, this period in which religion requires a rational foundation is to be established through objectivity, namely objective reflection. In the final period, religious life seeks to establish a closer contact with God, the Ultimate Reality, and the third stage is the ultimate point of religiousness for Iqbal. In Kierkegaardian terms, here the individual establishes a subjective relationship with religion by what Iqbal regards as 'personal assimilation'. In other words, the individual exists in religion through his own conscious action of assimilation. Here the human being becomes the vicegerent of God, the third stage in the development of the self. Iqbal's categories of religiousness will be examined in the next chapter in detail.

In terms of the relation between reason and religion in Iqbal's categories of religiousness, reason and its faculties start participating in human life from the second stage in which the individual attempts to understand religion. The problem of the relationship between reason and religion leads Iqbal to the question whether it is possible to apply 'the purely rational method of philosophy' to faith and religion, which he asks at the very beginning of his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.⁶³ In terms of this discussion, he introduces a number of concepts related to human reason such as pure thought, reason, philosophy, intellect, rational method, reflective synthesis, abstract reflection and science in referring to the faculties of human reason. In search of an answer to the question whether it is possible to apply the rational method of philosophy to religion, he admits that philosophy is sceptical, so 'it suspects all authority'.⁶⁴ This means that applying philosophy to religion may result in philosophy's denial of religion. On the other hand, he suggests that religion requires a 'rational foundation'. To quote from Iqbal:

Indeed, in view of its function, religion stands in greater need of a rational foundation of its ultimate principles than even the dogmas of science. Science may ignore a rational metaphysics; indeed, it has ignored so far. Religion can hardly afford to ignore the search for a reconciliation of the oppositions of experience and a justification of the environment in which humanity finds itself. That is why Professor Whitehead has acutely remarked that 'the ages of faith are the ages of rationalism'. But to rationalize faith is not to admit the superiority of philosophy over religion.⁶⁵

In the light of the paragraph above three propositions follow:

- 1 Rationalism is, as Iqbal and Whitehead understand, a wider concept than the scientific field, it includes a rational metaphysics.
- 2 Providing religion with the rational foundation it requires is an act of 'rationalizing faith'.
- 3 To rationalize faith, however, does not mean that philosophy is superior to religion.

Rationalizing faith can be defined as an attempt at providing religion with a rational metaphysics in which the human being can make sense of himself and his environment, and this is possible with the help of the rational method of philosophy. However, to rationalize religion is not to admit that philosophy is superior to religion, because the act of rationalization does not happen in the light of the sceptical nature of philosophy. In the process of the rationalization of religion and faith, for Iqbal, philosophy must judge religion in the light of the principles of religion, rather than its own rational principles. This includes philosophy's admission of the 'central position' of religion as 'an expression of the whole man'.⁶⁶ Philosophy's judgement of religion reveals itself as a process of what Iqbal regards as a 'reflective synthesis'. He writes:

Philosophy, no doubt, has jurisdiction to judge religion, but what is to be judged is of such a nature that it will not submit to the jurisdiction of philosophy except on its own terms. While sitting in judgment on religion, philosophy cannot give religion an inferior place among its data. Religion is not a departmental affair; it is neither mere thought, nor mere feeling, nor mere action; it is an expression of the whole man. Thus, in the evaluation of religion, philosophy must recognize the central position of religion and has no other alternative but to admit it as something focal in the process of reflective synthesis.⁶⁷

Although what Iqbal means by 'reflective synthesis' is not clear, it can be said in the light of his arguments that the reflective synthesis is the merging of the rational method in philosophy's judgement of religion with the principles of religion on a religious ground. One of the outcomes of this merging might be a certain definition of religion in objective terms. Iqbal accepts Whitehead's definition of religion: 'a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended.'⁶⁸ Thus, philosophy is directly related to what Iqbal regards as rationalizing faith or religion. However, it should be noted that the concepts of 'rationalization' and 'philosophy' must be separated sharply from each other. Rationalization distinguishes the distinctive character of religion, so it supports religion by providing it with a rational metaphysics. It takes into consideration the character of the subject matter upon which it is to be exercised. On the other hand, philosophy, as was said before, can deny religion as a result of its sceptical character. The role of philosophy is to provide a rational method that can be used in the process of the rationalization of religion. Hence, it can be said that philosophy is a *tool* used by human reason in the rationalization of religion or faith, and philosophy is appropriate when placed in the proper hierarchical relationship with religion, namely the subordination of philosophy to religion. The purpose of providing religion with a rational metaphysics, namely rationalizing faith, is to achieve objective answers to the metaphysical questions Iqbal raises such as 'What is the character and general structure of the universe in which we live?', 'Is there a permanent element in the constitution of this universe?', 'What place do we occupy in it, and what is the kind of conduct that befits the place we occupy?'⁶⁹ In the end of the process of rationalization of religion, as in the case of Kierkegaard's objective reflection, the individual reaches objective conclusions because the questions the individual deals with and the method he applies to the questions are objective. '*When the question about truth is asked objectively*', Kierkegaard writes, '*truth is reflected upon objectively as an object*'.⁷⁰ Consequently, objective reflection or philosophy leads the individual to abstract thinking, mathematics and historical knowledge or helps him make a clear definition of religion, but, at the same time, it leads the human being away from himself.⁷¹ In the process of rationalizing religion, although its method is to deal with religion in religious terms, it becomes something objective, an object. Thus it appears that the role of Iqbal's concept of philosophy as a tool of rationalizing faith also uses

the same methods as Kierkegaard's objective reflection. However, the problem is that for an existing individual a rationalized faith, although it is a significant part of his religious life, cannot be the ultimate aim. As Iqbal says, 'a mere intellectual belief in God does not count for much in Islam'.⁷² Why, then, does a religion, which can provide answers to the individual's questions regarding the nature of his environment, and, therefore, is intellectually satisfying, 'not count much'? This is because, first of all, for an existing human being 'the interest ... is subjectivity',⁷³ and to become a genuine religious self. Through an objective reflection becoming a self is not possible. This leads to the main problem of a mere intellectual belief, namely, connecting with religion and faith through philosophy or objective reflection lacks *action*. The previous section discussed that action, the key concept leading the individual to self-affirmation, consists of two elements, namely, actuality and love. Since objective reflection excludes the subject, and involves only thought, it lacks actuality, and therefore, it does not include an *existential pathos* or *love*. Since the religious ideal of the individual is self-affirmation,⁷⁴ and in order for an action to lead the individual to self-affirmation and to be a self-sustaining action, it must include *love*; an intellectual belief or a rationalized religion achieved by philosophy is not convincing. This is also the case with Iqbal's pure thought and abstract reflection. Iqbal does not make use of the notions of 'abstract reflection' and 'pure thought' as much as he uses philosophy, intellect and science. He uses the notion of 'pure thought' while discussing the role of reason in religion in a Kantian sense, most probably with reference to his use of the term in the latter's book *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Iqbal refers to the concept 'abstract reflection' mainly in his discussion of 'prayer'. The distinctive aspect of 'abstract reflection' is, obviously, its being 'abstract'. What Iqbal means by this is that it does not involve action, or in Kierkegaardian terms, it is objective and, therefore, lacks actuality. Since in order for an action to be a self-sustaining action it must involve love, when abstract reflection meets love and becomes an actual action, it transforms itself into what Iqbal regards as 'religious experience' or 'intuition', a higher form of thought. This leads to the second encounter of religion and reason, namely their encounter through their aims.

The distinction between reason and religion

In Iqbal's philosophy of religion, reason, philosophy, science and religion come together in their aims, namely to achieve knowledge of reality. Iqbal writes: 'The truth is that the religious and the scientific processes, though involving different methods, are identical in their final aim. Both aim at reaching the most real.'⁷⁵ Iqbal connects religion to love mainly in his poetic works. This type of love is, as was mentioned in the previous section, the poetic form of his central concepts 'religious experience' and 'intuition'. The terms he compares with love are thought, intelligence and science. In his poems especially these concepts usually appear to be the opposite of love. He advises his reader to abandon reason,⁷⁶ and not to seek guidance from intellect, but to apply to love instead,⁷⁷ and preaches

that reason and heart always fight against each other.⁷⁸ In this poetic expression, while love represents the Prophet, reason denotes Abu Lahab, the Prophet's uncle and well-known enemy of Islam condemned by name by the Qur'an.⁷⁹ These expressions reveal an apparent contradiction with his arguments in *The Reconstruction*, since, as has just been seen, a rational religion is a significant part of the stages of the individual's religious life. In fact, these expressions contradict not only *The Reconstruction*, but also his other poems in which he suggests that it is possible to know God through science and other forms of reason. However, the only condition for this is that reason, intellect, intelligence, science, knowledge, or any kind of faculty of human reason requires the help of love, as he indicates in the verses from different works below:

Science without love is a demonic thing,
Science together with love is a thing divine⁸⁰
Reason under heart's guidance is godlike,
When it frees itself from the heart, it becomes satanic.⁸¹

While on its own reason is unable to 'know God', with the help of love 'intelligence' and reason are able to become a power to build a new world to which Iqbal refers repeatedly:

Only through love intelligence gets to know God,
Love's labours find firm grounding in intelligence
When love is accompanied by intelligence
It has the power to design another world.
Then rise and draw the design of a new world,
Mingle together love with intelligence.⁸²

Consequently, when Iqbal's statements regarding reason are considered as a whole, it becomes clear that without love or intuition, reason does not enable the individual to understand what religion requires; it actually harms religion. The forms of reason such as thought, intellect and reflection are transformed into something else when they come together with love. Love or intuition, however, is not different from the faculties of reason in their natures. Iqbal writes, 'In fact, intuition, as Bergson rightly says, is only a higher kind of intellect.'⁸³ In Kierkegaardian terms, subjective reflection is a higher kind of objective reflection, and only when an objective reflection is accompanied by subjective reflection the individual can become a genuine self.

Conclusion

This chapter has applied the Kierkegaardian method of the 'qualitative disjunction' to the problematic points in the main principles of Iqbal's understanding of becoming a self. These problematic points have been divided into three main headings, namely distinguishing subjectivity from objectivity, distinguishing

self-sustaining actions from self-dissolving actions, and distinguishing religion from philosophy. After a brief introduction to the chapter, Iqbal's two ways of the individual's connection to reality were considered, namely an exterior and objective relation to reality and an interior and subjective relation to reality, and his concept of 'religious experience'. It was argued that Iqbal creates confusion particularly in his relating 'religious experience' to objectivity and subjectivity. Kierkegaard's distinction of objective and subjective ways of approaching the truth has been employed, and then, Iqbal's concept of action was seen in the light of the Kierkegaardian notions of actuality and action. This also included the identification of the distinctive tool, namely love, in the determining of the value and quality of human acts, with the help of Kierkegaard's concept of 'existential pathos'. The concepts of 'action' and 'love' which have been identified with Kierkegaard's help also helped to present the relationship between human reason and religion, and the distinction between connecting reality through reason and through love, heart, intuition, or more frequently religious experience.

Here, it is worth elucidating the scope of the discussion of this chapter, and distinguishing between what has been included and what has not been included in the argument in this chapter. Throughout this study the main argument has been that Iqbal does not seem to be interested in providing his reader with a clear account of his terminology, and his philosophy of the self is arguably where his terminology is the most unclear. The task, then, is to highlight these ambiguities in his philosophy of the self. It has also been argued that Kierkegaard's philosophical method can help shed a light on these problems, and, accordingly clarify them. Not all aspects of Iqbal's philosophy of the self have been included and discussed. The task has been only to point out the problematic points of his philosophy of the self, particularly his way of dealing with his terminology, and to apply the Kierkegaardian method developed in Chapter 2 to these problematic points. In order to do this, the main principles of becoming a self in Iqbal have been identified. In order to clarify the problematic aspects of these principles they are approached with the question to what extent they serve Iqbal's purpose. This showed that his philosophy of the self, despite having the potential for it, does not *perfectly* serve his purpose, namely the creation of a new world built by and consisting of genuine Muslims. This is mainly because his terminology presents ambiguities and needs clarification at certain points. These terminological problems are limited to his notion of objectivity, discussion of the concept of action and love, the role of reason and its faculties in the individual's religious life, and the development of the self towards becoming a genuine self before God. The Kierkegaardian principle of making distinctions has been applied to these problems.

The exploration of the question of how the concepts identified and clarified in this chapter play their roles in the other concern of the Kierkegaardian dialectics, namely the cultivation of an existential appropriation on the part of the human being, is the task of the next chapter.

Notes

- 1 Fazlur Rahman, 'Iqbal's Idea of Progress', in Verinder Grover (ed.), *Mohammad Iqbal: A Biography of his Vision and Ideas* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1998), p. 323.
- 2 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 8.
- 3 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 14.
- 4 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 13.
- 5 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 3.
- 6 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 13.
- 7 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 174.
- 8 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 14–15.
- 9 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 15.
- 10 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 2008), pp. 5, 18, 20, 21, 23, 126, 127 (hereafter cited as 'Kitab Bhavan version', all other references to *The Reconstruction* refer to the 1934 Oxford University Press version).
- 11 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 18, 89, 125 (Kitab Bhavan version).
- 12 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 2, 3, 5, 15, 56, 61, 76 (Kitab Bhavan version).
- 13 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 16 (Kitab Bhavan version).
- 14 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. v, 1, 8, 15, 16, 25, 26, 27, 28, 62, 124, 144, 183, 192 (Kitab Bhavan version).
- 15 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 18.
- 16 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 19.
- 17 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 54.
- 18 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 368.
- 19 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, pp. 165–166. Italics original.
- 20 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 130.
- 21 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 113.
- 22 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 113.
- 23 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, trans. R. A. Nicholson and Arthur Arberry, p. 3, <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/640.pdf> [Accessed on 25 September 2017].
- 24 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, 339.
- 25 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 340.
- 26 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 339.
- 27 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 187.
- 28 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, pp. 432–433.
- 29 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 339.
- 30 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 339.
- 31 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 387.
- 32 For a study of Iqbal's notion of 'love' which connects with the Qur'anic notion of *rahmah* (mercy or grace) see Abraham H. Khan, 'A Hint of the Divine Rahmah in Iqbal's Ishq', *An International Journal of Anthropology*, 90, no. 1–2 (2010): 411–427.
- 33 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 41.
- 34 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 5.
- 35 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 5.
- 36 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 393.
- 37 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 5.
- 38 See Iqbal, 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani (New Delhi: Adam Publishers, 2006), pp. 106–107.
- 39 Iqbal, 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 107.

- 40 Iqbal, 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 108.
- 41 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 13.
- 42 For example see Iqbal, 'Political Thought in Islam', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, pp. 138–154.
- 43 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 19.
- 44 Iqbal, 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 107.
- 45 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 13.
- 46 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 43.
- 47 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 38.
- 48 Iqbal, 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 104.
- 49 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 37.
- 50 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 15.
- 51 Iqbal, 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 102.
- 52 Kierkegaard, *PF*, pp. 37–48.
- 53 Iqbal, 'Gabriel's Wing', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, trans. D. J. Matthews, Naim Siddiqui and Syed Akbar Ali Shah (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2014), p. 263, <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/784.pdf> [Accessed on 3 October 2017].
- 54 Iqbal, 'Javidnama', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, trans. Arthur J. Arberry and Bashir A. Dar, p. 299, <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/849.pdf> [Accessed 10 October 2017].
- 55 Iqbal, 'Persian Psalms', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, trans. Arthur J. Arberry, p. 252, <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/848.pdf> [Accessed on 10 October 2017].
- 56 A. K. Rashid, 'Iqbal and the Role of Philosophy in Religion', in Verinder Grover (ed.), *Muhammad Iqbal: A Biography of His Vision and Ideas* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1998), pp. 249–262.
- 57 A. K. Rashid, 'Iqbal and the Role of Philosophy in Religion', p. 250.
- 58 Fazlur Rahman, 'Iqbal's Idea of the Muslim', p. 439.
- 59 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 41.
- 60 Iqbal, 'Javidnama', p. 297.
- 61 According to a letter cited by Annemarie Schimmel in *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), p. 61.
- 62 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 171.
- 63 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 1.
- 64 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 1.
- 65 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 2.
- 66 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 2.
- 67 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 2.
- 68 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 1–2.
- 69 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 1.
- 70 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 199. Italics original.
- 71 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 193.
- 72 Iqbal, *Stray Reflections: The Private Notebook of Muhammad Iqbal*, ed. Jawed Iqbal (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2006), p. 154.
- 73 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 193.
- 74 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 3.
- 75 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 185.
- 76 Iqbal, 'A Message from the East', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, trans. Muhammad H. Hussain, Arthur J. Arberry and Mustansir Mir, p. 108. <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/702.pdf> [Accessed on 3 October 2017].
- 77 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', p. 32.

- 78 Iqbal, 'Gabriel's Wing', p. 254.
 79 Iqbal, 'Gabriel's Wing', p. 284.
 80 Iqbal, 'Javidnama', p. 305.
 81 Iqbal, 'What Should Then Be Done O Nations of the East!' in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, trans. Bashir A. Dar, p. 353. <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/725.pdf> [Accessed on 3 October 2017].
 82 Iqbal, 'Javidnama', p. 301. Arberry translated the Persian word '*ilm*' into English as 'science'. However, the word '*ilm*' is originally an Arabic word, and can also be translated into English as 'knowledge'. For the original Persian text see, <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/969-416-202-008.pdf> [Accessed on 3 October 2017].
 83 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 3.

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5 Cultivating existential appropriation on the part of the reader

Introduction

In the introduction it was claimed that a significant parallel between Kierkegaard and Iqbal can be found in their methods of dispelling the wrong perceptions of religion: they both use literary techniques, take human existence as the starting point for their reflections, and develop a notion of the self. Chapter 2 highlighted that cultivating existential appropriation on the part of the reader is one of the main concerns of Kierkegaard's dialectics through which he attempts to help his readers become genuinely existing Christian selves. Chapter 2 also showed that it is mainly by employing Socratic method and irony in his authorship as a literary technique and by highlighting the fact that Christianity is an existence-communication that Kierkegaard attempts to cultivate existential appropriation on the part of his reader. Likewise, it is by bringing his reader's attention to the existential character of Islam that Iqbal attempts to cultivate an existential awakening on the part of his reader. The means by which he strives to achieve this is through the use of poetry, and the examination of the nature of religious experience and prayer. However, his treatment of each of these themes is marked by a lack of terminological clarity as will be highlighted and discussed in the following sections. He introduces a number of existential categories in his analyses of what he calls the periods of religious life and the education of the ego. However, as will be seen, he does not make a clear distinction between the different existential strands of Islam and the manner in which they foster the believer's existential awakening. It is here that the Kierkegaardian hermeneutic constructed in Chapter 2 and a number of Iqbalian concepts clarified in Chapter 4 can assist. In order to clarify the existential categories in Iqbal's thought, in this chapter the cluster of concepts Kierkegaard develops to describe the nature of the self and to articulate the different ways the self is situated in the world will be drawn on. In other words, this chapter explores the application of another concern of Kierkegaardian dialectics, namely, the cultivation of existential appropriation on the part of the reader which will help identify and formulate Iqbal's understanding of becoming a Muslim self before God. The distinction made in Chapter 4, in the light of Kierkegaard's method and terms, between the concepts that are conflated by Iqbal will also be of help in identifying the central features of Iqbal's thought.

First, Iqbal's use of his poetry to develop existential awakening on the part of his reader will be examined in the light of Kierkegaard's concept of 'indirect communication'. The parallels between Iqbal's employment of poetry and Kierkegaard's theory of indirect communication, and the application of Kierkegaard's theory of indirect communication to Iqbal's literary method will make it possible to demonstrate that for Iqbal education of an individual must involve the teacher's starting from the position and level of the learner. Although Iqbal does not have a particular interest in talking about his method, scrutiny of a number of documents such as letters, speeches and life events make it possible to examine his literary character in the light of 'indirect communication'. The main principles of Kierkegaard's indirect communication, namely the maieutic approach, and his irony are useful in the attempt to understand Iqbal's literary method.

A close reading of Iqbal's works shows that for him Islam is not merely a collection of teachings and commands but a world-view which the individual must assimilate and appropriate existentially. This chapter will also attempt to identify and clarify Iqbal's understanding of the existential character of Islam more fully in the light of Kierkegaard's notion of 'existence-communication'. Kierkegaard's three stages of existence, namely the stages of the aesthetic, ethical and religious will also help to approach Iqbal's three stages of religious life which were introduced briefly in the previous chapter. These stages will lead to Iqbal's two central concepts, namely religious experience and prayer, which will be examined in the third and fourth sections of this chapter.

In the third section, the Kierkegaardian notion of 'Religiousness A' will be applied to Iqbal's concept of 'religious experience'. The notion of 'religious experience' was examined as a means of yielding knowledge of reality, and of establishing a subjective relation to God in Chapter 4. In this chapter, this concept will be taken as a crucial term in the individual's becoming a self before God. Besides conflating the notion of religious experience with other concepts, a further problem with Iqbal's treatment of the concept is that he is concerned with the technical and practical aspects of the term and does not pay sufficient attention to the role of religious experience in the individual's existence. He gives the impression that religious experience is a vital concept in the individual's religiousness; however, he does not show his reader how to employ this term to his existence. Since it is argued that Iqbal applies indirect communication to his authorship, from a Kierkegaardian point of view it is his task to explain or show the ways of becoming a self to his reader or listener, although the success of his communication to his reader is not under his control. Kierkegaard's pseudonym Climacus' notion of 'Religiousness A', the natural or general type of religiousness, helps to uncover the role of religious experience in the individual's existence.

In the fourth section, Kierkegaard's notion of the religious sphere, and Climacus' distinction between 'Religiousness A' and 'Religiousness B' will be applied to Iqbal's notion of prayer. First, the distinction is to be made between the different forms of prayer to which Iqbal refers, and an attempt will be made to

identify what type of prayer Iqbal implies to develop the human self. Then, his notion of prayer will be considered as a *distinctive* characteristic of Islam, and it will be argued that prayer as a distinctive characteristic of Islam is a compulsory element in the individual's becoming a genuine Muslim self. In this section, the concepts clarified in the light of Kierkegaard's principle of the 'qualitative disjunction' in Chapter 4 will be used in the discussion of Iqbal's characterizing prayer as a kind of reflection.

The aim in this chapter is to examine Iqbal's method and understanding of cultivating existential appropriation on the part of his reader in the light of the Kierkegaardian hermeneutics constructed in Chapter 2. The view is taken that applying Kierkegaard's method to Iqbal's thought enables the formulation and clarification of Iqbal's perception of Islam as an existential phenomenon, and the individual's movement towards becoming a genuine Muslim self, a perfect self, before God.

Iqbal's poetry as 'indirect communication'

In Chapter 2 it was argued that Kierkegaard developed and employed indirect communication because existential, ethical and religious truths can be grasped only when the recipient of those truths appropriates them and makes them his/her own. This means, they cannot be communicated directly and objectively, because such modes of communication fail to take account of the existential commitment required on the part of the recipient of such truths. The appropriation of such truths requires a creative act on the part of the reader that parallels the creative act of the writer who wishes to communicate these truths. Kierkegaard made use of literary and poetical forms to encourage his readers to embark upon such a creative appropriation of the truths communicated in his various works. He aims at reaching his goal by means of what he calls the Socratic or maieutic method, aesthetic authorship and irony. His communication with his reader through these concepts involves two main principles. First, communication must help the individual appropriate the truth that is communicated. Second, communication must be indirect, because, as was previously said, direct communication does not enable the individual to appropriate and therefore grasp truths. The key point in this is to start where the reader is and to establish a common ground with him/her. In Kierkegaard's words:

No, an illusion can never be removed directly, and basically only indirectly. If it is an illusion that all are Christians, and if something is to be done, it must be done indirectly, not by someone who loudly declares himself to be an extraordinary Christian, but by someone who, better informed, even declares himself not to be a Christian.¹

The main problem for Kierkegaard is his conviction that genuine Christianity had vanished from modern Denmark, resulting in the illusion that every citizen who lives in the Christian state is a Christian. He aims to remove this illusion

and confront his contemporaries with the *difficulty* of becoming a Christian. Becoming a Christian is a difficult task, so one cannot become a Christian without personal effort. Since most people are in illusion by living in aesthetic categories,² the writer or the communicator must approach his reader not like an 'extraordinary Christian', but as someone who understands and makes the reader feel that he is understood in order to be able to lead him out of that situation into the religious stage. Kierkegaard's pseudonymous characters fulfil this duty.

With regard to Iqbal, he follows a similar course of action in his poetic method as will be examined. However, the problem is that Iqbal does not provide a clear account of his method as Kierkegaard does in his *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*. This ends with two results. First, as will be seen shortly, Iqbal's literary approach appears to be a collection of contradictions. Second, this has caused one of the most significant characteristics of Iqbal's thought, namely his particular literary method, to remain in the background, and has led scholars of Iqbal to ignore an important aspect of his philosophical method. The aim of this section is, then, to point out the contradiction in his literary approach, and to dispel these contradictions by means of the Kierkegaardian hermeneutics. This will also show how Iqbal approaches his reader or listener in order to cultivate an existential awakening and appropriation on his part.

Iqbal's relation to poetry as an artistic form shows inconsistencies in two ways. First, he condemns all kinds of art, including poetry. For him, all kinds of art done merely for aesthetic pleasure, or as he puts it 'Art for the sake of Art', are a sign of the decay and decline of a culture.³ This view arises from his *ethics*. In the introduction to *The Secrets of the Self* he writes:

the idea of personality gives us a standard of value: it settles the problem of good and evil. That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it is bad. Art, religion, and ethics must be judged from the stand-point of personality.⁴

This shows that Iqbal's ethics, his understanding of good and bad, depends on his idea of the self. Likewise, in his article titled 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal' he writes of the value of human actions including making art, and writes, 'that which intensifies the sense of individuality in man is good, that which enfeebles it is bad'.⁵ In the light of Iqbal's statements it can be said that the character of an action depends on its effect on the self: if the action helps cultivating the self it is good, if it results in or leads to destruction of the self, it is bad. In other words, if the individual's action leads him to self-affirmation, it is good, and if the same action leads him to self-negation, it is evil. For an act or action to be ethically 'good', it must cultivate the human self; otherwise, it is 'bad'. For Iqbal, art, as an action, done for mere aesthetic pleasure does not contribute to the development of the self, as can be seen in his critique of Persian poetry. In one of his verses in his *The Rod of Moses*, he clearly states that classical Persian mystical poetry, despite its literary and aesthetic value, makes no contribution to the self, because this kind of poetry does not sharpen 'the sword-edge' of the

self.⁶ Then, art for the sake of art that makes no contribution to the individual's becoming a self is ethically bad despite its aesthetic value. Iqbal's negative approach to poetry, particularly Persian poetry, raises the question why he makes Persian poetry a significant part of his intellectual career, and writes his poems mostly in Persian although it is not even his mother tongue. Previously it was seen that Iqbal presents a highly critical stance towards Islamic mysticism. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to use traditional mystical poetical forms such as *masnavi* and *ghazal*, which creates a further contradiction in his relation to the arts. He wrote his two philosophical poems *The Secrets of the Self* and *Mysteries of the Selflessness* in the form of *masnavi*, and *The Call of the Caravan Bell* consists of a number of *ghazals* he wrote in his intellectual career.⁷ It is not only that he uses classical literary forms, he also makes use of a number of traditional mystical poetic symbols such as the rose and nightingale in his poetry.⁸ Apparently, when his approach so far is considered, Iqbal seems to be in a contradiction. In order to eliminate the seeming contradiction created by Iqbal's not talking about his literary technique in detail, his approach should be considered not only in the works he published, but also in his personal letters, speeches, newspaper articles and life events.

The main question here is why Iqbal believes that making art for merely aesthetic pleasure leads society to decay and decline, and, therefore it is ethically bad. Previously it was discussed that for Iqbal human actions can be either self-sustaining or self-dissolving. Consequently, as in every act of the human being, there are two ways of writing poetry or two types of poetry, namely, self-sustaining poetry, and self-dissolving poetry. Iqbal's discussion of the Prophet's views on poetry also shows that he deals with poetry in these two groups. In an article published in *The New Era*, Iqbal cites two different examples of the Prophet's approach to contemporary Arabian poetry. One of them is from the poetry of Imra-ul-Qais, a well-known Arabic poet of the Prophet's era. Iqbal reports that the Prophet said of the poet 'He is the most poetic of all poets and their leader to Hell', and continues:

Now, what do we find in the poetry of Imra-ul-Qais? Sparkling wine, enervating sentiments and situations of love, heart-rending means over the ruins of habitations long swept away by stormy winds, superb pictures of the inspiring scenery of silent deserts – and all this is the choicest expression of old Arabia.⁹

In other words, Imra-ul-Qais is criticized by the Prophet, because, Iqbal claims, his poetry directs the individual to imagination, rather than to will, and functions as a sedative on the reader. Hence, a literarily good poem can be harmful for society, and even lead them to hell. Iqbal writes: 'The Prophet's criticism reveals this most important art-principle – that the good in art is not necessarily identical with the good in life.'¹⁰ Another example Iqbal reports from the Prophet is his appreciation of a poet after listening to one of the verses the poet has composed. The verse, as Iqbal translates it runs, 'Verily I pass through the whole

nights of toil to merit a livelihood worthy of an honourable man.¹¹ The reason for the Prophet's appreciation of this poet is that the verse, for Iqbal, is 'healthful and vitalising', and that the poet idealizes 'the pain of honourable labour'.¹² The Prophet's appreciation, then, shows another principle regarding 'art', namely, 'art is subordinate to life, not superior to it'.¹³ This means that genuine art does not dominate life, but serves life. In sum, art should not be considered and evaluated in terms of its literary beauty and the aesthetic pleasure it gives, but in terms of its contribution to human life and the self. Otherwise it is no more than disintegration or what Iqbal regards as a 'message of decay'.¹⁴ Thus, for Iqbal, poetry must contain a purpose and message to the reader and this message must cultivate the self/ego of the reader.

Besides pointing out the distinction between the two types of poetry, Iqbal does not provide a clear account of how genuine poetry can serve the development of the self or becoming a self. In other words, Iqbal explains *what* genuine poetry and art are, but he does not give a clear answer to the question *how* genuine poetry contributes to the self in a positive way. It is here that Kierkegaard's indirect communication can help to uncover the main principles of Iqbal's use of poetry. As was said at the beginning of this section, Kierkegaard's communication with his reader consists of two main principles, namely cultivating existential appropriation on the part of the reader, and being indirect. Reading Iqbal's approach in the light of these two principles can indicate how Iqbal's poetry, as 'genuine' poetry, contributes to becoming a self.

Iqbal's close friend Sir Abd al-Qadir reports that during his studies in Europe, Iqbal himself came to a point of crisis in his creative life when he questioned the validity of poetry. When Sir Abd al-Qadir reminded him of his poetry's importance for the people of his country and their future, he decided to continue his poetical endeavours. Sir Abd al-Qadir writes:

One day Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal told me that he had firmly decided to abandon poetry, to avow never to write verse, and use the time he would spend on poetry on some other productive pursuit. I told him that his poetry was not such as should be abandoned. On the other hand his poetry had the potential of curing the malady of our backward nation and unfortunate country. Hence it would be inappropriate to waste such a useful divinely bestowed capability. Sheikh had only half consented, and it was agreed to leave the final decision to Mr Arnold's opinion. The Sheikh was to change his opinion if Mr Arnold would agree with me and the reverse would be the case if he agreed with Sheikh. I consider it the good fortune of the intellectual world that Mr Arnold agreed with me. So it was decided that abandoning poetry was not proper for Iqbal, and that any time spent on this work would be equally useful to him and to his country and nation.¹⁵

Hence, Iqbal, encouraged by the people around him, decides to use poetry in the service of his purposes although he is not interested in it for any artistic taste, as he claims. Iqbal attempts to save his country from the problems of its 'backward

nation' through his poetical gift by transforming it into a tool that he can use in his philosophical agenda, since poetry is a significant part of the cultural and social life of Indian Muslims. Schimmel points out the role of poetry in India:

There is a very peculiar art of reciting poetry in the East, and especially in the Indian subcontinent: the poem is recited, with or without a special melodious intonation, and every line is repeated once more either by the recitator himself or taken up by the public which listens untired for hours and hours, and learns easily by heart the new verses; the effect of a single well-said line can raise a large audience simply up to ecstasy.¹⁶

Iqbal justifies Schimmel's statements by admitting that he writes poetry in order to attract the attention of his society because it is a common tradition in India. He writes in one of his letters: 'I have no interest in the art of poetry, but I have some special intentions for the declaration of which I have chosen the way of poetry because of the state and traditions of this country' (M I 195, 1935).¹⁷ In another letter, Iqbal summarizes his views regarding his use of his literary method as a means of communication with his readers: 'I do not imagine language as an idol which must be adored, but as a medium for expressing purposes' (M I 56).¹⁸ Iqbal's use of language as a medium can also be observed in his employment of irony in his poems *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i Shikwa*.¹⁹ As was seen in Chapter 3 these two poems consist of a dialogue between a Muslim, who believes that he is a genuine Muslim, and God. Like Kierkegaard who employs pseudonymous authorship and therefore provides his reader with the opportunity of choosing the character which he thinks the most suitable for him, Iqbal follows a similar method. By playing the role of an ordinary Muslim and acting as a mouthpiece for Muslim frustration, Iqbal implies that Muslims of his day do not criticize themselves but only complain about their situation even if they themselves are responsible for that situation as becomes clear at the end of the poems. Iqbal empathizes with the modern Muslim individual, and actually helps his reader in a way which Kierkegaard explains as 'In order truly to help someone else, I must understand more than he – but certainly first and foremost understand what he understands.'²⁰

Hence, Iqbal starts from where his reader is, and tries to be understood by as many people as possible, and this is the point of departure of his use of poetry and literary method. The reason for his desire of being understood arises from his purpose of re-educating Muslims and cultivating existential appropriation and awakening on the part of his readers. By means of traditional mystical poetical forms and symbols, he appeals to the aesthetic inclination of his reader although he bitterly criticizes Islamic mysticism. In order for education to be successful, the teacher or communicator must be able to think in the way the learner thinks. Iqbal also knows that if he does not communicate to his reader in a way he understands or he fails to attract his readers' attention, he will fail in his mission of awakening his nation. In Iqbal's educational approach, the learner is in the centre. This entails approaching the individual/reader/learner in a way

he understands and in a way which can affect his self. Consequently, Iqbal's use of poetry as a method of education serves his educational purposes. He says, 'Education, like other things, ought to be determined by the needs of the learner.'²¹

Thus, although Iqbal is not aware of doing so, he uses Socrates' maieutic method and indirect communication in his poetry. However, it should be noted that Iqbal's indirect communication with his reader encounters the difficulty that the success of the communication is not in his power. The aim of 'indirect communication' is to awaken existential appropriation on the part of the audience. All Iqbal can do is to 'compel him to become aware'.²²

Islam as an 'existence-communication'

According to Kierkegaard, belief systems communicate to the individual specific ways in which he can choose to live his life, and any kind of mode of existence or world-view is an 'existence-communication'. Johannes Climacus distinguishes between three basic modes of existence that the individual can choose to live accordingly, namely the aesthetic, ethical and religious modes of existence. Applying this distinction to Iqbal's thought entails considering how Iqbal's treatment of Islam can be read in terms of Kierkegaard's conception of world-views as modes of existence and existence-communications. On this understanding, Islam as a form of belief, a world-view, is a mode of existence and an 'existence-communication'. Some of the fundamental tools that make one a genuine Muslim, namely 'action' and 'love', were identified and discussed in the previous chapter. Becoming a genuine Muslim, for Iqbal, means cultivating these existential categories. That is, Islam is not only a system of teachings; it is also a system of belief, which expects the individual to assimilate and act upon its teaching. The genuine Muslim does not merely 'know' or 'think' about Islam, but through action and love appropriates the core beliefs of Islam and makes them his own. In Kierkegaardian terms, Islam is an 'existence-communication' and the individual is only genuinely a Muslim when he subjectively commits himself to these beliefs, and allows them to transform his existence.

In *The Secrets of the Self*, Iqbal introduces three stages in the development of the self or education of the self. These stages are:

- 1 obedience to the law, namely Islamic law identified by the Qur'an and the Prophet,²³
- 2 self-control that is possible through the individual's fulfilment of his religious duties such as praying, fasting, pilgrimage, and almsgiving²⁴ and
- 3 divine vicegerency.²⁵

The problem with Iqbal's stages is that he does not develop them or raise any further discussion on them anywhere else except in a few pages of *The Secrets of the Self*. This is a highly problematic issue because the development of the self or becoming a Muslim self is his central concern, but he does not develop the three

crucial steps of becoming a genuine Muslim self that could help his reader. Iqbal makes a similar division in his three stages of the education of the self, which he calls the periods of religious life, in the last lecture of his *The Reconstruction*. Here, he does not make any reference to his previous discussion in *The Secrets of the Self*, however, his latter arguments can be regarded as a more developed form of his division in his former work. These are the spheres of *faith*, *thought* and *discovery*. The problem again is that Iqbal mainly makes definitions of the spheres, but provides neither a clear account of them nor any detail regarding their natures and functions, although religiousness is his main concern in becoming a self before God.²⁶ The three stages of the religious life of the individual, which Iqbal discusses in less than two pages, is highly crucial, since they include important clues regarding the question of what to do in order to become a genuine Muslim self or how to become a genuine Muslim self. The aim of this section is to examine Iqbal's spheres in the light of Kierkegaard's three stages or spheres of existence, particularly the stages of the ethical and religious. This will help to clarify and grasp the nature of the individual's relation to Islam as an 'existence-communication' in becoming a self or a genuine Muslim. However, before moving on to this, it should be noted that it is not presumed that Kierkegaard's stages and Iqbal's spheres are identical or synonymous as Kazmi claims.²⁷ Such an approach would be a superficial approach since it would ignore the differences between their thoughts by characterizing them as synonymous. On the other hand, this does not mean that Kierkegaard's division of three stages cannot be used in identifying and clarifying Iqbal's spheres of religious life. Kierkegaard's spheres will, actually, helps to grasp the way in which the Muslim individual relates himself to Islam as an 'existence-communication' in Iqbal's thought.

The stage of 'faith'

The first stage of the individual's religious life expects him to obey the Islamic principles 'as a form of discipline' without any examination of the purpose or nature of these principles. This sphere is not concerned with any personal development of the human being, and Iqbal defines this sphere as 'a perfect submission to discipline'.²⁸ He writes: 'In the first period religious life appears as a form of discipline which the individual or a whole people must accept as an unconditional command without any rational understanding of the ultimate meaning and purpose of that command.'²⁹ In this sphere, there is no concern regarding the individual's personal development or any rational attempt to understand religious commands: 'This attitude may be of great consequence in the social and political history of a people, but is not of much consequence in so far as the individual's inner growth and expansion are concerned.'³⁰ Although the period of faith is not concerned with the development of the self or becoming a self, the individual establishes a relationship with Islam. However, if there is no place for a rational understanding or any existential appropriation, then, how can the individual establish a relationship to Islam? In Kierkegaardian terms, the answer would be by imitating the others. Climacus writes:

Just as a mother admonishes her child who is about to attend a party, ‘Now, mind your manners and watch the other polite children and behave as they do’, so he, too, could live on and behave as he saw others behave.³¹

The individual is told to obey the religious command, and in doing so, he behaves like the other people obeying the same command. This, in Kierkegaardian terms, is an objective relationship with truth. Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal hold that this is not satisfying in the existential development of the human being, since it does not include enough principles to lead the individual to his ultimate aim of becoming a self before God. However, for Iqbal, this is a significant step for an individual both in the development of his self and his religious life. Yet, there is a significant question regarding Iqbal’s first stage, which he appears to miss, namely the question why the individual accepts and obeys the Islamic command while he has the choice of living as he wishes? At first sight it is difficult to read this stage in terms of Kierkegaard’s aesthetic stage, because as was seen in Chapter 2, becoming a religious self is not among the primary concerns of the human being who exists in the aesthetic sphere. It is interested in the individual’s immediate and relative goals and desires. Since Iqbal’s sphere of faith involves religious principles, it cannot be regarded as an aesthetic mode of existence in Kierkegaardian terms. For Kierkegaard’s Climacus, the individual’s task is to relate himself absolutely to the absolute goal, and relatively to relative goals. However, as was suggested before, it is always possible for the human being to relate himself absolutely to relative goals. In other words, it is possible for the individual to let his relative concerns transform his existence. In terms of Iqbal’s first stage, what this means is that the individual can present a submission to religious commands, can pray five times a day, can fast during the holy month of Ramadan, can even make pilgrimage only because of fear of others or loss of a high position, or can be excluded from society. Likewise, he can do all of these in order to gain a high position or impress people around him, since he connects himself to relative goals such as reputation. This can depend on the conditions of his social and religious environment. So, although Iqbal does not explain the type of ‘pathos’ in the individual’s act of following the Islamic command, there are two possible ways in which the individual can obey the Islamic command. There can be, on the one hand, an individual who follows the Islamic principles for relative ends and worldly concerns, and relates himself to Islam through aesthetic pathos. On the other hand, there can be another individual following the Islamic command without any worldly concern or, in Kierkegaardian terms, without any concern for relative goals. The individual has no concern for his existential development but commits himself to the Islamic commands as a duty incumbent on every Muslim. In other words, such an individual is aware of the fact that he must relate himself to Islam for an absolute end although he does not examine the nature of this absolute end and the commands in which it is expressed. Iqbal certainly intends the second type of commitment to Islamic principles by ‘perfect submission to discipline’ to be a first step towards the highest goal of the human being. In one of his articles he

compares a modest religious Muslim with a well-educated so-called Muslim who attaches himself to Islam with the concern of relative goals and admits that the former is more valuable than the latter:

To me a Muslim of scanty means who possesses a really Muslim character is a much more valuable national asset than a high-salaried, free thinking graduate with whom Islam, far from being a working principle of life, is merely a convenient policy in order to secure a greater share in the leaves and fishes of the country.³²

Here, then, the *qualitative distinction* between the two types of commitment to Islam, namely the commitment with an 'existential pathos' and 'love' and with an 'aesthetic pathos' must be considered.

A further problem regarding this stage is the probability that the individual can stay at this stage throughout his lifetime, and die at this stage without being able to move into the next stages, and even without being aware of his capability of developing his religiousness. In Climacus' words:

a person might very well live on, marry, be respected and esteemed as husband, father, and captain of the popinjay shooting club, without discovering God in his work, ... because he managed with an analogy to the speculative confusion of the ethical and the world-historical by managing with custom and tradition in the city where he lived?³³

A person may wish to be a religious person, but at the same time want to satisfy his worldly concerns, and may not even be interested in any further religious development. In Kierkegaardian terms, the individual may want 'a good job, a beautiful wife, health, ... and in addition an eternal happiness',³⁴ and so have no interest in the 'renunciation' of his worldly desires. This means that the individual is not relating himself absolutely to the absolute goal. This is not Iqbal's concern, because he focuses all of his attention on the final stage, and is less interested in other important steps, which will lead the individual to the final stage. However, it is Iqbal's task to cultivate an existential appropriation on the part of his reader at any stage as a communicator. On the other hand, despite all his endeavours, the success of Iqbal's communication is not within his control. Thus, all he can do is to communicate to his reader and consider that his endeavour might be unsuccessful.

The stage of 'thought'

The second stage, namely the stage of 'thought' is where the individual includes his reason and understanding under his submission to the religious authority. In the previous chapter the role of reason in the realm of religion, and its limits in the individual's relation to reality were considered. In that chapter, this stage was approached with the question of the relationship and distinction between reason

and religion, and dealt with the issue with a particular focus on the role of human reason in religious belief. The stage of ‘thought’ was the departure point in the discussion of distinguishing between reason and religion. It was argued that the second stage is where the individual provides a rational basis and justification for what he believes, seeks answers to his metaphysical questions, and, therefore, rationalizes religion. The tool the individual employs in the process of rationalization is philosophy, or in Kierkegaardian terms, objective reflection, and the results the individual achieves are objective. However, a mere rational faith or the stage of ‘thought’ is not sufficient for the individual’s becoming a genuine self. Reason must be accompanied by what Iqbal regards as ‘love’ or ‘intuition’, and become a ‘handmaiden’ of religion. In this section the question is the value and role of the stage of ‘thought’ in the cultivation of the self in Iqbal, and the human being’s relation to his absolute goal, namely to become a self through self-affirmation. This means that this stage will make a particular focus on human existence.

Iqbal writes of the stage of ‘thought’:

Perfect submission to discipline is followed by a rational understanding of the discipline and the ultimate source of its authority. In this period religious life seeks its foundation in a kind of metaphysics – logically consistent view of the world with God as part of that view.³⁵

The methods the individual employs at this stage are objective methods. The human being uses objective methods of philosophy through objective reflection, and aims at gathering objectively valid answers to his metaphysical questions regarding the nature of the universe and the human being’s place in reality. On this basis, it can be concluded that the stage of ‘thought’ is also not concerned with the existential development of the individual. However, before making such a judgement, first Iqbal’s intention by ‘a kind of metaphysics’ and ‘logically consistent view of the world with God’ in which religious life seeks its foundation should be examined. This leads to Iqbal’s discussion of the metaphysical questions surrounding the human being such as the nature of the universe and the place the human being occupies in the universe in his first lecture of *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.³⁶ For Iqbal, the most significant characteristic of the human being is that he is the most superior creature in the universe: ‘With all his failings he is superior to nature, inasmuch as he carries within him a great trust which, in the words of the Qur’an, the Heavens and the earth and the mountains refused to carry.’³⁷ The human being is superior to all creatures by his being the most responsible creature that is capable of making free choices and achieving immortality. A justification of his position in the universe in the light of the Qur’an will make him realize that he is not created without any aim: ‘Thinketh man that he shall be thrown away as an object of no use?’ (75:36), Iqbal quotes.³⁸ Then, the individual finds the answers to his question with a careful reading of the Qur’an. It is also the Qur’an that provides the individual with a logically consistent view of God with his Creativity, Knowledge, Omnipotence

and Eternity.³⁹ The stage of ‘thought’ is where the individual establishes a logically consistent Islamic world-view in the light of the Qur’an, and, therefore, where Islam becomes an ‘existence-communication’ for him. What this means is that the individual must not merely ‘know’ about these metaphysical Islamic principles, but make them his own. This is the major distinction between the first and second stages. In the first stage, the individual knows about God, and he obeys the Islamic rules, he may even know the principles of an Islamic world-view. However, in the second stage, the individual uses his own reflection, provides answers from the Qur’an, and continues with an existential appropriation of Islam as an ‘existence-communication’. In Kierkegaardian terms, Iqbal’s second stage involves not only objective reflection or thinking, but also ‘subjective reflection’ and ‘double reflection’ which for Climacus includes the communicator’s own relation to the idea.⁴⁰

The stage of ‘discovery’

The third stage is the last stage of religiousness. At this stage, the individual wants to go beyond Islam as a mere ‘existence-communication’ or world-view, and to establish a closer contact with God. Iqbal regards this as the replacement of metaphysics by psychology. He writes:

In the third period metaphysics is displaced by psychology, and religious life develops the ambition to come into direct contact with the ultimate Reality. It is here that religion becomes a matter of personal assimilation of life and power; and the individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of the law, but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his own consciousness. As in the works of a Muslim Sufi – ‘no understanding of the Holy Book is possible until it is actually revealed to the believer just as it was revealed to the Prophet’.⁴¹

What Iqbal means by displacement of metaphysics by psychology is that, in this period of religiousness, the individual does not need the answers to his metaphysical questions or any rational and intellectual quest anymore. His quest is now to achieve a more intimate relation to God, ‘Ultimate Reality’. This relationship between the individual and God helps him discover himself as a unique self. Iqbal writes:

The climax of religious life, however, is the discovery of the ego as an individual deeper than his conceptually describable habitual self-hood. It is in contact with the Most Real that the ego discovers its uniqueness, its metaphysical status, and the possibility of improvement in that status.⁴²

This discovery, for Iqbal, is possible not through the human being’s intellectually and rationally analysable experience, but through an inner experience of the

individual which Iqbal also regards as a kind of ‘psychology’.⁴³ ‘Psychology’ and ‘psychic phenomenon’ are also other terms Iqbal uses for his concept of ‘religious experience’. Religious experience leads the individual to his discovery of himself as a unique personality before God, and his way of establishing a direct relation to God, or to the ‘Most Real’ in Iqbal’s words. Iqbal’s notion of ‘religious experience’ will be examined in a separate section, and it will be shown how this crucial concept plays its role in the individual’s highest level of religiousness, the period of discovery. However, before moving on to this, a number of issues regarding Iqbal’s division of religious life, the relation of each period with each other, should be clarified.

A concluding discussion on Iqbal’s periods of religious life

A further issue regarding Iqbal’s division of religious life, from a Kierkegaardian point of view, is that he does not discuss how the individual moves from one period to another period, whether a previous stage is transformed into the following stage or the individual himself leaves one stage behind and moves towards higher stages. In terms of Kierkegaard’s stages, it was argued that Kierkegaard’s stages are not connected by a merging of the stages but by the individual’s ‘leap’ or his free decision to move from one stage to another. Iqbal’s stages can also be approached from this point of view. Although no rational understanding of the individual takes place in the first sphere of religious life, this period is conditioned by what Iqbal regards as a ‘perfect submission’ to Islamic authority. It was claimed that a ‘perfect submission’ entails the individual’s obedience to Islamic commands without any worldly concern. The individual’s promotion, in the religious sense, to the second and third stages depends on his own free choice and will, namely a leap rather than merging the stages. This means that the transformation happens in the individual’s own existence rather than in the sphere itself.

This discussion raises the question whether the higher stages involve the lower stages, or the individual leaves the previous stage, or in Kierkegaardian terms ‘dethrones’ one stage in his movement towards the next one. In the discussion of Kierkegaard’s spheres of existence the same question was raised, and concluded that Kierkegaard’s stage of the ethical and religious also include the aesthetic stage. With reference to Iqbal, although he does not provide a clear view, it can be said that Iqbal also holds that the higher stages involve the ‘dethroned’ stages. In his statements regarding the third period, he writes, ‘the individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of the law, but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his own consciousness’. It can be concluded from this that even the highest stage is not a departure from the Islamic commandment or ‘law’.⁴⁴ In other words, the individual must continue following the Islamic commandment with a perfect submission in each sphere. However, in discussing the third sphere it was seen that Iqbal suggests that the metaphysics established in the second sphere with the help of rational evaluation is displaced by psychology. What Iqbal means by the

displacement of metaphysics by psychology is that the human being who exists in the third period does not need metaphysics anymore.

The final question regarding Iqbal's periods of religious life is whether the third period is the combination of the first and second periods. In the discussion of this question in terms of Kierkegaard's stages, it was concluded that they must not be regarded as a mathematical process, and that his religious sphere is not a synthesis of the aesthetic and ethical spheres. With regard to Iqbal, Iqbal's periods of religious life are like steps towards perfection, and each step is significant for the following step. However, this does not mean that Iqbal's stages can be regarded as a mathematical process. This actually would be a non-Kierkegaardian approach, since Kierkegaard is highly critical of objective approaches in the realm of existence. In the following sections it will be seen more clearly how even the last stage include stages in itself such as religious experience and prayer like the Kierkegaardian distinction between Religiousness A and Religiousness B, and that Iqbal's highest stage is not a combination of the first and second stages.

Religious experience

In Chapter 4, it was argued that Iqbal's central notion of religious experience includes both objective and subjective elements. It is objective in terms of its content, but the individual can only achieve the objective content of religious experience through subjectivity. It was also seen that religious experience is the way the human being achieves knowledge of reality, which is not open to sense perception or any other rational approaches. In order for the human being to grasp reality in its entirety the exterior or objective relationship to reality must be supplemented by a subjective relationship, namely religious experience.

Iqbal makes a particular focus on the practical aspect of the concept of religious experience, namely its being one of the tools for yielding knowledge. While spending most of his energy on proving the validity of religious experience and the place it occupies among other faculties of human experience,⁴⁵ he ignores a very important aspect of the term, namely the way this term functions in the human being's existence. This is like giving someone a treasure map showing only the place exactly where the individual is and where the treasure is without any directions or instructions but with a few confusing clues. He gives the clue that religious experience is a significant term in becoming a genuine Muslim and reaching to the third and highest level of religiousness, namely the stage of 'discovery', and in maintaining this mode of existence. However, he does not give any clue regarding how the individual is supposed to connect religious experience to his own existence. This is where Chapter 4 in which the Iqbalian concepts were discussed in the light of Kierkegaard's principle of 'making distinctions' or 'qualitative disjunction' will help.

Although Iqbal does not point out in which sphere of religiousness religious experience takes place, Iqbal's arguments show that it is not available to the individual until he reaches a certain level of religiousness, since it arises from

the individual's quest for an intimate and subjective relation to reality and God. This means, for instance, it is not available for the individual who lives in the first sphere of religious life, which does not require any existential involvement. Then it is possible for the individual to maintain his life in the second period of religious life, namely the period of 'thought', because it includes the individual's subjective participation in his religious belief. In terms of the third sphere, Iqbal emphasizes 'religious experience' as a significant part of it, and, for him, religious experience, as a conceptually non-manageable experience, is the element that leads the individual to the climax of religious life, or what can be regarded as the third period of religious life, in which the individual discovers his own self as a unique phenomenon.⁴⁶ Religion in the third sphere is in fact a kind of experience for Iqbal.⁴⁷ In the light of these arguments, then, Mohammed Maruf's claim that 'religious experience is not as common as our ordinary experience' can be completed with the comment that this is because religious experience is not available to everyone, although everyone possesses the capability for religious experience.⁴⁸ For example, one cannot expect a history professor to understand and interpret Einstein's equations if he has never studied them before. However, this does not mean that a historian can never understand Einstein's equations. Understanding Einstein is available to him and anyone if enough attention and effort are paid. This is perhaps why it is not common to see people who are specialized both in history and physics. This is not because it is impossible, but because it needs a huge effort and a certain intellectual level. A similar state of affairs applies to religious experience. In order for an individual to achieve religious experience, he must make extra effort and must have reached a certain level of religiousness. This leads to the universality of religious experience, since it has been claimed that for Iqbal every human being is capable of 'religious experience'. A close reading of Iqbal's arguments shows that Iqbal regards religious experience as a universal phenomenon. While defending the possibility and validity of religion, he writes:

The whole religious literature of the world, including the records of specialists' personal experiences, though perhaps expressed in the thought-forms of an out-of-date psychology, is a standing testimony to it. These experiences are perfectly natural, like our normal experiences.⁴⁹

As can be seen in the paragraph above, religious experience is a universal phenomenon peculiar to all humanity. Its universal nature does not change that the individual should strive to achieve it, since, as has just been argued, religious experience is available to everyone, but the individual must make extra effort. In Kierkegaardian terms, the universality of religious experience can be regarded as a general type of religiousness, which Climacus calls *Religiousness A*. Religiousness A, or the dialectical, in the first place can be found in any religiousness outside of Christianity. Climacus writes:

A person existing religiously can express his relation to an eternal happiness [...] outside Christianity, and it certainly has also been done, since it must

be said of Religiousness A ... because it has only universal human nature as its presupposition ...⁵⁰

Although it is not genuine Christianity, in order to become a genuine Christian, first of all, the human being must exist in Religiousness A.⁵¹ Hence, it is a significant sphere in becoming aware of genuine Christianity or what Climacus calls *Religiousness B*. Religiousness A is important because it is also dialectical. What this means is that Religiousness A is a subjective relation to truth through 'existential pathos'. In order to approach Iqbal's notion of 'religious experience' through Climacus' notion of Religiousness A the characteristics of Religiousness A should be applied to 'religious experience'. In Chapter 2, it was seen that 'existential pathos' is, for Climacus, what makes the individual's actions an 'actual action'. In other words, through 'existential pathos', the individual's action can transform the individual's own existence, and therefore become an actual action. Iqbal's notion of 'love' was also introduced, and in the light of Climacus' 'existential pathos' it was suggested that Iqbal's notion of 'love' is the element which transforms the individual's actions into self-sustaining actions, or what Climacus regards as 'actual actions', which lead the individual to self-affirmation, to become a genuine self before God. Thus, Iqbal's notion of 'religious experience' is also *dialectical* in Kierkegaardian terms, because, like Religiousness A, it involves 'love' and is a 'self-sustaining action'. What distinguishes religious experience from any other self-sustaining act is its purpose, namely achieving a closer contact with God as was pointed out in the discussion of distinguishing between subjectivity and objectivity. Iqbal writes of the character of the individual's closer contact with God: 'It is in contact with the Most Real that the ego discovers its uniqueness, its metaphysical status, and the possibility of improvement in that status.'⁵² It is in religious experience that the human being establishes an intimate relationship with God and comes across his own self as a unique phenomenon, i.e. that the human being realizes that he is a unique single individual before God, and understands his unique position in reality. In the light of the interpretation of 'love' and 'action' as the central elements of 'religious experience', then, it can be said that 'religious experience' is the individual's ultimate self-sustaining act, by which he meets his religious belief with 'love', and encounters God in his action. However, here a question regarding the universality of religious experience, namely the distinction between Islamic and non-Islamic forms of religious experience should be distinguished. Whereas for a Muslim individual the ultimate point of his religious experience is his encounter with the God of Islam, it can differ for a non-Muslim. It depends on the understanding of the 'truth' in each religious tradition. Climacus' comparison between the person who objectively seeks the true God and prays in untruth, and the person who prays to an idol but prays with passion should be recalled here. His comparison between the two types of relation to truth shows that truth may differ in different religions, and the way the individual relates himself to his own truth is no less important than the truth itself. Every religious tradition may have its own understanding of truth, and

religious experience is the way in which the human being relates himself to this truth. While in Iqbal's religion it is the unique God of Islam, for Kierkegaard it is the God of Christianity. So, the main character of religious experience is that, like Religiousness A, it is a one-way relation to the truth. What this means is that religious experience only determines the character of the human being's relation to the truth, not the truth's or God's relation to the human being.

So far, besides being a way of yielding knowledge, the general character of religious experience can be summarized as follows:

- 1 Religious experience is a general type of religiousness; however, it is not available to every religious individual.
- 2 This is because religious experience is a dialectical relation to truth, which means it is a self-sustaining act involving 'love', and requires an extra effort through which the individual to existentially appropriate his religious belief and make it his own.
- 3 Religious experience is the *way* in which the individual discovers his self/ego as a single individual and a unique reality before Truth, for Islam God, namely the Ultimate Ego.

For Climacus or Kierkegaard, Religiousness A is not genuine Christianity. Genuine Christianity also requires and includes Religiousness A in itself, however, in order for Religiousness A to become Religiousness B, the dialectical in second place, or genuine Christianity, it must be conditioned by 'a something'.⁵³ This 'something' changes the nature of the individual's relation to what Climacus calls 'eternal happiness'.⁵⁴ Evans nicely summarizes the distinction between Climacus' Religiousness A and Religiousness B:

The main difference between Religiousness A and Christianity, which Climacus calls 'Religiousness B' in Postscript, is that Religiousness A is a religion of 'immanence', presupposing only the natural concepts and emotions that are possible for human beings on the basis of their own reason and experiences. Christianity, on the other hand, is supposed to be a religion of 'transcendence', meaning that it claims to be rooted in a revelation from God that humans could not have discovered or invented using their own powers.⁵⁵

Kierkegaard calls the 'something' by which Religiousness A is conditioned 'paradox', the idea of incarnated God. Islam also claims itself to possess a transcendental nature and to be rooted in a divine revelation in the way Evans describes. However, the condition of genuine religiousness and faith for Kierkegaard is not only the way the individual relates himself to God, but also the way God communicates with the human being by incarnating. Whereas this is possible for Kierkegaard through God's incarnating to a human being, for Iqbal or Islam, God chooses a messenger among the human beings to send his message to humanity. However, this is not a paradoxical relationship. A paradoxical

relationship in the way Kierkegaard defines is actually not possible for Iqbal and Islamic faith. Consequently, it is not possible to apply Kierkegaard's idea of Religiousness B to Iqbal's understanding of becoming a genuine self. However, Iqbal introduces a new concept without which it is not possible to become a genuine Muslim self before God, namely 'prayer'. Although prayer falls into Kierkegaard's category of Religiousness A, it differs from ordinary religious experience by being not the condition of faith but of becoming a genuine Muslim self.

Prayer

Iqbal raises the notion of prayer in his poems, but he places a particular emphasis on the philosophical aspect of the term in the third lecture of his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought* under the heading of 'The Conception of God and The Meaning of Prayer'.⁵⁶ The English word 'prayer' could refer to two concepts in Islam. The first one is *dua* (دعاء) in Qur'anic terminology, which means 'to call' or 'to invite' in Arabic, and refers to the human being's attempt to call God and communicate with God or request help or guidance from him, and is common in almost all religious traditions.⁵⁷ The second notion of prayer in the Qur'an is *al-salat* or *salat* (صلاة) a religious ritual and command, which is one of the five pillars of the Islamic faith.⁵⁸ The main Islamic languages such as Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Turkish, follow the Qur'anic practise of distinguishing between these two forms of prayer. Although in his works in Urdu and Persian, Iqbal uses several different words for each of the meanings such as Persian *namaz* (نماز)⁵⁹ and Arabic *dua*,⁶⁰ in his English-language writings, such as *The Reconstruction*, he employs only the word 'prayer' and does not provide a clear explanation of which meaning he intends by the term. To elucidate the issue two examples from *The Reconstruction* can be quoted. Iqbal writes: 'His constant prayer was: "God! Grant me knowledge of the ultimate nature of things!"'⁶¹

Here, Iqbal refers to the Prophet's personal request from God. In another paragraph Iqbal writes: 'and find its fulfillment in an attitude of mind which religion describes as prayer – one of the last words on the lips of the Prophet of Islam.'⁶² According to the literature, the last words of the Prophet to which Iqbal refers are 'al-salatu al-salatu wa mamalakat aimanukum' which means 'be mindful of your prayers and be kind to persons subject to your authority'.⁶³ Hence, in this paragraph his concept of prayer refers to *al-salat*, the type of prayer that is one of the pillars of Islam. Both of the terms *namaz* and *dua* were also translated into English by the term 'prayer' by the two well-known orientalist scholars R. A. Nicholson and A. J. Arberry. The use of 'prayer' to cover both *dua* and *salat* is not only due to the choice of Iqbal's translators, but he himself is also responsible for this choice of terms. For the sake of clarity these two forms of prayer will be described as private and ritual prayer respectively. Although Iqbal does not make a clear distinction between ritual prayer and private prayer, it appears that in his *The Reconstruction* he pays particular

attention to ritual prayer (*namaz, salat*) rather than private prayer (*dua*). This can be clearly seen in his highlighting the role of the timing of prayer,⁶⁴ Islam's appreciation of congregational prayer,⁶⁵ and the importance of the one particular direction of prayer,⁶⁶ which are peculiar to ritual prayer in Islam. For Iqbal private prayer is also a significant part of the individual's religiousness, but in this section, emphasis will be on Iqbal's understanding of ritual prayer in Islam as the condition of becoming a genuine Muslim self.

Before moving on further the two types of ritual prayer should be distinguished in order not to create confusion and contradiction. It was seen that in the first sphere of Iqbal's categories of religiousness the individual is expected to follow the Islamic command including ritual prayer without any examination in order to move towards higher stages. However, despite his obedience to Islamic law being constant, it only consists of a kind of imitation of other Muslims. Thus, his ritual prayer may not have any particular effect on his own personal existence. Ritual prayer as a religious experience and a higher expression of the individual's religious existence is different from the type of ritual prayer of the individual who exists in the first period of religiousness. Although it is called 'ritual prayer' it must be much more than simply being 'ritual'. The individual who exists in the sphere of discovery, the highest stage of religiousness, expect- edly attributes a different meaning to his religious actions including ritual prayer. It is this type of ritual prayer that is to be dealt with throughout this section.

It was seen that religious experience is a way in which the individual connects with reality. It is also possible to develop an indirect contact to reality which is an exterior and objective relation to reality. However, such a relationship with reality is not a genuine contact with it. Religious experience enables the individual to establish a more genuine and intimate relation to reality in its wholeness. The agency through which the individual achieves such an intimate relation to reality is prayer in Islam. Iqbal writes: 'Religion seeks a closer contact with Reality ... In order to achieve this intimacy thought must rise higher than itself, and find its fulfilment in an attitude of mind which religion describes as prayer.'⁶⁷ Iqbal describes 'prayer' as an attitude of mind in which 'thought' becomes a higher form. On this basis it can be said that religion is a higher form of thought. However, this is not enough to characterize 'prayer' as a thought form. The nature of prayer as a thought form becomes clearer in Iqbal's dealing with the concept as a way of yielding knowledge, and his comparison of 'prayer' and 'reflection'. The act of prayer, like religious experience, aims at reaching the knowledge of reality, and develops a consciousness of the self/ego in the individual. The general character of all kinds of 'prayer' is that they are in search of knowledge. Iqbal regards any kind of activity aiming at achieving knowledge as 'prayer'. He writes:

The truth is that all search for knowledge is essentially a form of prayer. The scientific observer of Nature is a kind of mystic seeker in the act of prayer. Although at present he follows only the footprints of the musk-deer, and thus modestly limits the method of his quest, his thirst for knowledge is

eventually sure to lead him to the point where the scent of the musk-gland is a better guide than the footprints of the deer. This alone will add to his power over Nature and give him that vision of the total-infinite which philosophy seeks but cannot find.⁶⁸

Any search for knowledge, including scientific observations, is a kind of prayer for Iqbal, because he believes that it will, sooner or later, lead the individual to the fact that nature is only a symbol for a greater reality, as can be seen in his metaphor of the musk-deer. To see the deer itself is definitely a more genuine source regarding the nature of it than to see its footprints which can give only a very broad and obscure knowledge regarding the nature of the animal. Prayer is also a kind of religious experience, so it is not surprising that Iqbal regards prayer as a way of yielding knowledge. Religious experience enables the individual to establish a subjective relationship with reality, and gather the knowledge regarding reality, which is not available to sense perception and human reason. In this respect, Iqbal claims that prayer is actually a kind of 'reflection'. He writes:

The act of prayer as aiming at knowledge resembles reflection. Yet prayer at its highest is much more than abstract reflection. Like reflection it too is a process of assimilation, but the assimilative process in the case of prayer draws itself closely together and thereby acquires a power unknown to pure thought.⁶⁹

What Iqbal appears to argue in the passage above is that although prayer is a similar process to 'reflection', it differs from what he calls 'abstract reflection', and in prayer the human mind is transformed into a higher form of reflection. His statements in this paragraph are crucial to understanding the nature of 'prayer' for Iqbal. However, there is lack of clarity in his concepts of reflection, abstract reflection, ordinary reflection, pure thought, power, attitude of mind, assimilation and drawing together. This lack of clarity has consequences for his conception of prayer. Here, Chapter 4, in which a distinction was made between Iqbal's key concepts with the help of Kierkegaard who is, like Iqbal, concerned to articulate the nature of reflection, including its relationship to prayer, can help. Chapter 4 showed that Iqbal talks about two main types of thought forms: first, abstract and pure thought and reflection, and, second, religious experience or intuition as a higher form of thought. Iqbal means by abstract thought or reflection something that does not involve actuality and which transforms thought into a concrete action. In other words, abstract thought or reflection is concerned with ideas rather than events, so it is, in Kierkegaardian terms, only possibility. Therefore, abstract thought is unable to help the individual with 'the concrete situations of life'.⁷⁰ Pure thought, in this sense, is identical with abstract reflection for Iqbal. Iqbal applies the Kantian concept of 'pure' to the concept of 'thought' while dealing with the issue from a Kantian point of view, however, in function, for him, both abstract thought and pure thought are identical. They both

are unable to provide the individual with the knowledge of reality in its entirety, but are concerned with and limited to the observable aspect of reality. On the other hand, as was seen in Chapter 4 and in the previous section, religious experience and religion provide the human being with the opportunity of achieving concreteness, which pure thought and reflection cannot do. Religious experience, for Iqbal, involves actuality, and therefore, is concrete. What this means is that religious experience or intuition is concerned with concrete events rather than abstract ideas, and requires the subjective involvement of the individual in his thought with his action and love. This enables the individual to achieve knowledge of reality in its entirety. With respect to their aims, then, religious experience and thinking or reflecting is identical, since they both aim at gathering knowledge, and indeed, thought and intuition come from the same source for Iqbal.⁷¹ Iqbal's claim that prayer resembles reflection in the quotation above arises from his conviction that prayer is a kind of religious experience. However, prayer, like religious experience, 'is much more than abstract reflection', and this case of being much more shows itself in the process of what Iqbal calls 'assimilation'.⁷² To explain this in Kierkegaardian terms, Iqbal's process of assimilation can be interpreted as the individual's subjective appropriation of religious teachings. This means that the individual applies religious teachings which can be achieved through pure and abstract thought to his own being, and lets them transform his existence, and Iqbal regards this period as the process of assimilation. As a result of this process a 'power', which is not available to pure thought, emerges.

In fact, prayer must be regarded as a necessary complement to the intellectual activity of the observer of Nature. The scientific observation of Nature keeps us in close contact with the behaviour of Reality, and thus sharpens our inner perception for a deeper vision of it.⁷³

The main characteristic of prayer is that it is not the purpose of the human being but is a tool by means of which the individual achieves knowledge of reality and encounters God. Iqbal calls this 'spiritual illumination'.⁷⁴ Spiritual illumination is the ultimate outcome and end of prayer. He writes: 'The agency through which this association is achieved is the act of worship or prayer ending in spiritual illumination.'⁷⁵ Iqbal does not talk much about the nature of 'spiritual illumination' or define this concept, however, his statements show that it is a state in which mind 'gives up its career as a seeker of slow-footed universality and rises higher than thought to capture Reality itself with a view to become a conscious participator in its life'.⁷⁶ In other words, it can be said that the spiritual illumination of the human being is the state in which the individual leaps into the stage of discovery that is not interested in a rational understanding of religion anymore from the stage of faith. It is where the self discovers 'its situation in a larger whole of life'.⁷⁷ Prayer, then, can be defined as the means of spiritual illumination in which the individual discovers his self as a self before reality and God. It can be concluded that it is not possible to become a genuine Muslim self without prayer as a ritual type of worshipping in Islam. This is because prayer is

the means by which the individual leaps into the stage of discovery, namely the highest step in becoming a genuine Muslim.

Conclusion

This chapter has applied one of the two concerns of the Kierkegaardian dialectics or qualitative dialectics to Iqbal's understanding of the existential character of Islam. The issue has been examined under four headings dealing with four main issues. After a brief introduction, this chapter started with Iqbal's use of his poetry as a means of indirect communication. Subsequently, it has been argued that Iqbal regards Islam as an 'existence-communication', which means Islam is not a group of teachings and rules, but an existential phenomenon. Then, the existential character of Islam has been discussed in more detail in the following two sections on the roles of religious experience and prayer as the cores of the human being's religious life. Throughout the discussion Kierkegaard's stages of human existence, namely the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious, have been employed. In the meantime, the Iqbalian concepts, which were clarified in the light of the Kierkegaardian principle of qualitative disjunction, the other concern of his qualitative dialectics, have been employed where required.

Iqbal's approach to Islam as an existential phenomenon has helped understand his views on becoming a self. However, his lack of concern for distinguishing between different concepts, and his not providing his reader with sufficient help to cultivate existential appropriation creates problems in the examination of his idea of becoming a genuine Muslim. At this juncture applying Kierkegaard's concern to cultivate existential appropriation on the part of the reader to Iqbal's thought has enabled the formulation of the existential aspect of his philosophy as well its literary character. Kierkegaard's method of indirect communication and his maieutic method have helped to show that Iqbal's contradictory approach towards Islamic mysticism, particularly in terms of mystical poetry, is actually a distinctive character of his own literary method of communication. The Kierkegaardian notion of existence-communication has helped to show that in order for the human being to become a self he must appropriate, or in Iqbalian terms 'assimilate', the teaching of Islam. This process of assimilation involves the individual's religious experience. However, it is not possible for the individual to become a Muslim self before God without ritual prayer, since it is the way the individual reaches the third stage of religiousness and achieves 'spiritual illumination' in which he realizes his self as a self before God. A genuine prayer involving the individual's subjective appropriation and action with love distinguishes Islam from different modes of existence, existence-communications, and subjective relations to different truths. The point Iqbal attempts to highlight throughout his authorship is that becoming a genuine Muslim self or perfect self is only possible through an existential appropriation of Islam as an 'existence-communication' which is possible through the individual's constant prayer, an action in which he meets God, and discovers his own self. The method Iqbal uses in order for his reader to realize this is mystical poetry.

Notes

- 1 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 43.
- 2 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 7.
- 3 Iqbal, 'Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani (New Delhi: Adam Publishers, 2006), p. 159.
- 4 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, trans. R. A. Nicholson and Arthur Arberry (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2014), p. 4, <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/640.pdf> [Accessed on 25 September 2017].
- 5 Iqbal, 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 103.
- 6 Iqbal, 'The Rod of the Moses', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, trans. Syed Akbar Ali Shah, V. G. Kiernan and Bashir Ahmad Dar, p. 328. <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/743.pdf> [Accessed on 19 September 2017].
- 7 For a study dealing with Iqbal's poetry, particularly his employment of different poetical forms and the main themes of his poetry, see Syed Abdul Wahid, *Iqbal: His Art and Thought* (London: John Murray, 1959), pp. 104–212.
- 8 For instance see 'The Colourful Rose' and 'The Philosophy of Grief', in Iqbal, 'The Call of the Caravan Bell', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, trans. M. A. K. Khalil, V. G. Kiernan and Mustansir Mir, pp. 128–129, 177–178, <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/786.pdf> [Accessed on 19 September 2017].
- 9 Iqbal, 'Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 158.
- 10 Iqbal, 'Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 158. Italics original.
- 11 Iqbal, 'Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 158.
- 12 Iqbal, 'Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry', p. 159.
- 13 Iqbal, 'Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry', p. 159.
- 14 Iqbal, 'Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry', p. 159.
- 15 Iqbal, 'Preface by Sir Abd al-Qadir', in 'The Call of the Caravan Bell', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, p. 126. <http://iqbalcyberlibrary.net/pdf/786.pdf> [Accessed on 19 September 2017].
- 16 Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), pp. 65–66.
- 17 Translated from Urdu and quoted by Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*, p. 70.
- 18 Translated from Urdu and quoted by Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*, p. 61.
- 19 For a detailed analysis of Iqbal's use of irony in his poetry see Mustansir Mir, 'Word-play and Irony in Iqbal's Poetry', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 3, no. 1 (1992): 72–93.
- 20 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 45.
- 21 Iqbal, 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 109.
- 22 Kierkegaard, *POV*, p. 50.
- 23 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, p. 18.
- 24 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', in *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, pp. 18–19.
- 25 Iqbal, 'Secrets and Mysteries', *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*, pp. 19–20.
- 26 The second stage, namely the stage of thought was discussed in terms of the relationship and distinction between reason and religion in Chapter 4.
- 27 Syed Latif Hussain Kazmi, *Philosophy of Iqbal (Iqbal and Existentialism)* (New Delhi: A. P. H. Publishing, 1997), p. 111.
- 28 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 171.

- 29 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 171.
- 30 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 171.
- 31 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 244.
- 32 Iqbal, 'The Muslim Community: A Sociological Study', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, p. 132.
- 33 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 244.
- 34 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 391.
- 35 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 171.
- 36 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 1–26.
- 37 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 11.
- 38 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 11.
- 39 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 61.
- 40 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 76.
- 41 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 171.
- 42 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 173.
- 43 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 173–174.
- 44 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 171.
- 45 Particularly see Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 27–58.
- 46 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 173.
- 47 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 175.
- 48 Mohammed Maruf, *Iqbal's Philosophy of Religion, A Study in the Cognitive Value of Religious Experience* (Lahore: Islamic Book Service, 1977), p. 119.
- 49 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 179.
- 50 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 559.
- 51 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 557.
- 52 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 173.
- 53 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 556.
- 54 Kierkegaard, *CUP*, vol. 1, p. 556.
- 55 C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 139.
- 56 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 59–89.
- 57 For instance, 'Call on Me; I will answer your (Prayer)', (Surah The Believer, 60, tr. Yusuf Ali).
- 58 For instance, 'Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to thee, and establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds ...', (الفَخْشَاءُ وَالْمُنْكَرُ), (Surah The Spider, 45, tr. Yusuf Ali).
- 59 See the original Persian text of Iqbal's *The Secrets of the Self*, <http://allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/asrar/text/index.htm> [Accessed on 6 October 2017].
- 60 See the original Persian text of Iqbal's *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, <http://allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/persian/ramuz/text/index.htm> [Accessed on 6 October 2017].
- 61 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 3.
- 62 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 58.
- 63 Quoted in Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 168.
- 64 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 103.
- 65 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 87.
- 66 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 88.
- 67 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 58.
- 68 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, pp. 86–87.
- 69 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 85.
- 70 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 120.
- 71 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 2.

- 72 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 85.
 73 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 86.
 74 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 85.
 75 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 84.
 76 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 85.
 77 Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, p. 85.

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6 Conclusion

This book is based on the claim that Iqbal's discussion of becoming a genuine Muslim is problematized by a terminology that is not perfectly fit for the purpose, and that the parallels between the approaches of Kierkegaard and Iqbal provide a powerful hermeneutic both for interpreting and clarifying Iqbal's thought, and showing that some seeming ambiguities can disappear when considered from a Kierkegaardian perspective. It can be concluded that the inconsistencies and contradictions in Iqbal's thought as parts of his intellectual development should be distinguished from other terminological issues. The inconsistencies and contradictions that can be regarded as parts of an intellectual development can be seen in almost every thinker. The most distinct contradiction of this kind can be best observed in Iqbal's wholly contradictory attitude towards Islamic mysticism. A close reading of his works shows that there is a significant difference between Iqbal's attitudes towards Islamic mysticism before and after his time in Europe. His most aggressive attitude towards Islamic mysticism is to be found in his *The Secrets of the Self*. After this work, which he started writing after his return from Europe and finished in 1915, his views on Islamic mysticism followed a constant direction until his death in 1938. Yet Iqbal had himself always resorted to traditional mystical notions, concepts, expressions, metaphors, tropes and other literary forms throughout his poetical writings. Therefore, his contradictory behaviour towards Islamic mysticism should be considered as part of his intellectual development, and his use of the literary language and style of Islamic mysticism should be considered as a part of his own distinctive literary method that he employed particularly in the works he produced after his time in Europe.

As a result of a Kierkegaardian reading of Iqbal's view of becoming a genuine Muslim, it appears that becoming a genuine Muslim entails the following:

- 1 *Assimilating Islam as an 'existence-communication'*. It was the application of Kierkegaard's notion of 'existence-communication' to Iqbal's statements on human existence and Islamic teaching that helped to uncover Iqbal's understanding of the existential character of Islam, which is a vital part of the individual's becoming a Muslim self. It was argued that, for Iqbal, Islam

is not a collection of teachings that are concerned with merely organizing human life. It is, all in all, an existence-communication, which requires that the individual assimilate its teachings and allow them to transform his whole being in accordance with its teachings. Islam is a world-view not merely to be known but to be lived, and in order to become a genuine Muslim, the human being must realize that Islam is an existence-communication, a world-view; at the same time, Islam must be allowed to transform the whole being. Assimilating Islam as a world-view begins with the individual's following the Islamic command perfectly by subordinating reason to religion. This is followed by the establishment of an Islamic view of reality and metaphysics. The Islamic world-view or Islam as an existence-communication suggests the individual not only turn towards his self, but also be in contact with his environment, the universe and God, and understand his position as fundamentally different from other creatures by virtue of his superiority, free will and immortality. Although this may include a number of objective processes such as scientific research or philosophy, the relation that helps the individual become a genuine Muslim self is through what Kierkegaard regards as subjective reflection which enables the human being to have what Iqbal regards as a relation to the inner nature of reality. Such a relationship is provided by religion and religious experience. Islam as an existence-communication also entails the human being's submission to Islamic law and an attempt to understand it rationally.

- 2 *Confirming the Islamic world-view with ego-sustaining or self-sustaining acts.* The individual's appropriation of Islam as a world-view is not sufficient on its own for the process of becoming a self for Iqbal. The individual must verify his assimilation of Islam as an existence-communication with his acts or actions. Iqbal divided human actions into two categories, namely self-sustaining actions and self-dissolving actions. However, he did not identify the distinction between these two types of actions clearly. With the help of Kierkegaard's notions of 'action' and 'actuality' it was concluded that there are three main characteristics of human actions: (1) actions which include actuality, (2) actions which require the individual's subjective involvement in his act, and (3) actions which have an influence on the outer world. The type of action that Iqbal wants to develop, and that helps the individual become a genuine Muslim self, is 'self-sustaining' action, and it must be distinguished from any 'self-dissolving' action that leads the human self to destruction. Kierkegaard's notion of 'existential pathos' was helpful in clarifying the distinction between Iqbal's view of self-sustaining actions and self-dissolving actions. The distinction between the two types of action is the Iqbalian notion of 'love'. Love is the feature that helps the human being relate himself to his absolute goal or eternal happiness existentially. Such an action has a constructive influence on the outer world as well as on the personality of the human being, and is crucial for becoming a genuine Muslim self. Consequently, the human being who appropriates Islam as an existence-communication must transform his actions into self-sustaining actions through relating himself to eternal happiness with love.

- 3 *Prayer*. Ritual prayer is the essential part of becoming an ideal Muslim. However, prayer of this type must possess some qualifications. First of all, it must include the individual's religious experience. This means that prayer must enable the human being to contact the inner aspect of reality that cannot be achieved through sense perception or rational methods. Second, as was previously seen, for Iqbal, the individual must follow the Islamic law with a 'perfect submission' from the first stage of religiousness, and Islamic command expects the individual to practise ritual prayer five times a day. This means that the individual's ritual prayer must be continuous, and follow the Islamic law. Another character of prayer that is crucial in becoming a Muslim self is that it provides the human being with an encounter with God. Only when the human being experiences this type of ritual prayer can he become a genuine Muslim self.

It was discussed in Chapter 2 that one of the reasons for Kierkegaard's use of pseudonyms was that for him existence-possibilities should not be forced on human beings. So Kierkegaard used different pseudonymous characters with various personalities and, therefore, enabled his readers to choose from different existence-possibilities, and this is a very significant aspect of Kierkegaard's whole intellectual character. Iqbal also follows a similar way to Kierkegaard's employment of indirect communication. He appreciates the literary tendencies of his reader, and appeals to the aesthetic inclination of his society, and therefore uses traditional mystical poetical forms and symbols. However, as a result, a question may arise in the mind of any Kierkegaard and Iqbal reader, namely the question whether they genuinely respect the free will and choice of the human being. In other words, both thinkers define the character of a genuine Christian and Muslim respectively, and believe that every Christian and Muslim has to become that particular type of person in order to achieve an eternal happiness. The problem does not lie in their understanding of the nature of faith or a genuine relationship with faith. Rather, it is with their not providing their readers with different ways to achieve each of the principles of becoming genuine religious personalities. They both define different types and ways of *not* being a genuine Christian and Muslim as can be seen in Kierkegaard's use of different pseudonymous characters, and in Iqbal's emphasis of different characteristics of modern Muslims which he bitterly criticizes. However, it seems that, in order to become a genuine Christian or Muslim, and to achieve eternal happiness promised by Christianity and Islam, the human being must become an ideal Christian or Muslim, but only the ideal Christian and Muslim as particularly conceived in the mind of Kierkegaard and Iqbal respectively. In the end, it can arguably be said that Kierkegaard and Iqbal are caught in a sort of blinkered, almost solipsistic vision of 'becoming a genuine religious self' namely and exclusively their own.

Throughout this book it has been emphasized that Iqbal talks about what to do in order to solve the problems of the modern Muslim world but he rarely, if ever, discusses *how* to do it. It may be suggested that his lack of philosophical

precision at some points resulted from his preoccupation with political activities and his lack of focus on the development of his philosophical thought. This lack of precision may even have been something deliberate and the result of a conscious act – i.e. his terminological vagueness and philosophical inexactitude may have been his way of protecting his ideas from close scrutiny. Indeed he has become a thinker who has exerted great influence on modern Muslim intellectuals. It could even be claimed that his appeal was increased by his lack of specificity and practical detail of application: in other words, his *not* showing to his readers the details of how to reconstruct the Islamic world and become genuine selves enhanced rather than diminished his popularity, particularly among traditional and conservative Muslim intellectuals who constitute the majority of the Muslim intellectual world. He was skilful in arguing that modern Western thought is only a different form of Islamic thought, thus enabling him to imply that there is nothing wrong in assimilating what is not in conflict with Islam. Another example of his diffident avoidance of the possibility of conflict by holding back from clearly definitive statements can be seen in non-affirmation of the physical resurrection of the dead, as was seen in Chapter 5. Iqbal does not categorically reject this idea, which was assumed by traditional Muslim scholars, but he only goes so far as to say that there is no single Qur’anic verse that determines that the resurrection of the human being is a physical event. A further example where Iqbal seems to choose to ‘play it safe’, so to speak, is in his deleting the very hostile verses he wrote about Hafiz in his *The Secrets of the Self* in order not to provoke reaction from his own society, since Hafiz was a much loved mystical poet held in high regard in traditional Muslim society. As Moosa nicely summarizes,

It was a radical project in reconstruction and reform of religious thought that would challenge many tenets of Muslim orthodoxy. Miraculously, Iqbal, unlike many other scholars, has been saved from imprecations of heresy by Muslim orthodoxy.¹

This, actually, does not have to be regarded as a ‘miracle’. It is possible to surmise that if Iqbal had presented his ideas more articulately and visibly as a reformer or modernist, he would not have achieved the iconic status which has held him above serious criticism, and he may well not have become as influential as he did. This is a matter of conjecture, of course, but it may also be the key to Iqbal’s own motivation and sensitivity. Had he been more explicit in the articulation and pragmatics of his thought, he may have found himself isolated and out of favour with much of his audience in the Muslim world, as was the case with many modernist Muslim thinkers such as Sayyid Ahmad Khan of India and Rashid Rida of Egypt. However, what distinguishes Iqbal from the others is that he put the character of his audience at the centre of his philosophical agenda which can be summarized in his own words: ‘Education, like other things, ought to be determined by the needs of the learner.’² In other words, steeped as he was in the traditional literature, and so skilful in the medium of Persian and Urdu

poetry, what distinguishes Iqbal from most of the other modern Muslim thinkers was that he knew very well the aesthetic and religious character of not only his own Indian Muslim society, but was also able to appeal to Muslims in the wider Islamic world using a voice they found resonant and relevant. The questions he raised at the beginning of the twentieth century and the issues he dealt with still open new perspectives among Muslim intellectuals today, and this is perhaps why Wilfred C. Smith is right in his claim that ‘Any modern Muslim who would talk about religion must begin where Iqbal left off; otherwise he is not worth listening to.’³ And as a last word on his presentation of his philosophy, it should also be admitted that, even if he did not provide his readers with a clear way to follow, he offered them new ways of thinking which can be found in this Kierkegaardian reading of him.

This book has been deliberately confined to the application of Kierkegaard’s approach to Iqbal’s theory of becoming a Muslim self. Thus, it did not include any Kierkegaardian analysis of further aspects of Iqbal’s philosophy, such as his social or political views. Further to this study, particularly interesting would be the approaches of the two thinkers to the relation between the state and religion, secularity and the ideal religious society and the correspondences and, so to speak, conversations between them. Moreover, Khan’s suggestion of bringing the various works of each author to the table is worth noting:

the best strategy for continuing an Iqbal-Kierkegaard conversation may be to adopt the same strategy Kierkegaard uses with all his pseudonyms, that is to make all of the pseudonyms sit at the same table and serve on a panel, along with Iqbal and Kierkegaard themselves. Of course, to keep Iqbal from being drowned out among so many Kierkegaardian voices, the authorial voices of the two early Persian poems, *Asrar-i-Khudi* [The Secrets of the Self] and *Rumuz-i-bekhudi* [Mysteries of the Selflessness], will need to sit at the table too. For that matter, it might be well to reserve a place for Iqbal’s 1934 lectures *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, since so creative a thinker must surely have changed his views significantly during his most productive years.⁴

The idea is a good one, for there are only really contradictions in Iqbal’s ideas if he is seen as someone who could not change his mind. In this study Kierkegaard has been recognized as someone who wrote under a number of pseudonyms. Iqbal always wrote under his own name, unlike Kierkegaard, so it is more difficult to see him as actually having a succession of evolving personas over the years, where his thought develops, switches emphasis, becomes distracted, takes on different positions. This would allow seeing multiple personalities in both writers, and we should resist the temptation to try to find an essential Iqbal or an essential Kierkegaard. Such studies along these lines of an interreligious approach, in Mall’s words, ‘contribute to a common, global discourse and conversation of human kind that extends beyond the narrow limits of the East-West dichotomy’.⁵ Such a dialogue would not only contribute to Iqbal and Kierkegaard studies but also make a contribution to Christian-Muslim philosophical exchange.

Notes

- 1 Ebrahim Moosa, 'The Human Person in Iqbal's Thought', in *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought*, ed by H. C. Hillier and Basit Bilal Koshul (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 22–23.
- 2 Iqbal, 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal', in *Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal*, ed. Latif Ahmad Sherwani (New Delhi: Adam Publishers, 2006), p. 109.
- 3 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (Lahore: Minerva Book Shop, 1943), p. 124.
- 4 Abraham H. Khan, 'Iqbal and Kierkegaard's "Judge William"', in *Kierkegaard: East and West, Acta Kierkegaardiana* (Sala Slovakia: Kierkegaard Society in Slovakia, 2011), p. 76.
- 5 Ram Adhar Mall, *Intercultural Philosophy* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), p. 13.

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