Chapter II

A Philosophy of the Individual

One of the most well-known Islamic mystics, Hussein ibn Mansur al-Hallaj, was beheaded in Baghdad in 922 for having declared, in a famous theopathic utterance: *ana'l Haqq*, which is to say, as Louis Massignon translates, 'I am the creating Truth = my 'I' is God'.[22]

But which 'I' is speaking in the man who says '*I* am the Truth'? It should be truth itself, so inconceivable is it that such a predicate could be attributed to a finite ego. Truth alone being able, truthfully, to testify for itself, only an 'I' previously annulled by it, and in it, could, not *profess regarding itself*: 'I am the Truth', but be the *instrument* of this testimony. Only in such a way can the very act of positing oneself as a witness not change the unicity, the 'aloneness' of what it bears witness to.

When this unicity that leaves nothing outside of it is fully realised, to say 'I am the Truth', like a drop of water saying 'I am the Ocean', is not to make a scandalous statement but simply to recognise the impossibility of being fully oneself, of being able to claim a separate position in one's finiteness in order to speak to the infinite in the accusative and say to it: '*you* are the truth'. This utterance thus appears as the sign of an absorption of the 'I' into the totality, and its ultimate meaning would be the same as an indefinite repetition of the third person: '*Him*'…

Muhammad Iqbal invites us to transform our perspective, to turn aside from this path of absorption, and the metaphysics it expresses, to one of 'the loving embrace of the finite': 'In the higher Sufism of Islam', he writes, 'unitive experience is not the finite ego effacing its own identity by some sort of absorption into the Infinite Ego; it is rather the Infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite'.[23] He thus invites us to turn our back on a Sufism of extinction for a philosophy of action founded, on the contrary, on a self-affirmation that is more faithful, according to him, to what represents the true Quranic conception both of 'the value and destiny of the human ego'.[24]

Self-affirmation

In his presentation of *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, Muhammad Iqbal draws on the metaphysics of Sufism, and on the notion, which is an essential feature of this metaphysics, of the 'impersonal absorption' which he says appears for the first time in Bayazid Bistami; and as a consequence of such a notion, he explains that we will inevitably be led to the famous and 'hopelessly pantheistic' *logion* of Hussein ibn Mansur al-Hallaj 'who, following the true spirit of Indian Vedantism, exclaimed: 'I am God' (*Aham Brahma asmi*)'.[25]

This is a case of the condensed expression of a pantheistic metaphysics which, turning its back on an emanative and neo-Platonic theory of creation,[26] will conceive it rather as being, in a passive mode so to speak, the reflected image of eternal Beauty. An image reflected in nature and equally in human being, who would thus be wrong to think of themselves as entities apart: all sense of separation according to such a doctrine would simply be the result of ignorance of this essential truth that alterity is mere appearance, a dream, a shadow that could never, when faced with the sole Reality, achieve the consistency of an 'I' or mark the emergence, in the heart of Being, of *personality*.

A necessary consequence that follows such a set of premises is that immortality is always impersonal. In the terms of an Aristotelian such as Ibn Rushd (Averroès), for example, immortality only properly belongs to the universal active Intellect alone; who is, in effect, *no one*. And such an immortality would have no other significance then than being the final reabsorption of the false multiplicity of shadows into the light of the impersonal totality.

> Intelligence, according to Ibn-i-Rushd', writes Iqbal: 'is not from of the body; it belongs to a different order of being, and transcends individuality. It is, therefore, one, universal, and eternal. This obviously means that, since unitary intellect transcends individuality, its appearance as so many unities in the multiplicity of human persons, is a mere illusion. The eternal unity of intellect may mean, as Renan thinks, the everlastingness of humanity and civilization; it does not surely mean personal immortality.[27]

The metaphysical alternative is thus between a monism of Being from which no 'creation' would be able to emerge from Himself or ontological pluralism. 'Thus it is' Iqbal says 'that monist and pluralist thought have responded to each other dialectically throughout history, taking different forms each time according to the context'. And we can see 'he adds' in the way the pluralism of beings, that Leibniz called monads, represented an objection to the pantheism of Spinoza which followed from his definition of substance as being, in all necessity, singular, an analogy to the path taken by Wâhid Mahmûd who, in the 8th century, opposed the monistic doctrines and taught that 'reality is not one, but many – primary living units which combine in various ways, and gradually rise to perfection by passing through an ascending scale of forms'.[28]

The universe, Wahîd Mahmûd also says, still explaining his metaphysical atomism, is composed of *afrâd*, 'essential units, or simple atoms which have existed from all eternity, and are endowed with life. The law of the Universe is an ascending perfection of elemental matter, continually passing from lower to higher forms determined by the kind of food which the fundamental units assimilate'.[29]

The Iqbalian philosophy of the affirmation of the consistency of the individual self will be able to reconnect with the principle of this pluralist reaction to monism, in the same way that it will retain the idea, such as it is found in Suhrawardî's philosophy of *Illumination*, of a continuous movement which is the spiritual progress of individual souls that is not ended even by death: 'The individual souls, after death, are not unified into one Soul, but continue different from each other in proportion to the *illumination* they received during their companionship with physical organisms'.[30]

The amount of *illumination* received qualifies individuals differently. Two souls cannot be the same, which would then justify their ultimate reabsorption into the heart of the one undifferentiated totality that would be identical to them. On the contrary, for Suhrawardî, who Iqbal states that he anticipated the Leibnizian theory of indiscernables,[31] the continuous journey of souls traces differentiated and individualized spiritual trajectories. This progress is always the state of a soul-body unity welded together by love and occupied by the desire for *illumination* and it's this unity that is the site of the human ideal of ascension in the scale of being, which also constitutes a continuous process of emerging freedom, which is to say awareness of self as being a distinct individuality:[32] awareness of self as *personality*.

Overall, even if we can see pantheistic aspects in Suhrawardî's illuminationist philosophy, it remains, for Iqbal, that it posits two affirmations that will be close to the principle of his own thought: *the world is something real and the human soul is a distinct individuality*. In virtue of these affirmations, the illuminationist philosophy breaks with the metaphysics of a certain Sufism of the extinction of individuality in the Whole. This is the same break that Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy of self and action will make, where it is a matter, as he writes at the end of his *Development of Metaphysics in Persia* of turning away from 'pure speculation and dreamy mysticism' to 'rouse the spirit to a consciousness of the stern reality of things'.[33]

The Test of Consistency

The ultimate end of the human ego is not to be absorbed in contemplation; it is not to *see* something, Iqbal declares, following on in the words that conclude his *Lectures* and where he discloses the ego's moment of 'supreme bliss' as well as its 'greatest trial' at the same time: 'It is in the ego's effort to *be* something that he

discovers his final opportunity to sharpen his objectivity and acquire a more fundamental 'I am' which finds evidence of its reality not in the Cartesian 'I think' but in the Kantian 'I can'. The end of the ego's quest is not emancipation from the limitations of individuality; it is, on the other hand, a more precise definition of it. The final act is not an intellectual act, but a vital act which deepens the whole being of the ego, and sharpens his will with the creative assurance that the world is not merely something to be seen and known through concepts, but something to be made and re-made through continuous action. It is a moment of supreme bliss and also a moment of the greatest trial for the ego…'[34]

This passage perfectly illuminates the notion that is at the heart of Iqbalian thought, that of *khudî*, the self, which, far from pursuing its own annihilation within the light of the Whole, affirms itself on the contrary, before God Himself. The desire to bear witness to one's own being – simply because to be is precisely to show oneself as a desire to be – is not extinguished in the divine Presence. Or rather, this desire to be needs, at its finest extremity, to have God Himself as its witness and its test, so to speak. In the language of poetry, as found in the *Book of Eternity*, this witnessing by God of the finite ego is evoked as follows:

> Invoke the aid of three witnesses to verify thy 'Station'.
> The first witness is thine own consciousness –
> See thyself, then, with thine own light.
> The second witness is the consciousness of another ego –
> See thyself, then, with the light of an ego other than thee.
> The third witness is God's consciousness –
> See thyself, then, with God's light.
> If thou standest unshaken in front of this light,
> Consider thyself as living and eternal as He!
> That man alone is real who dares –
> Dares to see God face to face! [35]

This theme of individual reality that is experienced even at the level of divine Reality is present everywhere in Iqbal's poetic work. It is, he indicates, the significance of the attitude, given as an example, of the Prophet of Islam when, faced with ultimate Reality: 'the eye did not waver, nor yet did it stray' (Quran 53:17), and it forms the motif of some of the strongest images in his poetry: that, for example, of the atom that feels its own light in the presence of the sun, that of the drop of water that persists even in the depths of the ocean…

It is a theme that is organically connected to another that also pervades Iqbal's poetic work and which concerns the consistency, the solidity of the ego. Thus, the drop of water persists precisely because it has been able to take on the consistency of the pearl; the wave retains its being because it is sculpted by

its movement; if coal and the diamond have the same origins, the diamond is what it is because in its ripened and solidified form it has taken on its own hardness, whereas: 'When the mountain loses its self, it turns into sands'.[36]

We can observe the metaphysical reversal that Muhammad Iqbal performs in the significance he henceforth gives to mystical experience according to this perspective of self-affirmation. The Hallajian experience in particular comes to be thought in a totally different way to what it seemed to mean when it was evoked in *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*; and from now on the Sufi martyr is given, when the poet encounters him in 'The Sphere of Jupiter', the task of speaking against the negation represented by the annihilation of self: 'You who seek your goal in annihilation', 'non-existence can never discover existence'.[37]

We are indebted to the work of Louis Massignon, who collected and published the *Fragments d'Halladj* and thus allowed us to have a more faithful perspective on the meaning of his famous words, to have understood in this way the true interpretation of his experience. Consequently, Iqbal writes, we can understand that this 'is not the drop slipping into the sea, but the realisation and bold affirmation in an undying phrase of the reality of the human ego in a profounder personality'.[38]

From this perspective, there is no comparison with the destiny of the Fallen Angel, Satan, which cannot be read as a 'personalist testimony', according to a reading which is effectively encountered within the Sufi tradition, where it is a matter of taking the full measure of the ambivalence of the rebellion of one who was initially a prince among angels. Satan is in effect that being who learned to say 'I', and, thus discovering ego and personality, ultimately exiled himself within the pathology of self that is egoism: 'Thy soul cares only for itself, like the camel: 'It is self-conceited, self-governed, and self-willed'.[39]

It remains nonetheless that he stood in this way against the order to bow before a creature, keeping in mind the 'only venerable prostration': 'The only venerable prostration, Is the one that excludes all others'!'[40]

In this sense, his revolt carries the positive message of self-affirmation as witness to Unity and that of a negation which went on to make the self a self formed by jealousy, a self that ends up expressing nothing more than resentment: 'I am better than he: Thou hast created me out of fire, whereas him Thou hast created out of clay' (Quran 38:76), Satan says to explain his refusal to prostrate himself before him who God has nevertheless 'breathed into him of His spirit' (Quran 15:29).

The stance of the 'divine rebel' carries for man – for he has to learn what he must become – a lesson that is expressed through the complaint Satan addresses to God, in the *Javid Nama*, bitterly regretting not having in humanity an adversary worthy of him, precisely because humanity has not known how to acquire the

consistency and solidity of an 'I' and doesn't have the personality, hard like a diamond, to oppose to the fire he himself has been created from:

> This runt Adam, what is he? A handful of twigs; and all a handful of twigs needs is a spark coming from me. If all that exists in this world is twigs, what is the use of having given me so much fire? It is not much to melt glass, but to melt stone counts for something! … I want a creature who turns my head, whose gaze makes me tremble. A man who would say to me: 'Get out of my sight.' A man before whom I would no longer be worth anything. Oh God! A living man who loves the truth! Perhaps then I would take pleasure in defeat![41]

The aim is thus to become a person and this happens through action. It is in action that the conquest of personality occurs, that the 'I' emerges and acquires more and more consistency; it is also in action that it is tested. Like the 'restless wave', the 'I' becomes aware of itself not in an 'I am' of the pure reflexive grasp of oneself, but an 'I am' that is revealed to oneself by being revealed in action.

In a poem whose title is precisely *Action and Life*, in the collection *Message from the East,*[42] the wave says: 'To roll on is to be, to lie still not to be'. The heart of the Iqbalian philosophy is this movement, this permanent restlessness that is life itself, for always: 'Life seeks to build a new universe'.[43] It's thus in this way that we must think the universe as the permanent project, the always-open construction site of the ultimate ego, continuously creative, from which the other egos proceed. Not then like a world emerging ready-made from an instantaneous act of creation achieved once and for all, a world that henceforth only offers itself for contemplation, a world to be *seen*, but, on the contrary, as a world to *be* and consequently, to act, a world for *becoming-person*.

A Cosmology of Emergence

The stakes of a philosophy of the self is not simply saving the finite ego from impersonality. It is also, and perhaps firstly, ultimate Reality that it is a case of offering to be thought as being genuinely an ego. It is the very conception of God that it is a matter of releasing, as well, from a pantheism that would make of Him 'some vague, vast and pervasive cosmic element, such as light', as Iqbal states in the third of his *Lectures* devoted to 'The Conception of God and the Meaning of Prayer'.[44]

Dwelling on this last comparison of God with light, which he reminds us is encountered in the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the poet-philosopher indicates that the well-known verse in the Quran (24:35) that identifies God with 'the light of the Heavens and of the earth', seems on the contrary to invite us to conceive of an individual using this metaphor. Let us consider the verse in its totality, which is to say what Iqbal calls the 'development of the metaphor': 'His light is like a niche in which is a lamp – the lamp encased in glass – the glass, as it were, a star'.

This description, he says, '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 glass likened unto a well-defined star'.[45]

Generally speaking, the concept of God as an individual is central in the Quranic notion of God whose ultimate expression is Iqbal says. This *sura* is given as the very definition of divinity and which is thus called, for this reason the *sura* of 'pure faith' or of 'deep religion' according to Jacques Berque's translation. The verse is as follows:

> SAY: 'He is the One God:
> God the Eternal, the Uncaused Cause of All Being.
> He begets not, and neither is He begotten;
> and there is nothing that could be compared with Him'.[46]

To hear these lines is to understand that they indicate to us the very significance of individuality. On this point, Iqbal says, there is an important lesson to draw from the thought of Henri Bergson concerning individuality or, more precisely, what he calls the tendency to individuation: 'while the tendency to individuate is everywhere present in the organized world, it is everywhere opposed by the tendency towards reproduction. For the individuality to be perfect, it would be necessary that no detached part of the organism could live separately. But then reproduction would be impossible. For what is reproduction, but the building up of a new organism with a detached fragment of the old? Individuality therefore harbours its enemy at home'.[47]

Muhammad Iqbal, who quotes this passage, deduces from it that at the summit of the scale that constitutes beings according to the degree to which what we may call a 'becoming-individual' has been achieved within them, the accomplished individual can only think itself as one in which there is absolutely no trace of the 'enemy' tendency to leave oneself. Because it is perfect, this individual is necessarily then 'closed off as an ego, peerless and unique'.[48] It is not, however, totally closed in on itself, after the mode of the divine in Aristotle – which Aristotle defines as a 'thought of his thought' to express that its nature consists entirely of immobile contemplation of its own eternity. Quite to the contrary – and here we can usefully elucidate Iqbal's suggestion by evoking the distinction made by Gaston Berger in his reading of Louis Lavelle's work and in particular what Lavelle says regarding Being: because it is perfect, the Individual is 'something else entirely than a static reality: it is an Act even if this is only an *action* that takes place within time'.[49]

This distinction between 'act' and 'action' is important because it is precisely a matter of avoiding what Aristotle himself sought to avoid by completely separating the divine from becoming: making it a prisoner of time by inscribing its activity within the succession of causes and effects. Furthermore, Iqbal indicates, this Aristotelian conception aiming to save divinity from the order of

succession has not been without influence on the theological approach of certain thinkers in Islam, such as Ibn-i-Hazm, for example.[50] In effect, this Islamic theologian from Andalusia, who died in 1064, had been led to wonder about the meaning to give to an attribute like 'living', when it is predicated of God, precisely through fear of thus seeing the divine live, with a life that, by definition, is change. The solution he found is the prudently literalist one that consists of indicating that the only reason for speaking of God as living is that he Himself speaks of Himself in that way in His Book; it is thus understood that aside from this purely scriptural reference, the life of being is the price to pay in order to affirm His perfection.

For Iqbal however, it is necessary to be able to say that life is of being because it is the same thing to be and to be alive. But also, in effect, to be living and to be in movement is the same thing. Being is not enclosed within a 'life' that only pertains to its mystery and whose only relation to life, which is essentially movement, is one of pure homonymy. Such an enclosure would not make Being perfect, but 'utter inaction, a motiveless, stagnant neutrality, an absolute nothing.'[51] No doubt we don't refer to its action but more precisely of its act. To speak of an act rather than an action is thus to establish here a clear distinction between two radically different conceptions of time. Between the time of succession of causes and effects, that the intellect spreads out and cuts up following the analytic mode that is proper to it, and time as 'living creative *moment*' wholly within a 'now' where the *past* – what the separating intelligence calls such – operates within a *present* in which *future* possibilities open up.[52]

Being is not concluded from the thought of its inert perfection but from the experience of its creative movement. This formula could summarize the reproach Iqbal makes to the different forms of metaphysical argument to 'prove' God. They begin, he considers, by always positing a radical duality between thought and being, digging 'an unbridgeable gulf between the ideal and the real' and then wishing to reach the infinite by a simple negation of the finite.[53] In the end, these different arguments for proving God by manufacturing the infinite from the finite share with Zeno's paradox the desire to manufacture movement from immobility.

It is on the contrary movement that must serve as the point of departure, and the experience we have of it, this being possible precisely because 'thought and intuition are organically related', for which reason 'thought is capable of reaching an immanent Infinite in whose self-unfolding movement the various finite concepts are merely moments'.[54] It can thus be observed: this Iqbalian thought, one of whose foundational ideas is that there is a relation to the infinite within us that constitutes us and that it is 'the presence of the total Infinite in the movement of knowledge that makes finite thinking possible', can be understood both in the light of Spinoza's philosophy as well as Bergson which it willingly draws on.

This conception of Iqbal's according to which thought – as the world and as time – is full, so to speak, of the infinite goes then against the rationalist dogmatism that is expressed in the scholastic arguments that are offered as proofs of the existence of God; but it also refutes the Kantian attitude which 'failed to see that thought, in the very act of knowledge, passes beyond its own finitude',[55] an attitude that is comparable to that of Abu Hamid Al-Ghazâlî (1058-1111), the philosopher *Algazel* of the Middle Ages, who considered that thought, because it was condemned to be enclosed within finitude, necessarily had to abolish itself to give way to mystical experience alone.

Ghazâlî is moreover the author of a work entitled *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*,[56] which is the full expression of the conflict between speculative theology and philosophy in Islam, where he attempts to discuss and refute twenty theses that he believes sums up the doctrine of those who imported Greek metaphysics into the heart of the Islamic spiritual universe. There is one particular question which constitutes a point on which, according to Ghazâlî, these philosophers can be considered to be, quite simply, heretics: that of the co-eternity of the world of matter with God. This point which forms the topic of the first of the twenty discussions that make up the work is presented by Ghazâlî in the following way:

> The philosophers consider that the world has never ceased to exist with God …, to be His effect, to exist together with Him and not to be posterior to Him in time in the way that the effect coexists with the cause and the light with the sun.[57]

The Iqbalian cosmology of emergence transforms the question itself by firstly pointing out that it is a matter of misconceiving it as a static confrontation between the creator and his creation. The misconception on the one hand consists in positing the creative act of God as finite, on the other hand of giving it an external aspect that confronts Him as an other and on which He would act from outside. The Creator in this case simply beholds the spectacle of creation. However, because the act of God is itself infinite, eternal, the universe never ceases to be in 'organic relation to the life of its maker', it is nothing other than the 'free creative energy' which unfolds itself in our interpretations of it as space, time or matter.[58] And it's in an analogous way that Iqbal conceives, regarding the finite ego, the philosophical question, traditional since Descartes, of the union of the soul and the body. It is not a matter of constituting them as substances that are so radically different that their union becomes unthinkable other than under the form of metaphors, necessarily approximate, like that of the captain and his ship; nor of explaining that if they influence each other despite their absolute independence, it is because of a pre-established harmony that arranges it so that the modalities of the body have, in a parallel fashion from all perspectives, their equivalent following the modalities of the soul, and reciprocally, and Iqbal has in mind here the Leibnizian position on the question.[59]

Contrary to the very conception that begins by establishing a radical separation between soul and body so as to then wonder how their union can be conceived, the Iqbalian philosophy presents the soul as the emergence of consciousness from a higher order outside of the lower-order 'colony of egos' that constitutes matter.[60] Thus, what we call life and mind is a 'creative synthesis' which makes emerge the *event* of an 'unforeseeable and novel fact on its own plane of being, and cannot be explained mechanistically'.[61] The body can thus be seen as a 'system of acts' that 'repeat themselves' linked to the 'spontaneity' of mind, such that the body will precisely be conceived as 'accumulated action' which, as such, is not detachable from the soul whose 'habit' it represents.[62] And Iqbal draws an analogy with the relationship of God to creation by pointing out that nature as a 'structure of events' and 'systematic mode of behaviour' appears as 'organic to the ultimate Self' and as the 'habit' of God, following a Quranic expression.[63]

In all, the Iqbalian philosophy aims to go beyond the thought of a creation external to its creator and to posit the creative activity of the ultimate Ego as a continuous act in an eternal present that is only broken down by thought: and the philosopher-poet recalls in this regard[64] that when a disciple said in the presence of Ba Yazid of Bistam that 'There was a moment of time when God existed and nothing else existed beside Him', the master replied: 'It is just the same now as it was then.'

The ultimate Ego will be presented, without It being subject to becoming since it is faced with nothing outside of it, as the immanent Self which animates and supports the whole of a continuous creation, of a 'growing universe and not an already completed product which left the hand of its maker ages ago, and is now lying stretched in space as a dead mass of matter to which time does nothing, and consequently is nothing'.[65] His cosmology of emergence represents a major theme of Iqbal's poetic oeuvre.

Thus, after his *Prologue*, the poem *The Secrets of the Self* opens on a cosmogenesis where we see that the Self, whose potential sleeps in each atom and whose 'nature' is 'to manifest itself' – The form of existence is an effect of the Self, 'Whatsoever thou seest is a secret of the Self' – does so by expending itself with a measureless generosity which is simply the unfolding of its overabundance:

> For the sake of a single rose it destroys a hundred rose gardens
> And makes a hundred lamentation in quest of a single melody.
> For one sky it produces a hundred new moons,
> And for one word a hundred discourses.
> The excuse for this wastefulness and cruelty
> Is the shaping and perfecting of spiritual beauty.

The 'wastefulness' and 'cruelty' in question are nothing here but the very features of the creative force of which art carries the trace, they are the manifestation of that for which 'The spaciousness of Time is the arena' and to whose very essence it is to always overflow, in an inexhaustible superabundance.

Incompleteness is not imperfection, but on the contrary creative tension which riddles a universe that is always to be made – as 'He adds to His creation whatever He wills' (Quran, 35:1) – and God is not on board *within* evolution – it is to us, to our human way of seeing, that one of His signs appears as the alternation of day and night – since He *is* the evolution that, from His point of view, outside of any order of succession, in pure duration, 'means unfailing realisation of the infinite creative possibilities of His being which retains its wholeness throughout the entire process.'[66] It is for this reason that, at several points in his *Lectures*, Iqbal recalls the prophetic saying that identifies God with time (*dahr*): 'Do not speak ill of time, for time is God.'

And thus, when we hold the two points of view together, we understand that, according to the words of the poet Goethe, whom he cites:[67] 'All the straining, all the striving Is eternal peace in God'.

Nor is incompleteness a blind *élan vital* that no teleology can shed light on, as if: 'Its flames burned a hundred Abrahams', it is so that 'That the lamp of one Muhammad might be lighted'.[68]

And it is on this point that Muhammad Iqbal parts ways with Bergson – for whom, we learn from Louis Massignon, he immediately felt a spiritual affinity. In his *Lectures* he says that he is the only contemporary thinker to have engaged in philosophical reflection on the notion of duration.[69]

According to Bergson, 'when I look towards my conscious experience and ask myself what "existing" means to me, I encounter a series of successive states, feelings and representations that vary continually, and above all continuously, such that in all rigor I shouldn't even speak of a state, a word that precisely implies a certain *stability'*. Thus, Bergson says in the first pages of *Creative Evolution*, 'My mental state, as it advances on the road of time, is continually swelling with the duration which it accumulates: it goes on increasing – rolling upon itself, as a snowball on the snow'.[70] If we thus speak of a *state*, it is precisely because our attention manufactures a discontinuous psychological life, which distinguishes and separates, where there is the continuity of a flow, states which will then be joined up again, as one threads pearls, by a self who would be their immutable substrate. Time, from this point, is spatialized, inscribed within an external order of things: in a 'spurious existence', Iqbal comments.[71]

When meditation grasps the inner center within the deep self, the very *élan* of the life of the ego, where what are called states are melted in an indivisible and organic movement, it encounters a unique 'present', the one that is split up by the attention into a series of 'nows' that are substituted for each other successively: it then has the experience of pure duration, of 'time regarded as an organic whole that the Quran describes as 'Taqdir' or the destiny'.[72]

Closely following Bergson's text, Iqbal insists on the free creative movement that is original and that constitutes the universe, things being only what the intelligence carves out, whose more or less stabilized contours it outlines, thus

creating the separation that isolates fragments of Reality with a view to the action we carry out on them. But he rejects in Bergson the idea that the analysis of our conscious experience can lead us to the notion of a 'forward rush of the vital impulse' that would be 'wholly arbitrary, undirected, chaotic, and unforeseeable in its behaviour'.[73]

We can understand the rejection of teleology in so far as it represents a de-realization of time, which would only appear as the simple unfolding of a predetermined program. Time is de-realized if it is nothing but the distance that still separates a beginning from a goal which it simply has to seek out, so to speak. There is no longer in this case any *event*, strictly speaking, the future like the past stretching out in a vision that could embrace everything, that of the intelligence that Laplace has spoken of, that knows how to see the end in the beginning.

For Muhammad Iqbal, to not de-realize time is to conceive teleology in a different way starting with the very meaning of what it is to live. The feeling of teleological orientation is identical to the very feeling of life, as 'to live is to shape and change ends and purposes and to be governed by them'.[74] Orientation is not the inexorable realisation of a foreseen end, located at the end of an already-traced line; it should rather be understood as a movement of anticipation and projection, always in the present, which makes time the living and becoming reality of a process that is illuminated by a vision of the future.

And we can understand this non-deterministic teleology, this movement that not only does not deny the open character of the future, but makes this openness its very condition, by mentioning in its regard two notions that are at the heart of another philosophy of action that has already been evoked: that of Gaston Berger. These two notions are that of the *prospective*, which is pursued by this author's phenomenological approach, and that of 'a world that goes toward its youth', according to a Bergerian expression that expresses well what we have called, in Iqbal, 'a cosmology of emergence'.

Gaston Berger has given us a striking image of the prospective: it is the lights required by a car, running faster and faster, after nightfall, on a dark road, which is thus recreated to the extent that it is spread beneath the light that pierces the night.[75] It would thus be incorrect to think that the notion of the prospective is based on foresight. It is, on the contrary, because the world is made of events that we need a notion of prospective attitude that is anticipatory. In Gaston Berger's words: the world is not 'a finite set of problems';[76] on the contrary, each invention only multiplies the possibilities implied in a movement that is accelerating. If to age, then, is to see the possibilities on offer gradually become reduced, as well as one's own ability to take up what comes along, so as to become progressively enclosed within what one is, then the world – and humanity – 'far from aging, is becoming younger and younger'.[77]

These Bergerian notions, which are interconnected, shed a certain amount of light on the Iqbalian thought of the ultimate Reality as 'pure duration in which thought, life and purpose inter-penetrate to form an organic unity', as a 'rationally directed creative life'.[78] And to conceive this life as that of an ego is not a case of anthropomorphism: it is to escape the pantheism of an indifferent entity in order to conceive a genuine Unity that the poet describes as perceiving itself in a more accomplished way, which is to say tests itself, in the mental attitude that is prayer.