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Conceptions of Religion: Exploring the Converging and Diverging Religious Philosophies of Muhammad Iqbal and Friedrich Nietzsche

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**Conceptions of Religion: Exploring the Converging and Diverging Religious Philosophies
of Muhammad Iqbal and Friedrich Nietzsche**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in Global Studies from
The College of William and Mary

by

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(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)

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Abstract

Popular conceptions of Pakistan are visions of violence, terrorism, and radical Islam. However, the idea of Pakistan originates with poet-philosopher Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938) who cited a need for a state where Indian Muslims could live as true Muslims. Embedding his religious philosophy in poetry, Iqbal was a well-educated, progressive thinker, and had a variety of influences, including Friedrich Nietzsche (d. 1900). Nietzsche, sometimes called “The Great Atheist,” is most well-known for his pronouncement, “God is dead.” This thesis explores the apparent irony of how Iqbal, a deeply religious Muslim, took such philosophical inspiration from an apparent enemy of religion like Nietzsche.

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Introduction

As humanity entered the modern era, with its fetish for empiricism and Aristotelian logic as the basis of certainty, metaphysics and religion as sources of knowledge were called into question. The dominant trends within modernist thought view religion as a component of life to be examined, analyzed, and understood in the context of other human pursuits, but not as a reliable or autonomous source of knowledge. Post-modernity's suspicion of claims of unique access to Truth opts for the relativity of all narratives. Rather than discarding religious claims, postmodern thinkers generally focus on the contexts of specific religious claims and their role within human experience. Although post-modernity's paradigm significantly expands religious scholarship, it is a double-edged sword. Such perspectives supply the necessary objective distance for the scholarly study of sensitive topics like religion. On the other hand, they can marginalize religion at best, and perhaps promote cynical or dismissive attitudes toward religion.

To maintain the necessary scholarly rigor while respecting the value of religion in the lives of individuals and societies is not an easy task. For the purposes of this exploration, religion will be treated as an alternative type of metaphysical speculation seeking Truth. It is therefore viewed as an integral part of philosophical tradition and practice. Although this view is controversial within modern philosophical scholarship, evaluating the religious philosophies of two distinct religious philosophers otherwise would do great injustice to their work. It is therefore incumbent to view religion and philosophy as intrinsically linked, and as two equally valid methodologies for acquiring Truth. To discuss Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy and dismiss its religious components

would be absurd. Equally, Iqbal's philosophy without its religious aspects is incomplete. Such claims stem from the philosophical nature in which they approached religion. Thus, this thesis assumes interconnectedness between religion and philosophy, and will focus specifically on how Iqbal's and Nietzsche's exist both harmoniously and discordantly.

Analyzing discord between two religious philosophies raises the important point of the univocality and/or multivocality of the term "religion." Whether this term has one or many meanings shapes the formation of a religious philosophy. Further complicating comparative religious study is deciding if univocal definitions of religion contain opportunities for multiple interpretations. Conversely, it is tempting to assume multivocal conceptions of religion permit multiple interpretations of religion, but this is not correct either. Rather than create endless semantic arguments about a nebulous term, the difficulty in defining religion highlights the contentious nature of the subject. Finally, this thesis adds to the difficulty by comparing conceptions of religion across cultural, temporal, and linguistic divides.

Appreciating the complexity of the issues, it is again necessary to draw upon the connection between religion and philosophy. Utilizing the scholarly distance provided by post-modernity, one must realize that modern conceptions of philosophy as separate from religion are inherently flawed. Philosophy is inextricably related to religion and vice versa. Modernity's insistence that philosophy and religion are separate tools to answer religious questions subordinates religion to philosophy or philosophy to religion depending on one's bias. Iqbal and Nietzsche show this paradigm to be unsuitable. To understand and assess the relationship between philosophy, religion, Iqbal, and Nietzsche, requires treating philosophy and religion as equal partners in posing and

answering existential questions. The end result of viewing religion and philosophy connected in this way is religious philosophy.

Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal

This thesis's focal figure is the person and religious philosophy of Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938). A brilliant philosopher, devout Muslim, gifted poet, and driven activist, Iqbal is many things to many people. To some, he is an example of a progressive, modern, and devout Muslim, while others see him as a dreaded "Westernizer." For Pakistanis, he is the intellectual father of their state. Whether or not this idea is viewed positively is ultimately the choice of the individual. To academics, Iqbal is a fascinating example of reconciling Islamic ideals with modernity. He is akin to a twentieth century al-Ghazzali—a synthesizer of Islam, mysticism, and modernity. Moreover, he promoted the idea of a religious state without arousing trite and offensive images of a barbaric theocracy. However, what is most fascinating, and the inspiration for this thesis, is his unique, personally empowering religious philosophy drawing upon, yet remaining independent of, Nietzsche.

The importance of Iqbal's religious philosophy and its nuances are the primary focuses of this thesis. His audacious revisions to Islam remain tangible within academia and in the minds of South Asian Muslims. Although his brainchild, Pakistan, has not become the state of his dreams, Iqbal still represents what some modern commentators claim they desire from the Muslim-majority (the parts of world containing Muslim majorities) world. Delving into his religious philosophy, this thesis will examine his unique context and background. To elucidate Iqbal's religious philosophy, his seminal work, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, will be the primary source used.

Governing this choice is the fact that it avoids translation, as the work is based on lectures given in English. Supplementing philosophical ideas found in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* are references to Iqbal's poetry in translation.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Early readings of Friedrich Nietzsche's works (1844-1900) were dominated by offended and theologically motivated European Christians. Post-modern intellectual paradigms, however, reevaluated his writings to better contextualize and understand Nietzsche's thought. Carl Jung said, "Nietzsche was no atheist, but his god was dead."¹ Although most readers consider him an atheist, taking him at his word, it is healthy to question this assumption. Was he the "Great Atheist?" If so, what kind of atheist was he? If he was not, what kind of religious individual was he? Was there a religiosity to his atheism? This thesis will not seek to provide answers to these questions, but will use them to explore Nietzsche's religious philosophy.

Similar to Iqbal, Nietzsche is many things to many people. He is both the champion for atheists and skeptics worldwide, but also the primary religio-philosophical pillar for deeply religious Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer.² Clearly more lies underneath the writings and "atheism" of Nietzsche than is commonly believed. Beyond understanding who Nietzsche is, it is also important to explore why he is important. This is particularly important for analyzing influence on Iqbal. A central question guiding this thesis is how could a devout Muslim find Nietzsche both inspiring and repulsive?

¹ Carl Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1938), 103.

² Roy Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), 43.

Hypotheses

Scholars of religion and philosophy have discussed and written about the similarities between the religious philosophies of Muhammad Iqbal and Friedrich Nietzsche since the 1970s.³ There is no debate regarding the direction of influence, but the degree to which Nietzsche influenced Iqbal is contested. Unfortunately, less attention is given to the underlying reasons for the similarities and differences between each scholar's religious philosophy. Most analysis investigating the underlying reasons gives categorical answers: Iqbal translated the religio-philosophy of Nietzsche, or the similarities are merely coincidental.⁴

The former conclusion is drawn by the remarkable similarities that do exist when Iqbal's and Nietzsche's philosophies are compared. However, this answer is both reductionist and does not actually explain *why* the similarities exist beyond stating that Iqbal read Nietzsche. The latter idea, positing mere coincidence, is also deeply flawed. This argument wholly ignores Iqbal's years spent studying in Europe and uses his religious beliefs as a way to shield him from godless Western thought. Although Iqbal's own writings indicate that he felt a certain pity for the "godless" Nietzsche, such feelings did not preclude his incorporating Nietzschean principles into his own religious philosophy.

This thesis posits an alternative conclusion. First, it posits that each philosopher's religious philosophy was original. Additionally, for the present purposes of this thesis,

³ Hafeez Malik, ed., *Iqbal: Poet Philosopher of Pakistan*, (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1971).

⁴ See chapters 5-6, 9, 14-16 in Hafeez Malik (ed.), *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan* (); Roy Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, 62-63. Chapters 5, 6, and 16 tend to overemphasize Iqbal's differences with Nietzsche and fail to capture the full extent of Iqbal's encounter and admiration of Nietzsche. Chapters 9, 14, and 15 conversely tend to overemphasize Iqbal's similarities with Nietzsche. Some authors appear to argue for a middle ground, but this claim is not reflected in their analysis of Iqbal's relationship to Nietzsche.

the focus will be on the religio-philosophical work of Muhammad Iqbal as it relates to the religious philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. Although it is known that Iqbal read Nietzsche while in Europe, being influenced by him not inherently detract from Iqbal's originality. The contexts in which these authors were writing and thinking differed greatly. Therefore their messages and meanings differed in terms of what they wanted their audience to understand. Generally stated, this thesis posits that similarities and differences exist between Iqbal and Nietzsche's thought, but Iqbal selectively syncretized principles found in Nietzsche's works into his own philosophy.

Further exploring this idea of selective syncretism is understanding Iqbal's goal for his religious philosophy. It is clear that Iqbal's religious philosophy is not for its own sake, but part of the Indian Muslim liberation movement from British colonial rule. Nietzsche's goal was the liberation of Europe from the shackles of any system hampering individualism. These contextually different goals will be explored as integral to the overall understanding of convergence and divergence between their religious philosophies.

This thesis also explores the possibility that the convergence and divergence in the religious philosophies of Nietzsche and Iqbal can be explained by each philosopher's conceptualization of religion. Each author understood religion in both similar and different ways, giving rise to the observed convergence and divergence between their philosophies. Their conceptions of religion were products of their independent thought and geo-historical context. Guiding this hypothesis are several questions: What was each philosopher's "definition" of religion? What was religion's function? Was religion socially constructed to serve a societal purpose? What was religion's role in the life of an

individual or society? Answers to these questions lie within Iqbal and Nietzsche's writings. Thus, this thesis will draw heavily upon their primary sources.

Finally, this thesis will discuss Iqbal's understanding of Nietzsche. Therefore, instances in which Iqbal praises and criticizes Nietzsche will be analyzed because such statements will elucidate Iqbal's reading of Nietzsche. Specific questions regarding this aspect of the thesis include: To what degree could Iqbal read Nietzsche in German? Was Iqbal aware of the context and the audience to which Nietzsche was writing? Did Iqbal understand the stylistic and linguistic nuances of German well enough to detect sarcasm and metaphor? This last question is of particular import when dealing with Nietzsche's later works such as *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

Relevance

An exploration of the simultaneous interrelatedness and uniqueness of two distinct philosophers is relevant to both scholarly and popular discourse. Since September 11, 2001, concerns regarding the mixture of Islam, politics, society, culture and modernity/post-modernity have increased. A flawed question often posed is, "Is Islam compatible with any aspects of modern/post-modern life?" This thesis addresses this idea by exploring Iqbal's religious philosophy and places it in the context of twentieth century modernity. His religio-philosophical arguments and positions revolutionized the way South Asian Muslims view philosophy, Islam, and modernity. Some specific concerns cited by many in contemporary discussions are: How does Islam

view individual rights? How does Islam view philosophy? How does Islam view the individual in religion?

This thesis does not seek to engage in apologetics for Iqbal's or Muslim philosophy. The individual reader must decide the degree to which these questions are answered in a satisfactory manner. This thesis will, however, show that Iqbal's religious philosophy involved a unique syncretism with Nietzsche's religious philosophy. To many this is an odd hybridization of a deeply religious philosopher with the philosophy of an atheist. Textual references and analysis will demonstrate the relationship between these two religious philosophers. Broadly speaking, this thesis seeks to explore a curious religio-philosophical relationship between two religious philosophers who met only through the written word. This unique interaction between two contextually different individuals led to the development of a fascinating strain of thought within Islam.

Chapter 1: Iqbal's Thought and Philosophy

Iqbal's Family Background

Iqbal was born in Sialkot, Punjab, in present-day Pakistan on November 9, 1877. Iqbal's father, Nur Muhammad was a tailor by trade, meaning Iqbal's family, by today's standards, was likely middle class. Additionally, Nur Muhammad was a devout Sufi Muslim, which helped Iqbal's family gain notoriety within Sialkot.¹ An interesting note about Iqbal's family background is that he came from a family of Kashmiri Brahmin priests.² Biographical records indicate that Iqbal's family converted to Islam approximately two centuries before Iqbal's birth. His family's connection to Vedic priesthood, Kashmiri ethnicity, and two centuries practicing Islam likely gave Iqbal's family a great deal of social capital within Sialkot.

Iqbal's Early Education

Iqbal's early education appeared to be home-schooling under the tutelage of his father.³ Nur Muhammad's education instilled a reverence for the Qur'an and mystical Sufi practices, giving Iqbal both intellectual and spiritual knowledge of Islam. His earliest formal education was in the Arabic, Persian, and Urdu languages at the hand of local scholar Mir Hassan Shah.⁴ After receiving his religious and language education, his father sent him to receive a "Western" education.

Iqbal was educated at the Scotch Mission School, run by Christian missionaries.⁵ Here Iqbal gained an appreciation for Western secular disciplines, and exposure to

¹ "Biography of Allama Iqbal," The Iqbal Academy Pakistan, <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/person/person.htm>.

² K. C. Kanda, *Allama Iqbal: Selected Poetry* (Elgin, IL: New Dawn Press Group, 2006) 2.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵ Ibid.

English and Christianity. Although he maintained a standard Islamic position regarding Christian orthodoxy (i.e. the nature of Jesus), he did not criticize Christianity as did other Muslim scholars of his time.

After matriculating from the Scotch Mission School, Iqbal went to the Government College in Lahore where he met one of his greatest intellectual influences, Sir Thomas Arnold.⁶ Sir Thomas was the resident Islamic and Oriental scholar at the Government College and a deep admirer of Islam.⁷ His philosophical and historical perspectives on Islam made him a vocal critic of European misconceptions surrounding Islam.⁸ While at Government College, Iqbal pursued both a Bachelor and Master of the Arts in Arabic, English and Philosophy bringing him into close working contact with Sir Thomas.⁹ Iqbal was such an admirer of Sir Thomas that when he returned to England in 1904, Iqbal dedicated several lines of poetry to him.¹⁰

An important note that must be made regarding Iqbal's education in British India as well as Europe is the lack of actual documentation detailing his studies and the degrees he received. This is not to say that Iqbal was not highly educated, but there is room for healthy skepticism given this lack of documentation. Often all that is known regarding his education is that he received a degree at a specific school or university in a particular year. Settling this matter would require reviewing degree documents at the locations where he studied to determine if the universities have records of his various matriculations, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Sheila McDonough, *The Authority of the Past* (Chambersburg: American Academy of Religion, 1970), 16.

⁹ Kanda, *Selected Poetry*, 3.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3-4.

European Education

Following his graduation from the Government College in Lahore, Iqbal arrived in England in 1905 at Cambridge University.¹¹ Already holding degrees in philosophy and other concentrations, Iqbal is reported to have received another degree in philosophy from Cambridge University in 1906.¹² Additionally, he earned a law degree from Middle Temple in London and passed his barrister's exam in 1906.¹³ Finally, Iqbal left the United Kingdom for Germany and enrolled in Ludwig-Maximilians Universität in Munich where he received his Ph.D. in Philosophy in 1908 under the supervision of Dr. Friedrich Hommel.¹⁴ His dissertation, written in English, was entitled *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*.¹⁵ What is puzzling about his dissertation submitted to a German university under the supervision of a German scholar in English is the evidence suggesting Iqbal knew German well enough to conduct research.¹⁶

According to an often cited *hadith* (saying or deed attributed to Prophet Muhammad), Muslims are commanded to “seek knowledge even if it is in China.” Iqbal's breadth and many years of education certainly embody the ideal of seeking knowledge. A gifted legal scholar, philosopher, and poet, Iqbal returned to Lahore in 1908. Whether or not he fully attained all of these degrees in three years is a matter of further scholarly analysis. This point aside, his education in both Islamic studies and

¹¹ Mir Muntasir, “Allama Iqbal Brief Life Sketch,” The Iqbal Academy Pakistan, <http://www.allamaiqbal.com>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Dr. Iqbal Society of North America, “Life of Iqbal,” http://www.disna.us/LIFE_OF_IQBAL.html,

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ M. A. H. Hobohm, “Muhammad Iqbal and Germany: A Correspondence of the Heart,” *Iqbal Review: Journal of the Iqbal Academy Pakistan*, 41, 4 (2000), <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct00/index.html>. This claim is based on Iqbal's citation of German research in his Ph.D. dissertation and his letter correspondence with his tutor Emma Wegenast. In these letters he laments his *schlechte Deutsch* (“bad German”), suggesting a lack of confidence which may explain his decision to write his dissertation in English.

philosophy at European institutions demonstrates a broad general knowledge of various topics across contexts. Upon his return, he received a teaching position in the Faculty of Philosophy, teaching at Government College until 1911, when he began to practice law privately until 1934.¹⁷

Iqbal's Adult Years

Upon returning to Lahore, Iqbal began writing poetry advocating the removal of British colonial rule from British India (present day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) and Muslim spiritual revival.¹⁸ However, as politics and power structures began to change in South Asia, Iqbal's writings shifted from unified messages of Indian nationalism to messages exclusively directed to South Asian Muslims.¹⁹

He began his involvement in politics in 1908 when he became a member of the Executive Council of the British branch of the All-India Muslim League.²⁰ The All-India Muslim League was an organization formed in the early twentieth century by Indian Muslims who advocated an independent Indian state while retaining strong ties to Britain. However, the group differed regarding the post-independence status of the sizeable Muslim minority in British India. The group's consensus was any independence outcome would require a semi-autonomous Muslim state to protect the rights of Muslims. However, it is important to note that the group, and Iqbal for many years, did not advocate the creation of a Muslim state and a Hindu state that followed British partition in 1947.

¹⁷ Muntasir, "Allama Iqbal Brief Life Sketch."; McDonough, *Authority*, 16.

¹⁸ Kanda, *Selected Poetry*, 10.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Muntasir, "Allama Iqbal Brief Life Sketch."

Between the years of 1908 and 1927, Iqbal wrote religiously, philosophically, and politically charged poetry and prose. In 1930, he was elected to preside over the Indian Muslim League's annual meeting in Allahabad.²¹ It was at this meeting that he first expressed the idea of a semi-autonomous state for Muslims within a broader Indian state, in line with the early ideas of the All-India Muslim League.²² This suggestion was preceded by decades of discontent within the Muslim population of India. Examples of tension were various violent clashes between Muslims and Hindus (and at times Sikhs) in the 1920s, and poor electoral performances of Muslim candidates in municipal elections despite some areas having substantial Muslim populations. These events led Muslims to demand an autonomous region to preserve cultural self-determination instead of the likely democratic of political and cultural domination of Hindus. Concerning the issue of independent India, Iqbal was a member of the Round Table Conferences in London that discussed the future political status of India in 1930 and 1931.²³

The end of Iqbal's life is marked by poor health.²⁴ Despite health problems, he remained dedicated to both religious revival, philosophical inquiry, and national/political causes. In 1935 that he was elected president of the Anjuman-i Himayat-i Islam ("Association for the Service/Protection/Propagation [of the Honor] of Islam") which provided him with a new forum and position to promulgate his ideas.²⁵ The group's general purpose was to provide a forum of expression for politically active Muslims within British India. After chronic health problems, Iqbal's health declined rapidly. In

²¹ Pakistan Times. 2004. <http://pakistantimes.net/2004/11/09/specialreport.htm>.

²² Pakistan Times. 2004. <http://pakistantimes.net/2004/11/09/specialreport.htm>; Kanda, *Selected Poetry*, 17.

²³ Pakistan Times. 2004. <http://pakistantimes.net/2004/11/09/specialreport.htm>; Kanda, *Selected Poetry*, 17.

²⁴ Kanda, *Selected Poetry*, 17; "Iqbal in Years." Iqbal Academy Pakistan. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

²⁵ Kanda, *Selected Poetry*, 9; "Iqbal in Years." Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

the early hours of April 21, 1938, Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal died, missing his dream of seeing a Muslim state by nine years.

Overview of His Major Works

Unlike other philosophers, the bulk of his religious philosophy is in poetry rather than prose. This does not mean Iqbal avoided prose, but he knew his target audience, South Asian Muslims, preferred poetry to other media.²⁶ A practical reason for using poetry was the levels of illiteracy among his target audience.²⁷ With these reasons in mind, Iqbal wrote large volumes of poetry that were recited at community gatherings and Anjuman-i Himayat-i Islam meetings.²⁸ However, articulating religio-philosophical ideas requires a systematic and organized approach. Such an approach is found in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, which has the added benefit of being an English work. Although heavy emphasis will be placed on *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, his translated poetic works will be used to augment conclusions drawn from *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

A second point to cover before delving into Iqbal's thought is his use and choice of language. Of his published languages, he uses English when he wants to be systematic, and uses Persian and Urdu when he wants to reach his mostly illiterate and non-English speaking target audience of South Asian Muslims. The choice of Persian is natural, given its official use in the Mughal court and its popularity among Kashmiri poets in the nineteenth century.²⁹ Urdu is, to say the least, a disputed language, and

²⁶ Chitrlekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity, and the Making of Kashmir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 149.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 52, 324.

inextricably linked to Muslim subcontinent nationalism.³⁰ It shares many similarities with Hindi, but draws heavily upon Arabic and Persian vocabulary, and uses the Perso-Arabic script.³¹ As nationalist movements emerged across the subcontinent, they required standard languages to articulate their demands. For Vedic Indians, Hindi became the preferred medium, drawing heavily from Sanskrit for vocabulary as well as script.³² Although other factors exist regarding the development of Urdu as a national language, for many Muslim Indians, the connection to Islam gave impetus to develop Urdu as a distinct language from Hindi.³³ Curiously, Iqbal wrote more poetry in Persian than Urdu, but reasons suggesting he felt Persian was “superior” to Urdu are specious.³⁴ Pragmatically, poems in Persian could have wider appeal across the Muslim-majority world and among educated South Asians.³⁵ Urdu, by no means any less expressive, could reach the greatest number of people because of its closer ties to local subcontinent languages.³⁶

The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam

Iqbal’s prose masterpiece, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is actually a compiled series of lectures Iqbal gave between December 1928 and January 1929 at the Muslim Associations of Madras, Hyderabad, and Aligarh University.³⁷ The

³⁰ Ali Asani, “At the Crossroads of Indic and Iranian Civilizations: Sindhi Literary Culture,” in *Literary Cultures in History: South Asian Reconstructions* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 640.

³¹ Harish Trivedi, “The Progress of Hindi Part 2: Hindi and the Nation,” in *Literary Cultures* (see note 32), 640.

³² Ali Asani, “Crossroads,” (see note 32), 640.

³³ Sheldon Pollock, “Introduction,” in *Literary Cultures* (see note 32), 33.

³⁴ Kanda, *Selected Poetry*, 10, 17. The differences in the amounts of Urdu and Persian poetry may reflect style preferences, but Kanda’s claim that Iqbal felt Persian was superior to Urdu requires support, which he does not provide.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁶ Harish Trivedi, “Progress of Hindi,” in *Literary Cultures* (see note 32), 967-69.

³⁷ “Introduction to *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.” The Iqbal Academy Pakistan. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

six lectures were compiled in 1930, and eventually published in English by Oxford University Press with an additional chapter “Is Religion Possible?” in 1934.³⁸ This work represents the clearest expression of Iqbal’s religious philosophy and his concerns about Islam in South Asia. Throughout the lectures he covers epistemology, religious experience, conceptions of God and religion, the Self, “the Spirit of Muslim Culture,” the inherent dynamism within Islam, and whether religion, as he has defined it, is possible.³⁹

A prominent feature in this work is his frequent reference, both approving and critical, to European philosophers. The most noteworthy mentions are Nietzsche, Alfred Whitehead, and Henri Bergson, with brief references to William James and Darwin. Also characteristic of this work are references to Qur’anic verses and Persian/South Asian poets and mystics, reinforcing his points among Muslim audiences. The most significant aspect of the book is that it represents Iqbal’s outline for preserving Islam’s core principles while embracing modernity. It also demonstrates Iqbal’s selective syncretism regarding Nietzsche’s philosophy. The idea of selective syncretism describes Iqbal’s reading of various philosophers, particularly Nietzsche, in which he incorporates what he believes are Islamic principles central to his own philosophical ideas, and applies them to his context.

‘Ilm al-Iqtisad

Chronologically, Iqbal’s earliest work is *‘Ilm al-Iqtisad* (The Science of Economics) published in Urdu. This work explores how economic principles relate to other scientific disciplines, daily life, and social justice. He argues for altering social

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Oxford: 1934. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

practices to conform to economic theory to achieve social justice.⁴⁰ Not only is social justice central to Iqbal's understanding of Islam, but it is a recurring theme within the Qur'an:

O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.⁴¹

Additionally, Fazlur Rahman states in *Major Themes of the Qur'an*: "There is no doubt that a central aim of the Qur'an is to establish a viable social order on earth that will be just and ethically based."⁴² *Ilm ul-Iqtisad* was most likely directed toward educated, literate Urdu speakers, and represents the period in Iqbal's life when he targeted such elites to enact social change. He eventually abandoned this elitist approach, opting instead for a broad appeal through religious reformation.

The Development of Metaphysics in Persia

Iqbal's next major work was his Ph.D. dissertation, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, which traces Persian philosophical thought historically via important Persian religious figures such as Zoroaster and Baha'u'llah.⁴³ Relevant to this thesis is his appreciation for the historical development of Islamo-Persian thought from non-Islamic sources, and his conclusion that Sufism is a natural consequence of Greco-Islamic metaphysical thought.⁴⁴

Sufism is often translated as "mysticism," but such a word is inadequate, particularly for Sufism's South Asian orders. Heavily influenced by well-established

⁴⁰ "Introduction to *The Science of Economics*." The Iqbal Academy Pakistan. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

⁴¹ Qur'an 4:135.

⁴² Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1994), 37.

⁴³ "Introduction to *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*." The Iqbal Academy Pakistan. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

⁴⁴ Muhammad Iqbal, "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia" (PhD dissertation, Ludwig-Maximilians Universität, 1908), 148. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

Vedic ideas, South Asian Sufism is deeply spiritual, and exhorts its followers to seek the esoteric (*batin*) meanings of the Qur'an and Prophetic Hadith. Monistic ideas such as *wahdat ul-wujud* ("Unity of Existence/Being") are characteristic of South Asian Sufism. However, Ahmad Sirhindi's seventeenth century reformation re-emphasized Sufism's social activism in addition to its contemplative nature. Iqbal's religio-philosophical outlook also emphasizes deeper understanding of verses' meaning, and then *living* them. Iqbal's belief that Islam is defined by one's actions instead of one's thinking features prominently in his poetry.

Poetic Works: Shikwa, Jawab-i Shikwa, Asrar-i Khudi

Among the first works of poetry Iqbal wrote were in Urdu, the poems *Shikwa*, "The Complaint [Against God]," and *Jawab-i Shikwa*, "[God's] Answer to the Complaint." Both poems were composed shortly after his return to Lahore, and Iqbal recited *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i Shikwa* in 1910 and 1913 respectively.⁴⁵ These poems were later included in an anthology of his Urdu work called *Bang-i Dara* ("The Call of the Caravan Bell"), published in 1924.⁴⁶ The theme of *Shikwa* is a Muslim's complaint to God regarding the colonized status of the Muslims across the world. In the poem, the speaker accuses God of abandoning Muslims despite their adherence to God's laws:

We who with myriad *sajdas* filled
Thy holy Ka'ba's hallowed shrine
Whose bosoms reverently held
Thy great and glorious Book Divine—⁴⁷

This complaint highlights Muslims' faithful prayers facing Mecca and reverence for the Qur'an in spite of God's failure to reward and protect Muslims. In *Jawab-i Shikwa*, God

⁴⁵ "Iqbal in Years." The Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

⁴⁶ "Introduction to *The Call of the Caravan Bell*." The Iqbal Academy Pakistan.
<http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

⁴⁷ Muhammad Iqbal, "The Complaint," in *The Call of the Caravan Bell*, translated by Altaf Hussain, 181-82, <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

declares such external displays of piety disingenuous. God reminds Muslims' of their failure to follow the spirit of God's law, and instead adopting Christian, Hindu, and Jewish cultural norms.⁴⁸ Finally, God tells Muslims to profess real devotion and determine their own destinies rather than asking God to meet their needs.⁴⁹

These two powerful works shocked the Muslim community in South Asia. For a human to write a poem accusing God of failure received a negative appraisal. Yet, Iqbal was not exiled, excommunicated, or murdered for his words. His words struck a nerve, but also expressed Muslims collective feelings. Equally controversial and nearly as blasphemous was Iqbal speaking for God in *Jawab-i Shikwa*. However, God gives the final word, reminding humans of their foibles, and showing humans control their destinies, all resonated positively with many listeners. Ultimately, these two poems demonstrate Iqbal's ability to use poetry to challenge Muslims to change their situation. These poems also provide early glimpses into Iqbal's beliefs about humans, the self, and God, and each entity's relation to the other.

The next major work, a Persian poem, was *Asrar-i Khudi*, usually translated as "Secrets of the Self," published in 1915.⁵⁰ The complexity of terms Iqbal uses in this poem warrants a brief discussion. *Khud* and *khudi* are the Persian terms for "self" in the sense of being the sum total of one's existence. A useful comparison for understanding *khud* and *khudi* is the Persian word *khodaa*, meaning "God," and comes from the same root. *Ruh* and *nafs* are originally Arabic terms, but incorporated into the Persian lexicon.

⁴⁸ Id., "The Answer to the Complaint," in *The Call of the Caravan Bell*, translated by Altaf Hussain, 193-98, <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ "Introduction to *Secrets of the Self*." The Iqbal Academy Pakistan. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

Ruh is the “life-force, spirit” God breathed into Adam to give him life,⁵¹ and *nafs*, in the Persianate dualist meaning, is the baser self. English translations of Iqbal’s uses of *khud/khudi* are “Ego/ego” likely due to his use of those terms in his English works.

Within the introduction and the actual text of *Asrar-i Khudi*, Iqbal explores questions concerning human nature, and cites European philosophers in his introduction.⁵² In the poem, Iqbal focuses on the central themes of the Self/Ego, the individual, and human nature.⁵³ As a final comment on Iqbal’s works, references will be made to poems and other writings not cited as major works to supplement the arguments of this thesis.

Iqbal’s Influences

One of his earliest influences was his father, who played a major role in his early understanding of Islam.⁵⁴ Iqbal also believed himself indebted to Mir Hassan Shah for his abilities in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu. Another dramatic influence in his life was Sir Thomas Arnold. Iqbal was Sir Arnold’s favorite pupil, and much of Iqbal’s exposure to Christianity came from him.⁵⁵ Expressing his gratitude, Iqbal dedicated the following lines from the poem *Nala-e Firaq* to Sir Thomas:

My frantic hands will unwind the knots of my fate
I’ll break the bonds of Punjab, and run to you straight⁵⁶

Sir Thomas also provided him with greater exposure to and contextual explanation of Western European works of philosophy. Furthermore, Sir Thomas’ status within the field

⁵¹ Qur’an 38:72.

⁵² Muhammad Iqbal, *Secrets of the Self*, translated by R. A. Nicholson (1920), 3. 1915.

<http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ “Biography of Allama Iqbal.” The Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

⁵⁵ Hafeez Malik (Professor of Political Science, Villanova University), in discussion with author, April 2008.

⁵⁶ Kanda, *Selected Poetry*, 3.

of Islamic Studies, and respect for Islam, would have made him even more influential to Iqbal. Finally, as a part of Iqbal's formative academic years, he gave Iqbal the necessary respect for Western European progress evident in his syncretic religious philosophy.

The next great influence on Iqbal's thought was Friedrich Nietzsche. Although the two never met, Iqbal encountered Nietzsche through his books. There are fifteen explicit mentions, both positive and negative, of Nietzsche within his poetry and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Despite some of Iqbal's reservations regarding Nietzsche's religious philosophy, he had great admiration for Nietzsche's belief in the power of the individual spirit.

Iqbal's European Philosophical Influences

In Europe, Iqbal was exposed to the emerging differences between British philosophy and European continental philosophy. Particularly in the United Kingdom, but with a modest following in Germany, was a growing belief that philosophy should restrict itself to precise use of language. Termed Analytic Philosophy, it was based on the idea that language is finite and restricts the expression of ideas. Rather than focusing on metaphysics, the new goal was to improve the logic of existing arguments through greater linguistic precision. This had the effect of changing philosophy into a structured field valuing logical and linguistic analysis of arguments over creativity of thought.

The counterbalance to this increasingly narrow view was "Continental Philosophy," prominent in France and Germany. This philosophical position was empirical, focusing on phenomena. Continental philosophers discussed the individual's existence as occurring within sequences of phenomena, considering "being" not as an end, but a process. It was in these philosophical climates that Iqbal found himself in the

early twentieth century studying philosophy under J. M. E. McTaggart in the United Kingdom and under Dr. Friedrich Hommel in Germany. McTaggart was an expert in Hegelian philosophy, and gave Iqbal a firm grounding in Hegelian phenomenology. Dr. Hommel, on the other hand, was not a philosopher, but a German Orientalist specializing in Cuneiform, Assyrian history, and general ancient Near East history. Under Dr. Hommel's supervision, Iqbal wrote his doctoral dissertation on the historical development of Persian metaphysics.⁵⁷ Additionally, Iqbal studied in Germany shortly after Nietzsche's death, and observed the heated debate surrounding Nietzsche.⁵⁸ It is likely at this time that Iqbal read Nietzsche, despite possible warnings from Dr. Hommel, a committed Christian.⁵⁹

Apart from Nietzsche, the ideas of Whitehead and Bergson influenced Iqbal's religious philosophy. Although not published at the time of Iqbal's European education, Whitehead's *Process and Reality* (1929) impacted Iqbal's conception of time, demonstrated by Iqbal's multiple references to Whitehead in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Bergson's *Creative Evolution* (French 1907, English 1910) also influenced Iqbal's thought, despite his disagreements with Bergson's conception of time,⁶⁰ which Iqbal characterized as incompatible with a Qur'anic worldview.

Although occasionally disagreeing with Whitehead in his lectures as well, it is clear that Iqbal likes Whitehead's idea of time as a duality. Whitehead describes time as both creative duration driven by individual action, and the discrete units required by

⁵⁷ Dr. Iqbal Society of North America, "Life of Iqbal," http://www.disna.us/LIFE_OF_IQBAL.html,

⁵⁸ Steven Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany: 1890-1990* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 17-18, 24.

⁵⁹ Suzanne Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 237 in note.

⁶⁰ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 22.

human thought to comprehend events.⁶¹ Iqbal agrees in particular with Whitehead's Qur'anic understanding of the universe saying, "...Professor Whitehead describes the universe, not as something static, but as a structure of events possessing the character of a continuous creative flow."

Evaluating the relationship between Iqbal's influences and his thought is a difficult task. His religious philosophy was original and unique, but clearly drew upon philosophies he studied. Iqbal is most grateful toward his father, Mir Hassan Shah, Sir Thomas, Whitehead and Bergson. However, it is difficult to say if Iqbal had a positive or negative appraisal of Nietzsche. Most of Iqbal's poetic references to Nietzsche convey a sense of pity, but *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* draws heavily upon Nietzsche's ideas of self-empowerment. Iqbal's appraisal of Nietzsche is a critical question surrounding his fascination with Nietzsche, and will be covered in more detail in a later chapter.

The fingerprints of other European philosophers like McTaggart, Whitehead, and Bergson can also be seen in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Specifically, these thinkers contributed to Iqbal's understanding of time, space, and creativity's role in human existence. These ideas were important when Iqbal read Nietzsche, as they influenced him both toward and away from Nietzsche.

Iqbal's Political Context

Understanding the thrust of Iqbal's thought requires appreciating his colonial context. Britain had maintained an imperial presence in the Indian subcontinent since the founding of the East India Company in 1600. After crushing the Great Mutiny of 1857,

⁶¹ Ibid., 23.

Britain held political, economic, and military hegemony until 1947, when it divided the subcontinent into India and East and West Pakistan. As a member of the cultural elite, Iqbal benefited from access to British schools with Western curricula, and opportunities to study in Europe. However, the overall impact of colonialism in the subcontinent was negative and his disdain is captured in his lines about the Jallianwala Massacre in 1919:

Thus says the garden dust to the pilgrims of the park,
About the tricks of heaven remain thee not in the dark;
The seed of this tree was fed on the martyrs' blood,
Wash it with your tears, flush it root and bark.⁶²

In this socio-political climate, Iqbal expressed admiration for Western European achievements, and aversion to actions carried out in the name of empire-building.

Iqbal's Intellectual Context

Iqbal's South Asian intellectual context was characterized by a pan-Islamic reform movement led by figures such as Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898), Ameer Ali Sayed (d. 1928), and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897).⁶³ Each of these individuals advocated intellectual, educational, social, and political renewal through the use of *ijtihad*, the mechanism whereby scholars revise Islamic law in accordance with changing circumstances. These figures contended that *ijtihad* was required for Muslim societies to resist colonialism and adapt to Europe's technological advances. Their opponents maintained the absolute sufficiency of traditional formulations of Islamic law, and that Muslims should not be involved in secular affairs.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's ideas focused on the compatibility of science and Islam. He argued that Muslims were being colonized because of social weakness caused

⁶² Kanda, *Selected Poetry*, 4-5.

⁶³ Charles Kurzman, ed., *Modernist Islam 1840-1940: A Sourcebook* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 291, 316, 103.

by a lack of modern education.⁶⁴ This prompted him to establish the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1875, which provided an English-medium education in modern disciplines to build an educated class of Indian Muslims.⁶⁵

Ameer Ali Sayed's *Spirit of Islam* emphasized Islam's spiritual principles rather than strict jurisprudence, believing Islam was more than a legal code.⁶⁶ This view motivated him to found the All-India Muslim League in London in 1908 to promote his political vision regarding Islam, viewing enlightened Islamic rule as the best possible form of governance.⁶⁷ Ameer Ali's emphasis on Islam's underlying spiritual principles, influenced Iqbal to see what supported law, and uncover the underlying moral principles.

Finally, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's Salafism greatly shaped Iqbal's religious context. Al-Afghani's seminal work was *Answer of Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani to Renan* (original in French, *Réponse de Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani à Renan*) to French Orientalist Ernst Renan, critiquing his lecture and article *L'islam et la science (Islam and Science)*, in which Renan argued that Islam and Semites (i.e. Arabs) were incapable of scientific reasoning.⁶⁸ In response to attacks such as this, al-Afghani also advocated the compatibility of Islam and modernity, and encouraging pan-Muslim unity under Islam. Afghani is credited with founding the Salafi movement, which advocated imitation of early Muslims' piety and decision-making methodology to adapt to changing circumstances.

Also important to Iqbal's intellectual context was the religious reform and liberation movement among Hindus led primarily by Mohandas Gandhi. Although not

⁶⁴ Ibid., 291.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 316.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 107.

the subject of this thesis, the comparison to Gandhi is helpful due to greater scholarly and non-scholarly familiarity with Gandhi's movement. Gandhi, like Iqbal, was educated in the British colonial system, and also anti-colonial. Also similar to Iqbal, Gandhi used religious language to rally and empower Hindu Indians around independence from Britain. Although the term is not exactly applicable to Gandhi, Faisal Devji links Gandhi's non-violent movement based on ethics with contemporary global jihad movements.⁶⁹ Admitting the "grotesque" comparison, he indulges it insofar as jihad is, depending on perspective, a struggle to make a situation more just. In this way, Devji likens Gandhi and Iqbal's movements as intellectual precursors to contemporary "ethical" jihad.⁷⁰

Summary

The previous discussion of Iqbal's life, major works, and influences contextualizes his ideas. Given the intellectual base available to him, one may question his originality. However, Iqbal drew upon the existing knowledge base when he began codifying his religious and philosophical ideas. Yet, he also added a new, Islamic religious philosophy to the intellectual heritage of South Asia. Such a reciprocal relationship between Iqbal and his context makes it difficult to separate original and influenced ideas. The responsible, and correct, approach to understanding his ideas is to acknowledge reciprocity between the individual and the environment.

Islam as the Religion of Individual Empowerment

⁶⁹ Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 132.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

One of the central themes in Iqbal's religious philosophy, and related to Nietzsche's, is Islam as a religion of individual empowerment. This idea can be understood as an ability to make moral decisions without coercion from external sources. It can also refer to an individual's ability to form a moral or philosophical code free from coercion. Iqbal's view of individual empowerment is the idea that through Islam, and Sufism, one acquires God's attributes and unlocks and fulfills one's creative potential.⁷¹

The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam

Iqbal states in his preface, "The Qur'an is a book which emphasizes 'deed' rather than 'idea'."⁷² This remark sets the tone for his entire discussion of Islamic reform in light of modern scientific discovery and the threat of materialism. The Qur'an's purpose, and thus Islam's, is to "awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the universe."⁷³ More generally, religion's purpose is "the transformation and guidance of man's inner and outer life."⁷⁴ Despite these inducements to action and change, Iqbal describes the Muslim world as intellectually stagnant, and spiritually moving toward "the West." This spiritual trend refers to increasing materialism, which is not necessarily negative. However, he fears for the loss of Muslims' cultural heritage as Muslims gaze at Europe's wonders, and fail to recognize the Islamic principles underlying these achievements.⁷⁵ The aim of his lectures is:

... 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.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, see chapter six.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

In his closing chapter, “Is Religion Possible?” he extols Islam’s creative spirit, and challenges Muslims to view *taqdir* (“destiny”) as a series of internal potentials attainable through individual effort.⁷⁷ Iqbal emphasizes a “mature Fatalism” as:

...not negation of the ego... it is life and boundless power which recognizes no obstruction, and can make a man calmly offer his prayers when bullets are showering around him.⁷⁸

And he re-emphasizes his belief that the Qur’an focuses on action over idea:

The ultimate aim of the ego is not to see something, but to be something. It is in the ego’s effort to be something that he discovers his final opportunity to sharpen his objectivity and acquire a more fundamental ‘I am’ which finds evidence of its reality not in the Cartesian ‘I think’ but in the Kantian ‘I can.’ The end of the ego’s quest is not emancipation from the limitations of individuality; it is, on the other hand, a more precise definition of it. ... The world is not something to be merely seen or known through concepts, but something to be made and re-made by continuous action.⁷⁹

The guiding purpose behind the lectures is to encourage Muslims to adapt to changing times and information. The purpose is not to change Islam in light of twentieth century discoveries and values, but to use the new knowledge to inform one’s view of Islam. The religion remains the same, but how one understands it is what Iqbal proposes to change.

Iqbal believes self-empowerment comes *through* religion, which he describes as both rational and non-rational. The believer’s emotions and feelings within the experience of religion are more important than religious knowledge because emotions and feelings drive action. In fact, Iqbal argues for a balance between spirit and intellect:

The idea of finality, therefore, should not be taken to suggest that the ultimate fate of life is complete displacement of emotion by reason. Such a thing is neither possible nor desirable. The intellectual value of the idea is that it tends to create an independent critical attitude towards mystic experience by generating the belief that all personal authority, claiming a supernatural origin, has come to an end in the history of man. This kind of belief is a psychological force which inhibits the growth of such authority.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Ibid., 24.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 50.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 90.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 59.

Exactly how religion is a source of individual empowerment also requires discussion. Western European religio-philosophical tradition tends to promote the idea that individual freedom is antithetical to the moral restraints demanded by religion. Iqbal disagrees. Central to his argument is what he calls a “Higher Fatalism.”⁸¹ According to Iqbal, religious maturity is a progression through three stages of development, and through this three stage progression:

...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.⁸²

Empowerment comes through a deeper understanding of oneself by gaining a deeper understanding of the wisdom contained in religion. Iqbal further states:

...higher religion, which is only a search for a larger life, is essentially experience and recognized the necessity of experience as its foundation long before science learnt to do so. It is a genuine effort to clarify human consciousness, and is, as such, as critical of its level of experience as Naturalism is of its own level.⁸³

Religion, which is essentially a mode of actual living, is the only serious way of handling Reality. As a form of higher experience it is corrective of our concepts of philosophical theology or at least makes us suspicious of the purely rational process which forms these concepts. Science can afford to ignore metaphysics altogether, and may even believe it to be ‘a justified form of poetry’, as Lange defined it, or ‘a legitimate play of grown-ups’, as Nietzsche described it. But the religious expert who seeks to discover his personal status in the constitution of things cannot, in view of the final aim of his struggle, be satisfied with what science may regard as a vital lie, a mere ‘as-if’ to regulate thought and conduct. In so far as the ultimate nature of Reality is concerned, nothing is at stake in the venture of science; in the religious venture the whole career of the ego as an assimilative personal centre of life and experience is at stake.⁸⁴

Religion is neither a crutch nor a moral dogma, but a way of discovering oneself, one’s purpose, and creating one’s destiny.

As a Muslim, Iqbal believes religion’s liberating power is best experienced in Islam. This belief is evident in his comparisons of Islam to Judaism, Christianity,

⁸¹ Ibid., 50.

⁸² Ibid., 83.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 84.

Buddhism, and Hinduism (Vedic religions). The only real references to Judaism emphasize Judaism's historical role in providing a reason for Christianity's revolt.⁸⁵ He contrasts Judaism as a religion of legality with Christianity as a religion of spirituality.⁸⁶ Given his education background with Christian missionaries, Iqbal has more to say about Christianity. He describes Christianity's focus as spiritual, and not temporal.⁸⁷ He cites Friedrich Naumann (*Briefe über Religion*), to describe Christianity's ideal social and political disinterest in worldly affairs.⁸⁸ Iqbal's thoughts on Buddhism are expressed in *Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal* (1909), where he says Buddhism's emphasis on pain leads to otherworldliness and inaction.⁸⁹ Iqbal's view of Hinduism is not positive either. To Iqbal, Hinduism is a caste-based religion inferior to Islam's egalitarianism. Given these comparisons, Iqbal believes Islam is a religion of empowerment because it does not adhere to strict legality (Judaism), require redemption (Christianity), believe in pain's inevitability (Buddhism), or promote a hierarchy (Hinduism). In Islam:

Man is a free and responsible being; he is the maker of his own destiny; his salvation is his own business. There is no mediator between God and man. God is the birthright of every man.⁹⁰

Islam's freedom and agency are what make it the most suitable religion for individual empowerment.

Asrar-i Khudi

Iqbal extols individualism as the highest virtue of existence when he quotes the Prophet saying, "*Takhallaqu bi-akhlak Allah*," meaning "Create [within yourselves] the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 77.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 72.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 77.

⁸⁹ Kurzman, *Modernist Islam*, 305.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 307.

attributes of God.”⁹¹ According to Iqbal, the entire purpose of life is to become more unique by becoming more like God. The overall theme of the poem is an exploration of the Self. Early in the poem, Iqbal brings to light a paradox stating, “Self-affirmation brings *not-self* to light.” As important as creating new attributes for the Self is, it is equally important to understand what the Self is not. Iqbal then broaches the subject of love, and describes how love is both an action and a feeling, and the ideal of individualism.⁹² Iqbal then differentiates between asking others for help and self-reliance, favoring self-reliance.⁹³ Finally, Iqbal discusses the three phases a believer must pass through on the path toward individualism and fulfillment of the Self, which will be discussed later.⁹⁴

Iqbal’s purpose behind *Asrar-i Khudi*, is found in the section entitled, “An invocation”.⁹⁵ Here, Iqbal encourages all Muslims to seek life by being as unique as possible. By seeking individuality, Muslims will inspire each other to further seek God and reach a state of perfection. Reinforcing this point are Iqbal’s statements regarding the purpose of life:

The ultimate end of all human activity is Life—glorious, powerful, exuberant. All human art must be subordinated to this final purpose, and the value of everything must be determined in reference to its life-yielding capacity. The highest art is that which awakens our dormant will-force and braves us to face the trials of life manfully. All that brings drowsiness and makes us shut our eyes to reality around, on the mastery of which alone Life depends, is a message of decay and death. There should be no opium-eating in Art. The dogma of Art for the sake of Art is a clever invention of decadence to cheat us out of life and power.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Iqbal, *Secrets*, 3

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 13.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 18-20.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 31.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 4 (in note 4).

Iqbal's work of poetry is no exception. His ultimate purpose is to awaken in South Asian Muslims the desire to seek the individualism of God and thereby empower themselves through their religion.

Shikwa and Jawab-i Shikwa

The central crux of *Shikwa* (1910) revolves around the speaker's prayer to God in the form of a complaint. The speaker both asks and demands of God an answer for the current situation of Muslims in South Asia, and identifies God as the target of his accusation:

For I too have the gift of song
Which gives me courage to complain,
But ah! 'tis none but God Himself
Whom I, in sorrow, must arraign!⁹⁷

The speaker is both confrontational and reverent, suggesting Iqbal knew how close he was to blasphemy in the eyes of some Muslims. More than a rant, the poem is a philosophical question on the nature of evil. How could a good God allow such things to happen to believers? The complainer addresses the fact that Muslims have successfully spread God's message throughout the world, and yet, Muslims are colonized. The complainer also discusses Muslims' spiritual struggle stating:

Did we foreswear our faith to Thee?
To Thy dear Prophet cease to cling?
Of idol-breaking did we tire?
Or take to idol-worshipping?
Or did we weary of Thy Love,
Or Thy Love's rapture ever shun?⁹⁸

The complainer asks God why Muslims are suffering under foreign oppression when they have remained faithful to God. The poem ends by beseeching and reminding God to bless believers and uphold God's contractual obligation.

⁹⁷ Iqbal, "The Complaint," in *Caravan Bell*, 180.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 183.

Careful analysis reveals Iqbal is ridiculing many of his co-religionists. If this poem is indicative of Muslims' sentiments, then religious contractualism was a prominent theological view. Although extolling Muslims' actions throughout history, it is clear that the complainer's faith lacks maturity. The poem's target audience was South Asian Muslims, and its purpose was to both give expression to their grievances and cast light on their immature faith.

Jawab-i Shikwa

Iqbal's 1913 *Jawab-i Shikwa* was another iconoclastic way of expressing his overall theology. Speaking as God, Iqbal responds to the complainer by mocking the complainer:

So great their insolence indeed,
They dare even God upbraid!⁹⁹

Not responding to complaint line by line, God instead addresses South Asian Muslim behavior at large. God begins by criticizing the attitude with which Muslims perform their spiritual duties such as prayer and fasting. Next, God attacks Muslims' failure to keep pace with advances in knowledge, and the expectation that God will provide.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, God criticizes Muslims for trying to adopt the religious and cultural practices around them:

From Christians you have learnt your style
Your culture from the Hindus;
How can a race of Muslims pass
Who shame even the Jews?

You are known as Syed, and Mughal,
You call yourselves Pathan;
But can you truly claim as well
The name of Mussalman?¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Iqbal, "The Answer to the Complaint" in *Caravan Bell*, 194.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 194-95.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 196.

Ending the diatribe, God reminds Muslims that they must rid themselves of colonial humiliation and seize their destiny:

Thy shield be wisdom, be thy sword
The flaming Love Divine,
My fond *dervish!* dost thou not know
That all the world is thine?
 All else but God is at thy feet,
 If sounds thy *Takbeer* great;
 If thou a Muslim truly art,
 Thy effort is thy fate.
To my Muhammad be but true,
And thou hast conquered me;
The world is nought: thou shalt command
My Pen of Destiny.¹⁰²

The message to South Asian Muslims is clear: do not rest on your laurels. “Thy effort is thy fate” means that what Muslims will receive only rewards for which they strive.¹⁰³

Iqbal’s Specific Ideas

In addition to individual empowerment, other important religio-philosophical ideas exist within Iqbal’s works. These ideas are: *insan-i kamil*, Heaven and Hell, religion, Islam, and morality. Each of these ideas deserves greater attention, and will be analyzed using primarily *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, selected analysis by Hafeez Malik, and other works where appropriate.

Insan-i Kamil

The idea of *insan-i kamil*, often “The Perfect Man,” but also translated “The Perfect Human,” is Iqbal’s exemplar Muslim; a perfectly free and empowered individual. Although featured prominently in Iqbal’s religious philosophy, it is not original to Iqbal.

¹⁰² Ibid., 198.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Furthermore, it is not a concept Iqbal explicitly discusses in any of his major writings except for *Zubur-i 'Ajam* (Persian Psalms):

Question 7
Of what sort is this traveler, who is this wayfarer?
Of whom shall I say that he is the Perfect Man?¹⁰⁴

In 62 lines, Iqbal does not describe in great detail the attributes of the “Perfect Man,” but describes a human who is both a master of religion and matters of state.¹⁰⁵

According to Badaiyuni, a scholar at the Iqbal Academy in Pakistan, the idea of *insan-i kamil* originated with Sufi thinker al-Jili, who originally used the term to describe the Prophet Muhammad.¹⁰⁶ Iqbal acquired this idea from his studies in Sufism, expounded upon the concept, and removed the exclusivity reserved for the Prophet Muhammad. Iqbal’s version of the *insan-i kamil* has distinct attributes that any individual can cultivate.

The defining characteristic of the *insan-i kamil* is its successful completion of three stages of religious development: Faith/Obedience to Law, Thought/Self-Control, Discovery/Vice-Regent of God.¹⁰⁷ In the first stage, a Muslim submits to the will of God emphasizing the *insan-i kamil*’s bravery, devotion, and reverence for the ideal that is *insan-i kamil*.¹⁰⁸ During the second stage, a Muslim destroys his/her reverence for decadent values, and maintains a reverence for the *insan-i kamil*. This stage emphasizes the determination within the individual Muslim to strive for the ideal of the Perfect Human. However, an individual cannot remain in such a stage of destruction, and must

¹⁰⁴ Muhammad Iqbal, “New Garden of Secrets,” in *Persian Psalms*, translated by B. A. Dar (1948), 1927, 108. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Zamir Badaiyuni, “Nietzsche, Iqbal, and Post-Modernism,” in *Iqbal Review: Journal of the Iqbal Academy Pakistan* 44, 2 (April 2003), <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

¹⁰⁷ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 83; Roy Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), 64-65.

¹⁰⁸ Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, 65.

revere something. In the final stage, a Muslim creates new values from his or her struggle toward the ideal of *insan-i kamil* and God's will. Through the creation of life affirming values, the individual gains a deeper understanding of the self. This striving for a creative, self-oriented ego is the purpose of a Muslim's life, and is exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad. This final stage emphasizes the most important aspect of the *insan-i kamil*, creativity. Through these three phases, a Muslim transforms from a believer to the *insan-i kamil*, a true *khalifa*, or Vice-Regent, of God on earth possessing characteristics of deep reverence, destructive strength, and creative power.¹⁰⁹

Given these stringent criteria, it is natural to wonder if any individuals other than the Prophet have achieved the high spirituality of *insan-i kamil*. In his writings, Iqbal fails to mention any other human examples. However, he does not claim it is unattainable, and perhaps thought himself an *insan-i kamil*. Another question stemming from Iqbal's idea of the *insan-i kamil* is the purpose of such an individual. The purpose of this individual is to guide society toward perfection, and use his/her power to help others achieve perfection.¹¹⁰

Heaven and Hell

Among Iqbal's more curious ideas are his views on Heaven and Hell. Iqbal plainly states in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, "Heaven and Hell are states, not localities. Their descriptions in the Qur'an are visual representations of an inner fact, i.e. character."¹¹¹ This is consistent with his other metaphorical, Sufi interpretations of Qur'anic verses. Hell "in the words of the Qur'an, is 'God's kindled

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Hadi Hussein, "Conception of Poetry and the Poet," in *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, ed. Hafeez Malik (NY, London: Columbia University Press, 1971), 343.

¹¹¹ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 56.

fire which mounts above the hearts’—the painful realization of one’s failure as a man.”

In contrast, Heaven “is the joy of triumph over the forces of disintegration.” Discussing the subject of time and eternity, Iqbal rebuffs the idea that Hell is permanent. Rather than “eternal damnation,” it is “a corrective experience which may make a hardened ego once more sensitive to the breeze of Divine Grace”.¹¹² Furthermore:

Nor is Heaven a holiday. Life is one and continuous. Man marches always onward to receive ever fresh illuminations from an Infinite Reality which ‘every moment appears in a new glory.’ And the recipient of Divine Illumination is not merely a passive recipient. Every act of a free ego creates a new situation, and thus offers further opportunities for creative unfolding.¹¹³

Heaven and Hell are not fixed states, but dynamic and building character. By rejecting any permanence to Hell, Iqbal implies that all humans eventually reach Heaven, and ultimately creative, free egos.

Religion

In defining religion, Iqbal states:

Apart from this, religion on its doctrinal side, as defined by Professor Whitehead, is ‘a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended.’¹¹⁴

The “this” Iqbal refers to, is faith, and is essential to religion. The idea of transformation also features prominently because it is consonant with his goal of transforming the individual into the *insan-i kamil*. However, an important consideration is Iqbal’s understanding of religion versus the public’s conception of religion at the time. Iqbal’s definition clashes with the contractual nature of religion as an agreement between believer and God, expressed at length in *Shikwa*. Iqbal criticizes contractualism using the Mu‘tazilite theological school as an example:

¹¹² Ibid., 56-57.

¹¹³ Ibid., 57.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 2.

The Mu'tazilah, conceiving religion merely as a body of doctrines and ignoring it as a vital fact, took no notice of non-conceptual modes of approaching Reality and reduced religion to a mere system of logical concepts ending in a purely negative attitude.¹¹⁵

Iqbal's transformative conception challenged the public's contractualism. However, it is important to remember that Iqbal was a member, and a product of this society, and surely shared some ideas concerning religion with his fellow South Asian Muslims. Taking his definition of religion with his other statements, it is clear he believes religion is a positive force for changing individuals and societies.¹¹⁶

The purpose of religion, according to Iqbal, is "the transformation and guidance of man's inner and outer life."¹¹⁷ This leaves one wondering if religion is purely functional or has substantive elements. Iqbal answers this question by declaring religion both a force and method to aid humans in understanding their universe through the tools of thought and intuition:

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... Nor is there any reason to suppose that thought and intuition are essentially opposed to each other. They spring up from the same root and complement each other. The one grasps Reality piecemeal, the other grasps it in its wholeness... Both seek visions of the same Reality which reveals itself to them in accordance with their function in life.¹¹⁸

Finally, understanding religion's source is crucial to knowing how humans can perceive their universe. His attack on evolutionary theories of religion makes clear his belief that religion is not purely a human construct, although he states some religions are forms of escapism.¹¹⁹ He also criticizes Jung's view of religion as a "kind of well-meaning biological device" warning that this view of religion sends people "in an entirely

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 13.

hopeless direction.”¹²⁰ The ultimate source of religion, according to Iqbal, is the very thing it seeks, the Ultimate Reality. Religion is a “representative of some kind of Reality,” and guides humans back to its source. While Iqbal hates to use the term Mysticism, religion is a mystical way of knowing the universe and humans’ purpose of achieving the perfection God designed for them.¹²¹

In summary, Iqbal’s view of religion is a unique way of *perceiving* the universe. Mere understanding requires only philosophy. However, Iqbal believes that religion and life are dynamic processes *continually* seeking God and human perfection. Religion encapsulates all of human existence, and is critical to holistically understanding human existence and purpose. Islam fits into his conception of religion perfectly because Islam is a wholly encapsulating system uniting “religion and state, ethics and politics in a single revelation.”¹²²

Islam

Few actual descriptions of Islam are found in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, perhaps due to the origin of the work as a lecture. However, in the poem *Rumuz-i Bekhudi* (The Mysteries of Selflessness), Iqbal has an entire section entitled “The Pillars of Islam.” Instead of a description of Islam, it is an analysis of *tawhid*, “the unity and oneness of God,” and apostleship in Islam.¹²³ These two concepts are important aspects of the unified, universal Islam Iqbal seeks. *Tawhid* is a source of confidence that alleviates fear and all negative emotions that hinder a Muslim, and in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal describes *tawhid* as “equality,

¹²⁰ Ibid., 87.

¹²¹ Ibid., 83.

¹²² Ibid., 76.

¹²³ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, translated by A. J. Arberry (1953), 1918, 6, 9. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

solidarity, and freedom.”¹²⁴ Iqbal believes that the belief in a singular, unique God leads one to believe in individualism, and reflect the individualism of God (*tawhid*) in oneself.¹²⁵ Iqbal further applies this idea to the community and all humans in *Bang-i*

Dara:

This is the destiny of nature; this is the secret of Islam—
World-wide brotherhood, an abundance of love!
Break the idols of colour and blood and
become lost in the community.
Let neither Turanians, Iranians nor Afghans remain.¹²⁶

Iqbal’s vision of Islam is the unity of all believers lived on an individual and community level.

Perhaps paradoxically, Iqbal’s Islam is active, not intellectual, driven by the purposes of empowering the self, community, and political liberation. Clarifying his point, Iqbal separates intellectualism from “vitalism,” labeling intellectualism as mere understandings of causality. Vitalism, on the other hand, is Iqbal’s “Higher Fatalism” and equivalent to the term, *iman* (“belief”). Rather than intellectual belief, *iman* is lived through one’s actions: “Iman is not merely a passive belief in one or more propositions of a certain kind; it is a living assurance begotten of a rare experience.”¹²⁷

Iqbal credits Islam’s action-orientation to the Prophet Muhammad, and calls him the first religious rationalist, psychologist, and pragmatist. To support his statements, Iqbal cites Prophetic Hadith (statements and deeds of the Prophet). Iqbal stresses Muhammad’s virtues as evidence for his being an *insan-i kamil*, particularly highlighting his ego’s creative energy.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Iqbal, *Mysteries*, 6-8; Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 71.

¹²⁵ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 68.

¹²⁶ Iqbal, *Caravan Bell*, translated by D. J. Matthews, 1924, 219. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

¹²⁷ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 50.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2, 9, 41, 50, 58.

A final point is Iqbal's acknowledgment of multiple Islams. Although he is a proponent of his Islam, which he believes to be the true kind, he displays an awareness of other interpretations. In *Zarb-i Kalim* (The Rod of Moses) he states:

Go and recite in some cool grot
Your paternoster—
And there concoct some new Islam,
Whose mystic kernel
Shall be a tame submissive calm,
Despair eternal!¹²⁹

This acknowledgement of different Islams demonstrates two important points about his religious philosophy. The first is that he knew his audience, and was aware of the difference between textual Islam and practiced Islam. The second point is his recognition that his individually empowering Islam would have to overcome the established Islam. This second point caused Iqbal no small amount of distress as the possibility of his empowering Islam not taking hold occurred to him:

Iqbal! No-one in this world has ever known
your secret.
Does anyone know the pain I feel inside me?¹³⁰

Morality

According to Iqbal's writings, morality is an unwavering code of conduct that allows free egos to achieve their full potential.¹³¹ Applying definition by negation, one can also understand what Iqbal means by morality by understanding what it is not. Morality is neither utilitarian, nor is it predetermined.¹³² It is a fixed system of behavior, in which right and wrong, good and evil do exist. Iqbal chooses this behavioral definition because morality functions as a code of conduct for free egos, allowing them to unlock

¹²⁹ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Rod of Moses: A Declaration of War Against the Present Age*, translated by V. G. Kiernan, 1936, 306. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

¹³⁰ Iqbal, *Caravan Bell*, translated by D. J. Matthews, 1924, 150.

¹³¹ Major themes of *Reconstruction*, *Secrets*, and *Rod of Moses*.

¹³² Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 3, 26.

their potential. Iqbal is emphatically a moral absolutist. Supporting this claim is a reference from *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* where he discusses the principle of *ijtihad* (legal exertion to derive moral law):

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*.¹³³

His moral absolutism is also based on his belief in the principle of *tawhid*. Morality does not change—only the understandings of law informing moral behavior change. These changing understandings of how to be moral apply to all humans irrespective of religion or creed. The question, then, is what is Iqbal's source of morality? Examining Iqbal's statements, he equates *Shari'a* (Divine Law) and morality, and *fiqh* (human interpreted law) must change as insights into *Shari'a* change. Thus, what is legal, either known through *Shari'a* or *fiqh* at the time is moral. The sources of morality, then, are the sources of law, or the *usul al-fiqh*: The Qur'an, the Hadith, Scholarly Consensus (*ijma'*), and *Qiyas* (syllogistic reasoning), and/or *Ijtihad* for changing contexts.¹³⁴ The first two sources are commonly accepted as sources for *Shari'a* whereas the latter two are considered sources for *fiqh*.

In terms of providing examples of morality, Iqbal is quiet. However, he is vocal about determining the ultimate morality of actions. Iqbal's rationalization of morality hinges on the fixed principles of *Shari'a* which humans understand better over time. Therefore, good actions in the sixteenth century may not be considered good in the twentieth century because how to achieve the same good has evolved.¹³⁵

¹³³ Ibid., 72, emphasis added.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 76-82.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 70.

Iqbal's overall philosophy is about holistic understanding of events, and includes good and evil. Iqbal states, "Good and evil, therefore, though opposites, must fall within the same whole."¹³⁶ "There is no such thing as an isolated fact; for facts are systematic wholes the elements of which must be understood by mutual reference."¹³⁷ Good and evil have absolute standards, and humans must continually strive for the moral good to free their egos, but categorical separation of actions is impossible because good and evil are symbiotic.

Addressing a core Islamic belief regarding God's judgment, Iqbal injects intent as another factor in determining the morality or immorality of actions. "It is the invisible mental background of an act that ultimately determines its character."¹³⁸ In sum, moral and immoral actions are based on the current contextual understanding of *Shari'a*, the impact of an ego's free choice on others and its quest for freedom, and the action's intent. If an action was committed "in the spirit of detachment from the infinite complexity of life behind it,"¹³⁹ it is profane and immoral. However, the ultimate judge of such is not human, but divine, a fact Iqbal readily admits, "... God best knoweth what ye do! He will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection..."¹⁴⁰

Finally, morality's intersection with Islam is simple—being truly moral means building moral power through moral choice. This pursuit of moral power to achieve a state of freedom is the same goal as Islam. Morality and Islam therefore intersect in that they are one in the same. What is moral is Islam, and what is Islam is moral.

Conclusion

¹³⁶ Ibid., 40.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 71.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Qur'an 22: 67-68; Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 43.

Iqbal was a rare figure with a rarer religious philosophy. He radically altered how many Muslims understood religion, and contributed to the Muslim efforts to end British colonization in South Asia. He came from a unique family, and his diverse educational background exposed him to many different modes of thinking. All of this culminated in his poetic works, which express a desire for self-determination for Muslims, and a desire to unlock humans' potential. To Iqbal, there is no limit to human achievement if given the proper guidance, which naturally comes from God, the Qur'an, the Prophet Muhammad, and Islam.

An important point when reading Iqbal's religious philosophy is his pragmatism. He alters his tone and emphasizes different points as a function of context. He was highly emotional concerning colonization, and quite an activist, joining many Muslim societies involved in subcontinent politics. Iqbal's functionalism is geared toward freeing the individual and collective egos of Muslims. However, Iqbal does not see secular pursuits as the best means to liberation, and instead sees religion, and ultimately Islam, as a unifying factor to help Muslims end colonization. This need for an empowering religious philosophy is part of the reason he developed such a religious philosophy. Yet, his religious philosophy was dynamic and capable of lasting beyond liberation contexts. Iqbal was a visionary who advocated new ways of viewing the self, religion, Islam, and human existence, and attempted to gain followers willing to carry out his ideas.

Chapter 2: Nietzsche's Thought and Philosophy

One of the most admired and hated philosophers, in both his time and posthumously, Nietzsche has been the victim of polemics and apologetics. In discussing his background and religious philosophy, this thesis seeks to provide the reader with the basic information necessary to understand Nietzsche in order to follow the thesis's argument that linkages between Nietzsche and Iqbal exist. This thesis does not seek to condemn or enshrine Nietzsche, but merely to describe and explain, where necessary, contextual information that allows a reader to make his or her own judgments regarding Nietzsche's religious philosophy and its relationship to Iqbal's religious philosophy. This requires a focus on the major themes of his religious philosophy with necessary background and supplemental information provided for comprehension. It should be noted that the general interpretation of Nietzsche given in this chapter is one of nuance and subtlety. Rarely will Nietzsche be taken at face value, and underlying meanings and cross-references will be used to explain various religio-philosophical positions. The reading of Nietzsche offered in this chapter is not radical, but sees Nietzsche's works as part of a continuous discussion of identifiable main themes.

Nietzsche was born on October 15, 1844 in Röcken, Saxony, Prussia, into a very religious household. His father, Ludwig Nietzsche, was a Lutheran pastor of the Pietism movement and his mother, Franziska Oehler was the daughter of a Lutheran pastor. The Lutheran Pietism movement was an emotional and experiential movement, which had a deep impact on Nietzsche's thoughts on intellectualism.¹ In 1864, Nietzsche enrolled in

¹ Roy Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), 50.

the University of Bonn where he studied theology and majored in classical philology.² Several years later, in 1869, Nietzsche was conferred a doctorate by the University of Leipzig and accepted a teaching position of classical philology at the University of Basel which he retained until 1879.³ Nietzsche also had brief stints in military service, first in 1867 and again in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War where he served as a medical orderly.⁴ The last years of his life were both his most productive and miserable. Despite producing some of his greatest works in this period of his life, he remained relatively unknown.⁵ In January of 1889, Nietzsche collapsed in the streets of Turin, Italy and spent his remaining years in hospitals, an asylum, and under the hospice care of his mother and sister.⁶ Reportedly, Nietzsche's collapse precipitated "insanity," crippling Nietzsche intellectually, and although the nature of his affliction has never been more specifically described, it was likely syphilis. Nietzsche died at the age of 55 on August 25, 1900 in Weimar, Germany.⁷

Nietzsche's Historical Context

Nietzsche references the fact that he was privileged to have lived in tumultuous historical circumstances:

I take it for a good fortune of the first order that I lived at the right time and among Germans, of all peoples, so that I was *ripe* for this work...⁸

An example of a tumultuous event in Europe were the Revolutions of 1848, which Nietzsche calls "the events of 1848," and "grieved him [Nietzsche's father] beyond all

² Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4th ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 23.

³ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 250.

measure.”⁹ These events were revolutionary uprisings across the European continent in which urban and rural masses demanded basic freedoms and rights, bringing Europe closer to abolishing a still-present aristocracy. Germany experienced one such revolution, which sent a powerful message to elites, and resulted in increased freedoms for the growing middle class.

The second major historical event in Nietzsche’s lifetime was the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 and the subsequent German unification under Otto von Bismarck. Nietzsche had first-hand experience with the process of German unification through his voluntary participation in the Franco-Prussian War. It was during his service that he had a highly salient experience of human suffering after riding in a train car for three days with six wounded soldiers.¹⁰ A repeated theme in Nietzsche’s works is his criticism of all things “German” following this unification. It is not as if a German identity did not exist prior to unification as unification presupposes a cohesive identity. What Nietzsche was frustrated with was the popular devotion to this new entity of Germany. This can be seen in Nietzsche’s break with his long-time friend Richard Wagner as a result of Wagner’s excessive German nationalism.¹¹

During the same time, Europe experienced an increase in anti-Jewish ideologies. The most poignant example of anti-Jewish sentiment was the Dreyfus Affair in post-Franco-Prussian War France in which French-Jewish military officer Alfred Dreyfus was accused of espionage. Right-wing French groups and newspapers asserted Dreyfus’s treachery (which was unfounded; he was later acquitted of all charges) was because he was Jewish. This general political and intellectual turmoil had a deep impact on

⁹ Ibid., 226.

¹⁰ Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, 26.

¹¹ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 248.

Nietzsche. Many of his writings are critical of the ideals enshrined by previous German intellectuals such as Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer. One can see their fingerprints on his works, whether through his criticism or appreciation. Furthermore, his writings are often critical of the changing political systems in Europe, as well as the restructuring of the geopolitical map around new national identities to the exclusion of some identities. The intellectual and political events left their mark upon Nietzsche, and he returned the favor by leaving his posthumous mark upon the intellectual and political thought of Europe.

Nietzsche's Religious Context

The Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries created space for expression of discontent with traditional Christianity. Post-Enlightenment trends show movement away from publicly decreed religions in the form of “*cuius regio, eius religio*” (sixteenth century “Whose region/realm, his religion”) to privatization of one’s religion. However, despite Enlightenment writings, religion remained a central topic of public discourse. Additionally, the nineteenth century saw the formation of Christian revival movements across Europe, particularly in Germany prior to unification. By Nietzsche’s time, religion’s public presence was showing signs of a privatization shift by moving from governmental proclamations to scholarly and nationalistic discourse. As a result of these changes in religious discourse Nietzsche, anticipating a statement by Sigmund Freud in *Die Zukunft einer Illusion (The Future of an Illusion)*, could openly criticize religion without fear of reprisal beyond written criticism.

The comparative nature of this thesis requires a brief discussion regarding the perceptions of religiosity of Europe by South Asians and vice versa. Religion had a

greater public presence in South Asia than in Europe. Such relative differences led to emotional calls by traditional religious leaders in South Asia to denounce nineteenth century Europe as a bastion of secularism. Similarly, Europe's fascination with the "Orient" led to the assumptions that "Eastern" life was governed by religion. Both of these misinformed perspectives fail to appreciate the diversity of religious expression in both contexts. However, for the purposes of this thesis it is helpful to think of Europe as highly secular relative to South Asia, regardless of religion's presence in European public discourse.

Overview of Nietzsche's Religious Philosophy

Nietzsche was a prolific author who wrote on multiple subjects. Given the breadth of topics he discussed in his writings, an overview of Nietzsche's religious philosophy necessarily omits particular aspects. Despite the variety of topics covered, there are recurring themes within Nietzsche's writings that merit discussion, and critical to understanding the relationship between Iqbal and Nietzsche's religious philosophy. The specific aspects of Nietzsche's religious philosophy discussed are: individual empowerment (spirit, choice, creativity, culture), the *Übermensch*, eternal recurrence, morality, and religion.

General Concepts: Empowerment, the Self, Morality, and Religion

A common misconception regarding Nietzsche's philosophy is that he espoused sheer nihilism, offering a bleak, pessimistic view of the world and human existence. Quite literally, nothing could be further from the truth. In his youth, he was a pessimist, taking inspiration from Arthur Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (*The World as Will and Idea*). However, Nietzsche's is a life-affirming philosophy, but such

an understanding requires one to read beyond the words “God is dead,”¹² and “What does not kill me, makes me stronger.”¹³ By examining his works in more detail, one quickly realizes Nietzsche’s focus in on the individual. For example, Nietzsche states in

Untimely Meditations (1886):

The man who does not wish to belong to the mass needs only to cease taking himself easily; let him follow his conscience, which calls to him: ‘Be yourself! All you are now doing, thinking, desiring, is you yourself.’

...for the idea of its [the self] liberation gives it a presentiment of the measure of happiness allotted it from all eternity—a happiness to which it can by no means attain so long as it lies fettered by the chains of fear and convention.¹⁴

Supporting this idea of liberation and empowering the self is Zarathustra’s Introductory Speech, “I love him who is of a free spirit and a free heart” in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1884, 1885).¹⁵ This work, considered by many to be one of Nietzsche’s masterpieces, takes the format of a novel in which the protagonist, the prophet Zarathustra (based on the Zoroastrian prophet Zoroaster), dispenses wisdom to all who will listen. Many of Nietzsche’s key themes such as individual empowerment, the *Übermensch*, and Eternal Recurrence are first described in this work. Finally, it is worth noting that this book was especially important to Nietzsche, and he referred to it in his autobiography, *Ecce Homo* (“Behold the Man”), as “my Zarathustra.”¹⁶

Examining Nietzsche’s statements further, it is clear that Nietzsche’s empowerment lies not in endowing humans with civil or political rights, but giving them the knowledge of their potential as individuals. The problem with people’s enslavement

¹² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 167, 181-82.

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols: Or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*, ed. Alexander Tille, trans. Thomas Common (New York, London: The MacMillan Co., 1896), 98.

¹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 127.

¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. Alexander Tille (New York, London: The MacMillan Co., 1896), 10.

¹⁶ Id., *Ecce Homo*, 219.

to anything other than themselves is found in section 284 of *The Gay Science* (1882, 1887), a large collection of Nietzsche's aphorisms on a variety of subjects, "Few people have faith in themselves."¹⁷ It may seem reductionist to summarize Nietzsche's individual empowerment ideas to believing in oneself, but it is almost that simple. Nietzsche conceives of God as an ideal, and if God is dead, then one has no ideal toward which to strive. To *avoid* the ensuing nihilism, the ideal that used to be symbolized by God is replaced with the self. It is this idea of the self as a new ideal that draws out the next idea in Nietzsche's philosophy, going beyond oneself.

Nietzsche's concept of going beyond oneself is a strange concept, but not difficult to comprehend. Expressed most clearly in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche describes human history as a series of overcoming ideals humans lay before themselves.¹⁸ Zarathustra's, and thus Nietzsche's, question to those reading his works: "...Are ye going to be the ebb of this great tide and rather revert to the animal than surpass?"¹⁹ Yet, Nietzsche's idea of overcoming does not describe what he means by overcoming. Nietzsche clarifies this when he says, "What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal..." and "a *transition* and a *destruction*."²⁰ Nietzsche emphasizes that there is always something more to be achieved, that human psychological and philosophical evolution never stops.

Critical to self-overcoming is willing one's own destruction, sometimes figuratively, or literally.²¹ If one can destroy what one currently is, then there is a room for creativity, and an ability to go beyond what one was. Thus the paradox of creativity

¹⁷ Id., *The Gay Science*, 229.

¹⁸ Id., *Zarathustra*, 5.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 8.

²¹ Ibid.

is demonstrated—creation of something requires the destruction of something else.

Going beyond oneself requires seeing oneself in terms of something beyond and then engaging in the necessary self-destruction which produces the requisite voids for self-reconstruction. Nietzsche stresses individual empowerment and liberation because going beyond oneself cannot occur while the individual is enslaved to anything else.

Nietzsche's concept of morality flows from his ideas surrounding individualism, and going beyond all things. Nietzsche's classic phrase referring to his reformation of morality is "transvaluation of all values" or "re-valuation of all values."²² The very premise of *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) lies in the idea of transcending values themselves. In this book Nietzsche, seeks to cover a variety of topics and understand the etymological origin of terms using philological methodologies. The work is a brief attempt to understand the meaning, and ultimately, the value undergirding moral concepts taken for granted in nineteenth century European society.

Nietzsche, however, does not argue for a simple rejection or adoption of different values; rather, he advocates seeing beyond labels such as "Good" and "Evil". Nietzsche is then a harbinger of post-modern thought, in that he wants, as he says in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), to "*critique...moral values, the value of these values themselves must first be called into question...*"²³ This forceful book contains three essays discussing the various aspects of morality (i.e. "Good and Evil," "Good and Bad," "Asceticism"). Unlike other works on morality, *On the Genealogy of Morals* is not a

²² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, ed. and trans. Marion Faber (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 91; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, ed. Alexander Tille, trans. Thomas Common (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1896), 250; Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 20.

²³ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 20. Emphasis in original translation.

philosophical treatise about morality, and instead is an etymological discussion of the origin surrounding moral constructs and a commentary regarding their value.

It is not enough to merely critique and disregard values because this leaves one without values. Nietzsche argues throughout his canon that values give life meaning and direction, and therefore exhorts others to create their own values in line with the “Camel, Lion, and Child” metamorphosis. This individual development paradigm allows an individual to *choose* his or her morality as a creative expression of themselves, rather than shouldering the burdens of assumed morality, or remaining in the throes of nihilism. Individuals may choose to behave like camels, bearing the burdens of others; or like lions, continually rejecting all value systems; or like children, creating the values by which they choose to live.

A final important aspect of Nietzsche’s religious-philosophy results from his status as a religious public thinker. Nietzsche’s approach to religion is arguably the most complicated aspect of his philosophy. Over a century after his death, his approach to religion is being re-evaluated, after understandably upset nerves among primarily Christian thinkers who refused to delve deeper into his works. For quite some time after his death, his works remained within avant-garde and philosophical circles, only reaching the broader public after the Nazi regime adopted Nietzsche as their guiding philosopher.²⁴ At its most basic level, Nietzsche believes religion is a psychological-moral domain which provides the causes and remedies for human gaps in physiological knowledge. By “physiological knowledge” Nietzsche means the biological urges and/or pains that do not have readily apparent causes.²⁵ Taking this point further, Nietzsche calls religion a

²⁴ Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, 46.

²⁵ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 130.

“neurosis” that serves an anesthetizing function for humans.²⁶ This functionalist view of religion is Nietzsche’s primary view. However, he also discusses a substantive approach biased to his European Christian context. An aspect of Nietzsche’s view that will be discussed in more detail is his disdain for how religion is used to manipulate masses of people, similar to Marx’s characterization of religion as “the opiate of the masses.” It should be noted, however, that Nietzsche feels very similarly about any systems of belief that subjugate the individual to something other than the individual.²⁷

Individual Empowerment

Nietzsche’s ideas concerning individual empowerment can be categorized according to five emphases. The first is an emphasis on individual choice, as only voluntary action can be considered an action with a moral consequence. The second emphasis concerns the human spirit, and the importance for people to believe in their ability and power as humans. The third emphasis is on creativity and art as expressions of the human spirit driving culture and society forward. The fourth emphasis is that of culture itself, and how individuals shape the collective culture. The final emphasis is Nietzsche’s disdain for systems that fail to recognize the supreme importance of the individual. All of these emphases culminate in Nietzsche’s discussion of the *Übermensch*, which will be treated following explication of Nietzsche’s five emphases.

Regarding the importance of individual choice, Nietzsche is quite clear. In some way or another, the idea of free choice makes its way into most of Nietzsche’s writings. However, in his writings Nietzsche expresses a desire for individuals to control their choices, to “will” their acts using his terms. The emphasis on humans’ ability to choose

²⁶ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 45; Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, 53.

²⁷ Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, 53-54.

what they do, rather than simply following societal dictates is clearly seen in *On the Genealogy of Morals* second essay sections one and two. In these sections, Nietzsche explains how true sovereignty of the self is determined by an individual's ability to make promises and then fulfill them. Nietzsche describes this ability as a reflection of an individual's strength by taking an "I will" statement and making it a reality.²⁸ This ability to project one's will and desires onto reality is the individual's ultimate freedom. In other books, particularly in *The Gay Science* sections 117, 143, and 335, Nietzsche treats individual choice not as social deviance, but a liberating experience to achieve one's desires.²⁹

The second emphasis on the human spirit flows directly from his belief in the individual, and the individual's ability to make sovereign choices. To Nietzsche, the loss of faith in the self represents the triumph of *ressentiment* morality over what is noble, and ultimately natural, in human beings.³⁰ Walter Kaufmann describes *ressentiment* as a psychological frame of mind in which value judgments are based on materials and characteristics one does not possess.³¹ In simpler terms, it is the moral frame of reference in which one declares morally evil precisely that which one does not possess. Nietzsche uses *ressentiment* precisely because it captures what the English words "Evil" or "resentment," or the German words *Böse* or *schlecht* cannot.

A passage describing Nietzsche's views on the human spirit comes from *On the Genealogy of Morals* third essay, section 24, which attacks faith in externalities.³² In this section, Nietzsche decries as victims of false faiths those who place blind faith in objects

²⁸ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 57-60.

²⁹ Id., *The Gay Science*, 175, 191-92, 263-66.

³⁰ Ibid., 229.

³¹ Ibid., 7, 40.

³² Id., *Genealogy*, 148-53.

(gods, etc.) and false “free-spirits” who still ultimately place their faith in something such as philosophy or science.³³ Based on this and similar passages, the only real metric of faith is the truth it rests upon, and the only source of real Truth is the self.

Nietzsche’s emphasis on art, creativity, and culture are interrelated, but important distinctions exist. Nietzsche’s foremost treatise on these three ideas was *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). In this text, Nietzsche examines European culture during his time, and diagnoses the death of creativity, art, and culture with the growing influence of “scientific art.” He uses the rise and fall of Greek art, creativity, and culture as an analogy to nineteenth century Europe. The fall of Greek society began with the introduction of Apollonian precision and perfectionism to the detriment of the previously reigning Dionysian freedom of creativity. A society in touch with the realities of human existence must have the freedom of wild artistic expression if any joy is to be found in life. With scientific intrusion into human expression, creativity becomes formulaic and true art dies. The result of such encroachment is that culture collapses and civilizations end.

Nietzsche’s remedy is to return to art its wild passion, if not for the sake of appealing art, but for the sake of general creativity, expression, and the continuity of a culture. These three ideas connect with individual empowerment through the Dionysian spirit within individuals that allows for the creative and artistic continuity of a Dionysian culture that embraces life. Anything collective, such as culture, is based on the art and creativity of individuals, and according to Nietzsche, the Dionysian embrace of life’s dithyramb is the best way to maintain a dynamic culture.

The final emphasis regarding individual empowerment is Nietzsche’s criticism of systems and beliefs which inhibit the expression or the empowerment of that individual.

³³ Ibid., 149-50.

Such threats to individual empowerment include not only religion, but nationalism (evidenced by Nietzsche's abhorrence for nineteenth century extreme German nationalism), "pale atheism," pseudo-free spirits,³⁴ and any system that threatens this expression of individualism.³⁵ It is not the systems that Nietzsche fundamentally disagrees with, rather the implicit subordination of the individual these systems require.

Übermensch

One of Nietzsche's most well-known ideas, the *Übermensch*, is complex. Considerable debate exists as to how to properly translate the term because the German word *über* is a multi-vocal term and heavily reliant on context for proper translation. For the purposes of this work, preference will be given to Alexander Tille's translation of "Beyond-Man". While other scholars translate the term as "Superman" or "Overman," given Nietzsche's penchant for things "Beyond," it seems to be the most appropriate. However, the translation "Overman" would not be wholly incorrect either, as Nietzsche presents humans as something to be overcome. However, this section does not seek to give a treatise regarding this idea, but merely offers a discussion of the topic to make comparisons between Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and Iqbal's *insan-i kamil* more compelling. The critical ideas concerning the *Übermensch* are how one, if it is possible, becomes *Übermensch*, its qualities, and its purpose.

The first use of the word *Übermensch* occurs in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and a central theme to the work is what the *Übermensch* can achieve. The term is found in Zarathustra's first speech entitled "Of the Three Metamorphoses"³⁶ where Nietzsche

³⁴ Ibid., 149.

³⁵ B. A. Dar, "Inspiration from the West," in *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, ed. Hafeez Malik (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1971), 205; Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, 53-54.

³⁶ Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, 25.

describes his Camel-Lion-Child three stage process through which all individuals must pass. Each stage has a specific meaning and function within an individual's development toward becoming an *Übermensch*.

The Camel stage is how many individuals live the entirety of their lives, and is perhaps the "easiest" of the stages for an individual. The Camel, as its name implies, bears the burden of society's existing morality. Humans are born without the ability to choose their morality, and are socialized to adhere to certain norms. The purpose of the Camel is to follow these mores because at this early stage in the spiritual development of an individual, the individual can do nothing else. However, at a certain point in certain individuals' lives, the assumed load of society's morality becomes ever burdensome, and the weight engenders questions within the Camel. This questioning, as the Camel "hasteth to its own desert,"³⁷ leads it to the second phase in individual spiritual development.

The second spiritual phase is the Lion, in which the Camel shrugs off the assumed morality and norms of society. It is in this stage that the individual questions these mores and values, and decides whether they have any relevance to the individual's life. The Lion is a "Holy Nay,"³⁸ in which all values are recognized as created, and all value in these values is called into question. However, the Lion is incapable of creativity to develop new values. Thus, an individual cannot remain a Lion, or else the individual risks a life in nihilistic misery. This necessity for creating new values leads the Lion to become the final spiritual metamorphosis, the Child.

³⁷ Ibid., 26.

³⁸ Ibid., 27.

The Child is, according to Nietzsche, “innocence and oblivion, a new starting, a play, a wheel rolling by itself, a prime motor, a holy asserting.”³⁹ This is Nietzsche’s way of describing humans’ innate creative energy, which is capable of formulating new values out of the ashes of the old values destroyed by the Lion. This is the life-affirming phase within Nietzsche’s philosophy, embracing a new life adhering to the newly created values.

The next question regarding Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* is what constitutes such an individual? Furthermore, have any *Übermenschen* existed? To the first question, Zarathustra provides a detailed list of the *Übermensch*’s qualities in his introductory speech. Among the attributes of the *Übermensch* are the “lightning...[and the] insanity”⁴⁰ required to go against society’s values. The *Übermensch* is also defined in terms of what it is not, the *letzte Mensch* or “last-man.”⁴¹ The *letzte Mensch* is contemptible, hardly human. It is the state of individuals who no longer “despise”⁴² themselves enough to want to go beyond themselves. The *letzte Mensch* is content with the present achievement of humans—the *Übermensch* is not. The *Übermensch* is an individual that continually strives to go beyond itself, to “...willeth his own destruction”⁴³ in order that something new may be created from the ashes. The *Übermensch* is the ultimate creative, sovereign, individual force in society continually pushing for greater achievements beyond humans.

Nietzsche is not a teleologist, but purpose exists within his religio-philosophical framework. This includes the *Übermensch*, and one must ask what the purpose of such

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁴¹ Ibid., 11.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 8.

an individualistic, creative force is? The answer is alluded to in Zarathustra's introductory speech. Repeatedly, Zarathustra reminds his audience that the *Übermensch* is a new ideal for society to strive toward, telling them plainly to will the destruction of all that they know to clear a path for the *Übermensch*.⁴⁴ An important aspect of the purpose of the *Übermensch* rests in knowing Nietzsche's concept of God and gods as "ideals" within a society. With God dead, society no longer has the ideal being for a behavioral model, but Zarathustra says the *Übermensch* is to be society's new God-ideal. Furthermore, the *Übermensch* is not an unattainable ideal. In his discussion of *letzte Mensch*, Zarathustra tells the people that they do not have to settle for this "last man," but rather they still "have chaos within to enable one to give birth to a dancing star. I tell you: ye have still got chaos within."⁴⁵ This chaos is what is required to pass from the Camel to the Lion stage and from the Lion to the Child stage in the *Übermensch*'s metamorphosis. However, Zarathustra's urgency in proclaiming the *Übermensch* indicates that the required chaos to seek the *Übermensch* is finite, and when it is gone, humans will become *letzte Menschen*.

The *Übermensch* is an achievable ideal, which necessitates the conception of new ideals that society strives toward in an effort to continually develop and cultivate the human spirit. Zarathustra's statement: "What with man is the ape? A joke or a sore shame. Man shall be the same for beyond-man, a joke or a sore shame."⁴⁶ The *Übermensch* takes on a prophetic role, in which it serves as a beacon of individualism. At the same time, the *Übermenschen* are to rule society because societies will always have noble and the ignoble classes, analogous to the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 8-10.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 5.

Thus the *Übermensch* serves the purpose of guiding others toward the individualism that creates an *Übermensch*, by not denying its obvious superiority over “lesser humans” and exercising its sovereignty. Power is what drives the *Übermensch* toward its individualism, and it exercises its power until it too is surpassed by something greater.

Eternal Recurrence

The “Doctrine” of Eternal Recurrence is a prominent idea in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and is the entire subject of the chapter entitled “Of the Vision and the Riddle.”⁴⁷ To understand this idea, it is important to explain the riddle and provide its context within the overall story of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, as well as provide an analysis of what the riddle could mean.

The riddle itself is a highly confusing part of the story. The context of the chapter is Zarathustra has left his early companions and is currently on board a ship. He has developed a reputation as Zarathustra, but his identity on the ship is unknown. However, the word spreads that Zarathustra is on board, and the sailors immediately began to ask him questions to which he gave no answers.⁴⁸ Finally, he decides to speak and gives them the riddle and the vision. The characters in this particular section (one of the longest in the book) are Zarathustra and a Dwarf. Zarathustra approaches a mountain path and immediately hears the voice of the Dwarf comparing Zarathustra to a stone cast in the air, which must come down again, upon itself.⁴⁹ Zarathustra then describes how courage, even in the face of the abyss, or non-existence, is the best of all virtues. Then an argument ensues in which Zarathustra describes himself at a point in a road which

⁴⁷ Ibid., 222-29.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 222.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 223-24.

stretches eternally in either direction.⁵⁰ The Dwarf replies to Zarathustra with a paradoxical statement, “ ‘All that is straight lieth,’ murmured the dwarf with contempt. ‘All truth is crooked, time itself is a circle.’”⁵¹ This statement is the first instance hinting at Eternal Recurrence, or the idea that time loops eternally. Zarathustra responds in kind:

Behold,’ I continued, ‘this moment! From this gateway called moment a long, eternal lane runneth *backward*: behind us lieth an eternity.

Must not all that *can* run of things have run already through this lane? Must not what *can* happen of things have happened, have been done and run past here?

And if all things have happened already: what dost thou dwarf think of this moment? Must not this gateway have existed previously also?

And are not thus all things knotted fast together that this moment draweth behind it all future things? *Consequently*—draweth itself, as well?

For what *can* run of things—in that long lane *out there*, it *must* run once more!

And this slow spider, creeping in the moonshine, and this moonshine itself, and I and thou in the gateway whispering together, whispering of eternal things, must not we all have existed once in the past?

And must we not recur and run in that other lane, out there, before us, in that long haunted lane—must we not recur eternally?⁵²

Time here is not defined as a discrete measure, but instead is continuous and irreducible to its individual components. According to this view of time, there is no Prime Mover, time simply was, is, and will be, with every moment repeating itself.

Given Eternal Recurrence is posed in the form of a riddle, many interpretations are possible. Many have taken the riddle and the vision at face value, and declared that Nietzsche simply means life repeats itself eternally. One could also view this as an elegiac metaphor for creativity, implying that “there is nothing new under the sun.”⁵³ However, a new interpretation emerges by placing the riddle in the context of another

⁵⁰ Ibid., 224-25.

⁵¹ Ibid., 226.

⁵² Ibid., 226-27.

⁵³ Ecclesiastes 1:9 (New Revised Standard Version).

section in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* entitled “Of Free Death.”⁵⁴ In this particular chapter, Zarathustra makes the following profound, although brief, point relevant to Nietzsche’s overall thought:

In dying your spirit and your virtue shall glow on, like the evening-red round the earth: or else your dying hath not succeeded well.⁵⁵

Eternal Recurrence, then, is no longer about life recurring eternally, but rather values. Furthermore, since this statement acknowledges dying, as Nietzsche does elsewhere, it makes more sense to think of Eternal Recurrence as a thought experiment, rather than a “Doctrine.” The thought experiment reads: Only values chosen by the individual actually have any value to the individual. Imagine having to live an infinite number of lives with one’s current set of values. Would these lives be worth living under these values for all eternity? If the answer is no, then there is reason to evaluate one’s values such that one embraces the Eternal Recurrence of life. This willingness to live countless lives under a particular set of values is Nietzsche’s *amor fati*, or love of fate. Instead of a bleak fatalism and resignation to life, Eternal Recurrence prompts the reader to question how much one loves one’s life, whether one would be truly happy if fated to repeat life eternally under the current set of values.

Morals

Nietzsche’s concept of morality can best be summed up by his work *On The Genealogy of Morals* in which he systematically breaks down the origin of Western European morality. The overall idea regarding morality portrayed in this book is that morality, good, bad, evil, punishment, guilt, and innocence are all *terms* based in ancient systems of class structure. What is characteristic of the upper class, the noble class, is

⁵⁴ Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, 97-101.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

good, and what is bad is related to the lower classes.⁵⁶ Evil, according to Nietzsche is an entirely separate concept from bad, owing to its different etymological origin and conceptualization. According to Nietzsche the concept of evil is rooted in *ressentiment* morality, in which what is not characteristic of one's class is evil.⁵⁷ This works in both directions, with the noble, good individuals equating weakness with Evil, and the lower, *ressentiment* classes characterizing noble behavior as evil.⁵⁸ Evil, then, is that which contradicts one's understanding of moral behavior, or human nature. Nietzsche errs on the side of power and sees *ressentiment* morality as debasing humanity, and thus, evil.

What is important to understand about Nietzsche's conception of morality is that social groups base their moral systems on what benefits them as individuals. Morality is purely a human construct and is related to human valuation of material wealth. Nietzsche further considers the subjects of what makes actions moral and immoral and who makes such judgments. To the first, moral actions are those which are actions chosen by an individual's free spirit, and if moral weight is assigned to them, then they are moral. Thus, morality is highly relative with the only real criterion being that morality and moral actions be chosen by an individual.⁵⁹ What is required to have this power to choose is sovereignty over oneself.⁶⁰ Immorality is also easily defined by the individual, but again requires the ability of true choice, which cannot occur until one is sovereign. The ultimate judge of morality lies in both the individual and the beholder. Nietzsche, however, differentiates moral judgments from legal judgments, which are constructs of the dominant morality of society. If it be noble morality, then laws reflect what noble

⁵⁶ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 27-28.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ For clarification see Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 144.

⁶⁰ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 72-73.

morality finds moral and immoral, just and unjust, and vice versa with *ressentiment* morality.⁶¹ Justice and punishment cannot exist without laws that declare what is legal and illegal, but moral and immoral can exist independent of societal law because the individual is the ultimate judge.

Religion

Understanding Nietzsche's concept of religion requires first that one recognizes how critical nuance is, as his ideas regarding religion are complex, subtle, layered, and require careful analysis. The following section proposes to discuss Nietzsche's concept of religion, and how it related to public conceptions of religion at the time, as well as broach the subject of origin and morality of religion. Finally, a brief analysis will be offered regarding Nietzsche's stance on religion, and a brief description of his thoughts on Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

Central to this thesis is Nietzsche's conception of religion. If one were to seek a definition of religion within Nietzsche's canon, the closest one could come to is: "a psychological-moral domain" likened to a collective, historical neurosis that serves a function of explaining natural phenomena, creating power hierarchies, promoting individual and societal progression, and requires faith in something other than oneself⁶² and two inventions:

...to posit a particular kind of life and every day customs that have the effect of a *disciplina voluntatis* (discipline of the will) and at the same time abolish boredom—and then: to bestow on this life style an *interpretation* that makes it appear to be illuminated by the highest value so that this life style becomes something for which one fights and under certain circumstances sacrifices one's life.⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid., 75-76.

⁶² Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 130; Id., *Beyond Good and Evil*, 45; Id., *The Gay Science*, 240.

⁶³ Id., *The Gay Science*, 296.

This complex definition draws upon multiple references in Nietzsche's thought, and expresses Nietzsche's fundamental idea that religion serves a function for human beings. Whether this function is orienting oneself in the universe, or describing a way for one to relate to one's experiences, religion serves some function involving faith in something other than oneself. Furthermore, Nietzsche believes religion is inherently anti-rational, likely due to his upbringing in the Pietism movement. Religion, then, also serves an emotional function allowing humans to express a variety of emotions within the confines of a single articulating system. Nietzsche rejects the Truth of any religion, believing instead that the truth of a religion rests on what individuals believe to be true. He is not necessarily the enemy of religion, but wants readers to see religion as an anti-rational, human constructed system to explain a variety of human experiences. How one chooses to *use* religion is up to the individual, and Nietzsche offers his opinions, but the individual's decision is paramount and final.

It is fascinating to place this conception in his context, and compare it to the predominant conception of the time. Nineteenth century Europe remained heavily Christian, despite the writings of many Enlightenment elites against religion. As an example, Voltaire may have been critical of religion to the point of its abolition, but that did not change the fact that most French citizens in his time were either Protestant or Catholic. The interesting trend within Nietzsche's lifetime was the changing conceptions of public and private religion. Furthermore, secularism was gaining ground, but not enough to support Max Weber's Secularization Theory.⁶⁴ Nietzsche's definition was

⁶⁴ Secularization Theory is the idea that as societies advance scientifically and materially that the mythical explanations for natural phenomena provided by religion will be discarded. The idea was promoted prominently by sociologist Max Weber in his seminal work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of*

very much a functional, historical, and private definition, which he disseminated to a European public who still conceptualized religion as substantive, divine, and important to public life. This binary view of Nietzschean religion and nineteenth century European religion is somewhat misleading, but informative in understanding Nietzsche's "re-valuing of all values" campaign.

The origin of religion lies with early human ancestors seeking a way to explain the universe and phenomena around them, and absolve them of certain responsibilities.⁶⁵ Each religious founder is an individual or group of individuals who have recognized others' inability to comprehend the world and dominate their "lesser minds."⁶⁶ For such abilities, Nietzsche holds such founders in high esteem. However, Nietzsche abhors the "fruits" of their systems and the overall negative impact they have on the human spirit.

Equally critical is understanding Nietzsche's vehement criticism of religion. He intentionally provoked his readers to serve his purpose of revitalizing European culture and human dignity. When Nietzsche attacks religion, as he does in *The Antichrist* (1888), it appears to be a general polemical critique of Christianity and religion. However, embedded in these criticisms of Christianity and religion is Nietzsche's attack on the real enemy of personal enslavement. To Nietzsche, religion was the prime example of an enslaving system, and he attacked it more as an example rather than venting pure hatred for religion. This is an important nuance in Nietzsche's thought, which often is overlooked. Just as morality is relative to Nietzsche, his evaluations of religion are purely his. In addition to his opinions, they also reflect his nineteenth century European

Capitalism. Despite the applicability of this theory to Western Europe, current research challenges the validity of this theory in other contexts.

⁶⁵ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 191, 296-97.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 296-97.

Christian historical context, and certain doctrinal issues central to the religions he criticizes. Nietzsche also criticizes religions because they are systems that have such high ideals that it is all the more disappointing when they fail to achieve. Given this situation of failing to meet its own lofty ideals, Nietzsche argues it is better to do away with religion and start anew with the self. Religion is not inherently moral or immoral, useful or useless, but rather is a system that can either aid humans in empowerment or prevent empowerment. In Nietzsche's view, the latter of these descriptions is the overwhelming majority of cases regarding religion.

Specific references to Judaism, Christianity by Nietzsche are frequent and rare for Islam. This could be due to the fact that Nietzsche, being a philologist and not an Orientalist, had little knowledge about Islam. However, what references are available reflect that he had a basic knowledge of Islam for his time. His stance toward Judaism is one of mixed praise and contempt. He lauds Judaism for having a concept of God that serves as a model for a powerful human being, but disparages Judaism's development of a priesthood, and *ressentiment* morality. Christianity receives a similar review, in that Nietzsche actually admires Jesus' message, but not the Pauline interpretation of it. The emphases on suffering and wholehearted adoption of *ressentiment* morality are the glaring negatives of Christianity, which spoil the entirety of the religion. As for Islam, Nietzsche likens it to Judaism, and appreciates the emphasis on a strong God-ideal. In fact, Nietzsche wrote to his friend Carl von Gersdorff that he wanted "to live among Muslims for a good long time, especially where their faith is most devout: in this way I

expect to hone my appraisal and my eye for all that is European.”⁶⁷ Furthermore, he states in *The Will to Power* (1901) that Islam is:

...an affirmative Semitic religion, the product of a ruling class, looks like: the law-book of Mohammed, the older parts of the Old Testament. (Mohammedanism, as a religion for men, is deeply contemptuous of the sentimentality and mendaciousness of Christianity— which it feels to be a woman’s religion.).⁶⁸

Despite the questions of authenticity surrounding *The Will to Power* due to posthumous editing, it remains that Nietzsche saw Islam as a religion of strength, though likely sheer brute strength versus strength of will, reflecting his understanding of the Islamic conception of God.

Conclusion

If one were to describe Nietzsche as briefly as possible, the following words might come to mind: provocative, prolific, sarcastic, caustic, and clever. Nietzsche was all of these adjectives rolled into one individual who felt driven to share his concerns about European culture and society. Nietzsche’s religious philosophy is really one of tragic recognition: tragic in that he believed that the ideals, morals, and the God of true Christianity as preached by Jesus were dead. Recognizing this, Nietzsche felt that it was necessary to fill the void of a lifeless Christianity with a renewed belief in the individual, and the capability of the individual.

Contrary to some conceptions, Nietzsche’s religious philosophy is one of the furthest from nihilism. Nietzsche explicitly wants humans to achieve their potential, and not wallow in the misery a dead Christianity leaves behind. One of Nietzsche’s chief concerns lies with individual’s reasserting their power in the face of so many centuries of

⁶⁷ Rüdiger Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, trans. Shelley Frisch (New York, London: W. W. Norton and Co., 2002), 219.

⁶⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 93.

ressentiment morality and the denial of the nature of humans. True logic and morality flow from their harmony with human nature. This nature, according to Nietzsche, is a drive he calls the will to power (*Wille zur Macht*), which causes humans to want to better themselves, and discard anything preventing this process should be discarded. That Nietzsche regards religion, along with other systems and “-isms,” as a hindrance is not a reflection of the religion; rather it is a recognition that religion had failed and continued to fail to live up to its own moral standards. In a rather strange way, his critique of religion, especially Christianity, makes him a religious thinker of the “highest order.”⁶⁹

His consciousness of what religion was supposed to provide the individual, and the religious institutions’ failure to provide, drove him to criticize and ultimately discard the utility of such institutions. As an individual who spent the greater part of his life thinking about religion, human relations, morality, and empowerment, Nietzsche *is* a religious individual. Failure to recognize this is to miss most of Nietzsche’s greatest insights. Nietzsche’s thought was embraced by avant-garde circles that idolized him, something he would have likely never approved of, and conservative circles that demonized him not for his thought, but his “madness.”⁷⁰ This lack of genuine readership and analysis among most Europeans is perhaps what allowed a non-European like Muhammad Iqbal to read Nietzsche and recognize within his thought ideas compatible with Iqbal’s goals for Islam, and ideas Iqbal believed antithetical to Islam. Ultimately, Nietzsche’s “religiosity” piqued Iqbal’s interest and led to one of the most interesting transnational intellectual encounters in the twentieth century.

⁶⁹ Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, 43.

⁷⁰ Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy*, 26-27.

Chapter 3: Similarities and Differences between Iqbal's and Nietzsche's Religious Philosophies

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the particular instances of convergence and divergence between Iqbal's and Nietzsche's religious philosophies. To note an important complexity, convergence and divergence may occur simultaneously on different levels of the same concept. The exploration of possible mechanisms underlying the convergence and divergence will occur in subsequent chapters.

Similarities and Differences

The precise number of recognized similarities and differences between these two religious philosophies is likely to vary from reader to reader. However, after reviewing these religious philosophies, several salient instances surface and warrant further discussion. This chapter will combine the discussion of similarities and differences for the purposes of comprehension. Similar aspects within a concept will be introduced first, followed by any points of divergence. Ideas with both convergent and divergent levels are: the *Übermensch* and *insan-i kamil*, individual empowerment, religion, and Eternal Recurrence and Heaven/Hell. The only instance where these two religious philosophies completely converge is regarding the three stages of human development.

Übermensch and insan-i kamil

The first instance of similarity between Iqbal and Nietzsche is their ideas of *insan-i kamil* and the *Übermensch* respectively. Both have a messianic nature to them and both of them share personality characteristics. *Insan-i kamil* is strong-willed, fully *submissive* to God, and a product of his/her history and culture, but with the nuance that the ways of submitting to God are reformulated. For Nietzsche, the *Übermensch* is a

strong-willed, fully alive individual who has reformed culture by destroying old values and creating new values. In both ideas, there is the critical action of destroying old foundations and knowledge, and *reconstructing* thought and culture. Nietzsche's paradigm example is Zarathustra, with Jesus and Muhammad—the latter also being Iqbal's paradigmatic example—both serving as examples of “near” *Übermenschen*.

These two models of human perfection serve a societal function, but their most important function is for individuals. Both ideas are dynamic modes of behavior and not finite goals. Being an *insan-i kamil* or the *Übermensch* is not a static condition, but identifiable by an individual's behavior. The very idea behind the *insan-i kamil* and the *Übermensch* is an inherent dynamism, and is a description subject to change. This is not to imply that one can lose one's identity as *insan-i kamil* or the *Übermensch*, but it is important to understand that these identities are rooted in behavior reflecting profound insight into the self. As such, if an individual should begin to cease behaving in ways that do not reflect self-transcending values, one is no longer *insan-i kamil* or the *Übermensch*. As both thinkers would admit, this is a hypothetical situation as the effort necessary to become *insan-i kamil* or the *Übermensch* implies that an individual will pursue self-transcendence and behave dynamically as part of their new identities.

A distinction between Iqbal's and Nietzsche's religious philosophy is how these two ideals form humanity's antidote against the poison of cultural or religious decadence. Iqbal believes society requires three changes to remain dynamic and pursue the evolving ideals of social justice: “1) A spiritual interpretation of the universe, 2) Spiritual emancipation of the individual, 3) Basic principles of a universal import directing the

evolution of human society on a spiritual basis.”¹ The individual who leads society in these changes is the *insan-i kamil*. On the other hand, the *Übermensch* uses his/her will to power to resurrect creative art in society. Although some interpret Nietzsche’s philosophy as inherently oligarchic or autocratic, he clearly wanted all to reach their full potential. Supporting this claim are sections 270, 335, and 354 in *The Gay Science* where Nietzsche calls for all individuals to assert themselves against imposed morality. These statements are not directed at specific individuals, such as elites, or bourgeoisie, but to all. Linguistic evidence of his desire for all to achieve individual empowerment is his use of plural pronouns when making his arguments for individual empowerment.²

Another distinction is Nietzsche’s belief that *only a few could* achieve their full potential. What is important to notice is the difference between Nietzsche’s desire and what he believes is realistic. Nietzsche *wants* everyone to be empowered, but does not believe that all will engage in the process of liberating themselves from the burden of society’s values. There is nothing oligarchic or autocratic about this belief; it recognizes the path to empowerment is not easy, and discourages individuals from changing themselves. Analyzing Nietzsche politically reveals his greatest fear is the thought of morally enslaved masses in power via democratic rule. Therefore, he is pragmatic in his belief that society ought to be governed by those most capable. If this is a select group of *Übermenschen*, or a democratic polity of *Übermenschen* does not matter. What he is more concerned about is the empowerment of individuals, and creating an environment in which they can pursue their own empowerment. Iqbal, however, read into Nietzsche a

¹ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Oxford: 1934, 82.
<http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 263-66, 270, 299-300.

non-egalitarian structure for society and politics. In this respect, Iqbal believed Nietzsche to be a cultural elite attempting to maintain his position of privilege over the masses. Iqbal saw autocracy as a logical conclusion of Nietzsche's philosophy, and vehemently opposed it as antithetical to democratic and Islamic values of egalitarianism.³

Iqbal's solutions to modernity's problems are in conflict with Nietzsche's cultural rebuilding ideas. Iqbal's society needs to have a spiritual basis because he rejects the Christian dualities of mind/body and church/state.⁴ For Nietzsche, Western Europe's long-held spiritual basis was no longer capable of effectively solving society's problems, thus necessitating its removal. Iqbal's second solution calls for individual spiritual emancipation, and although Nietzschean in appearance, is different. Nietzsche's spiritual emancipation is along the lines of liberating oneself from the hindrance of religion and actualizing potential. Iqbal's spiritual emancipation is communing with the Ultimate Reality through Perfect Submission. Self-liberation in Iqbal's eyes is the realization that one's individuality is tied to God's individuality (*tawhid*). He believes that approaching the attributes of God leads to perfect individuation. It is helpful to think of this as a *khalifah* creating his/her own *taqdir*, and thereby developing his/her own *tawhid*. Iqbal did not describe the process as such because it would be seen as extremely blasphemous to suggest that individuals can cultivate individual *tawhid*. Blasphemy aside, the idea of "individual *tawhid*" cultivated by a *khalifah*'s writing of his/her own *taqdir* is a useful paradigm for understanding how Iqbal sees individuals' uniqueness as tied to God's uniqueness. Iqbal therefore desires emancipated individuals working together in order for society to continue its spiritual evolution.

³ Muhammad Iqbal, *Secrets of the Self*, trans. R. A. Nicholson (1920), 1915, 5.
<http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

⁴ Id., *Reconstruction*, 72.

Nietzsche would find this desire unacceptable because it is equivalent to wanting society to move toward the *Übermensch* only to regress back to the confines of human spirituality. Nietzsche's phrase "God is dead,"⁵ means that creativity's previous inspiration is dead, and the God now worshipped stifles humans' creativity. With God dead, there is no space for spirituality because spirituality, inextricably tied to the God, is inimical to human creativity and empowerment. Conversely, Iqbal argues that a constant link between individuals and the divine is the solution to society's ills by helping empowered individuals navigate modernity.

Individual Empowerment

Central to the thought of these two thinkers is the empowerment of the individual. For both Iqbal and Nietzsche, living as a fully empowered individual is the only way to live one's life in harmony with human nature. To both thinkers, living otherwise implicitly or explicitly denies the qualities separating humans from animals and fear one's human nature, implying such an individual is a coward. Iqbal viewed individual empowerment as a means of building strong communities by first cultivating strong individuals. Nietzsche's emphasis on individual empowerment follows a similar line of thought. Without strong individuals, substantive pursuits such as culture and art cannot progress and impact society as a whole.

Another similarity regarding individual empowerment is the discrete stage progression required to achieve such empowerment and its innate and acquired origins. Promoted by Rousseau and the Qur'an,⁶ all humans begin their lives in an empowered state, but society's rules or rote religious practice strip them of this initial power. As an

⁵ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 167, 181-82.

⁶ Qur'an 95:5.

individual matures and questions his/her thoughts and beliefs, the individual embarks on the path to empowerment. After much internal struggle, the individual emerges from the ashes of the former life to a life with new morality and insights. For both thinkers the process is the same, and only achieved by confronting the abyss and using one's strength to reach one's potential.

The function of individual empowerment is freeing an individual from servitude to imposed morality and beliefs, and modeling the process of achieving individuality for others. The *insan-i kamil* and the *Übermensch* are charged with demonstrating the possibilities of reaching deeper into the religion or going beyond oneself. Others are not to explicitly imitate the *insan-i kamil* or the *Übermensch* because the only being worth imitating is God or oneself. Rather, the method by which they achieved their respective fate, or *taqdir*, is supposed to inspire others, not the exact outcomes of their struggles.

The main differences between Iqbal and Nietzsche's ideas are the ways through which an individual achieves empowerment. Iqbal believes empowerment can only come through religion, whereas Nietzsche believes it can only come by removing religion. The distinction lies in that Iqbal's belief that individuality and empowerment are attained by approaching the most unique being in existence, God. Rooted in *tawhid*, Iqbal's definition of approaching means developing the characteristics of God within oneself which leads to the individual's individuation. Nietzsche, however, categorically rejects any notion of imitating another to attain individuality. To be an individual, one must differentiate oneself from others through choice and personally created value systems. The only use another individual has for one's pursuit of individual empowerment is modeling the struggle of achieving empowerment. For Nietzsche, the idea of imitating

another's attributes or values would defeat the purpose of individuation and empowerment. In summary, Iqbal believes in imitating the attributes of God to differentiate the individual from others whereas Nietzsche sees the creation of one's own values distinct from others as the source of individuation. This difference, unlike others, is not subtle, and is easily observed in each individual's writings on the subject of individualism and empowerment.

Religion

To discuss the similarities of each religious philosophy, it is necessary to return to each individual's definition of religion. For Iqbal, religion is:

'a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended.'⁷

Iqbal reduces religion to a set of truths, and believes that these truths, fully apprehended, have the power to transform behavior. The question then arises of what it means to fully apprehend something. In Iqbal's terms, true belief is the state of being in which one's behavior reflects an esoteric understanding of sacred texts and values therein. It is not a blind faith that ignores the rational basis underlying the laws within religion, nor is it purely intellectual commitment. It is a state of being in which one's grounding in the core values of sacred texts makes one adaptive to changing circumstances and able to making textual values societal realities.

For Nietzsche, religion is best defined as:

"a psychological-moral domain"⁸ "posit[ing] a particular kind of life and every day customs that have the effect of a *disciplina voluntatis* (discipline of the will) and at the same time abolish[es] boredom—and then: to bestow[s] on this life style a *interpretation* that makes it appear to be illuminated

⁷ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 2.

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 130.

by the highest value so that this life style becomes something for which one fights and under certain circumstances sacrifices one's life.⁹

Religion is then a coping mechanism codified into a moral system. This codification process requires interpretation, and necessarily rationalization, but Nietzsche does not claim that such rationalizations make the entire system rational. Rather, they provide the necessary justifications for expected behavioral norms. By shaping the behavior of individuals, the beliefs are reinforced, which are then reciprocally reinforced by behavior. Beliefs reinforce actions, and actions reinforce beliefs such that an individual who truly believes the proscriptions necessarily acts on them by believing in the moral good of such actions.

Religion, for both Iqbal and Nietzsche, is a system based in a set of beliefs that drive one to action. Furthermore, Iqbal's religion is "...an expression of the whole man,"¹⁰ and merges with Nietzsche's view that religion disciplines one's will. Religion, then, is far more than a system of "Shall's and Shall not's"—it is a system of being informed by rationalizations of behavioral norms. This view of religion as a system of being emphasizing action is the influential link between Iqbal and Nietzsche's views on individual empowerment.

One of the main differences separating Iqbal and Nietzsche concerns the uses and the goals of religion. Some of this variance is attributable to contextual differences, but some can be attributed to their views on eschatology and human destiny. Iqbal believes in a judgment and an end to earthly human existence. Nietzsche, inspired by the newly popular biological theory of evolution, believes in the continuity of human existence without a divine judgment.

⁹ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 296.

¹⁰ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 2.

The final difference is the tone with which each addresses religion. Even if Nietzsche was “a religious man of the highest order,”¹¹ the tone of his writings was critical of the religion of his time. Sometimes Nietzsche’s criticisms of religion are humorous jabs rather than actual scholarly criticism, but rarely is Nietzsche sympathetic toward religion. Iqbal, being a religious individual, generally expresses a favorable attitude and tone toward religion. In rare instances he lashes out at immature belief, or beliefs he considers inferior, and such reactions form the basis of *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i Shikwa*. This general difference in tone is indicative of how each author approaches religion within an empowerment paradigm.

Eternal Recurrence and Heaven/Hell

On the surface, these two concepts appear unrelated, but closer inspection reveals certain commonalities. Iqbal’s Heaven and Hell are not localities, but posthumous mental states. It is unclear whether he refers to actual neural experience after death, or if an individual’s soul experiences the localities. Iqbal, however, is highly spiritual and it is not unreasonable to think that such experience occurs in one’s soul. This complicates the matter of Heaven and Hell because the existence of a soul generates a new set of questions regarding the soul’s experience. Based on his lack of detail regarding Heaven and Hell, the important point is that the Qur’an’s descriptions are taken by Iqbal to be metaphorical descriptions of posthumous experience. Regarding Nietzsche’s Eternal Recurrence, it is unclear if the experience is literal or figurative. This thesis has argued for the latter, as Nietzsche does not believe in life after death.

These two ideas are similar in that they both pose a thought experiment regarding the afterlife. Nietzsche’s question asks the reader to consider his or her values, and

¹¹ Roy Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007) 43.

whether one would change one's values if one had to live by such values for eternity. If the answer is no, then one must evaluate one's values. If the answer is yes, then an individual is fully sovereign and capable of making moral choices. Iqbal asks the reader to consider if his or her actions would please the Creator. For individuals desiring Heaven, the three stages of religious development serve as a guide. Individuals must first bear the burden of belief, and then when the load becomes too heavy, to examine its significance. This examination period, if fruitful, provides the believer with the answers to the questions the religious burden creates. This stage of knowing why one must behave in certain ways leads to a merging of one's human will with God's. When this occurs, the satisfaction overwhelms the believer, who voluntarily and cheerfully orients his or her behavior to align with the code that is God's will. This necessarily makes society more just, and pleases the Creator so that upon death, the believer experiences bliss, or Heaven.

For Nietzsche, the feeling of "Heaven" is the assurance one has when one answers the question of Eternal Recurrence with an affirmative answer: Yes, I would be willing to live forever by these values. Morally, this is equivalent to Kant's Categorical Imperative, or the philosophical version of the "Golden Rule." Adhering only to that which you could do so for eternity mirrors Kant's belief that only those actions that are acceptable for all to do can be considered morals. To Nietzsche's chagrin, this exposes him as a moralist. He does not advocate a specific moral code, but rather the development of individually acceptable morals. These may or may not differ from the individual's current value system, but the distinction is that they are chosen rather than imposed.

Nietzsche and Iqbal believe this choice in moral behavior is critical to genuine, evaluable moral behavior.

Conversely, Hell is a state in which one must live eternally by values that enslave. Individuals who fail the development process experience the corrective process of Hell to provide them with the power to create values oriented toward social justice. The negative answer to Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence resembles Hell in that the individual is now aware of the fact that his or her morals are not what he or she wants. This dissonant situation of holding moral beliefs incongruous with one's desires is Nietzsche's Hell.

However, differences arise regarding these ideas when Iqbal calls Eternal Recurrence "fatalism worse than the one summed up in the word Qismat ('destiny')." ¹² His objection is grounded in his belief that Eternal Recurrence implies an inability to change one's path. Iqbal debunks Eternal Recurrence with three statements regarding immortality drawn from the Qur'an. The first statement is that "the ego has a beginning in time and did not pre-exist." ¹³ The second is that "there is no possibility of return to this earth." ¹⁴ The final statement about immortality is the strongest one and also the one that is furthest from Nietzsche's philosophy, "that finitude is not a misfortune." ¹⁵ Paul Tillich described Nietzsche as an individual keenly aware of "the threat of non-being," causing him a "melancholy happiness." ¹⁶ This attitude of both sorrow and finitude reflects Nietzsche's belief that death gives life meaning. This is to say that death makes

¹² Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 116.

¹³ Ibid.; Qur'an 6: 38.

¹⁴ Ibid., 116-117; Qur'an 38:99-100, 56: 59-62, 84: 18-19.

¹⁵ Ibid., 117.; Qur'an 19: 95-96.

¹⁶ Paul Tillich in, Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, 42; Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 224-25, respectively.

each moment of life special because eventually all such moments must end. Although he laments the end of life, Nietzsche does not necessarily fear death.¹⁷

However, Iqbal believed Eternal Recurrence's primary purpose was to assuage Nietzsche and others' mortality salience. Finding no reason to fear one's finitude, Iqbal references Qur'an 17:14, stating that actions in this life will ring in eternity, and that a life lived by the Qur'an's virtues is a life free from the fear of death.¹⁸ Thus, where Nietzsche recognizes the finitude of life which makes him appreciate life, Iqbal believes in the immortality of the soul eliminating any fear of death.¹⁹ Iqbal's reading of Nietzsche, however, leads him to conclude Nietzsche fears death, although they actually agreed, albeit for different reasons.

Three-Stage Metamorphosis of Human Development

Iqbal and Nietzsche believe that to progress from a mere human to *insan-i kamil* or the *Übermensch* one must self-actualize according to a three-stage process. This process is the most noticeable similarity between Iqbal and Nietzsche's religious philosophies. The two progressions are identical in structure and process. Iqbal's follows the pattern of Faith, moving to Thought, ending with Discovery. Nietzsche's process starts with the Camel, progressing to the Lion, and ending with the Child. These two self-actualization processes are also similar in the requirements for progressing from one stage to the next. In addition to being unidirectional, only those who attain the final stages are fully actualized individuals.

Both processes require the individual to change his or her conception of reality in order to progress to the next stage. Iqbal's stage development is religious in nature, and

¹⁷ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 224-25.

¹⁸ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 53.

¹⁹ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 168.

thus all changes in perception are rooted in profounder understandings of the Ultimate Reality. The stage development process is really, then, a way to develop a more mature metaphysical view of life. However, using this term in conjunction with Iqbal's religious philosophy is problematic because he detested traditional metaphysics. However, if metaphysics is viewed as a pursuit of Truth rather than speculative intellectual exercise, the term is more applicable. Given this definition, the process is about developing action-oriented ethics (Vital actions) grounded in deep spiritual knowledge (Intellectual actions).²⁰

For Iqbal, this metamorphosis is also a way to refine an individual's approach to religion. The differentiating transition occurs when the *insan-i kamil*'s "higher Sufism" replaces previously held religious metaphysics²¹ Recalling that the goal of Sufism is a deeper understanding of Islam's duties, Iqbal's use of "higher Sufism" is deliberate. The *insan-i kamil*'s new approach to religion profoundly alters the way the believer understands his or her relationship with God. The believer understands that he or she is, and always has been, linked to God. The emancipation of the individual comes not from the pure act of individuation, but the realization that his or her will is tied to the divine will. Such a belief, however, is only alluded to by Iqbal due to sensitivities associated with claiming humans can directly contact God. The execution of ecstatic Sufi al-Hallaj in 922 CE serves as a powerful reminder to Sufis to tread carefully when disseminating their beliefs.

With this religious psychology now integrated into the *insan-i kamil*, he or she now possesses a free-will and exemplifies the argument that Iqbal is trying to make:

²⁰ For Iqbal's distinction between Vital and Intellectual life see *Reconstruction*, 109-10.

²¹ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 50.

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.²²

This new creator of values is Iqbal's *khalifah*, and his or her role is to help others in the creation of creative egos forming the basis of Iqbal's pluralistic view of self-actualization.²³ Curiously, Iqbal does not address the precise nature of the *insan-i kamil*'s pluralism. One could argue that the *insan-i kamil* is an ideal, but not something that an individual could become. Others could argue that only the Prophet Muhammad was ever *insan-i kamil*. Still others could argue that the *insan-i kamil* is an independent being through whom higher Sufis commune with God. Although all of these are equally possible interpretations, they are not equally plausible. Within the history of Sufi thought, particularly that of Ibn `Arabi, there is the idea of approaching God like a moth approaches a flame. However, the goal is self-annihilation, *fana'*, and remaining in God, *biqua'*. Yet, the ever-present reminder of al-Hallaj often restrained Sufis in approaching God's flame too closely, and this concern seemed to resonate with Iqbal. Yet, Iqbal's dislike for the "unapplied abstract," that is to say thought for its own sake, would make an unattainable *insan-i kamil* inconsistent. It therefore seems more likely that the *insan-i kamil* is something that is possible for all believing Muslims. Iqbal's stage progression from mere human to *insan-i kamil* makes it possible to see the similarities between his stage progression and that of Nietzsche.

Nietzsche's Three Metamorphoses cast aside metaphysics entirely. The entire process of development hinges on the individual stripping away all that he or she holds

²² Ibid., 184.

²³ Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, 65.

dear. Once this is done, the individual must then resist the emptiness this creates, and develop a new set of values. This creativity destroys the old metaphysical knowledge and replaces it not with new metaphysical perspectives, but whatever the individual desires. The process is about stripping away all that once defined the individual, allowing the individual to reinvent him or herself.

Rather than posing the development using intellectual terms, Nietzsche presents an allegory to describe the process to individual empowerment. The curious aspect regarding Nietzsche's Three Metamorphoses is that it gives little attention to the conditions which provoke the camel to develop into a lion, or what causes the lion to destroy the old values. The only real discussion of conditions that necessitate a transformation occurs between the lion and child stages. Nietzsche is categorically opposed to nihilism, and instead sought a life-affirming philosophy. As such, a state which results in nihilism necessitates the creativity of a child to give life new meaning and purpose.

Recalling both Iqbal and Nietzsche's stages of human development, a near perfect correlation exists between the stages required for humans to go from human being to *insan-i kamil* or the *Übermensch*. Both ideas are stage-invariant, meaning one has to progress through each stage in order to proceed to the next stage, and emphasize iconoclasm. Here the term iconoclasm is being used analogically to describe the destruction of society's idols which take the form of unexamined moral codes and religious doctrines. For Iqbal, a Muslim must obey, and then examine critically the depths of religion in order to fully understand it. Nietzsche, on the other hand, argues the individual must delve deeper into the self in order to see one's power.

Both paths also require the individual to experience a large amount of discomfort and risk to achieve perfection. Although all humans must pass through the stages in a fixed order, progression is not guaranteed. These two metamorphoses share a common theme in that the individual must *decide* to embark upon the journey toward self-liberation. Iqbal likely draws his inspiration from the Qur'anic verse, "Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves."²⁴ Nietzsche emphasizes individual choice in growth as the first choice in going beyond. However, neither of the authors fully addresses the status of those who choose to remain static. What is their eschatological status? Iqbal's reference to the Qur'an 13:11 seems to answer the question for him, in that individuals who do not take the initiative to change will remain slaves to rules they do not understand. Similarly, Nietzsche seems to argue that the only consequence for individuals who never empower themselves is that they too remain burdened and enslaved by forced moral standards. Although these two conditions may not seem terribly punishing, to Iqbal and Nietzsche, they represent the worst possible existences.

The one difference within the Three Metamorphoses and process of religious development is how Iqbal interprets Nietzsche's allegory. While he agrees overall with the empowerment process, Iqbal takes Nietzsche's description literally. Iqbal is impressed by the process and structure of the metamorphoses, but does not quite understand Nietzsche's use of allegory in this particular instance.

Overall, these similarities between Iqbal and Nietzsche's three stages of individual development are striking and rooted in similar core beliefs. Iqbal believes individuals will ultimately turn to a greater understanding of religion, and Nietzsche

²⁴ Qur'an 13:11.

believes that individuals will turn to a greater understanding of themselves. Regardless, each author believes that his developmental stages result in a more empowered and unique individual. The hypothesized reasons for these observed similarities and differences will be discussed in the following chapters.

Conclusion

Iqbal and Nietzsche's religious philosophies converge and diverge across several themes, but an important point is the simultaneous existence of similarities and differences within the same general concept. This raises the question of how such a situation is possible. The answer boils down to nuance. Each thinker's religious philosophy is complex, layered, and requires contextual understanding to fully comprehend the meaning behind their words. Furthermore, in a transnational intellectual encounter, what is written in one context can be interpreted and used differently in another context.

Iqbal's transnational intellectual encounter with Nietzsche is a case-in-point of such context-specific uses and interpretations. Iqbal experienced Europe during the peak of its imperial domination, but when he read Nietzsche, removing Christianity from his society was not his concern. Iqbal's chief concern was with his South Asian colonial context, and how best to remove the British presence from South Asia.

Nietzsche's religious philosophy was also context-specific insofar as he was writing to European Christians, and would not have imagined someone like Iqbal admiring his ideas. Nietzsche's religious philosophy's goal was to liberate Europeans from decadence and cultural and artistic decline, and to Nietzsche, the concepts of culture

and art were equivalent to religion. They were the highest ideals to strive for, and he was consumed with preventing their destruction

This information is provided in order to understand that Iqbal and Nietzsche can have both differences and similarities in their thought as a function of context and intent. The following chapter suggests the mechanisms of conception of religion and *selective* syncretism as responsible for Iqbal's adoption and rejection of elements of Nietzsche's religious philosophy.

Chapter 4: Exploring Possible Causes of the Similarities and Differences

Although possible mechanisms were alluded to in the previous chapter, this chapter's goal is to fully elucidate these possible mechanisms. In line with the hypotheses of this thesis, the convergence and divergence between Iqbal and Nietzsche's religious philosophies is primarily a function of each individual's conception of religion. Delving further into what this means is a critical starting point for this chapter. After a more in-depth analysis of the convergence and divergence between these religious philosophies, Iqbal's "selective syncretism" will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

Factors Contributing to a Concept of Religion

A conception of religion is more than a mere definition; rather it is an all-encompassing vision of what religion is and what religion's role is for society and an individual. It reflects an individual's personal experience with and historical appraisal of religion, which shapes an individual's ideas regarding religion's function. One of the primary factors shaping an individual's conception of religion is the religio-historical context. Thought does not occur in a vacuum, and an individual's conception of religion cannot be separated from the religio-historical context in which it is formed. Additionally, where intellectual exchange is encouraged, public intellectuals' conceptions of religion can influence scholarly conceptions of religion. This point is important because although Nietzsche's impact on European public conceptions of religion was negligible, his impact within the scholarly community that Iqbal was a part of was observable. Conceptions of religion can be reactionary, forward-thinking, supportive, critical, or any combination of these adjectives with regard to the contemporary understanding of religion. What is critical is placing conceptions of religion within an

individual's religio-historical context to help explain why some aspects of religion are emphasized more than others.

Iqbal's Conception of Religion

Iqbal's conception of religion was the sum total of an individual's being.¹ His all-encompassing view of religion may appear to smother other aspects of identity, but instead his view is that religion permeates and informs all aspects of an individual's identity. The purpose of *din* (literally "judgment" translated as religion) is to provide individuals with the appropriate moral framework to fulfill God's *amanah* ("trust") and be a faithful *khalifah* ("steward") of the earth. It constitutes a transformative structure and process that motivates and guides believers in fulfillment of the responsibilities of achieving social justice imposed by religion.² Such a process and striving for social justice, necessarily empowers the individual. It is not meant to assuage one's fear of death despite providing such comfort. The purpose of religion for the larger society is merely that of the individual at the aggregate level. If each individual undergoes the transformative process, then individual actions are morally grounded and the collective morality naturally manifests social justice.

Concerning religion's origin, Iqbal assumes the ontological argument: that higher than which nothing can exist, must exist. Iqbal, as a committed Muslim, believes in the innate ability to recognize the existence of the divine based on the Qur'an's description of religion as a divine ordination from God.³ However, he is not a literalist, and views the

¹ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 1934, 2.

<http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

² Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 2; Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1994), 37-38.

³ Qur'an 30:30.

Qur'an's description of God's *ruh* ("life-giving spirit")⁴ as a metaphor for the ontological arguments for religion and God. Although Iqbal does not say religion is required for belief in God, his argument implicitly questions the value of believing in God without religion to structure and ground such belief. Failure to believe in God contradicts human's *fitra* ("nature") and prevents the striving for social justice. Thus, to Iqbal, atheism's denial of God is equivalent to denying justice, and therefore prevents the creation of a just society.

Iqbal was a Sufi-influenced Sunni Muslim, but the subcontinent's religious and intellectual diversity exposed him to different ideas regarding religion. After the various religious and intellectual ideas around him, the most important factor in Iqbal's understanding of Islam is Muslim life under British colonial rule. After Muslims ruled the subcontinent for centuries as a minority group, the humiliation of colonization clarifies Iqbal's passion for justice and empowerment. Channeling this passion into nationalist activism, Iqbal led the Muslim League as president beginning in 1930.⁵ This movement's principles were based in the idea that Islam was morally, socially, and politically empowering. The other major nationalist movement, the Indian National Congress, included many prominent Indian Muslims, but stressed the subcontinent's diversity. Although a believer in Indian nationalism, Iqbal was committed to achieving justice for Muslims, and contextualizing his religious conception within the nationalist struggle elucidates his call to empowerment.

Nietzsche's Conception of Religion

⁴ Qur'an 38:72.

⁵ "Iqbal and the Pakistan Movement," The Iqbal Academy Pakistan, <http://www.allamaiqbal.com>.

Nietzsche understands religion as a constructed experiential value system to guide one's life, and often serves a secondary function of social control. This belief that religion plays a negative role in the lives of both individuals and society stems from his appraisal of institutionalized religion as historically oppressive when charged with determining everyone's morality. Such a public role is inimical to the individual's empowerment and development in changing circumstances. Furthermore, Nietzsche advocated the removal of religion from the individual's life. He argues religious value systems, oriented toward pleasing some externality, quash the individual's spirit for the "greater good," fear of divine punishment, or rewards in the hereafter.

Regardless of the religion in question, Nietzsche believes that all religions are human constructs that parallel human evolution. "Primitive" religions were early human constructs to provide comfort in the face of a bleak existence. As humans began to master their environment, polytheistic religions developed in which humans imparted ideal values upon "gods." Humans eventually replaced polytheism with monotheism by endowing a singular divine entity with both human ideals and the power to regulate all temporal and spiritual activity. According to this evolutionary approach, Nietzsche believes religion's origins reflect advances in human development, mastery over the environment, and heightened mortality concerns.

Finally, Nietzsche's European Christian context shaped his conception of religion. Specifically, his upbringing in the Lutheran Pietism movement taught him religion not as a set of doctrines, but as an experience. Religion was something an individual practiced and experienced, and not an intellectual exercise. Nietzsche's overall context was one in which religion was expected to permeate society and even guide governance and laws.

This made Nietzsche an iconoclast, who provided a bold and radical understanding of religion concurrent with other critics, but also ahead of its time.

Similarities and Differences in Religious Conceptions

The nature of religion is rooted in both its perceived origins and its functional appraisal as a positive or negative value system. Two basic distinctions regarding the origins of religion are divine and non-divine. If a religion is divine in origin, then it flows from whatever transcendent reality referenced by the religion. Conversely, if a religion is non-divine in origin, then it is a human construction designed for some purpose. One's perspective on religion's origins often indirectly impacts one's appraisal of its functionality. Additionally, one's individual and historical experience with religion shapes one's appraisal of its function. Categorically different, individual religious experience is an encounter with one's transcendent reality whereas historical experience with religion reflects communal experiences with religious institutions.

Iqbal does not offer proofs of God's existence, but accepts the Qur'anic assumption of an innate recognition (*fitra*) of God. He expands the idea of *fitra* to include religion, and by connecting *fitra* and religion argues that religion is not only divine, but the only way to appropriately respond to God. Religion's function, then, is to provide the necessary moral structure and transformative process to approach God, thereby approximating God's attributes and achieving empowerment. Religion, then, is inherently beneficial and empowering for humans. Other responses, such as atheism, pervert *fitra* and prevent the individual from approaching God and achieving empowerment.

Nietzsche, however, argues religion is non-divine and places it alongside other human constructs within evolutionary history. This view is consonant with nineteenth century secularist thought, and heavily influenced by the growing popularity of Darwinian evolution. Religion's evolutionary function is to assuage the fear of mortality and create social order through moral law by claiming transcendent origins for such law. Influencing Nietzsche's view is the European historical experience of monarchical despotism justified through religion. Keeping with the evolutionary perspective, Nietzsche argues that human advances in science and social and political organization make religion's comforts and control obsolete, and even maladaptive when applied to contexts that do not require religion's socio-political hierarchies and explanations of natural phenomena.

Also featured prominently in Iqbal and Nietzsche's conceptions of religion is the impact religion has on the individual. Islam and Christianity both claim to existentially impact individuals by providing a set of morals and worldview. The metric each religion uses to assess a change in belief is the individual's behavior. However, the exact process in which this change in beliefs occurs is both a unifying and divisive point between Iqbal's and Nietzsche's conception of religion.

Reflecting their modernist views, they advocate the need for the individual to answer existential questions rather than institutions or doctrines. Therefore, both religious philosophers seek to empower the individual so that individuals feel capable of navigating existential questions without institutional dogma. Stemming from this belief in individual agency is the emphasis on experience. Drawing upon their respective Sufi and Pietist backgrounds, they believe in the primacy of emotional religious experience.

To clarify, both Iqbal and Nietzsche reject institutionalized religion, albeit for different reasons, and argue instead for allowing individuals to experience some form of transcendence.

In Iqbal's case, self-transcendence is communion with God provided by religion. Nietzsche's self-transcendence is *going beyond* what one currently is and becoming what one desires to be. Both of these paradigms shun intellectualized religion promoted by institutions, and argue for transformative, emotive, and empowering attempts at self-transcendence. Iqbal argues religion is ideal for self-transcendence through communion with God, while Nietzsche regards all religion, personal and institutional, as equally detrimental to self-transcendence. However, a commonality is their belief that the drive for transcendence leads to action. For Iqbal, this idea is rooted in the Qur'an, "Allah does not change people's lot unless they change what is in their hearts,"⁶ and for Nietzsche, "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."⁷ Thus, intellectual belief without action inspired by such belief is insufficient to empower an individual. The critical link to empowerment they both share is that deeds reflect what an individual truly believes, and as such argue for idiosyncratic value systems to drive individuals to actively pursue their goals.

Another prominent aspect of their conceptions of religion is religion's impact on society. As an encompassing system, religion impacts society by attempting to regulate individual moral behavior and worldviews. Within the discussion of Iqbal and Nietzsche, their respective contexts are critical to understanding their views on the social impact of

⁶ Qur'an 13:11

⁷ James 2:17 (New Revised Standard Version).

religion. Furthermore, within this aspect of their conception of religion, their broader goals for their society are apparent.

Iqbal believed the societal purpose of religion was to create a just society. To Iqbal, society is a collection of individuals, and religion's function of providing each individual access to God is a positive force for society. The pursuit of social justice, then, is not something dictated by a central authority, but a collective of religiously empowered individuals. Within his South Asian context, Iqbal was a religio-political reformer reconstructing Islam as an empowering religion to remove British colonization from the subcontinent. Thus, religion's impact on society is inherently political, which is reflected in his focus on the value of Islam's empowering qualities to the nationalist struggle.

Nietzsche regards religion's societal impact as creating stagnation and complacency. As he sees it, the values within religions are fixed, and stifle individually empowering pursuits, such as art, and crush any changes in cultural norms. It is because of this overwhelming negative impact on society that Nietzsche advocates its complete removal. Yet, he sees religion as a potentially useful obstacle for individual growth insofar as the process of removing religion is difficult, but beneficial for individual sovereignty. Nietzsche's admittedly unrealistic ideal is to aggregate this self-transcendence to the broader society to create a dynamic, empowered society. Similar to Iqbal's use of religion to further his political agenda, Nietzsche's desire to remove religion to improve society makes him a moralist whose goal is to cause Europeans to follow Nietzsche and re-value all the values they take for granted.

From Conception to Religious Philosophy

The previous analysis shows Iqbal and Nietzsche's religious philosophies converging along three emphases: the individual, experience, and action. Each of these emphases carries over into their religious philosophies, giving rise to their convergent individualistic ideas. Additionally, they differ along three emphases: origin, function, and contextual purpose. These differences in conception influenced Iqbal and Nietzsche's ideas on how to attain the individual empowerment they both desired. Convinced of the existence of God, Iqbal was committed to demonstrating Islam's empowering qualities. Disenchanted with religion, Nietzsche was determined to expose it as a system hindering individual's empowerment.

Selective Syncretism as a Possible Mechanism

A concurrent mechanism to conceptions of religion that explains the observed similarities and differences between Iqbal's and Nietzsche's religious philosophy is selective syncretism. Selective syncretism is the process by which Iqbal was able to incorporate aspects of European philosophy he felt compatible with and *useful* to his South Asian context, and reject ideas either incompatible or not useful. This way, Iqbal remains original, but leaves the fingerprints of European thought on his work. However, simply because an idea is compatible with Islam, or useful for his anti-colonial goals, does not mean that Iqbal syncretizes it into his religious philosophy. Unique to Iqbal was his work in a mostly illiterate, traditional South Asian Muslim context, sensitive to matters regarding their religion. It would be useless for Iqbal to draft a religious philosophy so offensive that South Asian Muslims refuse to make it their own. Thus, on a practical level, selective syncretism helped Iqbal walk the fine line between being faithful to the goal of liberation and staying true to Islam

Examples of selective syncretism are Iqbal's use of *insan-i kamil* for Nietzsche's *Übermensch*. The syncretism worked because enough overlap existed between the *insan-i kamil* and the *Übermensch* such that Iqbal could syncretize aspects of the *Übermensch* to fit his context. Another example is the use of the word "self" or "individual." Iqbal saw the words "self" and "ego" in Nietzsche's works as similar to *khud/khudi*, which would resonate better with South Asian Muslims. A relevant example of a difference based on selective syncretism is Iqbal's outright rejection of Eternal Recurrence as incompatible with the Islamic view of life and afterlife. As such, incorporating Eternal Recurrence into his religious philosophy would have been ineffective and possibly detrimental to his goal of propagating his empowerment message.

Providing these brief examples makes it possible to see that Iqbal's and Nietzsche's similarities and differences also occurred via selective syncretism. Again, this thesis does not declare that this particular mechanism can explain the entire variance between the religious philosophies, but that it can be useful in explaining portions. It is also an important point that challenges two existing camps within Iqbal scholarship.

One camp believes Iqbal plagiarized Nietzsche by translating his philosophy into Urdu and Persian.⁸ The failure of this reductionist position is that it cannot account for the explicit rejections Iqbal makes regarding aspects of Nietzsche's religious philosophy. Furthermore, it seems to suggest that a South Asian Muslim could not devise a religious philosophy centered on individual empowerment, claiming these values are not part of

⁸ See chapters 9, 14, 15 in Hafeez Malik (ed.), *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan* (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1971); Roy Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam* (London: Routledge, 2007), 62-63. Although these chapters offer some nuance into the Iqbal-Nietzsche relationship, they tend to overemphasize Nietzsche's influence on Iqbal.

Islam-Confucian Eastern culture. To some extent it is true that “Eastern” societies tend to be more collectivist, but this West-East binary should not preclude scholars from giving credit where it is due. It should also not preclude scholars from failing to recognize intellectual diversity in societies.

The other camp believes that as a devout Muslim, Iqbal would never associate himself or his religious philosophy with the “Great Atheist” Nietzsche.⁹ This camp explains the similarities as purely coincidental, and highlights the differences to bolster their position. This too is a reductionist position, and also assumes a West-East binary that fails to recognize intellectual diversity. The solution to these two extremes, shared by other scholars such as Roy Jackson, is that of selective syncretism. In fact, Roy Jackson describes the selective syncretic approach in his book *Nietzsche and Islam* without using the term:

It is unfair, and inaccurate, to state that Iqbal derived his whole philosophy from Nietzsche, but nor is it correct to say that there is no influence at all! ... It is more accurate to say that Iqbal used his extensive knowledge of Western—and especially German—thought to incorporate it with his knowledge of Islam.¹⁰

This is precisely how the selective syncretist approach views Iqbal and Nietzsche’s transcultural intellectual exchange.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the various similarities and differences within Iqbal and Nietzsche’s actual concepts of religion. These similarities and differences were then applied to the observed similarities and differences in their religious philosophies with brief explanations as to how the differences in conceptions of religion accounted for the

⁹ See chapters 5, 6, 16 in Hafeez Malik (ed.), *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan* (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1971); Roy Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, 62-63. Similarly, these chapters tend to overemphasize Iqbal’s differences with Nietzsche and fail to capture the full extent of Iqbal’s encounter and admiration of Nietzsche.

¹⁰ Roy Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, 63.

differences in religious philosophy. Finally, this chapter concluded with a discussion of selective syncretism as a second mechanism explaining Iqbal's and Nietzsche's similarities and differences. These mechanisms are not definitive, but instead persuasive because it is difficult to imagine that context and education could account for all of the observed similarities and differences. It is at this point where the similarities and differences in conceptions of religion and selective syncretism play their roles. They fill the voids where context and education cannot explain how two different individuals living in two different time periods who never met developed both highly convergent and divergent religious philosophies.

Each of these individuals developed his religious philosophy with preconceived conceptions of religion. Nietzsche read other philosophy with this conception of religion in mind, and subsequently developed his religious philosophy based on his understandings of other religious philosophers. When Iqbal read Nietzsche, the same event occurred. Iqbal brought a particular conception of religion with him to his reading of Nietzsche, which influenced his agreement and disagreement with Nietzsche's arguments. It is in this way that both similar and differing conceptions of religion *and* selective syncretism work in tandem. Only that which can pass the conception of religion and goal-utility filters is included in the final religious philosophy. In the final chapter, the very concrete aspects of how Iqbal read and understood Nietzsche will be discussed to understand whether the idea of similar and differing conceptions of religion and selective syncretism were purposeful, or coincidental.

Chapter 5: Understanding Iqbal's Understanding of Nietzsche

This final section discusses the details of Iqbal's encounter with Nietzsche and how he understood Nietzsche. The chapter will then move to a discussion of the instances in which Iqbal expresses admiration for Nietzsche, as well as ridicule, and offer possible explanations as to why this might occur. The ultimate goal of this chapter is to further contextualize Iqbal's encounter with Nietzsche, and probe Iqbal's competency regarding his reading, comprehension, and application of Nietzsche's ideas.

Evaluating Iqbal's Encounter with Nietzsche

Given Iqbal's general contextual encounter with Nietzsche in turn-of-the-century Munich and Heidelberg, it is necessary to investigate further this cross-cultural and linguistically challenging encounter. Helpful questions are: How well did Iqbal understand Nietzsche? Did Iqbal understand sarcasm, cultural references, and poetic style in German? Did Iqbal recognize the audience Nietzsche was addressing? Did Iqbal read Nietzsche in translation? How did perceptions of public and private religion impact Iqbal's understanding of Nietzsche? How did context affect this transnational and transcultural intellectual encounter (i.e. Iqbal is in a Muslim, South Asian, colonized context. Nietzsche is in a Christian, European, colonizing context)?

It is likely that Iqbal was research-proficient in German, owing to the various German references throughout his Ph.D. dissertation conducted at the Ludwig-Maximilians Universität in Munich.¹ Furthermore, his *doktorvater*, "dissertation adviser," was the German Orientalist Friedrich "Fritz" Hommel, and it seems more likely that Iqbal had to know German rather than Hommel had to know English. However, without

¹ Muhammad Iqbal, "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia" (PhD dissertation, Ludwig-Maximilians Universität, 1908). <http://www.allamaiqbal.com>. Throughout his dissertation, Iqbal references research in German in his footnotes.

primary source documents, this is at most educated conjecture. There are primary source documents discussed by Dr. M. A. H. Hobohm indicating Iqbal had a relationship with a female German tutor in Heidelberg named Emma Wegenast.² Dr. Hobohm states that the relationship was not romantic based on the content of their letter correspondence. However, Iqbal was fond of her, and laments his lack of ability in German, to which Dr. Hobohm says “Iqbal...is much too modest.”³ Given his training at the Ludwig-Maximilians Universität, citation of German research in his dissertation, and his correspondence with Miss Wegenast in German, it would seem that Iqbal had a decent command of German.

However, understanding research articles and correspondence in German is different from Nietzsche’s stylistic German. Walter Kaufmann, one of the more notable Nietzsche translators and scholars, states, “Nietzsche’s books are easier to read but harder to understand than those of almost any other thinker...the individual sentences seem clear enough...it is the total design that puzzles us.”⁴ Given this, it is necessary to question whether Iqbal understood “the individual sentences” or the “total design.”⁵ Unfortunately, scholars are left with only Iqbal’s references to Nietzsche as indications of his understanding Nietzsche. Based on these indications, and the similarities and differences due to selective syncretism, Iqbal seemed to understand a great deal. Yet, when one reads some of Iqbal’s ridicules of Nietzsche, it appears that he did not grasp the

² M. A. H. Hobohm, “Muhammad Iqbal and German: A Correspondence of the Heart,” in *Iqbal Review: Journal of the Iqbal Academy Pakistan* 41, 4 (October 2000), <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 4th ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 72.

⁵ Ibid.

entirety of Nietzsche's points. As Kaufmann makes clear, however, it is difficult to claim one knows what Nietzsche meant.

Further questions regarding Iqbal's understanding relate to the High German, and varying styles employed by Nietzsche. He often makes his point through sarcasm, poetry, or German cultural references familiar to Germans, but perhaps not to non-Germans. Furthermore, Nietzsche's use of "monadologic" (self-sufficient aphorisms which can both stand on their own, but are connected to other aphorisms) make his thought that much harder to follow.⁶ This leads Kaufmann to say, "No half systematic anthology of sundry opinions can tell us 'what Nietzsche means'—either in the sense of his intentions or in the sense of his significance for us."⁷ Nietzsche's varying styles and seemingly disjointed aphorisms are challenging for educated Germans. How much more so then for Iqbal? The point of this section is not to claim that Iqbal was ignorant of Nietzsche's intended meanings, but to ask relevant questions regarding Iqbal's understanding of Nietzsche. It is therefore possible that some of the observed similarities and differences are due to chance by linguistic error, and not the similarities and differences in conception of religion and selective syncretism. However, this assertion fails the scholarly test of parsimony by assuming too much of Iqbal's understanding was chance or error.

Another related question is whether Iqbal was aware of the audience to whom Nietzsche was writing. Nietzsche was not writing to South Asian, Muslim, colonized individuals like Iqbal. Rather, Nietzsche was writing to the upper class, educated, religious and secular circles of nineteenth century Europe. Additionally, he was writing

⁶ Ibid., 75.

⁷ Ibid., 76.

to an audience experiencing the turmoil of German unification and a redrawing of the European geo-political map. Failing to understand Nietzsche's audience, and recognizing it did not include individuals like Iqbal is a mistake. The question then is whether Iqbal was cognizant of Nietzsche's target audience? The answer is again speculative, but likely yes. The principle of selective syncretism can help explain this problem, by suggesting Iqbal parsed out aspects of Nietzsche's religious philosophy that he knew would be acceptable in his context. By avoiding those aspects which would not translate cross-culturally, it seems that Iqbal recognized where Nietzsche was speaking to humans in general, or to Europeans, and "Germans" specifically.

The final question related to Iqbal's linguistic encounter is whether he read Nietzsche in translation. This is another question lacking a definitive answer, but it appears the answer is no. The reasoning for such an answer is that Iqbal likely encountered Nietzsche in Germany, and the likelihood of English translations of Nietzsche in Germany at that time is slim. Furthermore, it is unlikely Iqbal read Nietzsche in the United Kingdom, given a general animosity among British philosophers toward Nietzsche because of his statements regarding the "English." Additionally, British philosophy during Iqbal's time was moving toward Analytical Philosophy and away from the more metaphysical religious and philosophical pursuits of continental Europe.

A method to determine whether Iqbal read Nietzsche in translation is to cross-check his quotes of Nietzsche to see if he is directly quoting or paraphrasing. In one instance, Iqbal quotes Nietzsche in *The Gay Science* as saying nationalism is "sickness

and unreason” and “the strongest force against culture.”⁸ If one compares these translations with Thomas Common’s 1924 translation of *The Gay Science*, one notices he is paraphrasing, and references the full quote in his endnotes. One is then left with two choices regarding Iqbal’s quotation of Nietzsche. The first option is he read Nietzsche in translation and deliberately chose not to fully quote a translated English passage for an English lecture series. The second is he paraphrased the quotations because he knew the original German, but could not expect his audience to have a full command of both English and German. Of these two options, it seems that the second is more plausible, supporting the claim that Iqbal read Nietzsche in German.

It is also appropriate to ask if Iqbal’s reading of Nietzsche was affected by differing conceptions of public and private religion, univocal vs. multivocal uses of the word religion, and the differences between the word “religion” and the word “*din*” (Arabic/Islamic word for “Judgment” but often translated as religion). To the first question, it seems that there were tensions between Nietzsche’s more private conception of religion and Iqbal’s more public conception of religion. These tensions stem from Iqbal’s belief that religion’s role was improving the individual and society *through* individuals. Nietzsche’s general belief was that although religion ideally empowers people history does not support this belief and led him to abandon the religious empowerment paradigm. To facilitate this, he promoted the privatization of religion and the secularization of society, in line with Secularization Hypothesis. This point proved contentious because it pitted Iqbal’s Muslim beliefs against Nietzsche’s secularism. In

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 339; Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 1934, 86. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

the end, it appears Iqbal's belief in the public role for religion was unshaken, and may have resulted in some of Iqbal's disagreements with Nietzsche.

The second part of this question concerns the differences between Iqbal and Nietzsche's differing vocalities (multi-vocal and univocal) of the word religion. Multivocal and univocal simply mean the degree of latitude that the author uses a word, in this case religion. Due to Iqbal's broad understanding of what religion is, his usage of the word is multivocal, in that it can be applied to many different, often non-traditional, situations. Nietzsche's use is univocal, owing to his philologist's training in the precise use of words. When Iqbal uses the word religion, it is important to understand his context. When Nietzsche uses religion, context is important, but he has more consistent, narrow meaning for the word. Additionally, Iqbal was using a multi-vocal word across languages, using "religion" in English, and *din* in Persian and Urdu. This creates additional complexities because these two terms are not entirely equivalent. A religio-philosophical and linguistic bias was part of both authors' writings, and a bias Iqbal brought to his readings of Nietzsche. Iqbal's bias in the context of his encounter with Nietzsche could explain some of the variance between Iqbal and Nietzsche's religious philosophies.

The final part of this question deals with the meanings of the word religion. A rough etymological translation of the word "religion" likely comes from the Latin "religare" meaning "to bind" indicating there is a link between humans and something else (i.e. the divine). The word *din* means "judgment" implying there is a judge, a recipient, and criteria for such judgment. These two words have different meanings, but are often translated as equivalents. The word "religion" is more appropriate to the

European Christian context which emphasizes the individual's commitments to the divine *through belief*. The word *din* is more suited to Iqbal's belief that one's actions are more important than one's doctrinal beliefs. Two important questions are: what meaning did Iqbal associate with Nietzsche's use of the word "religion," (i.e. Latinate, or Islamo-Arabic *din*) and if he used these terms interchangeably in his own writings. Iqbal was clever enough to notice the difference, but it is possible that this confusion of terms could explain some of the variance in religious philosophies.

Finally, it is appropriate to ask whether the differences in contexts significantly affected Iqbal's reading of Nietzsche. Iqbal was anti-colonial, but benefited greatly from the colonial education systems and had a great deal of admiration for Europe. However, there is little doubt that he disliked the European colonial presence in South Asia. The question, then, is whether Iqbal's anti-colonial feelings interfered with his reading of European writers, such as Nietzsche.

It is possible that two equally valid answers exist for this question. The first is the answer for Iqbal the Scholar, who is capable of setting aside his emotions to evaluate as objectively as possible the ideas in front of him. Given Iqbal's interest and early exposure to Western European philosophy through his British secular education, this seems plausible. Two examples showing Iqbal the Scholar are *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* and his poem *Payam-i Mashriq* (A Message from the East). In these two works, one religio-philosophical and one poetic, Iqbal evaluates and drafts religious-philosophy, and reconciles the "East-West" divide in versified communication. However, the second answer deals with Iqbal the Nationalist Poet, who did not set aside personal feelings about European colonization when evaluating European ideas. In his

poem *Zarb-i Kalim* (The Rod of Moses), Iqbal rails against Western European decadence and the negative effects of foreign domination, appealing to the emotions felt by many under colonialism. In this second case, Iqbal was not rationally evaluating European thought, but decrying Europe as a monolithic, colonizing entity. Perhaps he did this for the sake of his message's appeal (i.e. contradicting his own thoughts, but agreeing with the thoughts of others), or perhaps it was his genuine emotional reaction. In the end, it is likely that both of these explanations are appropriate, and that Iqbal's evaluation of European thought depended on his personal emotional context, and his audience.

This begs an interesting question that asks if Iqbal was Machiavellian, or whether his thought was organically dynamic. For many in South Asia, Iqbal was inspiring, and not a manipulator. However, from a scholarly perspective, one could argue Iqbal adapted his thought based on his audience to make his message more effective. Given the low levels of literacy at the time, it would have been difficult for others to identify inconsistencies. Ultimately, this is speculative because Iqbal never wrote an autobiography, leaving scholars only with words requiring interpretation.

Instances of Praise for Nietzsche

Instead of giving multiple instances of Iqbal's praise for Nietzsche, this section will provide a singular, illustrative example. Coming from *Javid Nama*, Iqbal devotes a full 73 line section to Nietzsche entitled "Beyond the Spheres: The Station of the German Philosopher Nietzsche."⁹ Iqbal acting as the narrator introduces a man described as

⁹ Muhammad Iqbal, *Javid Nama*, trans. A. J. Arberry (1966), 1932, 71-73. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

having “a voice full of agony... vision keener than an eagle’s.”¹⁰ Within the poem, the narrator asks Rumi who is this “madman,”¹¹ (possibly referencing Nietzsche’s madman section in *The Gay Science* which declares “God is dead”¹²) that denies Gabriel, Paradise, *houris* (nymphs of Paradise), and God repeatedly? Rumi responds: “...the German genius... Hallaj without gallows and rope.”¹³ This reference to Hallaj is an important honorific among Sufis because Hallaj was executed for his statement “*Ana al-Haqq*” (“I am the Truth” but using one of the ninety-nine names God, thereby calling himself God). The comparison to Nietzsche pays homage to the extreme statements he made to a society that does not fully understand them. Iqbal also praises Nietzsche’s thoughts as “sublime,”¹⁴ and further describes him as someone who sought truth more than his contemporaries, leaving him utterly alone in his search. Iqbal even goes so far as to compare him to Moses.¹⁵ This description paints Nietzsche as a tortured soul that a reader empathizes with and wants him to achieve his goal and end his anguish.

Although there are melancholy tones which could be construed as criticism, the overall tone of the passage is one of admiration. These melancholic instances, however, suggest a sadness that can only come from deep respect for an individual. The clues that lead to this conclusion are the ways in which Iqbal praises, which are contrasted to the ways he criticizes, covered in the next section. The most important clue regarding Iqbal’s admiration is who actually praises Nietzsche. In the previous passage, he used Rumi, who would have been well-known to all who read or heard *Javid Nama*. Another

¹⁰ Ibid., 72.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 181-182.

¹³ Iqbal, *Javid Nama*, 72.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 73.

important clue pertaining to the sincerity of Iqbal's praise is his comparison of Nietzsche to Hallaj and Moses. These references seem calculated because Hallaj and Moses would hold great appeal among Sufi and non-Sufi Muslims respectively. Particularly flattering is Iqbal's comparison of Nietzsche to Moses, which gives Nietzsche and his "revelations" a status akin to Mosaic Law. A final clue is Iqbal's repetition of positive adjectives common in Persianate poetry which uses such hyperbole to reinforce specific points.

An additional point to consider is why Iqbal would make poetic references to Nietzsche at all. Noted earlier, Iqbal often used poetry for mass appeal, and the mostly illiterate masses in British India would not have known who Nietzsche was. Yet, Iqbal references him anyway, which begs the question of why. On one level, he is making a functional reference for the educated audiences. On another level, he is introducing an unknown individual praised by individuals familiar to the audience. It is possible that he deliberately connected his ideas with Nietzsche to earn the respect of educated listeners, and to also gain support from the uneducated by having well-known figures praise Nietzsche, and therefore, his ideas. Iqbal's praise then is both personal and strategic for spreading his message.

A final point to consider is whether Iqbal praised Nietzsche more during certain periods of his life compared to other periods. Using a timeline of his active years, his first instance of praise occurs in *Payam-i Mashriq* (1923),¹⁶ followed by a second instance in the aforementioned *Javid Nama* (1932),¹⁷ and his last instance of praise in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1931, 1934).¹⁸ The timeline for these

¹⁶ Muhammad Iqbal, *A Message from the East*, trans. M. Hadi Hussain (1977), 1923, 53-55. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>. Iqbal makes 3 positive mentions of Nietzsche.

¹⁷ Iqbal, *Javid Nama*, 71-73. Iqbal makes 1 lengthy positive mention of Nietzsche.

¹⁸ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 86. Iqbal makes 1 brief positive mention of Nietzsche.

poems, both in Persian, seems to indicate a consistency in Iqbal's admiration across his active years.

Instances of Ridicule/Criticism

To adequately demonstrate Iqbal's criticisms of Nietzsche both an example of versified and prose criticism will be used. *Zarb-i Kalim* provides useful versified example of Iqbal's critical tone toward Nietzsche. The content of this criticism is somewhat similar to *Javid Nama*, but the overall tone of the passage is harsh. Two poignant selections from *Zarb-i Kalim* are:

The subtle point that God is one,
The German sage could not perceive:
Clear sight and mind are both a must,
So that this point one may conceive.¹⁹

Followed by:

Although his natural bent of mind
From stains and blemish is quite free;
His soul this dormant fact betrays
He yearns for life replete with spree.²⁰

In the first passage, Iqbal uses sarcasm to criticize Nietzsche by juxtaposing him as the "German sage" and being unable to perceive the "subtle point" of God's unity.²¹ To Iqbal and Muslim listeners, the central tenet of *tawhid* ("oneness of God") is obvious to all who observe their surroundings with "clear sight and mind."²² The second passage criticizes Nietzsche's materialism and singular focus on humans, and his emptiness by rejecting the divine. Iqbal poetically states that Nietzsche's mind, like that of all humans,

¹⁹ Muhammad Iqbal, *The Rod of Moses: A Declaration of War Against the Present Age*, trans. V. G. Kiernan, 1936, 19. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

is naturally bent toward God and blemish free, but longing for materialism, Nietzsche ruins his good nature.

The prose criticism comes from *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* with one particular moment standing out from the rest. In this section, Iqbal is discussing psychology's and biology's inability to understand religion and religious life through the scientific method.²³ He chides scientific analysis of religious sexual imagery and rejects defense mechanism hypotheses for the development of religion.²⁴ He then makes a statement which leads into his discussion of Nietzsche:

...if the science of psychology is ever likely to possess a real significance for the life of mankind, it must develop an independent method calculated to discover a new technique better suited to the temper of our times. Perhaps a psychopath endowed with a great intellect—the combination is not an impossibility— may give us a clue to such a technique. In modern Europe, Nietzsche...²⁵

Here, Iqbal labels Nietzsche a “psychopath endowed with a great intellect,”²⁶ which is not a flattering description. Iqbal also states Nietzsche received a prophetic vision (perhaps alluding to *Thus Spake Zarathustra*'s “Of the Vision and the Riddle”), but concludes, “...Nietzsche was a failure; and his failure was mainly due to his intellectual progenitors such as Schopenhauer, Darwin, and Lange whose influence completely blinded him to the real significance of his vision.”²⁷ Iqbal further ridicules Nietzsche for his desire for an oligarchy of *Übermenschen*, and lack of interest in cultivating the divine in “the plebeian.”²⁸ Finally, Iqbal concludes his ridicule of Nietzsche by characterizing

²³ Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, 88.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 89.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

him as a hypocrite who publicly claimed to not need spirituality, but privately was “fully conscious of his own spiritual need.”²⁹

It is easy to see Iqbal delivers sharp criticism to Nietzsche’s thoughts and ideas, and skirts *ad hominem* attacks. In earlier instances in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal had scholarly disagreements with some of Nietzsche’s conclusions, but did not label him a failure. In this example, however, Iqbal’s pity for Nietzsche is demeaning and pejorative.

Similarly, Iqbal’s leaves clues for the reader to recognize when he is being critical. In these two instances, one can detect his intent to criticize through his tone, his religio-cultural references, and the *ad hominem* quality of his statements. In both the poetic and prose statements one senses a disdain for Nietzsche’s ideas, and on some level for Nietzsche himself. The sharp tone and terse statements stand in stark contrast to Iqbal’s lengthy, hyperbolic admiring statements. Second, the religio-cultural references regarding God’s existence would have been a powerful criticism in light of his audience. Finally, the *ad hominem* character of Iqbal’s prose ridicule is uncharacteristic of Iqbal, but nonetheless an expression of his disagreements with Nietzsche. A final note regarding these criticisms is that this thesis does not claim Nietzsche’s thoughts and ideas are immune to criticism, but such criticism ought to be conducted in a scholarly manner.

Another consideration regarding these criticisms is where they fall on Iqbal’s intellectual timeline. The first instance occurs in *Asrar-i Khudi* (1915) where Iqbal criticizes Nietzsche for having received revelation, but not being perceptive enough to

²⁹ Ibid.

realize it.³⁰ Iqbal's next set of criticisms are found in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, published in 1931. Following this, however, Iqbal's next negative mentions of Nietzsche appear in *Bal-i Jibril* (1935) and *Zarb-i Kalim* (1936), either explicitly in the poem, or in Iqbal's footnotes.³¹ Given this timeline, it also seems that Iqbal was consistent in his criticism of Nietzsche across his writing career.

Finally, one must ask the question that these criticisms warrant: If Iqbal selectively syncretized from and admired Nietzsche, how could he be so critical of him? Restated, what is the source of this ridicule? To answer this question, one must acknowledge the possibility that Iqbal had difficulty detecting some of Nietzsche's sarcasm in his works. Nietzsche was a serious individual, but there are times in his works when his provocative statements exist primarily for shock value. One of the difficulties of foreign language study is detecting the differences when an author is being serious or hyperbolic. Another possibility uses the Iqbal the Nationalist Poet- Iqbal the Scholar paradigm. This works for most instances, but fails to account for Iqbal's criticisms in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, where Iqbal was speaking as a scholar. Finally, one must ask if Iqbal really felt pity for Nietzsche, as this is the last thing Nietzsche would want from any of his readers. To this final question, it is difficult to say if Iqbal's pity is genuine, or for effect based on his audience. Unfortunately these questions assessing Iqbal's negative comments regarding Nietzsche are not likely to have satisfactory answers across all situations. One possible explanation across instances is selective syncretism, in which he selects out pieces of Nietzsche's philosophy that he

³⁰ Muhammad Iqbal, *Secrets of the Self*, trans. R. A. Nicholson (1920), 1915, 3-4. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>. Iqbal makes 2 brief criticisms of Nietzsche.

³¹ Muhammad Iqbal, *Gabriel's Wing*, trans. Naeem Siddiqui, 1935, 19 (in note), 51. <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/>. Iqbal makes 2 brief criticisms of Nietzsche; Iqbal, *The Rod of Moses*, 19. Iqbal makes 1 brief criticism of Nietzsche.

cannot stomach or use, or thinks his audience would not be able to stomach or use. The difference between these points is slight but profound and one's answer paints Iqbal and his criticisms in different lights.

Conclusion

This chapter scrutinized the various detail-oriented aspects of Iqbal's encounter with Nietzsche, and discussed possible alternative explanations for Iqbal and Nietzsche's convergence and divergence. Following this discussion, instances of Iqbal's praise and reproach for Nietzsche and his ideas were discussed. These analyses were followed by some explanations regarding Iqbal's praise and ridicule, and possible explanations for their underlying mechanisms.

The first part of the chapter offered a linguistic and detail-oriented contextualization of Iqbal's understanding of Nietzsche, and discussed answers to several questions regarding the encounter. Among the competing explanations for these questions, one is often left with choices that either 1) assume an extreme, and/or 2) require multiple valid premises and/or 3) assume Iqbal was far less intelligent than he seemed to demonstrate. Ultimately these competing explanations do not seem as plausible when placed alongside this thesis's proposed mechanisms of conceptions of religion and selective syncretism.

This chapter also discussed some specific instances of admiration and disdain for Nietzsche, and analyzed possible reasons for such admiration and criticism. Again, alternative explanations for these occurrences seem lacking. They either require Iqbal to shrewdly manipulate the masses, or lack consistency in his thought. Ultimately, these questions must be weighed on the basis of credible evidence, which is differentiated from

non-credible evidence by individual bias. However, this allows the study of, and critical analysis of Iqbal's thought, and especially its relationship to Nietzsche's to continue to develop.

Conclusion

This thesis relies heavily on the understanding of the terms “religious philosophy,” “convergence,” “divergence,” “selective syncretism,” and “conception of religion”. To review this thesis’s quasi-hypotheses, it is appropriate to redefine these terms as they appear. A religious philosophy is a set of ideas, the focus of which is to discern the role of religion in the life of an individual. These ideas draw heavily upon religion and have broad implications for the role of religion in the life of an individual. Convergence is defined as the degree of similarity between two concepts or ideas, contrasted with divergence as the degree of difference between two concepts or ideas. Selective syncretism, as it pertains to this thesis, is the process by which Iqbal was able to incorporate aspects of European philosophy he felt compatible and *useful* to his South Asian context, and reject ideas either incompatible or not useful. Finally, a conception of religion is defined as an all-encompassing vision of what religion is and what religion’s role is for society and an individual, and contains an individual’s ideas about the purpose and/or function of religion, as well as the origins of a religion. These terms play a critical role in this thesis, and form the conceptual basis upon which the thesis explores its hypotheses.

Throughout this thesis, four quasi-hypotheses were explored regarding the convergence and divergence of Iqbal and Nietzsche’s religious philosophies. The first dealt with the actual religious philosophies. This thesis argued that Iqbal and Nietzsche’s religious philosophies, although exhibiting similarities and differences, were each unique intellectual achievements. The second hypothesis explored was a possible mechanism underlying the observed convergence and divergence between these two religious

philosophies, arguing that each author's conception of religion plays a key role in explaining the observed variance. This thesis does not argue that the similarities and differences in conceptions of religion fully explain all the variance observed between the religious philosophies, but it is the most explanatory and most predictive. The third quasi-hypothesis revolved around selective syncretism as a possible mechanism facilitating the incorporation of Nietzsche and other thinkers' religio-philosophical ideas into Iqbal's religious philosophy. This hypothesis is related to the first regarding the uniqueness of each individual's religious philosophy. This thesis argues that the way in which the originality of Iqbal's religious philosophy is preserved is through the process of selective syncretism. By utilizing aspects of Nietzsche's religious-philosophy that fit within Iqbal's *pre-existing* ideas, Iqbal was able to develop an original, revolutionary Islamic religious philosophy incorporating aspects of Nietzsche's Christian-based religious philosophy. The fourth quasi-hypothesis regarded Iqbal's actual understanding of Nietzsche and the cross-cultural and linguistic encounter between these two authors across time. Rather than presenting an argument, the actual details of the encounter were discussed to demonstrate that the conceptions of religion and selective syncretism arguments explained more of the variance than alternative explanations.

This thesis also argues that scholarly exploration of these areas requires holistic views of each author's religious philosophy. A brief recapitulation of the religious philosophy of Iqbal and Nietzsche is thus appropriate. Iqbal believes Islam is a socially oriented, individualistic religion that empowers the believer as he or she strives to develop the attributes of God. By this emulation of God's individuality (*tawhid*), the individual undergoes a three-stage religious development process, and becomes more

aware of the underlying obligations that ground Islam in action for social justice. This greater understanding of belief and action ultimately results in the transformation of the individual from a mere human believer to an *insan-i kamil*, or Perfect Human. The ultimate goal of becoming this *insan-i kamil* is to improve the social welfare of others, while continually striving for greater individuality. All of these actions please the Creator, which creates a state of bliss upon death, referred to as Heaven.

Nietzsche's religious philosophy is one of individual growth through the reevaluation of all assumed values. By determining the value that each of these values has within the life of the individual, he or she moves *beyond* absolutes and into a realm in which value, morality, and religion is purely that of the individual. The individual goes through a three-stage metamorphosis which results in the individual unlocking his or her full potential once the individual has the ability to create new values, morals, and religion if he or she so chooses. The goal is ultimate freedom through choice and unlimited creativity of the self. This entire struggle prepares the individual to give a positive answer to the question of Eternal Recurrence. Does the individual want to live for all eternity either the same life cycle, or different life cycles with the same values, depending on interpretation? The end state of an individual who can answer affirmatively this thought experiment is an individual who fully embraces life, loves his or her fate as chosen by the individual (*amor fati*), and becomes the *Übermensch*.

These two religious philosophies have a remarkable amount of convergence paired with a significant amount of divergence. It seems paradoxical, but when understood through the lens of each individual's conception of religion and Iqbal's selective syncretism, the paradoxical quality of the statement fades. At the surface level,

each religious philosophy has a three-stage metamorphosis, emphasizes the individual and his or her empowerment above all else, and envisions similar dynamic action states. The differences between these religious philosophies arise from the emphases placed on the individual's empowerment. Specifically, what the goal for such empowerment is, how to achieve such empowerment (whether through or outside religion), and the dynamic action states have nuanced differences.

One way of viewing these similarities and differences is to say that Iqbal understood Nietzsche "correctly" at certain points and misunderstood others. This position has some validity in that it is possible some of the differences are due to Iqbal's misunderstanding, implying the religious philosophies have more convergence than this thesis argues. However, it is a risky proposition both scholarly and philosophically to make such statements for two reasons. The first is that such a statement assumes that there are categorically correct and incorrect interpretations of Iqbal's and Nietzsche's religious philosophy. Second, it assumes Nietzsche's religious philosophy is inherently correct, and that Iqbal's correctness is contingent upon its synchronization with Nietzsche's. One way to avoid falling into this philosophical trap is to look for a mechanism that might regulate or influence each author's formation of a religious philosophy. This is precisely what this thesis seeks to do by presenting the idea of a religious conception coupled with selective syncretism.

Yet this proposition raises the question of whether the observed patterns can be reduced to two basic concepts as these. Initially, such a hypothesis seems overly reductionist, but proper evaluation reveals it to be a fuller, more explanatory and more predictive reason for the observed variance versus competing explanations. Other key

factors in the formation of a religious philosophy are an individual's education and context, but these are incapable of accounting for the entirety of the variance between Iqbal and Nietzsche's religious philosophy. Such explanations would reduce Iqbal's religious philosophy to a Persian and Urdu translation of Nietzsche's religious philosophy. Additionally, such an explanation cannot fully reconcile the differences between the two religious philosophies, or Iqbal's criticisms of Nietzsche's ideas. Furthermore, relying solely on context, or context and education, would mean that neither philosophy is really original, and merely a product of each individual's context and education. Such an extreme environmental view is hard to sustain given the holistic paradigm within this thesis. Given these criticisms of other approaches, this thesis argues that the convergence and divergence in conceptions of religion best explains the variance in the religious philosophies.

This thesis also argues that each individual's unique conception of religion was related to their context and education, but also shaped by their assessments of the human condition. Iqbal's conception of religion is multivocal, broad, and generally positive regarding the role of religion within the life of an individual and society. Nietzsche's concept is univocal, narrow compared to Iqbal's, and generally negative regarding the impact of religion on the individual and society. Iqbal views religion's purpose as transformative for individuals, compelling them to act in ways that better their societies. By pursuing social justice, the individual is empowered, increasingly unique by imitating God's attributes, and aware of esoteric religious knowledge. Nietzsche believes that by following one's *chosen* values, one becomes empowered and creative with or without

religion. However, in Nietzsche's view of history and how religion functions, full individual empowerment without discarding religion is unlikely.

These basic tenets form their respective conceptions of religion, which in turn inform and shape the development of their religious philosophies. At times, these conceptions of religion merge, as they do along the lines of the importance of the individual, the importance of action, and the importance of experience. At times, these conceptions of religion diverge, as seen in their view of the general role of religion for the individual, the origin of religion, and their views of religion and the individual within their given contexts.

A puzzling aspect of this thesis centers on Iqbal's concurrent admiration and criticism of Nietzsche. Intuitively, it would seem that for an individual to draw upon another's ideas, a degree of admiration or respect must exist. Generally criticism is rooted in a variety of more or less valid reasons. Iqbal's criticisms can be classified into three categories: 1) criticisms based on religious conception, 2) failures in comprehension, or 3) simple *ad hominem*. Overall, Iqbal's praises and criticisms are best explained by conception of religion and selective syncretism. Where his conception merged with Nietzsche's, he selectively syncretized and admired Nietzsche for his contributions to general religio-philosophical thought. Where they did not coincide, Iqbal rejected and criticized Nietzsche's ideas, sometimes descending into *ad hominem* attacks. These attacks on Nietzsche's person are the most difficult to reconcile with the thesis's proposed mechanisms. As such, this thesis yields to other plausible explanations, the most instructive being the Iqbal as Scholar and Nationalist Poet binary. Iqbal the Scholar could read Nietzsche's more provocative statements and react professionally to

such statements. Iqbal the Nationalist Poet was far more emotive and polemical against the enemies of his religious philosophy and Western European colonial powers and influences. Other explanations include Iqbal's disdain for European colonization, which may have colored Iqbal's reading of Nietzsche and other European thinkers.

Additionally, it is possible that Iqbal reacted poorly to some of Nietzsche's statements because he failed to understand the nuance of German sarcasm and provocative expression for shock value.

All three of these explanations are plausible to some degree, but this thesis regards the first explanation of Iqbal's two attitudes is most consistent with his overall philosophy. However, this calls Iqbal's sincerity and consistency into question. Did he change his statements to fit his audience, even if they went against his beliefs? Did he hold some of his beliefs back because it would have affected the popularity and influence of his message? In the end, each reader must decide what evidence is most compelling regarding this Iqbal's "love-hate" relationship with Nietzsche.

In closing, this thesis has argued for the consideration of similar and differing conceptions of religion and selective syncretism as the prominent underlying mechanisms behind Iqbal and Nietzsche's similarity and difference. One of the primary points this thesis emphasized is the importance of holistic understandings that capture the nuances in religious philosophies. To state that one definitively knows what Iqbal or Nietzsche means on any given subject is a bold claim, and ought to be subject to close scrutiny. This thesis does not claim to have the definitive interpretation of these two authors. Instead, it argues a plurality of interpretations exists, of which some, such as this thesis, are more supported by evidence.

Integral to this thesis and the research process in general is the use of primary sources. Reading the authors' own words in their original works coupled with a thorough contextual understanding of the authors and their works is critical to conducting quality research. Where possible, this thesis has endeavored to use primary sources in the original language, or reliable translations. The importance of using primary sources flows into the importance of properly contextualizing one's arguments and the arguments one analyzes. It is impossible to understand Iqbal and Nietzsche without understanding these individuals' unique backgrounds. This thesis gave a reasonable level of biographical information to contextualize each religious philosopher to help elucidate some of their more difficult concepts.

Finally, this thesis has attempted to remain faithful to the authors' intended message, factoring in their contexts and target audiences. Neither Iqbal nor Nietzsche ever wrote any of their ideas with this thesis in mind, and instead wrote to a specific audience with a specific purpose. In order to provide the most compelling case for this thesis's quasi-hypotheses, every attempt was made to consider the intended audience as part of the context of the argument.

Iqbal lives on in the legacy of modern-day Pakistan. Part of the relevance of this thesis is that it adds to the literature surrounding the individual credited as the intellectual father of Pakistan. The fact that such a progressive individual is associated with the modern state of Pakistan raises questions regarding the individual's beliefs. One of the goals of this thesis is to shed further light on Iqbal as an intellectual separate from the current problems in Pakistan. This is especially true when his words are used in sermons in non-Urdu speaking areas to justify actions entirely contrary to his beliefs.

An interview was conducted with an individual, who will remain anonymous for security reasons, to understand Iqbal's legacy among the Pashto in the northwestern part of Pakistan. Iqbal's poetry is invoked for a variety of reasons, from preparing individuals to cross borders into Afghanistan and attack US soldiers to accusing the Pashtos of not being true Muslims.¹ The interesting way in which Iqbal is used by various individuals throughout the northwestern part of Pakistan demonstrates the breadth of interpretation possible with Iqbal.² In areas where orality trumps literacy, Iqbal's poetry, touching on a variety of subjects, can be applied in nearly any situation.³ This is especially true of Iqbal's poetry, which derives its meaning and power based on surrounding verses, or in the case of the Pashtos, sermon topics.⁴ This thesis has argued that although a multitude of interpretations are possible, not all are equally valid. Iqbal was not a violent individual and would have condemned using his poetry to incite violence. Despite the disparity in Iqbal's applications in northwest Pakistan, he remains immensely popular in the state that he envisioned. Yet, despite this popularity, his words are not heeded in contemporary Pakistan.

Second, this thesis adds to the body of literature asserting that Iqbal is neither a Muslim Nietzsche nor unaffiliated with Nietzsche. Both extreme camps of thought are incorrect as Iqbal and Nietzsche were two individuals who believed they were revolutionizing the way others thought. Finally, this thesis adds to the body of literature that presents a challenge to the Clash of Civilizations theory of Samuel Huntington by demonstrating that Iqbal, a fully "Eastern Islamo-Confucian" South Asian Muslim,

¹ Interview with an anonymous colleague, February 10, 2010.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

admired and incorporated rather well Nietzsche's ideas, which are fully "Western Judeo-Christian" European and secular. By describing Iqbal as a modernist Muslim religious philosopher, this thesis offers a powerful challenge to Clash of Civilizations Theory. One of the philosophical characteristics of modernity is the emphasis on the individual's responsibility. Nietzsche's thought, contextualized in nineteenth-century Europe, is viewed by scholars as quintessentially modern. His description of the individual as achieving empowerment by removing all obstacles to his or her sovereign choice is seen as a modernist treatise on individualism. Iqbal's description of achieving individual empowerment is identical to Nietzsche's in both structure and process, making his emphasis on the individual modernist. The only alternatives to this conclusion require changing one's conception of philosophical modernity, regarding Nietzsche as something other than a modernist, or discarding Iqbal as a religio-philosophical fluke among Muslims. These first two options are absurd to consider, leaving the third as a possible alternative. However, Iqbal's continuing prominence in Pakistan as its intellectual father makes this alternative null and void. Given this analysis, Iqbal, a devout Muslim, was also a modernist. Taking this further, the questions concerning Islam's compatibility with modernity are moot. Iqbal, and his continuing relevance as the intellectual father of the second largest Muslim state and the only state ever created specifically for Muslims, refutes Huntington's theory. The question, then, of the current status of democracy, civil and political liberties, and violence is not inherent in the pre-modern religion of Islam, but found instead by analyzing other relevant factors such as colonization and its effects and the proliferation of weapons.

The relationship between Iqbal and Nietzsche can be viewed as one that Nietzsche might have approved of when he said this in *Ecce Homo*:

I want no “believers”...I have a terrible fear that one day I will be pronounced holy...⁵

Iqbal was never a “believer” in Nietzsche, but another religious philosopher who appreciated Nietzsche’s contributions to thought, and per Nietzsche’s desires, never pronounced him holy.

⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, Translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), 326.

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