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IQBĀL'S APPROACH TO ISLAMIC THEOLOGY OF MODERNITY

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Abstract. This essay is a study of Iqbāl's *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* as a continuation of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's quest for a framework to understand modernity from Islamic perspective. Khan's *Jadid 'ilm al-kalam* defined his approach to Islamic theology of modernity and later provided the basis for 'Islamic modernism'. The essay argues that due to diverse experiences of modernity objectifications of modernity changed from science and nature in the nineteenth century to identity and autonomy of self in the twentieth century in Iqbāl's approach to theology of modernity. The essay has three sections: the first explains the origins of the Islamic theology of modernity; the second offers an analysis of Iqbāl's reconstruction of this theology, and the third reviews recent critique of Iqbāl's approach. The essay concludes the discussion with an overview of contemporary theologies of modernity in the Muslim world.

Islamic theology of modernity, also known *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*, "new theology" and "Islamic modernism", is usually characterized as an apologetic approach to defend Islam against modern Western criticism. This is probably because modernity came to be known in the Muslim world in the wake of colonialism when Muslims found themselves on the defensive. To the Western colonial regimes, Islam was not compatible with modernity and hence it was to be reformed and modernized or else marginalized. Muslims, therefore, generally conceived

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modernity, modernism and modernization not only as Western and alien but also as hostile and threatening. Islamic theology of modernity was not, however, entirely apologetic. It was essentially an endeavor to develop an Islamic framework to understand and respond to the questions that modernity posed to Muslim cultural outlook in general and to Islamic theology in particular. In this respect it defended Islam against particular criticism but it also developed a theological framework to explain how modernity was relevant and compatible to Islam.

Muslim responses to Western modernity range from call for reform of to call for revival of Islam, and from total rejection of either tradition or modernity to a reconstruction of Islamic religious thought. Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898) was the first Muslim to realize in 1870s the need for "*jadid 'ilm al-kalam*", a new Islamic theology of modernity.[1] Khan's approach was also called "Islamic modernism".[2] This approach became immediately controversial. The Indian *Ulama* opposed it because to them it symbolized modernity and westernization. Except for Khan's close associates, very few Muslim thinkers before Allāma Muhammad Iqbāl (d. 1938) supported the Islamic theology of modernity and its need. Iqbāl's *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* that revived the movement for Islamic theology of modernity in the twentieth century. Recent studies rightly pose the question whether Iqbāl's approach to Islamic theology of modernity is a continuation of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's 'theology' or not.

This essay studies this question in three sections. The first section presents an overview of the origins of the Islamic theology of modernity in Khan's call for *jadid 'ilm al-kalam* and later development. The second offers a summary of what we may call Iqbāl's Islamic theology of modernity. The third analyzes the debate on Iqbāl's approach to this theology. The essay concludes the discussion placing Iqbāl's contribution in the broader context of the debate about the movement for *jadid 'ilm al-kalam* and suggesting that Iqbāl's approach is better understood as a quest for a theological framework to understand modernity and to interpret Islam accordingly than as a defense of Islam against modern criticism.

I. ISLAMIC THEOLOGY OF MODERNITY

Generally, Jamaluddin Afghani (d. 1897) and Mufti Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905) are claimed as the founders of Islamic modernism, but to our knowledge, Sayyid Ahmad Khan is the first Muslim thinker who stressed the need for *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*. His theology of modernity differed from that of Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905) who remained largely faithful to ancient Islamic theology. Khan's interest in modernity was not merely intellectual; he experienced the cruel and violent as well as the liberating processes of modernity. He served the British when the *Ulama* in Delhi also had close and friendly relations with them. He remained loyal to them in the 1857 Indian revolt and defended Muslims when the British generally believed that Muslims could never be loyal to them.

William Muir, a devout Christian missionary and a secretary in the Frontier province in India in the mid-nineteenth century, characterized Muslim stories about Muhammad the Prophet and his companions as legendary and 'multitudes of wild myths'. He contended that Prophet Muhammad's marriages and wars were in clear contrast to Christian moral values.[3] Khan wrote in defense of Prophet Muhammad refuting William Muir and other critics of Islam. It was during these writings that he realized that the old Muslim theology was not helpful in responding to the Western criticism of Islam.

He rebutted William Hunter's report (1871) on 1857 that claimed that the tenet of Jihad obliged Muslims to rebel against the non-Muslim rule, and to reject modern sciences and education. Khan clarified that these were bad English governance and mutual misunderstanding that caused the revolt, not the Qur'ānic teachings on Jihad.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan perceived three threats to Islam in nineteenth century India: missionaries, European prejudices against Islam, and the doubts about Islam in the Muslim mind.[4] In his address to the Anjuman-i Himayat-i Islam in Lahore in 1884, Sayyid Ahmad Khan called for *jadid 'ilm al-kalam* to respond to these threats. In this speech Khan refers to two levels of this need: one the need of a rational and critical framework to explain Islam,

and the second the need for the restatement of Islam within that framework. In order to understand the structure of his argument let us summarize the main points of this speech.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan begins his address by stating that there are two types of belief: unquestioned belief and critical belief. It is the second type of belief that demands proof for the truth of everything. During the Abbasid period when Greek sciences became popular among Muslims, critical belief found discrepancy between the tenets of philosophy, which they acknowledged as true, and the contemporary teachings of Islam about which they became doubtful. "The *Ulama* in that period established three ways of protecting Islam. The first was to prove that tenets of Greek wisdom and philosophy, which were against Islamic teachings, were wrong. The second was to formulate such objections to the propositions of [Greek] wisdom and philosophy by which these tenets would become doubtful. The third was to harmonize between the tenets of Islam and the tenets of wisdom and philosophy. By pursuing this debate a new science originated among Muslims which came to be known as *'ilm al-kalam*."[5]

The science of *kalam* became part and parcel of Islamic learning. It incorporated several tenets of Greek philosophy and natural sciences that could be harmonized with Islam. Gradually, however, these tenets came to be identified as tenets of Islam. Today, a new wisdom and philosophy has emerged. The tenets of this philosophy are entirely different from those of the Greek philosophy whose erroneousness is an established fact now. The *'ilm al-kalam* that the ancient *Ulama* developed to confront Greek philosophy had some success. But today it is "neither sufficient for the firm believer, nor does it satisfy the mind of the doubter."[6] Calling for *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*, Khan said, "Today we need, as in former days, a modern *'ilm al-kalam* by which we either render futile the tenets of modern sciences or make them doubtful, or bring them into harmony with the doctrines of Islam."[7] In the latter part of his speech, he then states how tenets of Islam, namely unity of God, prophesy, and so on can be rationally explained because human nature corresponds with nature and the teachings of Islam being words of God are not in contradiction with nature being the work of God.

Khan's call for new Islamic theology identified three alternative options for the new framework: (1) to refute the questions posed by modern science, (2) to question their accuracy, or (3) to accept them.[8] By the time he made this call, Khan had begun developing a new framework for the interpretation of the Qur'ān and a new method of reasoning in 1862. Khan wrote a commentary on the Qur'ān to resolve what he regarded as conflicts between science and the Qur'ān.

In *al-Taqrir fi usul al-tafsir* (a written statement on the principle of exegesis) published in 1892, he proposed fifteen principles for the exegesis of the Qur'ān. As these principles constitute Khan's new theology, a brief analysis of these principles is given below.

The first eight principles respectively are statements about the unity of God, the prophesy of Muhammad, revelation, the reality and true nature of the Qur'ān, and Divine attributes. The ninth principle explains the relationship between the Qur'ān as the "word of God" and nature as the "work of God". "There is no matter in the Qur'ān disagreeing with the laws of nature."[9] He clarifies that the Prophet did not claim any miracle, as evidenced in the Qur'ān (18:110). Khan argued that miracles are not in conformity with the laws of nature and concluded saying, "We declare openly that there is no proof of the occurrence of anything supernatural, which, as it is asserted, is the miracle."[10] Explaining why earlier scholars did not raise any objection to the irrationality of some of these miracle stories, he wrote, "The natural sciences had not progressed and there was nothing to draw their attention to the law of nature and to make them aware of their mistakes."[11]

The principles from tenth to thirteenth respectively state Khan's position on the compilation and collection of the Qur'ān. He rejects the traditional theory that some verses in the Qur'ān were abrogated and no longer applicable. The Qur'ān does speak about abrogation (*naskh*), but the meaning of the term has been continuously debated. The doctrine of abrogation was used in old theology to explain apparently contradictory statements in the Qur'ān. The idea of abrogation also gained significance to justify the claim that the revealed laws in the Qur'ān cancelled the

validity of earlier revelations. Some scholars like Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d. 1388) explained that abrogation in effect means clarification, not cancellation of a verse. Shah Waliullah (d. 1762) questioned the exaggerated number of abrogated verses claimed by earlier generation of Muslim scholars.

Khan also rejected the idea of contradiction in the Qur'ān and instead argued that these verses in fact mutually explained each other. For him the Qur'ān is the most essential source that overrides the sayings (*hadith*) and practice (*Sunna*) of the Prophet and the jurist doctrines (*fiqh*), which were the decisive sources for the orthodoxy. He also rejected the old Muslim theologians' claim that according to the Qur'ān, the Bible and other revealed books were corrupted and therefore abrogated. He explained that Qur'ān spoke about the corruption of understanding the text, not the corruption of the text itself.

The fourteenth and fifteenth principles elaborate the close relationship between the Qur'ān and the created world (natural phenomena) as the work of God and concluding that the work overrides the word of God.[12] The fifteenth principle develops the hermeneutics dealing with the miracle stories in the Qur'ān. He lays down seven criteria for interpreting the miracle verses. For example, he says, "If there is any rational contradiction between the dictionary [*i.e.*, literal] meanings and the [metaphorical] meanings determined in the light of reason, then the dictionary meanings are not correct."[13] If a verse refers to an event or thing, which is contrary to the laws of nature, we must regard the statement a metaphor. For instance even ancient theologians did not take statements about God sitting on the throne or about God's hand in their literal meaning.

Khan relied mostly on earlier Islamic sources in his commentary. His biographer Altaf Husain Hali counts 52 points where Khan differs with his contemporary *Ulama* in his commentary, out of which in 41 cases he cited the traditional sources to support his views. Only on 11 points he offered new interpretations.[14] It is significant to note that later *Ulama* like Rashid Rida in Egypt and Muhammad Ali Lahori, Abu Said Abd

al-Rahman Farid Koti and many others in India interpreted these verses similar to Khan.[15]

Khan also criticized Muslim beliefs and practices such as slavery, polygamy, and wrote on other such controversial subjects as relations with non-Muslims, especially consuming food prepared by them. Out of the conventional four Sunni sources (*i.e.* the Qur'ān, *hadith*, analogical reasoning, and consensus) he questioned the authenticity of *hadith* and the authority of the consensus. Khan rejected adherence (*taqlid*) to specific schools of Islamic law in favor of *Ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning). His views on abolition of slavery, rejection of polygamy, aggressive jihad, and triple divorce became staple doctrines of Islamic modernism.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan's new theology generated a wide range of debates. Mawlana Qasim Nanawtawi (d. 1879) of the School of Deoband was probably the first among the traditional scholars who developed a detailed argument against this new theology.[16] Shibli Nu'mani (d. 1914), a close associate of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and several traditional *Ulama* rejected even the need for a new theology because for them the ancient theology was scientific enough to dispel doubts created by the modern science. Perhaps 'rational' and 'scientific' meant 'logical' in accordance with the Greek logic and metaphysics. The bitterest opposition to Khan and his theology came from the reformist Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (d. 1943) who himself supported female education and reform of superstitious practices. He issued in 1886 a long fatwa in which he pointed out fifty heretic statements in the various writings by Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his associates.[17] He called them "heretic naturist sect" (*firqa muhditha nechariyya*). He claimed that this sect was guilty of finding fault with the *Ulama*. It corrupted the laws of *Shari'a*, ripped up its roots, destroyed its branches, criticized the experts of *Hadith* and accused the commentators of the Qur'ān for wrong interpretations. He found Sayyid Ahmad Khan's views close to infidelity, but he cautiously declared him a heretic (*mubtadi'*).[18]

Jamaluddin Afghani was in India during 1879 to 1883, when the Indian *Ulama* condemned Khan's theology as naturism.

Afghani believed that materialism had caused more damage to humanity than anything else. According to him Darwin's theory of evolution deprived humans from dignity and sense of civility that religion bestows on them. He wrote a strong refutation of Khan's theology, which was originally published in Persian in 1878 and was translated and published in Urdu in Calcutta in 1883. This refutation is more widely known outside India, than Khan's own writings.

Afghani called Khan's theology *nishariya* (*nechariya* or naturism), because it regarded nature as the measure of truth. Naming them *nechariya* implied in common parlance also that they worshipped nature. He ignored Khan's explanation that to him nature was God's creation and not the Creator. Afghani's disciple Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905) published an Arabic translation of the above treatise in 1885 and developed Afghani's ideas further in his treatises *Risala al-Tawhid*,[19] and *Risala Nasraniyya*, both written in the classical tradition of theology. Unlike Khan, who often opted for the rational arguments provided by the Mu'tazila, Muhammad 'Abduh stays largely close to the Salaf and Ash'aris. The two treatises became very popular in Egypt.

Like 'Abduh, Shaykh Husayn al-Jisr's (d. 1909) treatise *al-Risala al-Hamidiyya*"[20] also gained popularity in the Arab world.[21] It was translated into Urdu in 1897; the Urdu translation had the title 'Science and Islam' with a sub-title: "*jadid 'ilm al-kalam*".[22] The *Ulama* in India and elsewhere welcomed and recommended its use as a textbook.[23] Jisr was a Lebanese scholar who had studied in al-Azhar and was familiar with modern Western sciences through the writings of Reverend Isaac Taylor,[24] an English missionary whom he met in Lebanon in 1867.

Jisr explains miracles as natural phenomena and provides justifications of miracles in modern scientific language. For instance, he explains Prophet Muhammad's miracle of splitting moon (*inshiqaq al-qamar*) as an admissible physical phenomenon according to modern physicists.[25] According to him, modern science does not refute the Islamic tradition; rather it upholds it.

Similarly, he rationalizes in modern terms the Muslim practices of veiling (*hijab*), polygamy and slavery.[26]

Jisr refers frequently to natural phenomena, but he does not propose nature and natural laws as standards and norms to define the universality of Islamic beliefs and practices. He defined nature as matter and naturism as materialist and atheistic belief that posed nature as co-existent with God. He does not mention Sayyid Ahmad Khan, but his refutation of *Dahriyyun* (the naturists), as 'those who regard matter eternal and uncreated and who do not believe in God or Prophet' may be read as repudiation of Khan's new theology.[27]

The *Ulama* in India opposed Sayyid Ahmad Khan's modernism, including his Aligarh movement for modern education. In fact this whole period between Khan and Muhammad Iqbāl is called by one historian as 'a period of reaction to Aligarh'.[28] We have mentioned above that in India, Shibli Nu'mani (1857-1914), a close associate of Sayyid Ahmad Khan was disillusioned with him and refuted his theology. He found the new generation at Aligarh completely westernized with only emotional attachment to religion. This ambivalence to Islam was probably due to the fact that Khan did not introduce his theology into Aligarh syllabus and let the Deobandi *Ulama* teach religion. It alienated the young generation from a rational approach to Islam. It must also be noted that while Aligarh approached the problem of Muslim decadence by encouraging Muslims to pursue modern education and to cooperate with the British, Deoband decided to preserve Islamic tradition by isolating Muslims from the British and modern institutions. The *Ulama* of Deoband termed Aligarh approach materialistic and theirs as religious.

Shibli wrote a two part volume on *'ilm al-Kalam* arguing that ancient Kalam was sufficient to encounter modernity; the theological doctrines which were unable to defend Islamic beliefs had been obsolete for a long time. Instead of new theology, he called for a critical study of Islamic history to correct Western misconceptions and distortions of Islam. According to him, the modernists, *i.e.* those who graduated from Western institutions were easily misled by the Western criticism of Islam because they

lacked knowledge of the Islamic history and old theology. Nu'mani wrote a detailed history of Muslim theology, providing a summary of the major doctrines. He illustrated how most of the issues raised in modern times were not new to Islamic theology.

Akbar Allahabadi (d. 1921), Suleiman Nadwi (d. 1953) and Abul Kalam Azad (1958) played a significant role in opposition to the movement for *jadid ilm al-kalam*. Akbar Allahabadi's poetry damaged Aligarh cause more than anything. He ridiculed and mocked modernity and modern education and criticized Aligarh for betrayal of Islamic tradition. Akbar's critique of Western education is quite pointedly reflected in Iqbāl's poetry.

Iqbāl respected both Akbar Allahabadi and Suleiman Nadwi. Suleiman Nadwi opposed the Aligarh movement meticulously, including the trend introduced by Khan and Hali of using plain Urdu language. Nadwi was essentially conservative and under his editorship, Nadwa's periodical *Ma'arif*, a very popular scholarly periodical, became the loudest spokesman of Muslim conservatism.[29]

According to Sheikh Ikram, in addition to some historical events within and outside India, it is Abul Kalam Azad who destroyed Khan and his movement successfully.[30] First, he revived the passion for a flowery Urdu overtly decorated with Arabic words and phrases. This style ended the trend of using language as a means of communication and instead revitalized the trend of enjoying language for its own sake. Second, Azad introduced a type of ambivalence to modernity. He appreciated intellectual activities in Europe but socially he remained opposed to it. In order to refute Qasim Amin's influential book on the freedom of women, he translated into Urdu and published Farid Wajdi's book. Third, he eulogized Jamal al-Din Afghani, who was committed to opposing the British, refuted vehemently Khan's *jadid 'ilm al-kalam* and stood for freedom and nationalism.

Azad was strongly opposed to Sayyid Ahmad Khan's new theology. Refuting the need for a new theology, he observed, "We must remember that the all groups of theologians failed against ancient philosophy. They will also fail similarly against the so-called new philosophy. At that time these were the people

of *Hadith* and those who followed the path of Salaf who were successful. Today again only they are successful. None among the jurists and the theologians ever won the day."[31] Azad's opposition to *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*, Aligarh and the Western thought was so impactful that even Iqbāl had to rely on the style and diction introduced by Azad.

II. IQBĀL'S THEOLOGY OF MODERNITY

Allāma Muhammad Iqbāl (1877-1938) delivered several public lectures in 1920s on the issues posed by modernity. They were later published in 1934 under the title *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. In our view, the *Reconstruction* offers a new Islamic theology of modernity in continuation to Sayyid Ahmad Khan's call for *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*. As evident from the publications still appearing in south Asia with the title *jadid ilm al-kalam,* debate on the need for a new Islamic theology continues, although the objectifications of modernity keep changing in the formulation of these new theologies.[32]

Several scholars have critiqued Iqbāl's reconstruction of religious thought and his interpretation of Islam. The purpose of this essay is not to defend Iqbāl or to judge whose interpretation is 'authentic'; this essay limits itself to explore how this critique defines the need for new theology and how far it agrees with Iqbāl's definition and methodology.

Muhammad Iqbāl's *Reconstruction* follows the path of Islamic theology of modernity initiated by Sayyid Ahmad Khan. But it is significant to note that at the same time it marks a major turning point in the growth of this theology. The *Reconstruction* consists of a series of lectures that he wrote and delivered in Lahore, Madras, Hyderabad and Aligarh between 1924 and 1930. Iqbāl observed that the "concepts of theological systems, draped in the terminology of a practically dead metaphysics" couldn't help the reconstruction of religious thought. "The only course open to us is to approach modern knowledge with a respectful but independent attitude and to appreciate the teachings of Islam in the light of that knowledge, even though we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us."[33] Iqbāl thus endorsed

Sayyid Ahmad Khan's call for a new theology by clearly rejecting ancient metaphysics as a dead science.

Iqbāl sees the problem of religion and modernity as a problem of impossibility of re-living the special type of inner experience on which religious faith rests, which is vital to assimilate the alien universe. It has become further complicated for the modern man who has developed habits of concrete thought and suspects that inner experience is liable to illusion. Modern concrete mind, therefore, demands for a scientific form of knowledge. The *Reconstruction* is an attempt to meet that demand which takes due regard to Islamic philosophical tradition and recent developments of human knowledge. He is encouraged in this endeavor by the self-critical approach in the modern sciences, especially in physics.

The seven chapters in Iqbāl's book are organized systematically to analyze and make religious experience understandable to the modern man. The first chapter offers an analysis of the religious experience as a source of knowledge. The second chapter examines this experience philosophically, and third puts the religious experience of prayer to pragmatic test. The fourth chapter relates religious experience with modern and Islamic theories of self and its freedom from the perspectives of religion and philosophy. The fifth chapter explores prophesy as a fundamental of Islamic culture that demonstrates how religious experience transforms itself into a living world force. This particular perspective is possible only by disregarding the Greek classical metaphysical view of reason, matter and movement and by adopting the Qur'ānic anti-classical approach to the universe. The sixth lecture on *Ijtihad* illustrates how the dynamism within the structure of Islamic thought was lost by the adoption of classical methods of reasoning that led to *taqlid* and stagnation. The concluding chapter comes back to the question "Is religion possible?" to sum up the discussion in the book and to argue that the religious and scientific processes involve different methods but they are in a sense parallel to each other. In the scientific process self stands outside and in the religious experience the self develops an inclusive attitude. Both are descriptions of the same world but from different stand points.

(1) *Knowledge and Religious Experience*

Iqbāl remarks that poetry, philosophy, and religion all three are engaged with the questions about universe and man's place in it. The knowledge of reality that results from poetry is individual and figurative. Philosophy is purely rational, free and critical. It questions assumptions, which are uncritically accepted in religion, and it may also deny the Ultimate Reality or the capacity of pure reason to reach it. Science may ignore rational metaphysics. The religious quest for knowledge is social and intuitive as it aims at the transformation of man's inner and outer life. It stands, therefore, more in need of rational foundations of its principles than science. Religion is not the product of pure rational argument; philosophy must acknowledge the centrality of religion in examining religious experience. However, intellectual thought and religious experience are not opposed to each other; they have common source and are, therefore, complementary to each other.

Islamic theology sought rational foundations but unfortunately, it soon came to rely on Greek philosophy, logic as well as metaphysics, which did not suit the message of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān is anti-classical as it stresses change; it does not distinguish between material and spiritual, as its attitude is empirical. Modern development in philosophical thought and method has further exposed the limits of the ancient philosophy in understanding universe and man. Modern scientific developments have impacted human thought and therefore call for a restatement of their worldviews.

Islam encourages critical examination of religious experience because contrary to general assumption, ideal and real are not the opposing forces that cannot be reconciled. Iqbāl observes that mystic experience is as real as any other experience; it cannot be rejected merely because it is not traceable to sense perception. He finds this type of religious experience immediate, wholesome, intimate, direct and timeless. Religious experience is essentially a state of feeling with a cognitive aspect. It is, however, not merely personal; it can be subjected to intellectual and pragmatic tests, which respectively mean critical interpretation and judging by its fruit.

(2) ***The Intellectual View of the Religious Experience***

In order to test religious experience intellectually, Iqbāl examines the various theological and philosophical approaches and scientific theories of the universe and religious experience. First he analyzes the three types of arguments that theology presents for the existence of God: cosmological, teleological and ontological. He finds them as rational foundations of theology open to serious criticism because they take a limited and mechanistic view of things. Reviewing philosophical and scientific methods of analysis, Iqbāl finds that there are three levels of human experience: matter, life and consciousness, which are subject matter of physics, biology and psychology respectively. He explains how the classical frameworks of these sciences failed to conceive reality due to their static and sectional view of the universe. He particularity finds that theories of materiality were either mere illusions or interpretations of the evidence that observer receives. Modern science rejects the old concept of matter and defines it in terms of relationship between changing space and time. Further, objectivity of the observer is also questionable because he is also part of that experience. Life, on the other hand, is wholesome and in constant mobility, which suggests existence in time. Iqbāl then examines modern philosophical and scientific theories of space and time. He finds that philosophical theories in fact come to agree with the religious experience of the reality; both affirm that ultimate reality is a rationally directed creative life. To Iqbāl, the reality is spiritual, conceived as an ego and intellectually viewed as pantheistic. Iqbāl, therefore, concludes that judgment based on religious experience fully satisfies the intellectual test.

(3) ***Pragmatic View***

For the pragmatic test, Iqbāl offers two sets of argument. First, that even though rational augments are possible and acceptable, they are not sufficient to appreciate religious experience. He goes into a detailed analysis of the philosophical and theological theories and explains that instead contemplation of His attributes provides certitude. Divine perfection lies in His creativity. Creation of man demonstrates the fact that Divine

creativity has a purpose. Human ego is by instinct exploring, doubting and creating, which explain that that the essence of existence contains a creative will, which may be described as ego. The basic difficulty in discussions about Divine Creation lies in treating the infinite creativity in terms of finite space and time. God is absolute and living and being perfect, He is beyond the limits of space and time. After an analysis of different perceptions of time and time related concepts of creation and movement, Iqbāl elaborates that by its nature Divine knowledge cannot be separated from creativity. Man as a finite ego is bound by the distinction between the subject and object of knowledge; this distinction does not exist for God.

The second set of arguments makes the point that criterion of reality is the consciousness of the self or ego. Man is a finite individual ego that longs to relate to the Absolute ego but this relationship is not possible through reason. It is possible through prayer. Prayer is not difficult to understand. It is inductively known on the basis of the daily experience of a large number of humans. The Sufis have told us about their experiences of discovering special effects of prayer and priceless discoveries about themselves. Prayer takes diverse forms in various religious communities. The Quran mentions this diversity but stresses on the spirit of the prayer, which is purification of self, sincerity, justice and mercy. Search for knowledge and study of nature are also forms of prayer, because they express longing for Reality. Prayer is a way for the searching ego to discover its own worth as a dynamic factor in this universe. Prayer is an admission of humility but it is also a source of strength.

(4) ***Human Ego***

The Qur'ān underscores three objectives of the creation of man: closeness to God, his position as His deputy on the earth, and autonomy of the human self so that he can carry out his duties and be accountable for his deeds. It has been very difficult for Muslim theologians to define human self; they describe it as a lighter form of matter or accident, which dies with body and will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment. Apparently, this idea is originally Zoroastrian. The Qur'ān mentions self as a source of

knowledge besides history and nature. The Sufis, not the theologians have pursued this source. Now modern psychology is trying to explore this source.

In fact self is the centre of perception and its reality is too deep for the intellect to appreciate. It is a unity different from that of material things; its unity is neither structural nor time related. It is not mechanical. Past, present and future exist together in self in an indivisible manner of consciousness. Self is entirely private and unique; it remains separate from other selves despite relations with them.

The Qur'ān makes a distinction between creation and direction; the self belongs to the realm of direction. It cannot be explained by the duality between body and soul. It is difficult for a natural scientist and a theologian to understand the autonomy of the self; they either describe it in mechanistic terms or as a simple illusion. In Islam, belief is not simply a function of tongue and intellect, it is the name of that certitude which comes from religious experience and influences the shaping of deeds.

Iqbāl analyzes two problems related to the autonomy of the self: destiny and immortality. He alludes to certain historical causes and to the wrong interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses that complicated these issues. The Qur'ān speaks about the resurrection of all beings after their death, and that self is finite. Pantheistic Sufism is unable to explain the existence of finite in the presence of infinite. In fact, resurrection is not an external event; it is one of the destinations of self in its journey of evolution.

(5) *The Spirit of Muslim Culture*

Prophecy is fundamental to the spirit of Muslim culture. Iqbāl begins his discussion of the subject by explaining the difference between the prophetic and mystic types of consciousness. He explores the concepts of revelation and the end of prophecy in Islam and argues that the latter is the core concept of Islamic culture as it affirms the appearance of inductive reason to guide humans to knowledge. It is complementary and not contradictory to revelation. The Qur'ān stresses upon the study of

history and natural phenomena and therefore urges to note change and diversity in the universe. The ancient theology, based on Greek logic and philosophy, preferred fixed, mechanistic and immutable ideas of universe. The progress that modern science is making has been possible only after abandoning this mechanistic view of nature. Muslim culture had recognised the principles of movement and evolution and paved the way for Western philosophy in this direction but the Zoroastrian ideas of duality of good and evil and fatalism that permeated in it made the Islamic culture stagnant.

(6) *Ijtihad, the Principle of Movement*

The principle of movement in the structure of Islam according to Iqbāl is *ijtihad*, which means to form an individual independent judgment on a legal question. The set of legal principles received from the Qur'ān has great capacity of expansion and development. Ever since the establishment of schools, the law of Islam was "reduced to a state of immobility" by the rejection of *ijtihad* which had a number of reasons. Firstly there was fear that rationalism would destroy the foundation of Muslim society. Secondly the need of organization felt by the early scholars led to the exclusions of innovation in the *Shari'ah* and took away the power of the individual. He argues that the Qur'ān is not a legal code; its purpose is to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his relation with God and his creations. Similarly, the Sunna was meant for the people at that time and place, and therefore, according to the author, is specific to that people. The world of Islam according to Iqbāl should proceed to the work of reconstruction before them.

(7) *Is Religion Possible?*

Iqbāl has categorized religious life into three stages, namely faith, thought and discovery. The first stage involves acceptance without reasoning. In the second stage reasoning follows acceptance. In the third stage, religious life searches for a logical view of the world with God as a part of that view. Iqbāl explains that religion and science employ different methods to reach the ultimate reality. The method of dealing with reality by means of

concepts, he says, is not a serious way to deal with it. Religion is the only way to deal with reality since religion is more anxious to reach its final aim.

III. IQBĀL'S APPROACH TO THEOLOGY OF MODERNITY

The critique of Iqbāl's approach to the theology of modernity in recent studies deals with the following themes: Iqbāl's interpretation of Islamic tradition and its sources, his objectification of modernity, and the search for the framework of this theology. Studies of Iqbāl's theology of modernity have mostly focused on the question of the authenticity of its contents. That is why these studies restrict themselves mainly to exploring whether Iqbāl's particular interpretation of a Qur'ānic verse is correct and acceptable or whether his notion of human ego is pantheistic. Very few of them ask the question if there is a pressing need for a reinterpretation of a verse or of the notion of freedom and destiny. If there is a need then what should be the possible framework for this reconstruction. The question whether this framework is philosophical or theological is a question of methodology, not of the objectives. The following is a brief analysis of these recent studies.

Iqbāl's Interpretation of Islamic Tradition

Iqbāl consulted his contemporary *Ulama* regularly when he was working on the *Reconstruction*. Among them Mawlana Suleiman Nadwi (d. 1953) is particularly notable because Iqbāl corresponded with him frequently. Iqbāl relied generally on what Nadwi wrote in answer to his questions, but sometimes he was not satisfied and asked further questions. Nadwi mostly gave very short but firm answers. As claimed by some close associates of Mawlana Nadwi, he was the first critic of Iqbāl's theology and wished that the *Reconstruction* were not published.[34] Apparently, Nadwi had some reservations about Iqbāl's interpretation of Islamic tradition, but since we do not know exactly whether he actually disapproved of the book and on what grounds, we cannot go into details.

In 1971, Ali Abbas Jalalpuri wrote a very comprehensive critique of Iqbāl's theology of modernity. He faults Iqbāl for selective and arbitrary interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses. To him, ambivalence towards pantheism and Ibn Arabi (d. 1240) at some places, his devotion to the pantheist Rumi, and his idea of Absolute Ego make it clear that Iqbāl's theology has deep roots in pantheism.[35]

Altaf Ahmad Azami, presently Dean of the faculty of Islamic and Social Studies in Jami'ah Hamdard, Delhi, published his study of the *Reconstruction* in 1977.[36] It is a detailed analytical study of all the seven chapters. According to Azami, Iqbāl's theology is founded on pantheism, and there is no difference in this theology between God and man. Citing Iqbāl's poetry and Ibn Arabi's comments on the Qur'ān about man and God and the state of certitude, he observes, "Iqbāl and Shaykh Muhy al-Din Ibn Arabi totally agree with each other in the above views, which are both contaminated by the filth of infidelity and idolatry. May God forgive Iqbāl. These lectures contain mostly such views that may be clearly declared infidel (*kufr*) and idolatrous (*shirk*)."[37]

Azami finds most of the discussions in the book unclear and confused. He faults Iqbāl's theology on three points. First, Iqbāl studied Islamic theology in the light of Western thought. He forgot that they couldn't be changed because the source of Islamic teachings is God. Scientific discoveries may be used to support Islamic beliefs; they do not provide light to reconstruct Islamic beliefs as Iqbāl claimed. Second, Iqbāl claims that religious experience is a reliable means to perceive God. Azami doubts the authenticity of religious experience without the guidance of clear revealed text. Third, Iqbāl has interpreted the Qur'ānic verses out of their context.[38]

While the above two studies note and refute Iqbāl's pantheistic framework of theology, others describe his approach to Sufism positively modern. Katherine Ewing, an anthropologist who studies Sufi practices notes that Iqbāl reinterpreted Sufism to relate it to modern concerns of Islamic society. To her, Iqbāl deals with the problem of Sufism from a positive and modern point of view; he is critical of the spiritual role of the Sufis and of

the institution of *piri-muridi*, for which he terms "Persian mysticism". Iqbāl distinguishes between the esoteric and exoteric knowledge. Iqbāl's *Asrar Khudi* connected his interpretation of Sufism with the political action, necessary to create a new Muslim community. Iqbāl opened new relationship between Sufism and modernity.[39]

Suha Taji Farouki assesses Iqbāl's treatment of Sufism on similar grounds. Iqbāl combined philosophical Sufism and modern European philosophy to address the problems of Muslim adjustments to modernity. However, she finds that Iqbāl was ambivalent in his attitude to Sufism as he was ambivalent in modern thought.[40]

This last line of criticism about ambivalence is quite common. In fact, it informed by a view of modernity that regards Western modernity to be universal and ignores its other objectifications.

Iqbāl's Objectification of Modernity

Some recent studies criticize Sayyid Ahmad Khan that he was entirely under the influence of nineteenth century British writers and objectified their theories of nature as the true modernity.[41] Modernity is hard to define because its perceptions have been changing with time. There were several reasons for it. One main reason was continuing quest for one universally accepted assumption or agreed norm in the definition of modernity on the basis of which Islam could be defended as modern. Objectifications of modernity, therefore, changed from science to reason in the nineteenth century, and from development to economic and social justice in the twentieth century. The other reason was the search for an agreed idea or institution in the Islamic tradition on which a modern Muslim community could be founded. Objectification of modernity from this perspective varied between those who wanted to root modernity in Islamic tradition and who did not. Iqbāl turned to Sufism and his philosophical analysis of religious and Sufi experience reflected the first approach. Critics, as we have seen above, differ in their appreciation of this approach.

J. R. Smart observes that Iqbāl refused the Sufi concept of the annihilation of ego and propagated the development of Muslim self, powerful and active through submission to the will of God.[42]

Azzam Tamimi and John Esposito discuss Iqbāl's theology with reference to his analysis of the concept of time in Muslim theology, Sufism and modern philosophy. They observe that one of the problems of modernity/secularism is time-consciousness. Secular philosophers define time to be moving only in one direction and, therefore, perceive progress also to be unidirectional. Time is, thus, conceived to be static and absolute, which functions according to its own mechanistic rules. The time-consciousness of modernity has created a dilemma in the Muslim mind because to a Muslim time is a meaningful and dynamic dimension of relation between God, the Ultimate reality and man's ontological existence. Historical flow in this sense is not static, mechanistic and unconscious unidirectionality; rather it is a reflection of man's perception of ultimate Reality in the direction of time-consciousness. According to these authors, Iqbāl solved this problem by differentiating between different experiences of time, to which he was led by his understanding of a verse of the Qur'ān.[43] Iqbāl tried to restructure Muslim mind against the challenges of Western civilization, resolved this dilemma of time consciousness and ontological existence as follows. He said,

> Personally, I am inclined to think that time is an essential element in Reality. But real time is not serial time to which the distinction of past, present, and future is essential; it is pure duration, *i.e.* change without succession, which McTaggart's argument does not touch. Serial time is pure duration pulverized by thought — a kind of device by which reality exposes its ceaseless creative activity to quantitative measurement. It is in this sense that the Qur'ān says: "And of Him is the change of the night and of the day."[44]

Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal look at Iqbāl's theology from the perspective of religious identity, which found faith as a source of individual autonomy. Colonial modernity had redefined

Muslim identity in terms of traditional social affiliations and other particularistic elements. According to Iqbāl, Muslims were required to be accommodated within an enlightened view of anti-colonial nationalism. He spoke about a distinctive identity, which couched his anti-colonialism in autonomy that derived itself from "adherence to faith".[45]

Terence Ball stresses the fact that Iqbāl analyzed the concept of identity in nineteenth century much earlier than others and defined it in terms of self-knowledge. He engaged himself with the Western project of modernity and with the decadence of the East. He was critical of both East and West. Iqbāl faulted west for rejection of religion and for dehumanizing materialism. He criticized east for abandoning inductive reason and privileging religion. Iqbāl's vision of the self is motivated by a quest for self-knowledge that is achieved in communion with the Divine. True self is achieved in Tawhid. Iqbāl's idea of politics of authenticity is still relevant for defining identity in the time of globalism. Return to self is necessary for authentic identity against the West. Ball concludes that Iqbāl finds an answer to the present tensions about identity essentially as modes of being "in a concept of the self as the essence of being".[46]

The question of Muslim identity arose more critically than before in the wake of industrial and capitalist modes of modernity. According to Natini Nataranjan,[47] Iqbāl is critical of colonial and capitalist modernity. He turned to Islamic tradition for the critique of colonial modernity and in search for alternative modernity. Like Hali and Shibli, Iqbāl found textual legacy in Islamic tradition responsible for decline. But he also discovered dynamism in this tradition. Iqbāl questioned definition of Muslims as a nation or community in the ordinary sense of nationalism. He developed the idea of dynamic selfhood; *khudi* that resisted as well as reformed the totalizing views of modernity of the fatalistic decadent tradition. He called for will-rooted ethical community. Iqbāl combined disparate elements in an organized manner.

Iqbāl showed his independence by censuring the West and the European thinkers. He rediscovered Indo-Islamic spiritual

tradition and gave it a new interpretation. He could admire both Nietzsche and Rumi not because they belonged to the West or East but because they were helpful in his quest for alternative modernity.

Iqbāl used traditional ideas and forms to introduce new ideas. First, he took the traditional form of poetry, which was a familiar and popular form. Second, use of poetry for pedagogical reasons was within the tradition. Third, he made Indo-Islamic poetic tradition relevant to modern issues by enhancing its aesthetic character. Iqbāl was innovative and pragmatic.[48]

Search for a Framework for an Islamic Theology of Modernity

One of the questions with which a number of studies of Iqbāl's theology of modernity remain concerned is whether it is a continuation of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*. Mustansir Mir does not consider Iqbāl a continuator of Khan. According to him, Iqbāl's view that a scientific mind can relive religious experience, disagrees with Khan.[49] Bruce Lawrence, on the other hand, believes that Sayyid Ahmad Khan was precursor to Iqbāl. He explains that Khan welcomed the pragmatic values of the British especially in governance and education to the extant that modern science embodied the metaphysical values of medieval Europe. However, he challenged its superiority and countered with an alternative modernity based on the rigorous retrieval of Qur'ānic values.[50]

Aziz Ahmad (d. 1978)[51] and Fazlur Rahman (d. 1988)[52] distinguish Khan's theology from Iqbāl's, characterizing the former as intellectual and cultural and the latter as essentially political. Rahman who wrote extensively on Islam and modernity, and is regarded as one of the foremost Islamic modernists in the twentieth century, describes these theologies as two phases of Islamic modernism. He calls the latter 'Iqbālian phase' in which paradox of Islamic modernism became clear when it rejected the idea of allegiance to the West but continued admiring its scientific achievements. According to Rahman this ambivalence toward West hindered the progress of Islamic modernism, because opposition and admiration do not go well together. The

literature that romanticized Muslim contribution to science remained apologetic because it did not critically study the history of science and religion in Islam. It did not speak about the continuous religious resistance to rational sciences. It also led to overlook the defined boundaries between science and religion in the West.[53] Like Rahman, Charles Kurzman also finds ambivalence in Iqbāl's theology about West and its colonial civilizing mission; he praised Turkey and castigated it for Westernization.[54]

Sheikh Muhammad Ikram regards Iqbāl's theology as a continuation of Khan's *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*. However, he finds that Iqbāl was largely influenced by what he terms as "reaction to Aligarh".[55]

Ali Abbas Jalalpuri also compares Iqbāl with Sayyid Ahmad Khan but finds the former better versed in modern philosophy. Iqbāl's approach to life was philosophical in his early poetry and during the writing of his doctoral dissertation, but in his later life he adopted a revivalist approach to problems.[56] Jalalpuri's main argument in his study, *Iqbāl ka 'Ilm al-Kalam* (1971) is that Iqbāl is a great poet but not a philosopher; he is a theologian because his main objective was to defend religion. Modern philosophy, according to him, recognizes three aspects of thought: Metaphysics, critical or analytical philosophy and practical or dialectical philosophy. Modern philosophy does not value metaphysics; philosophy is a perennial, continuous and free intellectual effort, which cannot be subjected to a creed or faith. Dialectical philosophy too aims at a revolution in human societies. If rational arguments are directed to support and verify a certain religious belief it is called theology. Like Ghazali and Razi, Iqbāl is a theologian who is reconstructing religious thought in the light of modern intellectual thought and scientific discoveries.

Jalalpuri faults Iqbāl's theology for the following elements: Arian immanentist rather than Semitic transcendentalist concept of God that led him to pantheism, his eclectic adaptation of modern philosophical theories of Fichte's (d. 1814) ego and Bergson's (d. 1941) theory of time, and selective and arbitrary interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses.

Jalalpuri concludes his criticism of Iqbāl's theology saying that theology keeps Muslims attached and chained to their past. It blunts their critical faculties and creativity, encourages misplaced pride and romanticism, and more significantly it nurtures enmity to reason. "Our theologians are fearful of philosophy and science and believe that teaching these sciences is harmful. Largely, Iqbāl is responsible for this trend."[57] He was by nature a poet, and when he tried to construct philosophy on the basis of poetry, he let subjectivity overcome objectivity.

Jalalpuri is right in describing Iqbāl's work as theology, not philosophy. It is, however, stating the obvious. No doubt it is a theology of modernity in which Iqbāl argues that religious experience is subjective but it is real; it can be intellectually tested but the regular rational methods of objective investigation are not sufficient to examine it. Iqbāl's plea was to study self and its autonomy and include religious experience as a source of self. Jalalpuri explains Iqbāl's theology from a very limited perspective that he himself defined. He becomes very superficial in his analysis of Iqbāl when he argues that Iqbāl was inimical or dismissive of philosophy.[58] Iqbāl's theology of modernity was in essence a plea for critical approach to the Western thought and Islamic tradition.

Contrary to Jalalpuri, Azami does not find in Iqbāl a true theologian. He defines the objective of *'ilm al-kalam* to affirm Islamic beliefs and to remove the objections raised and the doubts created by the opponents of Islam in a rational manner. This science deals with the following subjects: God and His Attributes, life and universe, human self, revelation, prophesy, resurrection, free will and determinism, paradise and hell etc. Iqbāl's book may be counted as a book of theology because his lectures deal with the traditional subjects of Kalam. However, he disagrees with Iqbāl's approach and, therefore, counts it among the books on *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*.[59]

Modern man is focused on concrete things, while the ancients were interested in abstract thought. Religious beliefs cannot be proven by the modern methods of observation and experimentation. Iqbāl proposed mystic religious experience as a

basis for scientific experiment; this experience offers common ground for the science and religion. Iqbāl wrote these lectures to make Islamic thought acceptable to modern Muslim mind, but, according to Azami, it failed because his discussion of these ideas is too complex and difficult to be understood even by experts in the field, not to speak of the youth.

Azami's critique is summed up in his following comments: "In the writer's view, the religion whose possibility Iqbāl discusses is a philosophical interpretation of the nature of self; it is not a real religion that man needs. Iqbāl's argument of compatibility between science and religion (higher mysticism) is fallacious."[60] In Azami's view scientific and religious experiences have nothing in common. Further, scientific experiment is not limited to a few persons as it is the case of religious experience. Iqbāl was misled by his belief that Ultimate Reality exists in the material world. The Qur'ānic view of the universe and nature does not agree with that of higher mysticism. Contemplation of natural phenomena, according to the Qur'ān, is only a first step to discover truth; it cannot yield divine knowledge.

Whether in Sufism or philosophy, Iqbāl was searching for a framework for the theology of modernity. It was a quest for understanding modernity and its issues for Muslim society. Clinton Bennet describes Iqbāl's theology as the most modernist interpretation of Islam. He defined "progress", "movement", and "state" in Islamic thought. He was critical of the West. Nevertheless, because of Iqbāl's focus on *Shari'a* as the core concept in Islam, Bennet finds Iqbāl as a precursor to the neo-traditionist Mawlana Mawdudi.[61]

The above summary of recent studies shows that like Sayyid Ahmad Khan Iqbāl wanted to develop a framework to respond to contemporary intellectual challenges. The two theologies, however, differed with each other in the sense that while Khan was concerned with challenges posed by the discoveries of modern science, Iqbāl's shifted emphasis to society and state, and from theology to law.

Besides *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*, Iqbāl also called for a "new jurisprudence" to deal with the challenges of modernity. He

described *Ijtihad* as a core element in Islamic culture. This shift needs to be analyzed for two reasons; first as a shift in objectification of modernity, and second as a new Islamic framework to understand and to respond to the new needs.

The political situation had changed between Khan and Iqbāl. Iqbāl's era was that of nationalist agitation, self-determination, and mass politics. After the two world wars and the abolition of caliphate Muslims were engaged in nationalist movements for independence. Modernity in this era came to be objectified as independence and national identity. The political focus of the encounter with the colonial regimes, therefore, shifted the debate from theology to law and state, from abstract to concrete and from the mechanical to a dynamic worldview.

Iqbāl explained the need for this shift to *Ijtihad* as Islamic theology of modernity by pointing out how certain events in the classical period of Islamic history generated the fear of political and social disintegration and arrested the growth of Islamic jurisprudence. He pleaded for the institutionalization of *Ijtihad* and *Ijma'*, not only to make them more effective but also to channelize autonomy of the self. Iqbāl suggested that modern Parliament could play this role. It was from this perspective that he welcomed the abolition of Ottoman Caliphate by Ataturk. He admired Turkish republican form of caliphate as it transformed the caliphate from the authority of an individual to an institution of governance. For the Muslims in India, he also proposed a state or states, which would be independent enough to remove the stamp of Arab imperialism on Islam. Iqbāl's stress on the institution of parliament must be seen as an extension of his theory of self; it is the empowerment of self in a discursive manner where several individuals come to consensus through discourse.

In Iqbāl's jurisprudence, we also find a revival of the theory of the Objectives of *Shari'a*, expounded by a Maliki jurist Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d. 1388) founded on the notions of *maslaha* (common good), *huzuz* (individual personal interests) and universal objectives (*maqasid*) of *Shari'a*,[62] which became central to the Islamic modernist legal thought.[63]

Iqbāl objectified modernity as an issue of autonomy of self and called for empowering self. This doctrine, however, could not gain popularity because pantheist Sufism prevalent in Indian Muslim community insisted on elimination of ego and desire as expressions of human will and self. The orthodox *Ulama* also found the idea of *khudi* in conflict with the concept of total surrender to God. This was despite the fact that almost all reform movements stressed the role of individual. In these movements, stress on education, including literacy for women, individual obligation of preaching (*da'wa)* and on improving individual lives through religious learning reflected the concerns of modernity with self and individual. Tablighi Jama'at, a movement for renewal of faith that emerged in India in 1930s and soon spread worldwide, calls for reforming oneself in order to reform the society. These movements, however, regard Western modernity as a threat to Islam and religion and either reject modernity and modernization or search for an Islamic alternative to it.[64]

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above overview of the movement for *jadid 'ilm al-kalam* and its opposition shows that the impact of Western modernity in the Muslim world was felt slowly and diversely due to the varying social, economic, political and religious conditions in the Muslim world. Compared to Egypt and Iran, India was not homogenous in religion, language and culture. Muslims, even though a minority, had ruled there for a long period. Muslims were not immediately challenged in early nineteenth century in India by the Western impact because in the beginning Europeans were fascinated with the oriental culture and its intellectual tradition. Shah Abdul Aziz (d. 1824) a son of Shah Waliullah had quite friendly relations with the English. Muslims felt no political or intellectual threat from the English. Shah often outwitted Christian missionaries in religious debates. In fact, he regarded the English as intellectually weak because they were interested more in science and technology than in metaphysics and theology.[65] Shah's *fatwa* about India under the rule of East India Company as *dar al-harb*, a country on war was issued to explain

the legal status of the Muslims in the country, not a declaration of Jihad.[66]

It was after 1857 that impact of modernity came to be felt. Consequently, Muslim communities objectified modernity differently; also the focus of this objectification kept changing. The contexts of modernity varied from colonial rule to nationalism to nation state to cold war to globalism. Islamist theologies turned into theologies of power. These trends weakened the movements for *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*, which gradually lost its credibility.

There were three major educational institutions established in the nineteenth century India to respond to the Muslim educational needs: Darul Ulum Deoband, Aligarh Muhammadan College, and Nadwatul *Ulama*, founded respectively in 1867, 1875 and 1894 by Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Qasim Nanawtawi, and Shibli Nu'mani. To Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, although Deoband and Nadwa both opposed Aligarh college policies, yet Nadwa was in many ways closer to Aligarh in its essential objectives of reform through education. Its revisionary approach to modernity developed in reaction to Aligarh's experience in modern education.

Ikram argues that despite opposition, Aligarh was successful but Khan's call for *jadid 'ilm al-kalam* failed because beliefs are part of individual and personal experience, they are not derived by theological reasons.[67] The new theology remained more concerned with rationalization and with objections raised by the Western scholars and the Westernized Muslims. It failed to situate the problem in the social and individual lives of the believers. As historical evidence, he refers to the rationalist movement of the Mu'tazila that failed for the same reasons and persons like Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya became more popular.[68]

Islamist movements that claimed continuity with Ibn Taymiyya's ideas of revivalism and reform also opposed Islamic theology of modernity, particularly as formulated by Sayyid Ahmad Khan. They appear closer to Iqbāl in their focus on Islamic law and state, but the Islamists reject Iqbāl's ideas of democracy, parliament and *ijtihad*.

Sayyid Abu'l A`la Mawdudi (d. 1979) of Jama'at Islami in Pakistan and, Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, developed their political theologies of the modernity focusing on the sovereignty of God and supremacy of *Shari'a* to counter the idea of the sovereignty of the people and nation-state but gradually demand for *Shari'a* let the concept of nation state got rooted in this theology. They developed the new theology opposing Islamic modernist views on Jihad, polygamy, status of women and *ijtihad* and developed a political theology of power.

Mawdudi objectifies modernity as secularism, which he translates as *la diniyyat* (denial of religion). To Mawdudi, Islamic state is "Theo-democracy" (*Ilahi Jamhuri hukumat*) as opposed to *la dini jamhuriyyat* (secular democracy). In Islam people are not absolutely free to make their own laws. There are Divine limits (*hudud Allah*) on freedom. Islamic ideology regulates economy through principles of private property, and Divine laws about taxes (*zakat*), usury (*riba)*, and lottery. Divine laws govern family life with laws of veil and segregation between men and women (*hijab*), male supervision, rights and duties according to social status, and laws about marriage, divorce, and a qualified permission of polygamy. It also controls civil life through laws about crime and punishment. Since these laws are given as Divine revelation, there is no place for human legislation.

The movement for *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*, as we have argued so far, has also been critical of secular modernism. In fact, Sayyid Ahmad Khan's call for this new theology was caused by his concern about the rise of secular modernism among the Muslim elite. Iqbāl was also critical of secular modernists. Fazlur Rahman held Islamists and the conservative *Ulama* along with secular modernists responsible for misunderstanding Islam and modernity. He insisted on the positive role of Islamic modernism in keeping Islam relevant to the modern man. In his writings, the term Islamic modernism fully replaces *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*.

Rahman defined modernity with reference to specific forces, which were generated by and were also responsible for the intellectual and socio-economic expansion of the modern West. He argued that although the impact of the West cannot be denied, the

Islamic modernism couldn't be understood without placing it in continuity with the reform movements in the eighteenth century.

Islamic modernism, in Rahman's view, continues to confirm the hold of religion in all aspects of life. Secular modernists find life bifurcated into religious and secular in Muslim countries. For Rahman, this separation is accidental because Islam is not yet truly the basis of state; Islam has been applied only to a narrow religious sphere like personal laws.[69] Rahman holds not only the *Ulama* but also the apologists for Islam responsible for the imminent secularism in Muslim societies. According to him, "Apologetic-controversial literature created a barrier against further modernist development."[70] He concludes that "Unless secularism can be made into an effective force for positive progress, the only way for these countries seems to be to accept religion as the basis of state and to find within their religions not only adequate safeguards but formulas of genuine equality for minorities with the majority communities. Otherwise sooner or later, but probably in the predictable future these countries would break up into racial and of linguistic unit on the pattern of Europe."[71]

Under Rahman's influence, ideas of Islamic modernism spread to Turkey, Malaysia and Indonesia. His disciple Nurcholish Madjid (1939-2005) made one of the most prominent contributions in this regard. Madjid began his career as a student leader in Masyumi. He distanced himself from Masyumi in 1970 and other reformist associations and began to speak about the need for renewal of religious thought (*pembaruan pemikiran agama*). He introduced to Indonesian youth the Indian reformists Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Iqbāl. Similar influence appeared in other Muslim countries.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, Islamic modernism appears to have receded when the movements for Islamization spread in almost all Muslim countries. Islamic revolution in Iran, Islamization in Pakistan, Jihad and then Islamic rule by Taliban in Afghanistan, called for complete Islamization, rejecting Western modernity and returning to *Shari'a*. These movements radicalized not only Muslim political thought, which

led to militancy and bitter confrontation with the West but also produced a significant new theology of Islamization of knowledge. It called for expression of authentic Islamic values in education, particularly in teaching of sciences that signified objectivity. Total rejection of modernity and historicity of Islamic tradition led Islamists either to align with orthodoxy or to arbitrary construction of Islamic tradition. Islamic modernism was refuted as a product of Orientalism, which was defined as Western assault on Islam. Critical studies of Orientalism such as by Edward Said were used to reinforce this definition. Movements for authenticity and Islamization did not succeed in achieving their objectives.

In the twenty-first century, globalization shifted the emphasis to universal modernity of human rights. Discourses on human rights, self, and gender equality have revived the focus on self and its empowerment. This may be seen as a revival of Iqbāl's theology of modernity. This revival has impacted both the modernist and traditionalist schools of thought. Progressive Muslims, launched in 2004 in the USA, *Tanwir* (Islamic enlightenment) in Egypt, *Islam Hazari* (Malaysia), Enlightened Moderation (Pakistan), and Islamic Dialogue (Iran) appeared as ideas of *jadid 'ilm al-kalam*, or theology of modernity to defend Islam against the Western depiction of Islam as a religion of terrorism and violence. The focus on the autonomy of self has also influenced the quest of the traditionalist Muslim thought for a middle ground between Islamism and Islamic modernism. Groups of scholars who share such views are known by different names: *Wasatiyya* in Egypt,[72] and *Islahiyyun* in Saudi Arabia.[73] These groups consist of mostly scholars who were earlier associated with the Islamist movements. They call for rethinking of *Shari'a* in the modern context. In Egypt, Shaykh al-Ghazali (1917-96) published a very erudite critique of the Sunna as a source used by the jurists. Javed Ghamidi in Pakistan calls for examination of penal laws because they are not coherent with the structure, spirit and the meaning of the Qur'ān.[74]

To conclude, Iqbāl's approach *jadid ilm al-kalam* has been usually studied from the perspective of authenticity, *i.e.* whether it correctly corresponded with orthodox theology or modern

philosophy. Its contribution as an attempt to define modernity, and to develop a framework to interpret Islam was not given due attention. It is especially important to note that Iqbāl's focus on the autonomy of self, which was generally ignored in the nineteenth century, has re-emerged in the twenty first century.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 For an English translation of this lecture, see Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan*: *A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978), pp. 307-32.

2 Ignác Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung an der Vorlesungen* (Leiden, Brill.1920), p. 324.

3 William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1861), 4:308.

4 Ikram, 1992, p. 156.

5 Troll, 1978, p. 311.

6 Troll, 1978, p. 313.

7 Troll, 1978, p. 313.

8 Ikram, 1992, p. 159.

9 Aziz Ahmad, *Muslim Self-Statement in India and Pakistan* 1857-1968. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1970), p. 30.

10 Ahmad, 1970, p. 31.

11 Ahmad, 1970, p. 35.

12 Ahmad, 1970, p. 34.

13 Ahmad, 1970, p. 35.

14 Ikram, 1992, p. 160.

15 Ikram, 1992, p. 161.

16 For an English translation of Nanawtawi's *Tasfiyatul 'aqa'id*, see Aziz Ahmad and G. E. von Grunebaum, *Muslim Self-Statement in India and Pakistan* 1857-1968 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1970), pp. 60-76.

17 Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi, *Imdadul Fatawa* (Karachi: Darul Isha'at, 1992), 6: 166-185.

18 Thanawi's criticism of the modernists is best illustrated by his address in 1909 to the students of Aligarh College, founded by Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Thanawi argued that Muslims who were educated in institutions like Aligarh found themselves weaker in defense of Islam than the traditional *Ulama* because they lacked the necessary knowledge of Islam. He delineated three deficiencies in Aligarh graduates. (1) They do not consult the *Ulama* when they are in doubt about Islam. Doubt is like an

illness and the *Ulama* are the only physicians who can treat this illness. (2) Modern education gives them false confidence about themselves. (3) They doubt that the religious matters can be explained rationally. The modern educated do not understand *Ulama*'s language. They cannot do so because they do not learn the traditional sciences, which the *Ulama* have mastered (Thanawi 1976, 6). For Thanawi, the solution to modern challenges lied in the restoration of tradition and the authority of the *Ulama*.

19 Muhammad 'Abduh, *Risala al-Tawhid* (Cairo, 1934).

20 Husayn al-Jisr al-Afandi, *Kitab al-risalat al-Hamidiyya fi haqiqat al-diyanat al-Islamiyya wa haqiqat al-shari'at al-Muhammadiyya* (Beirut: Majlis Ma'arif, 1889), p. 35.

21 *The Risala* was very well received in the West as well as in the Muslim world. To most scholars of modern Islam, the treatise signified a change in Muslim attitude toward the West, particularly to non-Muslims. Malcolm Kerr calls Jisr "an enlightened and moderately progressive sheikh". In Egypt, Rashid Rida published extracts of the *Risala* in *al-Manar* (VIII, 456, 1, 2), and in Turkey Midhat Pasha published its translation in his journal *Tarjuman Haqiqat*.

22 Muhammad Ishaq Ali (Transl.), *Sa'ins awr Islam* (Lahore: Idara Islamiyyat, 1984)

23 Muhammad Ishaq Ali, *Sa'ins awr Islam,* Preface.

24 Rev. Isaac Taylor studied Islam and Christianity comparatively and found very few differences. Taylor also refuted other European authors. Referring to Africa, he lauded Islam's efforts to bring civilization to primitive peoples. There was a lively debate on Islam. In England, a mosque was established and an Arabic journal was launched. The editor invited the scholars in Lebanon for contributions.

25 Jisr, 1889, p. 35.

26 Jisr, 1889, p. 113, 120.

27 Jisr, 1889, p. 138.

28 Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, *Mawj-i Kauthar* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1992), 212 ff.

29 Ikram, 1992, p. 244.

30 Ikram, 1992, p. 250.

31 Ikram, 1992, p. 262.

32 A recent example is Muhammad Shahab al-Din Nadwi, *Jadid 'Ilm Kalam* (Karachi: Majlis Nashriyat Islam, 1994).

33 Muhammad Iqbāl, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1986), p. 78.

34 For a detailed discussion of the above claim and Iqbāl's reliance on Nadwi, see Muhammad Khalid Masud, *Iqbāl's Reconstruction of Religious Thought* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1996).

35 Ali Abbas Jalalpuri, *Iqbāl ka `ilm-i- kalam* (Lahore: Takhliqat, 2003).

36 Altaf Ahmad Azami, *Khutbat-i Iqbāl ek Mutala'a* (Lahore: Dar al-Tadhkir, 2005).

37 Azami, 2005, p. 13.

38 Azami, 2005, pp. 14-17.

39 Katherine Pratt Ewing, *Arguing Sainthood*: *Modernity, Psychoanalysis and Modernity* (Duke: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 69.

40 Suha Taji Farouki, *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century* (I B Tauris, 2004), p. 120.

41 Zafar Hasan, *Sir Syed awr Hali ka Nazriyya Fitrat* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 2003).

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43 Azzam Tamimi and J. L. Esposito, *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East* (London: Hurst, 2002), p. 195.

44 Iqbāl, *Reconstruction*, p. 47.

45 Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia, History, Culture and Political Economy* (Routledge, 1998), p. 241.

46 Terence Ball, ed., *The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 586.

47 Natini Nataranjan, (ed.), *Handbook of Twentieth Century Literature of India* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), p. 337.

48 Natini Nataranjan, p. 337.

49 Mustansir Mir, *Iqbāl* (London: I B Tauris, 2006)

50 Bruce Lawrence, *The Qur'ān and Biography* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), p. 12.

51 Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan* 1857-1964 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

52 Fazlur Rahman, "Islamic Modernism: Its Scope, Method and Alternatives", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 1 (1970), pp. 317-373.

53 Rahman, 1969, p. 258.

54 Charles Kurzman, *Modernist Islam* 1840-1940: *A Sourcebook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 8.

55 See above note 27.

56 Jalalpuri, 2003, p. 19.

57 Jalalpuri, 2003, p. 211.

58 Jalalpuri, 2003, p. 205.

59 Azami, 2005, p. 5.

60 Azami, 2005, p. 266.

61 Clinton Bennet, *Muslims and Modernity*: *An Introduction to the Issues and Debates* (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 22.

62 Iqbāl, 1986, p. 134.

63 For a detailed discussion, see Muhammad Khalid Masud, *Shatibi's Philosophy of Islamic Law* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1996).

64 Muhammad Khalid Masud, *Travellers in Faith, Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Movement for Faith Renewal* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

65 Muhammad Khalid Masud, "The World of Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1824)", in Jamal Malik (ed.), *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History* 1760-1860 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 298-314.

66 See for a detailed analysis, Muhammad Khalid Masud, "The World of Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1824)", in Jamal Malik (ed.), *Perspectives of Mutual Encounters in South Asian History* 1760-1860. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 298-314.

67 Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, *Mawj-i Kauthar* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1992), pp. 156-344.

68 Ikram, 1992, p. 164.

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70 Rahman, 1969, p. 252.

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73 Stéphane Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals: Saudi Arabia's New "Islamo-Liberal Reformists", *Middle East Journal*, Volume 58 (2004), No. 3, pp. 345-65.

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