

Love as the Achievement of Mystical Experience by Bergson and Iqbal: A Critical Appraisal

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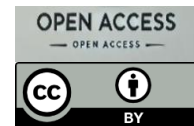
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Abstract

Henry Bergson (1859-1941) and Mohammad Iqbal (1877-1938) wished to establish religious truth on firm grounds beyond any doubt. For this purpose, both relied heavily on Religious or Mystical Experience, which is direct and doubt-free. However, the next and most important question is: What does the mystic achieve from this experience? The answer is "Knowledge" --- but what is the nature of this knowledge and how does it differ from other types of knowledge? Why and how does the mystic (or Prophet) use it? Both Iqbal and Bergson name its 'Love', which is a Life-force, Energy and a 'Transforming power' with the help of which the person having undergone the experience revolutionizes and changes the character of mankind. This paper has the objective to analyse the nature of this love, of which the ontology is dubious, therefore, its own claims may be uncertain too. Moreover, the approach of Iqbal to present love as an opponent or rival of knowledge and intellect has been questioned. Additionally, to which extent these views are compatible with Qur'an have also been discussed at length. The methodology is qualitative and analytic and the authors have shown their reservations on the love as a source of knowledge in the findings.

Key Words: Experience, Intuition Knowledge, Love, Mysticism, Reason, Transformation.



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Introduction

What is Love (*Ishq*)?

Iqbal's concept of love is a derivative of his views on religious experience which fills the mystic with a pulsating energy. This energy bestows a life affirming force upon him, which is actually a strong *will*. This has been named by Iqbal as Love (*Ishq*). This 'Love' is superior to intellect in the same way as religious experience and intuition is superior to intellect.

Love is defined as the affectionate relationship between human beings which is of two types mainly, that is, sexual and non-sexual (social). It is a kind of strong binding and a keen adoration for things/people whatsoever. Throughout our lives we love our parents, siblings, friends, relatives, kids, home, books, plants, country and so many countless entities. It falls within the category of social love. Whereas the attraction and charm we feel for our beloved/spouse is entirely different. It is known as sexual love.

However, Iqbal has not used it in the traditional sense. For him is a strong transformational force which is capable of bringing lasting revolution in human life. It is such a strong will which can mould the Divine decree too.

Iqbal is one of the philosophers who have based knowledge on experience and intuition to bring it out of the shadow of Scepticism. In this regard he has drunk deep from the tradition of German Idealists. The most eminent German Idealists are: - a- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), b- Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), c- Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Von Schelling (1775-1854) and d- George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). They introduced a novel epistemology, logic and metaphysics, which is totally different from the rest of the West. Iqbal is one of their ardent admirers and faithful disciples. Besides them, his other greatest source of inspiration was Henry Bergson, who was his contemporary and with whom he had warm personal relations too.

As Iqbal was a very well-read scholar, having thorough grasp on Muslim and Eastern Philosophies; he has drawn inspiration from multiple sources regarding love. Jalal-Ud-Din Rumi (1207-1273) was his major inspiration from the East. However, this paper may not cover all the sources due to paucity of space. It will focus primarily on Western Philosophy and Bergson, which is definitely one of the major intellectual stimulants.

It will be beneficial to have an introduction of intuition; it is a special faculty of knowledge distinct from sense perception and intellect. Intuition produces that

kind of knowledge which covers total passage of Reality. In this sort of knowledge all the diverse stimuli mingle together to form a single unanalysable whole in which duality of the subject and the object vanishes (Iqbal, 2006).

The knowledge gained through intuition is totally different from that of sense perception and reason and can only be “experienced” which is direct and does not need any external proof for its validity. Besides German idealists, prominent American Psychologist of 19th Century William James (1842-1910) was also a great proponent of religious experience and *The Varieties of Religious Experience* is his most famous book in this regard. William James has quoted four qualities of Religious Experience, which are as under:

- Ineffability;
- Noetic Quality;
- Transiency;
- Passivity (James, 1958).

Iqbal has enumerated five characteristics of the Religious Experience:

- Immediacy;
- Unanalyzable wholeness;
- Intimate Association with the Unique other self;
- Incommunicability;
- Deep Sense of Authority (Iqbal, 2006).

Iqbal has stressed Noetic Quality especially in his discourse. Noetic quality means that the mystical experience encompasses direct insight(s) without any reference to external world. Moreover, it gives a very strong sense of being “real”. This is common to all Religious, Spiritual, and Mystical Experiences (RSMEs) which have noetic quality. Iqbal has also laid emphasis on this ‘deep sense of authority’.

There is no doubt that mystical experience is a feeling, however, it can never be cut off from knowledge. They are of vision regarding zeniths of truth immeasurable and unfathomable by the discursive intellect. They are enlightenments and disclosures full of worth, meaning and standing. These are, nevertheless, incommunicable still; by default and necessity convey an inquisitive sense of authority for after-time. These illuminations not only produce mere knowledge, which may be used or left as such. They transfuse specific sort of energy in the mystic which he utilizes to transform the humanity

and society. This energy, dynamism or vigour is love or *Ishq* in the parlance of Iqbal.

Love is not a new phrase in the mystical literature either in Western, Eastern and Muslim traditions., many other luminaries have not only used rather wrote on it in-depth. One such example is that of Jacob Behman (1575-1624), who has perhaps elaborated it in the finest possible words. According to him,

“Love is Nothing, for "when thou art gone forth wholly from the Creature and from that which is visible, and art become Nothing to all that is Nature and Creature, then thou art in that eternal One, which is God himself, and then thou shalt feel within thee the highest virtue of Love. . . . The treasure of treasures for the soul is where she goeth out of the somewhat into that Nothing out of which all things may be made. The soul here saith, I have nothing, for I am utterly stripped and naked; I can do nothing, for I have no manner of power, but am as water poured out; I am nothing, for all that I am is no more than an image of Being, and only God is to me I AM; and so, sitting down in my own Nothingness, I give glory to the eternal Being, and will nothing of myself, that so God may will all in me, being unto me my God and all things” (Behmen, 1901).

However, Iqbal’s love is entirely different from that of Jacob Behmen’s since it does not deprive the soul of its possessions and the soul does not declare that it is nothing; rather this love not only affirms the soul, but also empowers and enriches it. This love confers so much confidence and courage upon the soul that it may preserve its identity even in the presence of the Infinite Ego. Qur’an itself has testified it how gracefully, the Prophet (*Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*) met with his Lord at the night of ascension.

“His eye turned not aside, nor did it wander” (Pickthal, 1930).

Iqbal has quoted here the Persian poet, Jamali of Delhi,

“Moses fainted away by a mere surface illumination of Reality; Thou seest the very substance of Reality with a smile” (Iqbal, 2006).

This article, however, is mainly concerned with the comparison of Bergson and Iqbal regarding love; hence it is the high time to move towards the main topic with the key players.

Discussion and Debate

a- Bergson on Love

Bergson has remained the greatest philosophical supporter of mysticism and love. He, in his fervour of mysticism and love, challenges the philosophers very assertively regarding their inability to replicate the services rendered by mystics.

Have the philosophers given humanity any agreed upon principles which may embrace not only the entire humanity but also all the experiences of daily life? Had there been no mystics, who would have held total humanity in the fold one indivisible love? (Bergson, 1935).

The most important and relevant question is that what a mystic would achieve through this love which is brimming from his being after the distinctive experience. As per Bergson:

What does the mystic wish? With the assistance of God he wants to fill those gaps in human species which are still left. He desires to make humans what they should have been. However, the main question is: How does it all happen? It is done by the vital impulse. This vital impetus itself chooses exceptional men, who by getting inspiration from it; infuse the same into entire humanity. This creative effort produces substantial changes in man and converts them into a particular species (Bergson, 1935).

Therefore, in short, it is the vital impetus which leads a mystic to that stage of individuality, that he is able to receive divine illumination. After receiving that light, the enlightened man finds himself filled with a special sort of energy which is known as 'Love'. It brightens the entire humanity with this light of love. One may recall a very famous verse of Iqbal which reads as under (in English translation):

“Bring every low to a high point with the power of love

Enlighten the world with the name of Muhammad”

(Iqbal, 1982)

For Bergson,

“Love is a “creative energy”, wherein the mystic sees the very essence of God (Bergson, 1935).

“Has this love an object”? He questions. Then answers himself with great reassurance,

“Let us bear in mind that an emotion of a superior order is self-sufficient” (Bergson, 1935)

This love has a very clear roadmap and it knows its job pretty well, Bergson enralls the reader by using most lucid and enchanting language:

“Granted the existence of a creative energy which is love, and which desires to produce from itself beings worthy to be loved, it might indeed sow space with worlds whose materiality, as the opposite of divine spirituality, would simply express the distinction between being created and creating, between the multifarious notes, strung like pearls, of a symphony and the indivisible emotion from which they sprang. In each of these worlds vital impetus and raw matter might thus be complementary aspects of the creation” (Bergson, 1935).

Mystics too, know well that their prime function in the world is to love and be loved in return:

They are practically guided by God’s will, “as if God himself acts in them, and their actions succeed in intensifying the original bond among human beings, which is fraternity rather than solidarity, because mystics are made for the world and not for themselves. Bergson claims that every mystic is a “new species, composed of one single individual”, who loves humanity while loving, and being loved, by the love from which humanity arises. “God is love, and the object of love: herein lies the whole contribution of mysticism”. (Campo, 2023).

Iqbal, being an enthusiastic aficionado of Bergson, has somewhat similar ideas about love; however, he has enriched this great and novel idea with his own philosophical wisdom, depth, insight and vision. For him, love besides being a strong creative energy is an insurmountable and indomitable will.

b- Iqbal on Love

Iqbal has given love a unique epistemological status which is not new in mysticism and poetry but definitely novel in philosophy. Love besides being a creative force is also a source of knowledge and in this way stands in contrast to science and reason.

According to famous orientalist of German origin and specialist of Iqbal Dr. Annemarie-Schimmel (1922-2003):

It is natural that love, Ishq as Iqbal calls it, is contrasted very frequently with Ilm, science, Aql, Reason and intellect. He uses Ilm mostly in the sense of science as natural science, Ishq is synthesis and Ilm is analysis. Both of them have to work together. In his landmark Persian poem, Payam-e-Mashriq Iqbal shows that without love, without this synthetic approach Ilm, science is something satanic. But if both of them cooperate they can create paradise on earth. It is one of the finest expressions of his beliefs in synthetic thinking instead of a dry analytical approach. In a poem, Iqbal brings together Goethe and his own eastern guide Mawlana Rumi, he quotes a line by Rumi to which both agree that the cunning intellect is from Satan but love Ishq is from Adam (Schimmel, 2000).

A contemporary scholar of Iqbal has explained Iqbal's concept of love in the following words:

To Rumi, this very reason is ever deluding and confusing weather to be or not be. Love is ever silent and never roaring or chaotic. Here Iqbal comes to be the espouser of the same analogy. To secrets of self, love is described as the relentless longing of assimilation and absorption. In Iqbalinism many appellations are given to love, the ever debated and discussed term like shoaq, Masti, Sooz, Khudi, Arzoo. (Dar, 2019)

Until now we have tried to understand the point of Bergson and Iqbal sympathetically; however, the matter is not as simple as it appears. The very difficult and complicated riddle of creation may not be resolved solely by the imagination of the poets and visions of the mystics. So keeping in view the scarcity of space at our disposal, we should now move to the criticism segment without further ado. Though there is much Iqbal has said on love, it would be quoted later in the segment of critical review. It is an interesting fact that plethora of literature is available on Iqbal's concept of love but criticism on the

same is very scanty. Readers, researchers and critics of Iqbal have generally lauded his idea of love and very few have judged them on the touch stone of history, logic and Islam. A humble academic effort has been made in the following section.

Critical Review

The very first question which has remained enigmatic for all the readers, admirers, critics and scholars of Iqbal is: Why did Iqbal bring religion into the domain of Psychology? What did compel him to this drastic step? And why did he defy sense experience so disdainfully? Why did he reject reason with all his might and vigour? Last but not the least why did he establish religion on experience at all? In the Lecture VII of the *Reconstruction*, "Is Religion Possible", he has divided religious life into three stages, that is: Faith, Thought and Discovery. It is the last phase wherein the religion shifts itself into the domain of Psychology from Metaphysics (Iqbal, 2006).

We have answered these questions partly above; his main purpose behind this endeavour is to establish the Islamic knowledge on 'something' beyond Scepticism and doubt. He had taken the entire inspiration not from Muslim mystics alone as has been erroneously understood generally. His real mentors were German Idealists whose epistemology, method, concepts and terminology he generously borrowed. His second light was Bergson. Our critical remarks on religious experience generally and on 'love' particularly are as under:

- Most unfortunately the characteristics of the source of love that is *Religious Experience* as explained by Iqbal above make it even more dubious and unreliable as compared to the sense experience and reason. It is an experience which is a prerogative of only a chosen few in the entire mankind and they too are not fully capable of explaining it since it is incommunicable. Moreover, Mystics and German Idealist are/were thoroughgoing pantheists and monists. Islam on the other hand is a purely theistic religion in which God has a unique personality other than any creature; hence there is absolutely no chance of 'intimacy with Unique Other Self' in the sense of Iqbal. Throughout the *Reconstruction*, Iqbal's idea of God is Aryan/Pantheistic, not Islamic. Additionally, it is an arbitrary selection of Fichte's theory of Ego and Bergson's Philosophy of time (Jalalpuri, 2003).

- To know God as any other object is totally out of question since as per Holy Qur'an: "There is nothing likes Him" (Pickthal, 1930). Finally, revelation of Prophets (*Peace be upon them*) may never be associated with any sort of mystical state(s), neither it may be named 'experience' which is a derogatory term, nevertheless. *Wahi* (revelation) is exclusively a matter of faith. The Prophets (*Peace be upon them*) are the chosen of Allah selected by Him. No practice or experience gives them the status of Prophets.

- Now we should move towards our main topic, that is, love. As far as Iqbal considers it a creative force, an inspiration, motivation, energy and dynamism; no one may differ with him. His ideas are enthusiastic, profound, sanguine and stimulating. However, our grave concerns start where he represents reason (*Aql*) and knowledge (*Ilm*) not only as rivals, competitors and opponent of his favourite love rather as arch enemies. There are some very pertinent questions:
 - i. Why did he do so?
 - ii. What is the source of his information that knowledge and specially reason are tools of Satan? (See reference above from *Payam-e-Mashriq*).
 - iii. If knowledge and reason (as per Iqbal) may not prove the religious knowledge conclusively; can even more dubious methods like love do?
 - iv. Iqbal wishes to reconstruct and revive Islam; however, is his approach compatible with Islam and the spirit of Qur'an?
 - v. Is Islam an anti-reason, anti-knowledge, irrational and illogical religion whose followers should literally hate reason and knowledge and rely upon non-authentic methods to gauge reality?

Now we will start our arguments one by one in refutation of Iqbal's ideas regarding love as an opponent or foe of reason and knowledge. In one of his famous Urdu poems, *Zauq-o- shauq*, Iqbal has put forward stunning, traumatizing and shocking ideas, the translation of which is as under:

"You know everything about my previous days and nights;

I did not know that Knowledge is a tree without fruit;

The old battle revived itself in my consciousness (and it revealed that)

Love is all Mustafa, and Reason is all Bu-Lahab! (Iqbal, 1982)

Renowned Urdu poet Josh Malihabadi (1898-1982) in his autobiography has strongly protested against this verse of Iqbal. Mustafa is the beautiful name of the Prophet (*Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*) and Abu-Lahab was his staunchest enemy in whose name there is a *Sura* in the Holy Qur'an wherein he has been cursed till eternity. Josh has shown extreme resentment why the most cherished concept and word of Quran *Aql* was so severely despised by Iqbal and from where did he bring the word *Ishq* which according to Josh is "rejected" by Qur'an. (Malihabadi, 1975).

Now is there any such evidence in the Qur'an that:

- i. Knowledge is fruitless venture, something useless and futile?
- ii. Reason is as cursed and the nastiest as the worst enemy of the Prophet (*Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*)?

Before bringing counterarguments, it would be appropriate to have some other examples, since we cannot cover all, due to the shortage of space at our disposal:

"Leave the Reason behind, because this light is;

A wayside lamp but not a destination!" (Iqbal, 1982).

"Reason has no other function than criticizing

Found your actions on love" (Iqbal, 1982).

It must be noted that when Iqbal uses the word *Ilm*, he mostly refers to Natural Sciences. Iqbal's attitude towards natural sciences is quite enigmatic to understand. At times, he is so enthusiastic about the achievement of the West and especially Modern Physics that he is ready to revise and if necessary "reconstruct" the theological thought of Islam in its light (Iqbal, 2006).

However, he is not ready to accept Science *in toto*; he accepts it partially until it serves his own favorite ideas; as soon as science deviates from his cherished beliefs he does not hesitate to declare it 'vulture', the most derogatory word imaginable for any discipline (Iqbal, 2006).

On the other hand, if we move towards the Book of Allah, we find that Qur'an holds knowledge in very high esteem. When angels differed with Allah on his decision regarding creation of Adam, Allah endowed Adam with knowledge and asked angels to tell the names which were taught to Adam

Hence it is knowledge, nevertheless, which gives Allah supremacy over entire universe and Adam not only on the angels but on all other creatures.

Had knowledge been so bad and ‘Satanic’, why did Allah Himself instruct the Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to pray for increase in his knowledge:

*“Exalted is Allah, the True King! Do not rush to recite ‘a revelation of’ the Quran ‘O Prophet’ before it is ‘properly’ conveyed to you, and pray, “My Lord! Increase me in **knowledge.**” (Pickthal, 1930).*

*“And Solomon succeeded David and said: “O people, we have been **taught** the speech of birds and we have been endowed with all kinds of things. Surely this is a conspicuous favour (from Allah)” (Pickthal, 1930).*

*“Say (unto them, O Muhammad): Are those who **know** equal with those who know not? But only men of **understanding** will pay heed” (Pickthal, 1930)*

Nowhere in the Holy Qur’an any such verse is found which says O Lord increase my faith or wealth or love (in any sense) which is a sufficient reason to believe that the Holy Book is knowledge oriented on which the first revelation to the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) stands as a witness:

*“**Read** with the name of thy Lord who made you” (Pickthal, 1930).*

Hence the very first message of Allah and his earliest command was about knowledge (*Ilm*) not about any sort of *Ishq*. As far as Reason is concerned, the whole Holy Book is filled with its variant names in Arabic, and Allah has declared it as His greatest gift to those who are on the right path. The words such as *Aql*, *Fikr*, *tafakkur*, *tadabbur* and *shaoor* are the most widely used nouns and verbs in the Qur’an. Allah has again and again addressed and invited this faculty of man and laid emphasis on him/her to use it order to understand Divine purpose and the righteous way to lead life. There is some mention of love and affection in Qur’an but entirely indifferent context. The strange and favourite word of Iqbal, that is, *Ishq* has never being used in Qur’an even once. The other words used for love do not weaken our main thesis that “*Ishq*” as such, though a purely Arabic word has never appeared in the Quran at all. Let us see some verses of the Open Book which support Reason:

*“He grants **wisdom** to whoever He wills. And whoever is granted **wisdom** is certainly blessed with a great privilege. But none will be mindful ‘of this’ except people of **reason**” (Pickthal, 1930).*

*“Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth; the alternation of the day and the night; the ships that sail the sea for the benefit of humanity; the rain sent down by Allah from the skies, reviving the earth after its death; the scattering of all kinds of creatures throughout; the shifting of the winds; and the clouds drifting between the heavens and the earth—‘in all of this’ are surely signs for people of **understanding**” (Pickthal, 1930).*

*And He has subjected for your benefit the day and the night, the sun and the moon. And the stars have been subjected by His command. Surely in this are signs for those who **understand** (Pickthal, 1930).*

*And He is the One Who gives life and causes death, and to Him belongs the alternation of the day and night. Will you not then **understand**? (Pickthal, 1930).*

*People of the Book! Why do you dispute with us about Abraham even though the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after the time of Abraham? Do you not **understand**? (Pickthal, 1930).*

*O you who have believed, do not take as intimates those other than yourselves, for they will not spare you [any] ruin. They wish you would have hardship. Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is greater. We have certainly made clear to you the signs, if you will use **reason**. (Pickthal, 1930)*

*“My people! I seek no reward from you for my work. My reward lies only with Him Who created me. Do you not **understand** anything” (Pickthal, 1930).*

There are hundreds of such verses wherein, Allah has asked again and again the believers to use their reason, wisdom, intellect and understanding. Then how come Iqbal has condemned this greatest endowment of Allah and on what ground he ventured to compare it with the cursed ‘Abu-Lahab’?

Nevertheless, he caused great confusion in the Muslim readers and triggered aversion in them regarding knowledge and reason. His famous verse in which he has taken the great step of Abraham (*Peace be upon him*) to plunge into fire as an outcome of ‘love’ is also a false interpretation. The move of Abraham (*Peace be upon him*) was based solely on reason since he has conclude that hand-made life-less idols could not be the Lord with the help of highly logical and rational arguments, see the following verses:

*“And ‘remember’ when Abraham said to his father, Âzar, “Do you take idols as gods? It is clear to me that you and your people are entirely misguided. We also showed Abraham the wonders of the heavens and the earth, so he would be sure in faith. When the night grew dark upon him, he saw a star and said, “This is my Lord!” But when it set, he said, “I do not love things that set.” Then when he saw the moon rising, he said, “This one is my Lord!” But when it disappeared, he said, “If my Lord does not guide me, I will certainly be one of the misguided people.” Then when he saw the sun shining, he said, “This must be my Lord—it is the greatest!” But again when it set, he declared, “O my people! I totally reject whatever you associate ‘with Allah in worship’. I have turned my face towards the One Who has originated the heavens and the earth—being upright—and I am not one of the polytheists.” And his people argued with him. He responded, “Are you arguing with me about Allah, while He has guided me? I am not afraid of whatever ‘idols’ you associate with Him—‘none can harm me, ‘ unless my Lord so wills. My Lord encompasses everything in ‘His’ **knowledge**. Will you not be mindful? And how should I fear your associate-gods, while you have no fear in associating ‘others’ with Allah—a practice He has never authorized? Which side has more right to security? ‘Tell me’ if you really **know**!” It is ‘only’ those who are faithful and do not tarnish their faith with falsehood who are guaranteed security and are ‘rightly’ guided. This was the argument We gave Abraham against his people. We elevate in rank whoever We please. Surely your Lord is **All-Wise, All-Knowing**”. (Pickthal, 1930).*

All the readers are requested to read this highly logical and well-knit argument and judge that is it based on reason or some sort of *Ishq*? It is quite noteworthy

that Allah Almighty Himself has used for Himself the beautiful titles of ‘**All-Wise, All-Knowing**’. If knowledge and wisdom/reason are synonyms of Satan or Abu-Lahab, why the most prestigious and esteemed Prophet of Allah is using it and why the Lord Himself is declaring Himself *Hakim* (Wise) and *Khabeer* (Knowledgeable)?

Another pertinent question here is that the entire train of arguments of Abraham (*Peace be upon him*) is based solely on observation of the phenomena of nature and subsequent reasoning. Had he ever undergone some dubious and mysterious ‘Mystical Experience’ which revealed on him the reality of God?

There is a discussion of Moses (*Peace be upon him*) and his companion in the Chapter 18th (The Cave). His companion exhibited intuitive knowledge as compared to the empirical, rational or scientific knowledge of Moses (*Peace be upon him*); however, these verses may not be generalized nor may be used “against” highly appreciated reason.

Conclusion

We have already resolved above that the disdain of Iqbal against knowledge and Reason is utterly unfounded and quite contrary to the spirit of Islam and Qur’an. There is no opposition either of *Ilm* (knowledge) and *Aql* (Reason). Moreover, there is no such epistemological source in Qur’an like *Ishq* or Mystical Experience. However, there must be some research from where Iqbal has picked these ideas and presented them in the name of Islam. As has been explained above that Iqbal’s concept of God is not Semitic at all, it is through and through Aryan/Pantheistic and German in its origin. Iqbal is heavily under the spell of Ibn Arabi and his ideas of hell and heaven in the fourth lecture of *Reconstruction*, “Human Ego and His Freedom” are completely borrowed from Ibn Arabi, instead of being based on Qur’anic concepts. He has a strong bend of mind towards mysticism and romanticism; rationalism as such is not his taste. In 20th century philosophers, Henry Bergson gave him unprecedented boost.

Muhammad Khalid Masud (b.1939) in his worthy and knowledgeable book on Iqbal has written about his overall approach in connection with rationalism:

“In order to appreciate Iqbal’s attitude towards rationalism it should be remembered that, on the whole, Iqbal belonged to the romantic school of thought and hence we find in him a degree of antipathy to rationalism. Accordingly, Iqbal values passion more

than reason. He regards intuition and religious experience worthier than logic and intellect” (Masud, 1996).

Definitely the idea of love (*Ishq*) too, is such a romantic idea which has sprouted from his very fertile and rich poetic imagination. As such we have no objection on it since every thinker and philosopher has the right to interpret the universe the way he likes. Our difference starts with Iqbal when he presents his own borrowed ideas from multiple sources in the name of Islam and Qur’an and puts forward arbitrary interpretations of Qur’anic verses in support of his entirely personal views. Following passage from a contemporary researcher supports this claim:

This article explains the main concepts of philosophy: “self”, “love”, “intuition”, his philosophy of time, his concept of Islam, and his critique of the West. It then traces the influences on his thought from Islamic thinkers, from the Western philosophers Fichte, Kant, Nietzsche, and Bergson, and the Influence of the Indian society he was living in. Iqbal claimed that all his ideas derived from his thorough reading of the Quran. However, the questions that shaped his answers were very much in the form of the European philosophy of the time, and in that of the discourses of his society too. (Popp, 2019)

Renowned American Idealist philosopher W.E.Hocking has written beautifully:

“A purely psychological technique cannot explain religious urge as a type of knowledge. It is doomed to be flopped while new Psychologists will test it, as it failed in the case of Locke and Hume” (Hocking, 1963).

Former Dean of Social Sciences and Chairperson, Department of Islamic Studies, Hamdard University, New Delhi, Altaf Ahmad Azmi (1942-2023) has literally begged forgiveness for Iqbal from Allah:

“May God forgive Iqbal? These lectures contain mostly such views that may be clearly declared infidel (kufr) and idolatrous (shirk). (Azmi, 2003).

Moreover, it is quite dangerous, nevertheless, to shift religion from the domain of Metaphysics to Psychology since psychological states are far more uncertain, subjective and doubtful as compared to sense perception and intellect, which are at least common among all the sane human beings.

Thus, any feeling or cognition perceived as love through any kind of religious experience is not tenable even before Psychology; it may be anything but not an epistemology to be relied upon. It may not impart authentic knowledge; moreover, which sort of knowledge, if any, it may yield? This is a question of another paper and beyond the scope of the present discussion.

Neuropsychological studies of the brain's loving kindness processing and potential for love are still standing on fragile grounds. There are several reasons for this paucity of information. Neuroscientist and psychiatrist Thomas Insel mentions two of the main reasons which are as under:

- The relative absence of neuroscience research on love can be attributed to two fairly obvious and related limitations. One is definitional. Love, whether considered as attachment, such as pair bond, or viewed as a form of self-sacrificing altruism, is difficult to define operationally.
- The second major problem is one of measurement. Although most of us may recognize love as the most powerful psychological and biological experience of our lives, how do we quantify this experience? (Insel, 2002).

With respect to the kind of mystical love we are discussing here, we should recognize an additional challenge, the limitations of personal experience with mystical love on the part of researchers. (Insel, 2002).

Two contemporary anthropologists Charles Laughlin and Melanie Takahashi have raised a very pertinent question about the mystical love. They say: What is the relationship of love with other affective states as anger, greed and anxiety? They have explained the mechanism of this love very profoundly in these words:

“We demonstrate that ritual practices are recurrently used across cultures to incubate and evoke intense feelings of non-romantic love, empathy, and compassion. Some of these practices include ritual drivers such as ingesting psychotropic substances (entheogens and empathogens), daily activities that devalue ego centeredness and promote love, empathy and selfless service, meditation upon loving kindness, and compassion. All of these practices are preparations for entering ME, the results of which

are interpreted within people's cycle of meaning". (Laughlin, 2020).

The above discussion reveals that though the topic is still in currency among different academic circles and disciplines, yet it is enigmatic and perplexing. It can never be considered an authentic source of knowledge and the foundations of a great global religion like Islam may not be raised on its vague, unclear and nebulous structure.

Therefore, we may conclude that:

- i. Iqbal's concept of love is heavily influenced by Bergson and methodology of German Idealists;
- ii. Love is not an authentic source of knowledge; nor do we know which sort of knowledge it produces.
- iii. This concept of love (*Ishq*) is not supported by the Holy Qur'an; it is a personal idea and ideal of Iqbal;
- iv. As per Holy Qur'an itself, knowledge and Reason are gifts of Allah, not the tools of Satan at all.

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