

Muhammad Iqbal`s process concept of God

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will expound upon one of the research questions, that is, *what is Muhammad Iqbal`s God conception?* As will be seen, this exposition is by no means exhaustive, but can serve as a platform for a more extensive study important to those interested in Iqbalian process-thought. In writing this chapter, I intend to delineate and analyse Muhammad Iqbal`s view of the Divine Being, particularly his idea of Divine omnipotence and Divine omniscience, from a *process* perspective.¹

To begin with, a brief presentation will be given in relation to the central place of God in Iqbal`s thought before I set about an exposition of Iqbal`s view of God and its various properties, especially as to the elements of omnipotence and omniscience.

4.2 The centrality of God in Iqbal`s thought and the importance of intimate convictions

Muhammad Iqbal`s lifelong project can be summarised as follows:

the task of restoring God to the public and the private spheres, not in the way it is visualized and enacted nowadays, but in the more subtle and time-tested manner of elucidating the essential relationship between the human and the Divine; reaching for the human heart through his wisdom poetry and, through the medium of his Urdu and English prose, removing obstacles which make it difficult or impossible for the mind to understand (Koshul and Umar, 2010).

As Iqbal sees it, the Qur`an fixes its gaze on the concrete realities of human life and not on mere universals or intellectualism. And therefore, **the Islamic God is not a God “in the heavens” or the abstract God of the philosopher`s mental activity.** As Iqbal remarks, “... A mere intellectual belief in God does not count for much in Islam.” Rather, asserts Iqbal,

¹ It is important to bear in mind that to understand Iqbal`s God conception purely from a process-perspective, is to lose sight of Muhammad Iqbal`s deeply Qur`anic influence, which has certainly shaped his reflections on our present subject matter.

“... The wisdom of Islam consists in exploiting the idea of God in the interest in Man” (Iqbal, 2006). As will be seen during the development of this thesis, Iqbal’s God is of pragmatic character, which is intimately related to the earthly life. Furthermore, for Iqbal, the existence of God, the reality of the self, its freedom and immortality, forms the kernel of Islamic faith (Enver Ishrat Hasan in Ruzgar, 2002). Even a cursory examination of Iqbal’s poetic and prosaic works reveal the centre of his thought, i.e., God. God is so to speak the “lifeblood” of his integralist and synthetic system of thought. In order to understand Iqbal’s system of thought, the first and foremost element that needs to be understood is his God concept, from which we can derive a vision of “Islamic humanism” characterised by elements such as human individuality, its freedom and innate dignity, and a humanistic state model.

Mostly, Muslim theologians and scholars have directed insufficient attention to the idea of God in which one believes, and how our thought-patterns are influenced by a specific concept of God we sincerely hold. According to Iqbal, Islam, as a mode of behaviour and a civil society (Iqbal 2012, 123), also bases the edifice of life on belief in The Divine Being. Since human character and conduct of life depends deeply on our convictions, i.e., the conviction regarding the nature/concept of God, His power, His relationship with human beings and the natural world, the meaning of Divine guidance and the place of humanity in the universe, we need to direct following questions:

- Do our images of God, The Divine Self, encourage the realisation of “universal humanity”²? Or, do they promote and generate sectarianism/fragmentation?
- Do beliefs in God encourage justice, equality, solidarity, freedom and the protection of humans’ innate dignity or does belief in God inspire hatred and ill will towards “the Other”?
- Is God portrayed as a Creator who works through coercive, unilateral power (leaving no room for creaturely agency) or through persuasion and mutual partnership?
- Finally, yet importantly, do our concepts of God create a humanistic outlook of life or a ritualistic one?

² ... To realize this essential unity of mankind as a fact in life by demolishing all barriers which stand between man and man (Iqbal 2012, 75).

The abovementioned questions call for, in our present climate of growing “crusade mentality” rising in Western circles and the Muslim fundamentalists’ willingness to plant, in the name of “authentic” Islam, a state based on Sharia laws with punishments that goes diametrically against the fundamental human rights and human dignity, adequate responses *within* Muslim communities. An in-depth study of these questions will take us far afield. I will in the succeeding chapter mainly direct my attention on the last question, slightly modified and specified.³

I will now move on to the next section in which Iqbal’s concept of God will be analysed and explored.

4.3 The idea of God

The conception of God developed by earlier Muslim thinkers revolved around **classical theism, formed by the Hellenistic philosophical heritage**. The Greek philosophy wielded tremendous influence on the minds of scholastic theologians, but, as Iqbal puts it in his book *The Reconstruction*, “it **[Hellenistic philosophy], on the whole, obscured their vision of the Qur’an**” (Iqbal 2012, 3, *sic*). Furthermore, by approaching the Qur’anic text under the spell of Greek philosophy, the earlier generations of Muslim scholars failed to perceive that the “**spirit of the Qur’an was essentially anti-classical**” (ibid. emphasis added).

One of the chief reasons for Iqbal’s categorical rejection of Hellenistic philosophy, particularly Neo-Platonism, and the Aristotelian concept of a fixed/rigid universe, rests in his insistence on the material world as a *de facto* reality, and the universe being dynamic and liable to expansion. The metaphysical position of Neo-Platonism abnegates the reality of human beings (finite egos). On the other side, the Aristotelian idea of a predetermined universe negates the very idea of novelty and freedom. Iqbal, by undertaking a discussion of the essentials of God conception, makes a clear demarcation line against the aforementioned stance, and **utilises, as with Christian process thinking, the model of “becoming/event”⁴ instead of substance-based categories**. However, as I will explain, Iqbal

³The second research question I have posed is the following: Does Iqbal’s God-model allow us to theorise and develop a humanistic concept of an Islamic state?

⁴Iqbal’s notion of a dynamic reality, and an expanding universe bear a resemblance to the model formulated by the Islamic philosopher and theologian Mulla Sadra (1572-1640), who also endorses the categories of “events” instead of inflexible substances. For Sadra, “**...everything in the universe is in a constant process of becoming-in permanent flux. For him, there are no fixed or finished “things”**” (Ruzgar, 2002).

still is traditional in the sense that he retains the property of Divine Immutability (changelessness).

4.3.1 God as Individual

Depicting God as an “individual” might qualify Iqbal, in the eyes of the orthodox Ulama (scholars), as a heterodox of the highest degree. For, does not the identification of God, the infinite, as an individual connote finitude, thus comparing God, “the incomparable” to His creatures? Such a depiction is not groundless, for Iqbal finds evidence from the Qur`anic scripture of God`s personality/individuality/egohood. In chapter III “The conception of God and the meaning of prayer”, we note the following assertion:

...In order to emphasize the individuality of the Ultimate Ego the Qur`an gives Him the proper name of Allah, and further define Him as follows: `Say, Allah is One; All things depend on Him; He begetteth not, and He is not begotten; And there is none like unto Him (112: 1-4) (Iqbal 2012, 50).

To Iqbal, the characterisation of God as an individual is “one of the most essential elements in the Qur`anic conception of God”⁵ (Iqbal 2012, 51). Since God is an individual, or, in Iqbal`s terminology, “the ultimate Ego”, He cannot be conceived as an impersonal, formless cosmic force. To interpret God as an individual does not imply moulding God after the image of Homo sapiens, it rather connotes an acceptance that life is not a “formless fluid, but an *organizing principle of unity*” (Iqbal 2012, 58, emphasis added). The unity of God (Allah) is demonstrated in the Qur`anic verses cited above. The first verse which states, “Say, Allah is One”, is worthy of clarification.

In the Qur`anic terminology, the word “Ahad” (One) signifies unity and wholeness. That Allah is One represents God`s “ahadiyya”, the property of *Oneness, i.e., integrity and self-consistency*. According to Iqbal, God is the perfect individual, “closed off as an ego, peerless and unique” (Iqbal 2012, 50). This idea precludes the conception of trinity (God is one substance in three persons), and polytheistic tendencies (multiple theological entities). God`s unity is for instance witnessed in the physical realm that exhibits “principles of unity and consistency”. The permanent natural laws are an instance of this oneness, without which the natural laws would have worked in a haphazardly fashion. To

⁵ This is rightly so, because, as we will see in the next chapter, the idea of *individuality* of God is closely connected with the idea of human individuality (human personhood).

reiterate, for Iqbal, God is the ultimate unity, hence the perfect individual, and not some sort of formless, vague or blind force. Reverting to the question of finitude (if individuality imply finitude), we note an important statement from Iqbal, which is worthy of attention. He maintains that,

...God cannot be conceived as infinite in the sense of *spatial infinity*. In matters of spiritual valuation mere immensity counts for nothing... Modern science regards Nature not as something static, situated in an infinite void, but a structure of interrelated events out of whose mutual relations arise the concepts of space and time... Space and time are possibilities of the Ego [God], only partially realized in the shape of our mathematical space and time. Beyond Him and apart from His creative activity, there is neither time nor space to close Him off in reference to other egos. The Ultimate Ego is, therefore, *neither infinite in the sense of spatial infinity nor finite in the sense of the space-bound human ego whose body closes him off in reference to other egos*. The infinity of the Ultimate Ego consists in the infinite inner possibilities of His creative activity of which the universe, as known to us, is only a partial expression. In one word God's infinity is *intensive*, not *extensive*. It involves an infinite series, but is not that series (Iqbal 2012, 52, emphasis added).

Stated differently, God is finite in relation to “spatial extension”, and infinite in the sense of His infinite possibilities and/or potentialities of “creative acts”. Laconically, God is immanent as well as transcendent. The position Iqbal takes on this issue will be discussed upon in later sections of the chapter. Let us proceed to the next attribute in Iqbal's understanding of the Divine conception.

4.3.2 God and creativity

The other central attribute of God, is the property of creativeness. What is the creative method of the Divine entity? Is God a mere “spectator” in relation to the universe? Is the creation a past outcome, or a mere fortuity in the life of the Divine being, which has no relationship whatsoever to Him? A broad exposition of the property of creativity and its various dimensions is not possible in this thesis. My aim is only to throw light upon some of the salient features of Iqbal's rendition.

According to Iqbal, the “real question” which we need to furnish an answer to is the following: «Does the universe confront God as His “other”, with space intervening between Him and it?» (Iqbal 2012, 52). Iqbal also poses another question worthy of attention: «In what matter does the creative activity of God proceed to the work of creation?» (Iqbal 2012, 54). As regards the first question, for Iqbal's person, there is no creation and event, from Divine point of view, which have a “before” and an “after”.

The universe and the creation cannot be considered as an independent, ontological reality

confronting God as His “other”. The categories of “before” and “after”, are so to say “introduced” by God by bringing the universe into existence and, which the human mind, for pragmatic exigencies, breaks up into a plurality of “space”, “time”, and “matter” on the “free creative energy of God”. Therefore, the world of matter is not a stuff “co-eternal with God, operated upon Him from a distance as it were. It is, in its real nature, *one continuous act...*” (Iqbal 2012, 52-53, emphasis added). What we call man’s spatio-temporal order (nature) is only a passing moment in the life-history of God. Or, in Iqbal’s words, the “*self-revelation of the Great I am*” (Iqbal 2012, 57, emphasis added). Hence, the universe is not a “thing” occupying a vacuum but an “act” of the Divine Self. Thus, matter does not present itself as a confronting “other” to God in the same way it confronts as regards human entities (finite egos), which the human mind is cognisant of (as a manufactured article) but do not create.

Turning to our second question (the mode of Divine creativity), Iqbal mentions the atomistic theory of the Ash`arite theological school, regarded as an orthodox and popular school in Islamic history. According to the Ash`arite thinkers, the world is composed of “*jawàhir*” (immeasurably small units monads). And because the mode of God’s creativity activity is incessant, the amount of atoms cannot be regarded as limited. The monads of Ash`arite theory are neither material nor permanent. Their existence is only a fleeting existence, which comes into being and is then annihilated by the will of the Divine Being, hence their idea of a constantly expanding universe (Iqbal 2012, 55). Moreover, another aspect of this atomistic theory of perpetual creation presupposes the element of accident. As Iqbal remarks, “if God ceases to create the accidents, the atom ceases to exist as an atom” (Iqbal 2012, 56). This idea excludes the category of “permanence”, that there is no element of permanence in nature, i.e., fixed laws of nature.⁶ Following this line of thinking developed by Ash`arites theologians, the law of causality becomes null and void since their atomistic theory of continuous creation negates the objective validity of causation in the spatio-temporal system. This model also gives rise to the idea of “special Divine action”, i.e., God intervening in the human world in order to manifest His power and absolute will (miracles), thus Divine actions transcending categories of “creation” and “conservation”.

⁶ Mouhanad Khorchide, a German Muslim theologian and director of the Centre for Islamic Theology at the University of Münster, explains the element of accidents thus: Because God, in His infinite creative power, upholds and sustains the world through His repeated activity of adding and annihilating, fire, for instance, do not possess the property of burning because God at every moment creates anew the substance of “burning” (Khorchide 2015, 26).

Muhammad Iqbal, while considering the Ash`arite model as a “genuine effort to develop on the basis of an Ultimate Will or Energy a theory of creation...” (Iqbal 2012, 56), which is closer to the letter and spirit of the Qur`anic point of view (a universe liable to growth) rather than the Aristotelian notion of a “fixed universe”, notes its rationalistic deficiencies (ibid.). One of the important responsibilities of future Muslim thinkers is, according to Iqbal, to improve the speculative theory of Ash`arites, and to “bring it into closer contact with modern science...” (ibid.).⁷

As we have seen, Iqbal, as with process thought, turns down the Aristotelian idea of a closed universe, and embraces a more Whiteheadian⁸ view of the universe and reality. If the universe is still in “becoming”, how does that relate to God`s knowledge? Is God`s knowledge unchanging, or evolving according to the ongoing creative actualisations of future possibilities? What will come next – the notion of Divine omniscience – is, alongside Iqbal`s view of Divine omnipotence, one of the most common features between Iqbal and process thought (Open Theism).

4.3.3 God and omniscience

In classical theology and theism, God is conceived as omniscient being. This idea indicates that God has total knowledge and/or full awareness in advance of all that would actualise and occur. Described in a different manner, God has an unchanging knowledge of past, present and the future, viewing the whole of reality gathered up in a single, all-encompassing vision; a super-eternal “now”. Muhammad Iqbal finds it difficult to accept the notion of Divine omniscient, as understood orthodoxly. He is closer to the process vision of Divine omniscience, articulated by leading Christian process thinkers such as Marjorie Suchocki, Monica Coleman, David Ray Griffin, John Cobb and Bruce Epperly. If omniscient (Divine knowledge) entails “a single indivisible act of perception which makes God immediately aware of the entire sweep of history, regarded as an order of specific events, in an “eternal now” then, this, according to Iqbal, indicates a “closed universe, a fixed futurity, a predetermined, unalterable order of specific events which, like a superior faith, has once for all determined the directions of God`s creative activity” (Iqbal

⁷ To my mind, Ghulam Ahmed Parwez is one of the most radical natural-law Muslim thinkers in the history of Islamic thought. His magnum opus, *Islam: A Challenge to Religion* (First Ed. 1968), testifies to a “theistic-naturalistic” world-view, in concord with much of the modern scientific developments and its world-view

⁸ The Whiteheadian position views the reality as a dynamic process, in terms of creative transformation (transmutation), and the creative flux and change which is the essence of the universe.

3). If we accept the notion of the Divine Will as dependent on an order of specific predetermined events, would not then such a notion be antithetic to God's living incessant creative activity? If God's knowledge and awareness is total and perfect, how can human beings add and contribute to the ongoing development of the human species and the cosmos? Would not the idea of God's perfect omniscient, and, by implication, the notion of predestination, subvert man's power of initiative and our position as dynamic contributors in the spatio-temporal order? **If our actions and lives are fully known and determined by God, then, in the words of Epperly, "...our experience of creativity and freedom are ultimately a sham, since all of our actions are already known...decided by God"** (Epperly 2011, 36). Divine omniscience, according to Iqbal, does not imply a timeless vision of the futurity in its actuality (complete knowledge about what will happen in the future). On the contrary, God knows the actual (the existent) as actual, while the future exists as possibilities to be actualised. Iqbal asserts, **"The future certainly pre-exists in the organic whole of God's creative life, but it pre-exists as an open-possibility, not as a fixed order of events with definite outlines"** (Iqbal 2012, 63). Engaged with the notion of Divine knowledge, Iqbal provides an illustration. He goes on to assert:

... Suppose, as sometimes happens in the history of human thought, a fruitful idea with a great inner wealth of applications emerges into the light of your consciousness. You are immediately aware of the idea as a complex whole; but the intellectual working out of its numerous bearings is a matter of time. Intuitively all the possibilities of the idea are present in your mind. If a specific possibility, as such, is not intellectually known to you at a certain moment of time, it is not because your knowledge is defective, but because *there is yet no possibility to become known...* (Iqbal 2012, 63, emphasis added).

In other words, **God does not know the future in its complete actuality. God does not fully know what the result of any specific event or encounter will be in its totality until it materialises and unfolds wholly in the future.**⁹ **The knowledge of the Divine evolves and "grows" in relationship to the ongoing evolution of the universe.**¹⁰ This idea echoes the process theistic vision of God's knowledge. As David Ray Griffin and John Cobb states, "...to say that God is omniscient means that in every moment of the divine life God knows

⁹ On this point, Iqbal's understanding resembles the position of Mutazilitè. According to their position, God does not know man's decisions before they are selected by man himself. God's foreknowledge includes everything except human decisions and actions, which God knows only in the moment they are actualised (Bektovic 2012, 58).

everything which is knowable at that time” (Cobb and Griffin 1976, 47). And because the concrete actuality is a state of constant flux and becoming, hence the birth of novel and unforeseeable occurrences, “...God’s knowledge is dependent upon decisions made by the worldly actualities” (ibid.). Iqbal mirrors the same notion when stating that, “...if history is regarded merely as a gradually revealed photo of a predetermined order of events, then there is no room in it for novelty and initiation” (Iqbal 2012, 63). Nevertheless, if a specific possibility or future-knowledge is not known by God at a definite moment of time, then this does not signify God’s “defective omniscient”. Rather, it only means, according to Iqbal, that there is yet no future-knowledge to be known because the future events are still in “becoming” and not wholly settled series of actuality. Such a conception of omniscience does justice to the elements of spontaneity, creativity and novelty inherent in the make-up of finite egos, which is “a fact of actual experience” (ibid.). If the future were pre-determined at a higher cosmic level by God then novelty, creativity, human freedom and spontaneity of life would be oxymoronic. The human person would have been reduced to a fully determined entity, machinelike. Is Iqbal suggesting that God voluntarily circumscribes His scope of foreknowledge of future encounters in order to let freedom exist? This, then, tend to make omniscience a matter of possessing a “quality” or “potential” to know rather than having specific foreknowledge.

Another aspect of the idea of omniscient is related to the doctrine of teleology. Even though Iqbal disagrees with the traditional notion of divine omniscience, **he still retains the teleological character of Reality. The question to be posed is: what does teleology signify for Iqbal?**

In order to answer the proposed question, we need to look at Iqbal’s notion of time. There is no denying of the fact that Iqbal has been influenced by the French philosopher Henri Bergson, but this is partly true. There exist some significant differences between Bergson’s understanding and Iqbal’s view. For both Bergson and Iqbal, “pure time” is regarded as a free creative movement. However, Bergson understands this free creative movement to be non-teleological in character, on the ground that teleology renders time unreal (Iqbal 2012, 43). **If teleology denotes the disclosure of a plan in view of a “predetermined end or goal”, it does render time artificial and unreal.** In Iqbal’s words, “...it reduces the universe to a mere temporal reproduction of a pre-existing eternal scheme of structure in which individual events have already found their proper places, waiting, as it were, for their respective turns to enter into the temporal sweep of history” (ibid.). Put differently, if the portals of the future are closed to reality, then the worldly order of events

is rendered as mere “imitation of the eternal mould”. If teleology signifies rigid determinism or fatalism, it leaves no ambit for freedom, neither Divine nor human. Furthermore, by implication, such a temporal order is not worthy of autonomous actualities (human agents), it is only a stage on which “puppets are made to move by a kind of pull from behind” (ibid.). Such a doctrine of teleology certainly reduces human beings to mere spectators, and robs them of their freedom, novelty and capacity for original action, giving rise to apathy and lethargy on the stage of human history. Iqbal categorically denies this idea, and furnishes an **unorthodox understanding of teleology, which differentiates between the categories of “purpose” and “destination”**. Muhammad Iqbal asserts that,

The world-process, or the movement of the universe in time, is certainly devoid of purpose, if by purpose we mean a foreseen end- a far-off fixed destination to which the whole creation moves. To endow the world-process with purpose in this sense is to rob it of its originality and its creative character. Its ends are terminations of a career; they are ends to come and not necessarily premediated. A time-process cannot be conceived as a line already drawn. *It is a line in the drawing – an actualization of open possibilities...* **To my mind nothing is more alien to the Qur`anic outlook than the idea that the universe is a temporal working out of a preconceived plan** (Iqbal, 2012, 44 emphasis added).

The above statement makes it clear that for Iqbal, the universe is bereft of any purpose as a foreseen end. Reality is teleological in the sense that “while there is no far-off distant goal toward which we are moving, there is a progressive formation of fresh ends, purposes, and ideal scales of value as the process of life grows and expands” (Iqbal 2012, 43-44). Reality is “purposive” but not fastened to a “specific” goal, which is pulling the world-process unto itself. Therefore, reality is not, as Bergson understands, “a blind vital impulse wholly unilluminated by idea. Its nature is through and through teleological” (Iqbal 2012, 43).

As mentioned in section 4.3, even though Iqbal’s God idea departs significantly from the traditional contention, he stills retains the property of divine immutability. If the Ultimate Ego reveals its incessant creative activity in the temporal order, and, furthermore, if the future exists as an open possibility in the organic whole of God’s creative life, can change then be predicated of God? If yes, then, does change denote imperfectability? Muhammad Iqbal, in order to secure divine immutability, hence divine perfection, distinguishes between what he calls “serial time” and “pure time”. Serial time is a divided into the categories of past, present and future. It is “...the time of which we predicate long and short” (Iqbal 2012, 38). It is an interpretation the human intellect put on the constant creative activity of God. In the spatio-temporal world process (serial time), the human

condition and life known to us is “...desire, pursuit, failure, or attainment- a continuous change from one situation to another” (Iqbal 2012, 47). In other words, from finite perspective – the only kind of point of departure known to human entities – change may involve the element of failure, thus imperfection. **If we apprehend the divine life after the image of human life, and thus interpret it in the light of our own conscious experience, we may restrict divine life to serial time, hence an anthropocentric representation/interpretation.** This will thus give space for failure and, by implication, imperfection. On the other hand, according to Iqbal, there exist another sphere of time, that is, real time. **Real time is not serial time, but “...pure duration, i.e. change without succession...”** (Iqbal 2012, 46). And because Iqbal regards God as the whole of Reality or the Ultimate Reality, “...the phases of His life are wholly determined from within.” (Iqbal 2012, 47). While on the contrary, the human phases are chiefly outside to us, i.e., we are related to the world-process as a “confronting other”. **To God, the properties of time and space and nature are His “functions”, organically related to God. Expressed in a different way, they are the “habit of Allah”** (Iqbal 2012, 45). As such, **God lives in another time order, Divine time, which is “...free from the quality of passage, and consequently does not admit of divisibility, sequence, and change”** (Iqbal 2012, 47). Reverting to the question, that is, does change denote Divine imperfection, Iqbal, on the account of God being the whole of reality and His phases being determined from within, states categorically that,

...change, therefore, in the sense of a movement from an imperfect to a relatively perfect state, or vice versa, is obviously inapplicable to His life. A deeper insight into our conscious experience shows that beneath the appearance of serial duration there is true duration. **The Ultimate Ego exists in pure duration wherein change ceases to be a succession of varying attitudes, and reveals its true character as a continuous creation...** To the Creative Self change cannot mean imperfection. The perfection of the Creative Self consists, not in a mechanistically conceived immobility... it consists in the vaster basis of His creative activity and the infinite scope of His creative vision. **God’s life is self-revelation, not the pursuit of an ideal to be reached.** The “not-yet” of man does mean pursuit and may mean failure; **the “not-yet” of God means unfailing realization of the infinite creative possibilities of His being which retains its wholeness throughout the entire process** (Iqbal 2012, 48, emphasis added).

To recapitulate, since God lives in pure duration (Divine time), and this universe is His creative self-expression and not the “pursuit of an ideal to be reached”, or a confronting “other”, He is immutable. God’s “I-amness” or His essence is “...independent, elemental, absolute” (Iqbal 2012, 44). Put differently, **serial time and space are the creative functions of God, i.e., God’s habit/character.** The Divine Being is expressing itself by creating the

world of time and space, but is not that time and space *per se*.¹¹ However, it should be noted that Iqbal's treatment of the concept of time is not a "settled issue". There are various aspects of his discussion which are still inadequately addressed. One concrete example I noticed involves the categories of "purpose" and "destination". As written above, for Iqbal, pure duration is purposive but not connected to any destination (destination-bound). The question to be asked is how can our finite outlook conceptualise the category of purpose by subtracting the element of destination? Can purpose exist without a goal, or *vice versa*? It is not possible in my thesis to expand on this specific topic of philosophical nature.

As we have seen, Iqbal is breaking sharply with the classical theistic interpretation of God's omniscience, which portrays God both as knower of the visible as well as the invisible (a position that, according to Iqbal, gives rise to doctrine of rigid determinism and violate the principle of free-will).¹² Whereas the human being is cognisant of the visible only (through discursive knowledge) and not the unseeable, due to its inability to transcend the divisible time (past, present, or future). Since God surpasses the divisible time, therefore, to Him there is only an "eternal now/present" (Parwez 1971, 20-21). Hence, we, the planetary beings, only know what the future holds as the future becomes our present moment. Divine omniscience does not limit future free actions in any way because the finite human entity is capable of employing his power of freedom to change his decisions. God knows that I will do x or y tomorrow, but He will in no way choose for me when more than one course of action (realisable possibilities) are open to me.

On the topic of God's omniscience, Iqbal may have reconstructed it somewhat more extensively than other scholars of Islam would care to acknowledge. However, let us put Iqbal's reflections on this point in their right context. As explained in chapter 3, Iqbal was writing and lecturing in an age where Muslim peoples were under the powerful yoke of Western colonialism and Hindu dominance on the one hand, and the Muslim priests and their ossified, imitational thinking on the other. He also spoke to middle class Muslims at a historical point of time when they were awakening out of their dogmatic slumber towards vigorous political action to secure their own distinct identity, on the basis of their religious and cultural heritage. Moreover, the "radical" interpretation of God's omniscience not as something "settled" but something in "becoming" suited the temper of

¹¹ The relationship between what we call nature and God is organic, and makes Iqbal an *immanentist*. But, it is also important to note that Iqbal is equally *transcendentist* as he sees no contradiction between the attributes of immanence and transcendence. This position will be considered in later sections.

the educational elite; an interpretation which paved the way for man's active role on the stage of world history.

The notion of Divine omniscience is intimately connected with the attribute of divine omnipotence. If, following Iqbal's line of reasoning, the future exists as an open possibility in the organic whole of God's life (a line in becoming), then, this signifies a limitation. And, furthermore, how can we reconcile limitation with God's omnipotence?

The next section deals with the important aspect of omnipotence.

4.3.4 God and omnipotence

For Muhammad Iqbal, the express purpose of his *Reconstruction* has been to "...secure a vision of the spirit of Islam as emancipated from its Magian [non-Islamic] overlayings..." (Iqbal 2012, 114, *sic*). As has been stated in section 4.2, God is the "lifeblood" of Iqbal's reformist ideas. Therefore, without getting the big picture of Iqbal's God vision, it will obnubilate the "the humanistic spirit of Islam", which is reflected through a reconstructed and to some extent novel interpretations of the various properties of Iqbal's God. Discussing the idea of the Divine Being from a Christian point of view, Whitehead supposed that "...traditional Christian theology took a tragic turn when it chose Caesar over Jesus..." (Whitehead in Epperly 2011, 38). Furthermore, he goes on to assert, "...But the deeper idolatry, of *the fashioning of God in the image of the Egyptian, Persian, and Roman imperial rulers*, was retained" (*ibid.* emphasis added). That the imperial layers contorted the image of the Islamic God was for Iqbal evident. **His task was therefore to desquamate the hard crust of this monarchical growth in order to restore the original image of God, and hence the image of Islam as a message to humanity.**

As will be examined in this section, **Iqbal's interpretation of Divine omnipotence takes a different route than the more hard-line traditionalists.** The conventional theistic understanding of divine power states that "nothing happens apart from divine determination or permission, even that which appears to be contrary to God's will for humankind and the world" (Epperly 2011, 53). In some other words, God is portrayed as the Ultimate Controlling Power (*id est*, God controls every single detail of the world's causal process). **According to the traditional theistic image of God, Divine power is both unlimited and unilateral, which, as a consequence, brings about the notion of "pot and the potter"**, i.e., the Divine entity can exercise unlimited power divorced from its effects on the

existence of human species or creation as such (blind omnipotence). God's creation is thus portrayed as helpless, fragile and insignificant in front of the awesome and perilous powers displayed by an all-powerful theological entity. If this is what is meant by love, then, states Epperly, "...this is not love, but narcissism and objectification, according to process theologians" (Epperly 2011, 40). If everything is decided at a higher cosmic level by God, then there is no possibility of novelty and creativity. This theological view has serious restrictive implications in this-worldly interactions. The injection of new possibilities through creaturely agency is mere pipe dream. Because, says Epperly, "in relationship to the all-powerful and all-determining God, the only possible response is subservience and passivity" (Epperly 2011, 41).

Humankind learns definitions through lived/actual experience. The idea of God as a wilful despot and as exercising unilateral power may have historical antecedents. Briefly stated, man's notion of God being a capricious and tyrannical power developed under the imperial form of government. Under the monarchic form of organization, the monarchs were mostly tyrannical, vagarious and repressive. The imperial rulers exhibited their capability of power and rule in a whimsical fashion, devoid of order, rhyme or reason. Their dominance over the masses was unilateral, which left no room for mutual partnership. A king could penalise his subjects with no reason other than demonstrating his absolute power and control, that too in an arbitrary way. Human beings brought up in such fortuitous and dreadful environments associated power, control, authority and sovereignty with tempestuousness, irresponsibility and whimsicality – the basic properties of tyrants (Parwez 1989, 161-162). The masses also considered God as a hyperbolized and glorified king – the ultimate representation of an absolute, irresponsible and unaccountable ruler destroying everything in its furious course. We also find similar thoughts in Whitehead. Discussing the topic of the traditional Christian theology and its notion of God as the Controlling Power, Whitehead remarks that, "...The church gave unto God the attributes which belonged to Caesar" (Whitehead in Epperly 2001, 49). In Islamic history, the priests (mullahs) also clothed God with attributes that belonged to kings and monarchs.¹³ This, thus warped the Qur'anic God. This, briefly speaking, is the anthropocentric God conception that influenced the consciousness of man in more

¹³ "...The clergy propagated the concept of autocracy and hereditary monarchy. They likened kings to *Allah* where both are bound by no law". (Parwez, 1997).

Mouhanad Khorchide also mirrors the same thought, that the Divine Being of the Quran has for centuries been depicted as a "tribal leader" and needs emancipation, in his interview at the following link: <https://en.qantara.de/content/interview-with-mouhanad-khorchide-god-is-not-a-dictator>

primitive societies of the past, and which, more particularly, still lingers in the collective mind of the Muslims worldwide.

Iqbal, in contrast, considers, on the authority of the Qur'an, Divine omnipotence not as a blind, capricious power without limits¹⁴ but as "intimately related to Divine Wisdom (*Hikmah*)", and finds the infinite power of God "revealed, not in the arbitrary and the capricious, but in the recurrent, the regular, and the orderly" (Iqbal 2012, 64). He goes on to say, "...at the same time, the Qur'an conceives God as holding all goodness in His hands" (ibid.). In other words, the Divine Will does not operate in isolation. Rather, it is an *aspect* of the Divine ego. God's will, an aspect of His personality, is not destructive and impersonal, but a Will of a God who is good, wise, benevolent and compassionate unto His creative creation.

The next question which arises on this point is: if God's will is limited, then, how is it possible to reconcile omnipotence with limitation? The answer to this question is given in the phrase "...Divine omnipotence as intimately related to Divine wisdom" (ibid.). Put differently, the principle of limitation on God is not imposed from outside. Rather, it is, as Iqbal states "...born out of His own creative freedom..." (ibid.). On this point, it is important to distinguish between the domain of inanimate objects and the domain of self-conscious entities (humans), and, furthermore, in which manner God's power is related to each of these respective domains, from an Iqbalian point of view. To recapitulate, the power of the Divine Ego operates not as a vagarious and haphazardly force, as was exerted by human imperial rulers, but rather is manifested in a systematic, orderly, and loving way. From an Iqbalian position, there are two different ways in which God's will (power) works in the created world.¹⁵ He makes a clear distinction between the category of "amr" on the one hand and the category of "khalq" on the other. We note the following important interpretation of the aforementioned terms,

In order to understand the meaning of the word Amr, we must remember the distinction which the Qur'an draws between *Amr* and *Khalq*. Pringle-Pattison deplors that the English language possesses only one word- "creation" – to express the relation of God and the universe of extension on the one hand, and the relation of God and the human ego on the other. The Arabic language is, however, more fortunate in this respect. It has two words *Khalq* and *Amr* to express the two ways in which the creative activity of God reveals itself to us. *Khalq* is creation and *Amr* is direction (Iqbal 2012, 82).

¹⁴ "...omnipotence, abstractly conceived, is merely a blind, capricious power without limits" (Iqbal 2012, 64).

¹⁵ it is important to understand that these are not disjointed activities, but rather *expressions* of the same integral activity of the Ultimate Ego.

To begin with, the aspect of creation (*khalq*) will be considered in relation to the spatio-temporal system:

- (I) In the phenomenal domain, God's power is expressed as controlling power. This signifies the laws of cause and effect, hence natural determinism. In the natural world (*al-khalq*), all physical objects and beings are bounded by inflexible, immutable, permanent natural laws (*Kalimàt Ullah*). We constantly experience the order, harmony, regularity and structural behaviour exhibited in the external world (*afaq*). As an instance, all of the celestial bodies are moving in their prescribed orbits. The planet Earth revolves around the sun in its gravitational field. The planets run according to set calculations (causal determinism). As the Qur'an says: "...There is no changing in the laws of Allah" (10: 64). Why is this causal determinism important? For Iqbal, it is related to the temporal career of the human agent. He argues:

...The ego is called upon to live in a complex environment, and he cannot maintain his life in it without reducing it to a system which would give him some kind of assurance as to the behaviour of things around him. The view of his environment as a system of cause and effect is thus an indispensable instrument of the ego...Indeed in interpreting Nature in this way the ego understands and masters its environment, and thereby acquires and amplifies its freedom (Iqbal 2012, 86).¹⁶

Despite possessing unlimited power and freedom, God, through self-limitation, does not suspend or break these set calculations, hence leaving out the notion of "special divine action" in the sense of supernatural intervention in the spatio-temporal order. The edifice of science and the predictions we make in the sphere of natural world is a direct result of the permanence and inflexibility of natural laws.¹⁷ God, by these permanent laws, upholds and conserves the world in its being, which gives us sufficient command over our external climate(s) and scope for a meaningful

¹⁶ Ghulam Ahmed Parwez mirrors the same understanding when he asserts that, "A lawful and orderly world is the appropriate stage for a rational being like man to play his part and achieve his objects. Man can live purposefully and can fulfil his self only in a world which he can understand and control" (Parwez 1989, 166).

¹⁷ The development of quantum mechanics raises some interesting questions as regards causal determinism and indeterminism at the atomic level. Process theology utilises the theories of quantum mechanics in order to put forward their notion that freedom and partial self-determination pervades all existence. As process theologian Marjorie Suchocki states: "Every part of God's creation has some element of freedom. What we call "freedom" ranges from very low levels of indeterminately random events to very high levels of conscious decision-making" (Suchocki 2003, 7-8).

earthly career. This is something we witness with our sensory systems. Said laconically, God's relation to the natural world is marked by controlling power (*al-khalq*). In one word, the power of God is "constrictive".

The next aspect is related to the domain of human agents:

- (II) In the sphere of human beings, in which way does God's power (Will) contribute? Before we set about to examine Iqbal's views on this important topic, another dimension is deemed as necessary to mention, which is linked to Iqbal's conception of the finite ego (human being). The human entity is, for Muhammad Iqbal, "a free personal causality" (Iqbal 2012, 86). This signifies the finite ego's partial self-determination. The human being is not a predetermined creature because God has "...chosen finite egos to be participators of His life, power, and freedom" (Iqbal 2012, 64).¹⁸ The essence of this phrase is that God has limited His own omnipotence and/or controlling power in order to confer on man partial autonomy. Freedom of choice is thus the most essential property of human beings, which, in turn, is a condition of moral goodness, according to Iqbalian thought. The element of freedom entails that the human ego can select between "several courses of action open to him" (Iqbal 2012, 68). To select between various modes of action involves the possibility of choosing that which is diametrical to goodness, which is an adventure. Iqbal contends, "...that God has taken this risk shows His immense faith in man; it is for man now to justify this faith" (ibid.). Since the Qur'an is – as demonstrated in chapter 3, Iqbal's primary sanction of his views, and on the account of him speaking primarily from a Muslim standpoint, he refers to the Qur'an in order to strengthen his thesis on the basis of theological proofs. Iqbal states that "...this freedom of conscious behavior follows from the view of ego-activity which the Qur'an takes. There are verses [¹⁹] which are unmistakably

¹⁸ It is important to note that when Iqbal speaks of the finite ego and her/his partial self-determination, it only covers the domain of man's "inner life", i.e., the self/ego/person of the human being. The physical structure of *Homo sapiens* is no doubt intimately related to the physical laws as any other lower organisms.

¹⁹ The Qur'an verses Iqbal is pointing towards states: *And say: The truth is from your Lord: Let him, then, who will, believe; and let him who will, be an unbeliever* (18: 29).

If ye do well unto your own behoof will ye do well; and if ye do evil against yourselves will ye do it (17: 7).

clear on this point” (Iqbal 2012, 87, *sic*). Having thus made clear the autonomy of human agents, we are now capable of understanding the mode of Divine operation in the arena of autonomous humanity. To repeat, the power of God in relation to the physical world is exercised through controlling force. On the other hand, in the world of free humans, God’s Will takes the form of “amr”, which stands for direction. The Arabic term amr also signify guidance (Parwez 1989, 169-170).

The obvious point is that God works through guidance, and hence cannot – because of the principle of self-imposed restriction – select for the finite ego from among the various courses of action (possibilities) open to her/him. In the domain of finite egos, it is the human will which is the dominating force, not divine power. Iqbal is clear on this point by asserting that, “...God Himself cannot feel, judge, and choose for me when more than one course of action are open to me” (Iqbal 2012, 80). In process terms, God’s influence/power upon human actualities is “persuasive”, not “coercive”.²⁰ As Cobb and Griffin asserts, “...In other words, God seeks to persuade each occasion toward that possibility for its own existence which would be best for it; but God cannot control the finite occasion’s self-actualization” (Cobb and Griffin 1976, 53). By this line of thought, Iqbal precludes the conception of fatalism²¹ altogether, a theological notion which has had a profound, detrimental impact upon the Muslim consciousness.²²

Clearly, by viewing and treating God’s power as persuasive in the sphere of human beings has far-reaching temporal implications for the abstraction of God-man relations, and, an equally significant implication in relation to human-to-human interaction, both in private and corporate capacity. Cobb and Griffin also visualises the important earthly implications by interpreting God’s power as persuasive rather than cohesive: “...This change has implications in all our relations, from one-to one I-thou encounters to international relations” (Cobb and Griffin 1976, 54). The spatio-temporal implications will be dealt with in the next chapter.

²⁰ The idea of God’s power operating by *persuasion* is maybe the most essential God aspect in Christian process theology, and also in Iqbal’s process conception of God.

²¹ The doctrine holding that all events in the human realm are predetermined in advance and human entities are powerless to alter their external state of affairs.

²² The doctrine of predestiny will be dealt with in the next chapter.

We will now move on to the next section, in which I will delineate Iqbal's own position regarding the doctrines of pantheism and panentheism.

4.4 Pantheistic or Panentheistic God concept?

It requires little effort to interpret Muhammad Iqbal's God conception as pantheistic through a reading of his early poetical works, in which pantheistic elements lay shattered.²³ Irfan Iqbal, in his article "Iqbal's concept of God" (1999), outlines three periods of Iqbal's intellectual growth. During the earliest phase of Iqbal's intellectual life (1901-1908), the pantheistic mode of thought was prevalent. In the first phase of Iqbal's reflection of God, says Irfan, "...God is conceived as Eternal Beauty, the universal Idos (Idea or Ideal) of Beauty...Just like a candle ceases to burn in the presence of the sun, life of this world of matter ceases to exist in the presence of Eternal life" (Iqbal, 1999). The idea of Eternal Beauty is derived from Plato's idealistic philosophy, which regards the Eternal Beauty pervading in all things. Moreover, the idealism of Plato also entails that only Ideas and/or Forms have permanence, the rest is an illusion, a shadow, and an optical illusion, which will evaporate into the Absolute Idea from which it proceeded. In relation to human beings, the outcome of this proposition is that human entities are also reduced to non-entities; devoid of permanence and reality, and, furthermore, will be wholly assimilated into the Absolute Reality, just as a drop merges with the ocean and becomes fully absorbed, thereby losing its identity.

The idealistic pantheistic elements of platonic and neo-platonic thoughts, amalgamated with Persian pantheistic ingredients, were a major influence on early Muslim philosophers. In popular Sufism, the metaphysical doctrine of "unity of being" (*Wahdat al-Wujud*) is central. This doctrine implies that God is the only reality, the necessary Being (Wujud), from which all things emanate. God is the only reality, the rest is an illusion, with no component of reality or permanence, because all that exists is a fleeting shadow (*maya*) of the Real (God). This entails, among other factors, that God and the universe and all that exists in between are identical in nature (hence the wholly immanence of God). The external, physical world is an integrated part of God. The same implies for the human entity, as she/he has no reality of her/his own, but is only part and parcel of the Real

²³ An instance in point is Iqbal's poetical creation *Call of The Marching Bell* (1924).

Being. There is thus no distinction between the Creator and the Creation (Khalil, 1996).

In Iqbal's *Reconstruction*, which is regarded as the expression of his mature philosophical-theological thoughts, we discover several passages which indicate Iqbal's rejection of a pantheistic God conception. One of the most lucid rejections of pantheism as an inadequate theological description of the Divine (God as a featureless, cosmic force and wholly immanent), is seen through his comments on the element of light in juxtaposition to God. Iqbal, while citing Lewis Richard Farnell's²⁴ views of God as a "vague, vast, and pervasive cosmic element" (Iqbal 2012, 51) states, "I agree that the history of religion reveals modes of thought that tend towards pantheism; but I venture to think that in so far as the Qur'anic identification of God with light is concerned Farnell's view is incorrect" (ibid.). The verse which both Farnell and Iqbal are pointing to is as follows: *God is the light of the Heavens and of the earth. His light is like a niche in which is a lamp—the lamp encased in a glass—the glass, as it were, a star* (Qur'an 24: 35). Iqbal agrees with Farnell that the opening sentence of the verse cited above paves the way for an interpretation which is indicative of an "escape from an individualistic conception of God" (ibid.). But, states Iqbal, when we read the metaphor of light by taking the whole of the scriptural verse into account – something Farnell tunes out – the verse gives us the diametrical picture. Thus Iqbal, "The development of the metaphor is meant rather to exclude the suggestion of a formless cosmic element by centralizing the light in a flame which is further individualized by its encasement in a glass likened unto a well-defined star" (ibid.). Furthermore, Iqbal proposes a new interpretation, both in the revealed literature of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as regards the representation of God as light. Following the view of modern knowledge, especially the teachings of modern physics, which, according to Iqbal, "...is that the velocity of light cannot be exceeded and is the same for all observers whatever their own system of movement" (ibid.), the metaphor of light must indicate the Absoluteness of God, not His Omnipresence, "...which easily lends itself to a pantheistic interpretation" (ibid.). Moreover, while discussing God's individuality, Iqbal categorically states that, "...space and time are possibilities of the Ego [God], only partially realized in the shape of our mathematical space and time. Beyond Him and apart from His creative activity, there is neither time nor space to close Him off..." (Iqbal 2012, 52, *sic*). It is clear from what we have seen that Iqbal does not intend that the Ultimate Ego be regarded as pantheistic,

²⁴ Lewis Richard Farnell (1856-1934) was an Oxford academic functioning as Vice-Chancellor from 1920-23 and a scholar of classics.

understood as “God is identical to the rational order of the universe (*logos*) (Kessler 2008, 52), or in Sufi parlance, “Wahdat ul Wujud” (unity of being).

Another dimension of the object under investigation (Idealistic pantheism), known as Sufism/Tasawwuf in the Indo-Pak world, is connected to the human entity. For popular Sufism, the express purpose and felicity for human beings is annihilation with God (*Fana*), or, the absorption in God. This achievement of annihilation into God, by various techniques, entails the elimination of human will, and stipulates personal insignificance in front of the only Real Being. The point of view logically leads to man`s seclusion from the temporal world and its mundane affairs, thus the suppression of our vitality and efforts to shape and reshape our external environments for the betterment of humanity (Khalil, 1996). The otherworldly-oriented mysticism is considered by Muhammad Iqbal as “...a seemingly charming ideal of life which reduces the healthy and powerful to death” (Stepanyants, 1973). As mentioned earlier, Iqbal, during his intellectual career – especially in his early poetical works – was tended to a pantheistic view of existence, which also implies the unreality of human beings, reduced to mere passive conductor of God`s will. He, however, outgrew his pantheistic inclination in his more mature writings (the *Reconstruction* being the climax of his system of thought). One of Iqbal`s most shattering statements opposed to the Sufi doctrine of annihilation of the human ego, is expressed in the following words, “The end of the ego`s quest is not emancipation from the limitation of individuality; it is, on the other hand, *a more precise definition of it*” (Iqbal 2012, 156-157, emphasis added).²⁵ This statement of Iqbal serves as a fruitful point of departure to Iqbal`s panentheistic conception of the Divine Being.

Standford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP) defines the concept of panentheism in the following way:

Panentheism considers God and the world to be inter-related with the world being in God and God being in the world. It offers an increasingly popular alternative to both traditional theism and pantheism. Panentheism seeks to avoid either isolating God from the world as traditional theism often does or identifying God with the world as pantheism does (Culp, 2013).

Jay McDaniel²⁶, in his article “God with a Spacious Heart: An Introduction to Panentheism” (2016) writes that, “it [panentheism] emphasizes that all things are “in” God, even as God is more than all things added together. It envisions God, not on the analogy of Caesar, but on the analogy of Christ's own spacious heart (McDaniel, 2016). Furthermore, Epperly states that the gist of process theology’s panentheistic vision of God is, “God in all things, and all things in God” (Epperly 2011, 28). In other words, God is not depicted as the “wholly other”, but rather as the “wholly present one”, “whose existence cannot be contained by the world (ibid.).

Before we proceed, there is one important difference to highlight. As McDaniel notes in his article “Panentheism: The Universe as God’s body” (2015), panentheism is, in his own words, “...a multi-religious option”. By “multi-religious option”, he means that there are various advocates for panentheism, who are working in their own religious contexts, responding to their own belief-systems. Therefore, “you can be a Jewish panentheist, a Christian panentheist, a Muslim panentheism [panentheist]...” (McDaniel, 2015, *sic*).

During the various sections, which present the most central attributes of the Iqbalian God conception, it is made clear that Iqbal perceive God not as wholly immanent – being identical with the universe ontologically – but also transcending the created order (Iqbal 2012, 45, 52, 53, 57, and 62). In other words, Iqbal’s notion cannot be interpreted as pantheistic, because for Iqbal, as Whittemore contends, “...outside God there is no individual, there is nothing...” (Whittemore, 1956). For Muhammad Iqbal, God’s transcendence is such that there cannot exist any ontological entity “apart from” God, that limits His creative activity or Being. Furthermore, Iqbal’s God is neither a deistic God, because the created order is not ontologically separated from God but rather organically related to The Ultimate Self, which is, in Iqbalian terminology, “the partial expression of the Ultimate Ego” (Iqbal 2012, 52). In one word, Iqbal’s God conception is neither pantheistic, nor deistic, but panentheistic – understood by it that the created world is not identical with God, nor separate from God, but in God, who also is more than the sum total of the universe.²⁷

²⁶ Jay McDaniel, a philosopher and theologian, works as a professor of Religion at Hendrix Collage. His speciality is process thought, and has written numerous books and articles on the subject. For more information about J. McDaniel, visit the following site: <https://www.hendrix.edu/religion/religion.aspx?id=2945>

²⁷ Parwez also reflects the panentheistic understanding of the Divine. Says he, “In the Qur’an, God is presented as both Immanent and Transcendent. He works in the world as a creative urge and also exists

Before we proceed, it is noteworthy to mention a criticism posed by Salman Raschid, a retired British psychiatrist, against the notion of Iqbal's God. The gist of Raschid's criticism about Iqbal's notion of God is related to a finite idea of divinity. Argues Raschid, "...His concept of God is a finite (panentheistic) one...Iqbal's finite deity cannot be reconciled with the supremely transcendent, but also immanent, God of the Quran." (Raschid 2010, xvii). Further, the ground for Raschid's statement for the finite deity of Iqbal's God consist of "the inclusion of the created order (nature) within the being of the creator (God)" (Raschid 2010, 62). He goes on to assert that "Iqbal's discussion of God's ego-hood and infinitude and the divine attributes (creativity, eternity, knowledge and omnipotence) all reinforces his fundamentally finite notion of deity" (Raschid 2010, 63). For Raschid, Iqbal's notion of God is finite because God includes the created world within His Being. The question to be asked is: if God do not include the created world in His being, then, by implication, the "created world" must ontologically be situated outside God, hence opposed to God. If such be so, then how is it possible to reconcile God's "infinitude" by this line of reasoning? Moreover, as I have explained, the doctrine of panentheism, from a process perspective, do not signify finitude. On the contrary, it stands for God's transcendence as well as God's immanence. That God includes the created world in His Being only reinforces God's transcendence, not His finitude. A less "embracing" God would be less "infinite". We need not delve into these subtle issues, which will take us far-off from our primary topic under investigation.

Coming to the relation between the finite and the Infinite entity, Iqbal provides us with a reformed God-human model. According to Iqbal's understanding of the Qur'anic scripture, the kernel of the book is to make the human being conscious of his multiplex relations with God and the universe (Iqbal 2012, 7). For Iqbalian process thought (as with Christian process thinking), God is the Ultimate Ego, and the most creative entity, but not the only one. Thus, by virtue of possessing partial self-determination, the human agent is capable, through his own private efforts, to become God's co-worker. Iqbal is pellucid on this important issue by asserting that, "...man occupies a genuine place in the heart of the Divine creative activity, and thus possesses a much higher degree of reality than things around him. Of all the creations of God he alone is capable of *consciously participating in the creative life of his Maker*" (Iqbal 2012, 58, emphasis added). In order to become a dynamic

outside it as its ground. He manifests Himself in nature and yet transcends it. He is eternal and yet in the changing world every day a new phase of His glory is presented to our view..." (Parwez 1989, 75).

and creative factor in the life of God, the human being must not release herself/himself from the limitations of individuality so as to submerge in the Divine Being, but, on the other hand, actualise and fortify his creative potentialities and instincts. Because God Himself “...has chosen finite egos to be participators of His life, power, and freedom” (Iqbal, 2012, 64). As Iqbal understands it, the express aim of the human ego is not to *see* something (as was the case in in popular Sufism), but to *be* something. For Iqbal, to be is to *create* and *re-create* by continuous action (Iqbal 2012, 56-57, emphasis added).

This reformed God-man model differs significantly from that of pantheistic and classical theistic model: a model depicting only God as the sole creator and reality, whereas human entities are mere spectators of a spectacular show of creation. Iqbal, by interpreting Divine power as “directive agency” in the domain of human beings, sheds light on the relationship between God and humanity, which is not based on a rigid and frightening master-servant model, but as a dynamic bond in which humanity has a stake in the creative, open-ended advance of the universe (a line in becoming). One of the most important aspects, if not *the* most essential aspect, that need to be challenged by reformist voices in the Islamic world, is related to the projection of God and the image of humanity as found in the Qur`anic scripture, and, furthermore, how these conceptions and ideas unfold on the temporal stage between humans and their environment.²⁸

In this chapter I have answered one of my proposed research questions through a *process* perspective without losing sight of Iqbal`s Islamic standpoint. Muhammad Iqbal departs radically from the more classical interpretations of the Divine attributes of omniscience and omnipotence, interpretations that were more inclined to portray God in the image of dictators marked by unilateralist power, and a perfect Being with unchanging knowledge. I have also argued that Iqbal`s conception of God – in his *Reconstruction* book – is neither pantheistic, nor deistic, but relational panentheistic, understood as God being both immanent and transcendent, a position which does justice to the autonomy and reality of actual entities (cf. human beings).

In terms of Iqbalian process thought, it is hoped that his chapter charts a new ground and raises questions partially answered and partially left open. It does pave the way for a process-driven interpretation of God, indebted to Iqbal but also moving beyond Iqbal, building upon other themes in the Qur`an and Whiteheadian conceptuality.

²⁸ Mouhanad Khorchide has in one of his interviews states that “we need an objective, courageous debate within Islam – on the image of God and man in the Koran among other things” (Topcu, 2015).