

Chapter IV

Fidelity and Movement

On Science

In his monumental *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Majid Fakhry has Muhammad Iqbal occupy a prominent position among the representatives of 'modernism', at the heart of a line in which one encounters the names of the Persian reformer Djamal al-Dîn al Afghânî (1839–1897), who can be considered as the spiritual father of this current of thought, the Egyptian Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), a disciple of the first, or, in India, Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898) and Sayyid Amir Ali (1849–1928).

One of the essential characteristics of the 'modernist' attitude is, in his opinion, the insistence of thinkers in this current on the conjunction between religion and science, and on the role of the spirit of research and analysis in the development of civilization.¹⁴⁹ Thus, for example, in his *Presentation of the Muslim Religion*,¹⁵⁰ Muhammad Abduh writes that it is 'in the nature of man to be guided by science' – the science of the universe, he specifies – 'and the knowledge of things of the past'.¹⁵¹ He recalls the suggestion of a 'contemporary Western philosopher' according to whom civilization developed in Europe when it was based on 'the emancipation of the will and independence in judgement', two principles that allowed many minds to 'become acquainted' and 'acknowledge in each other the right to exercise their will and seek the truth under the guidance of their reason'; and he adds that 'the philosopher in question specified that it was a ray of light from Islamic culture and Muslim science that enlightened them in the 16th century'.¹⁵²

It must be said that this recollection of a period when the spirit of inquiry and free thought were honored in the Islamic world, and which then contributed to their development in Europe, is common in those thinkers called 'modernist' and in particular represents an important aspect of Muhammad Iqbal's position.

But in other respects Majid Fakhry also expresses a certain irritation with the place and role that science holds, according to him, in Islamic modernist thought. And it is with particular regard to Muhammad Iqbal, he says, given his universality of spirit as well as the learning and eclecticism shown in the references he introduces into his arguments – Fakhry considers them to be sometimes 'exasperating' – that he denounces what he considers to be the mistake of the modernists in general: 'By joining the Islamic or Quranic conception of man and the world to the current stage of scientific development, as Iqbal did particularly, the modernists make a ... very dangerous mistake, since they subordinate the religious truth of Islam to the doubtful truth of a scientific phase. And if the history of scientific progress teaches us anything, it is the ephemeral nature of such scientific phases, whether they are associated with the venerable names of Aristotle or Ptolemy or with the modern pioneers such as Newton, Eddington or Einstein'.¹⁵³

In a word, there is thus a scientific and obscurantistic way of referring to scientific discourse; and, at the end of this criticism, is perhaps indeed found the idea that, on this level, modernism runs a high risk of being nothing but a scientism, a simple varnish composed of allusions, gratuitous in the end, to a scientific juncture that is essentially changeable. There would in this case be the danger of misunderstanding the non-fluctuating truth of the religious domain.

It is an important criticism: we only have to remember the Galileo affair to be convinced of it. The question also appears to be very current when it is connected to the quite definitely scientific sort of exegeses that are encountered with many contemporary authors, which consist in reading, in passages of the Quran that are then considered to be 'scientific', the prefiguration and something like the *key* to today's discoveries or theories.

That, effectively, unlike Iqbal's discourse on science, is scientism, which wants in some a way for the Book to also be a – coded – scientific treatise, the code never being deciphered except retrospectively of course, once the theory has been produced. This type of approach is built on free interpretations at the end of which one is flabbergasted to find in such or such a verse the very thing one has put there oneself, in the will to see at any price scientific anticipations in the Quranic text.¹⁵⁴

We certainly find, here and there, formulations that seem to support the idea that the reference to science fills, in Muhammad Iqbal's philosophical position, such a role of confirmation, which would thus make him vulnerable to Majid Fakhry's criticism. It is thus necessary to examine things in detail, and judge the use that is made of science in specific cases: after evoking the identification of God with light, as it is encountered in the three monotheisms, Muhammad Iqbal reminds us that 'The teaching of modern physics is that the velocity of light cannot be exceeded and is the same for all observers whatever their own

system of movement. Thus, in the world of change, light is the nearest approach to the Absolute'.¹⁵⁵

On analysis, we can clearly see that here there is neither the idea of religious discourse anticipating that of science nor of the confirmation of the former by the latter. It is simply a case of knowing that today our situation is one of living in a world where the theory of relativity tells us something about light that can impart new depth to our way of understanding, which is to say of interpreting, the words that identify God with 'the light of the Heavens and of the earth'. In other words, what is expressed in the scientific reference is neither a simple inessential varnish, nor an 'intellectual imposture' that would seek to import scientific discourse by claiming to be unaware of the boundary that separates it from philosophy. It is the *reconstruction*, in the present of a state of culture that is also connected to a given arrangement of scientific knowledge, of our reading and interpreting tools and protocols of words that, thereby, remain living, which is to say open.

This concept of 'reconstruction', featured in the title of his major work, is, in effect, important in Iqbal's thought. It also carries the sense of a 'revitalization' whose necessity, to take an older example, was apparent to Ghazâlî at the end of the task he undertook to place in doubt the authority of the tradition insofar as it led only to imitation and conformism. We find this concept in Muhammad Iqbal's writing when he speaks of a 'work of reconstruction' of a theory that characterized a theological school within Islam, known under the name of 'Ash'arite atomism', 'in the light of modern physics'.¹⁵⁶

That the atomism of the Ash'arite *kalâm*¹⁵⁷ does not prefigure such or such an aspect of modern physics goes without saying, as it also goes without saying that he does not find any miraculous confirmation in it. In a word, it must be understood that its justification pertains entirely to the metaphysical questions he has been seeking to formulate a response to, and nothing to do with this physics. Given, in the light of this physics, it can be reinterpreted, take on a new life, be reconstructed as a theory that speaks to us today. And there we have the whole content of the Iqbalian notion of 'reconstruction', which gives its meaning to the whole approach of the poet-philosopher. Iqbal defines this approach by writing that 'equipped with penetrative thought and *fresh experience* the world of Islam should courageously proceed to the work of reconstruction before them'.¹⁵⁸

The first and principal merit of the Ash'arite theory in Iqbal's eyes is that of having constituted within the history of Islamic thought, the moment of systematic refusal of a complete and fixed world. In effect, new atoms are produced every instant which augment a universe that is nothing other than continuously active creative energy become visible. In this universe, a thing, as a result, is 'in its essential nature an aggregation of atomic acts'.¹⁵⁹ We can thereby see what 'illumination' this Ash'arite atomism might receive when it is considered in a light

educated by what modern physics says about leaps, discontinuity, etc.: the cosmology of emergence whose importance in Iqbal's philosophy has been stated is not genuinely conceivable until a non-Newtonian physics is possible, and this in turn allows us to read, reconstructing its meaning retrospectively, the atomistic doctrine developed by Ash'arite theology.

But the essential point regarding the significance of the role of scientific discourse in Iqbal's philosophical position lies elsewhere: what is truly important is less the reference to this discourse than, in the words of the physicist Abdus Salâm, the fact of 'introducing accepted scientific knowledges and concepts into the life of the community'¹⁶⁰; thus moving to the reappropriation of the scientific spirit by Muslim societies, which represents one of the conditions of possibility of *ijtihad*.

This imperative, which is effectively a constant with the 'modernists', can be considered as an extension of the debate around the relationship between the scientific spirit and Islam, such as took place, for example, following a lecture by Ernest Renan, that saw contributions from, among others, Al Afghânî and the writer Charles Mismar, in France, in 1883.

In his 'Réponse Al Afghânî' that appeared in the *Journal des Débats* of 19 May 1883, Ernest Renan indicated that it was precisely his conversation with Afghânî, to whom he had just been introduced, that convinced him to choose to speak, in a famous lecture delivered at the Sorbonne, on 'L'Islamisme et la Science'. This lecture, published afterwards, 30 March 1883, in the *Journal des Débats*, gave rise to many responses, including that from Al Afghânî.

Renan's thesis on Islam is well known: on the metaphysical and theological level, he positively appraises the demanding and minimalist character of Islamic monotheism, and, in particular, the fact that the Muslim religion is not based on miracles and the supernatural, and that it is consequently careful not to confuse faith with the sense of the marvellous; but it seems to him that, when it comes to the scientific spirit, the rational imperative stops, and with it curiosity: it is necessary in effect, he believes, to know how to avoid the science of nature being in competition with God.

Against this thesis was the reaction of Charles Mismar, who wrote regarding Renan's lecture that it was 'a work of pure eloquence, suspended on needle-points';¹⁶¹ and thus opposing this presentation of an Islam that would be inherently resistant to the spirit of scientific inquiry, he referred to a necessary 'regeneration of Islam' in these terms: 'Islam is like a clock whose mechanism is intact, even though it is obstructed by rust and dust. All that is needed is to shake off the dust, remove the rust and set the pendulum in motion to rally the seventh part of humanity round the time of science and civilization'.¹⁶²

In these two ways of seeing was the opposition between an essentialist approach – that of Renan – and a genuinely historical approach, which is Charles Mismar's. If Renan's thesis ultimately amounted to turning the real,

given situation of Muslim societies at the time he was writing into the very essence of their religion, Mismar's response and the metaphor of the clock that expresses it is based rather on the historical fact of a prior development of the sciences in the Islamic world.

Many were greatly astonished, and some offended, during this debate, by the particularly moderate and conciliatory position adopted by Djamal al-Dîn al Afghânî regarding Renan's statements.¹⁶³ We can understand as reasons for this, firstly, that he took the lecturer's thesis as a description of the Muslim societies of the end of the nineteenth century, regarding which he himself, in many places in his work, had written, from this perspective, the same thing as the French philosopher, often citing the verse from the Quran according to which 'God does not change men's condition unless they change their inner selves' (13:11).

We may remark here that this attitude of Al Afghânî's regarding Renan, reproduced Iqbal's attitude to Spengler's 'culturalism', which consists in conceiving civilizations as separate organisms, as so many juxtaposed and incommunicable islands, each one enclosed within its own context and ultimately depending only on its own specific principle of evolution. Spengler thus, says Iqbal, mistakes the 'magian crust' overlaying Muslim societies today for the very expression of a *magian spirit* that would be the *essential* feature of Islam. This culturalist attitude thus prevents the effective history of the constitution of methods and knowledges in the Muslim world being genuinely grasped, and, in particular, that of their transmission to Europe.¹⁶⁴

To return to Al Afghânî's response to Renan, we can also understand its nature by pointing out that the more complete reply he could have made was in fact elsewhere than in his brief contribution to a debate conducted in a language he was not proficient in. Its expression can be found, for example, in a text where he recalls the 'utility of philosophy', which allowed the Islamic world to open up to science by being able to take lessons from peoples under its domination by translating the works they held. Comparing this attitude to the present state of affairs, he goes on to truly scold the 'scholars of India' to rouse them from the dogmatic slumber into which their ignorance of modern science and its achievements has plunged them:

look, he basically tells them, at telegraph lines, phonographs, photographs, microscopes... and update, not your religion, but your understanding of it: 'Is it not incumbent upon you to serve those who will follow you with your highest thoughts, just as your revered predecessors served you? ... Is it not a fault for a percipient sage not to learn the entire sphere of new sciences and inventions and fresh creations, when he has no information about their causes and reasons? And when the world has changed from a state to another and he does not raise his hand from the sleep of neglect?'¹⁶⁵

And since Renan spoke in terms of essence, we have there the true essence, for Al Afghânî, of a religion that assigned no limit to the investigation of the nature of things except the de facto limits encountered by rational curiosity itself in its journey of understanding the world.

All of Muhammad Iqbal's statements regarding the scientific spirit of inquiry and analysis are continuous with this line of thinking and aim to reveal the spirit of investigation to itself once again by rediscovering the meaning of the Quranic conception that invites us to think in terms of unlimited life and movement, which he calls, for this reason, 'non-classical'.

On the notion of limit, Iqbal asserts of thought that it is 'in its essential nature, incapable of limitation ... In the wide world beyond itself nothing is alien to it. It is in its progressive participation in the life of the apparently alien that thought demolishes the walls of its finitude and enjoys its potential infinitude.' And he goes on to point out that the refusal of limits belongs, so to speak, to the very principle of thought, since its impetus is precisely to be tormented by the infinite; thus, as has already been mentioned, the infinite is not only offered to its activity, from the outside, but is encountered, living within thought as the principle of its deployment: 'Its movement becomes possible only because of the implicit presence in its finite individuality of the infinite, which keeps alive within it the flame of aspiration and sustains its endless pursuit'.¹⁶⁶

As for the classical or anti-classical character of the Quranic conception, it indicates the necessity for Iqbal to find this genuine spirit of the Quran and to make a break with the spirit of Greek philosophy; he writes, in effect, that if the introduction of this philosophy into the spiritual universe of Islam undoubtedly represented an opening for Muslim thinkers, it nevertheless succeeded in clouding a reading of the Quran that he believes should be reconstructed today.

Transposed to the pointed and brusque language of poetry, this thesis translates into formulas that suggest a rupture with the approach of the Hellenizing *falâsifa* like Al Farâbî (died 950) and first of all with the master of them all, the divine Plato himself. Thus the seventh song of *The Secrets of the Self* begins with these lines:

'Plato, the prime ascetic and sage,
Was one of that ancient flock of sheep'.¹⁶⁷

And the rest of the poem tells us what a strange flock it is a question of: one of 'dead spirits' to whom 'the world of Ideas' is dear, whereas for the 'living spirit' it is the 'world of phenomena' that is sweet. In other words, it is Platonic idealism that is targeted here, as resting, according to the poet, on such a fascination for the 'invisible' that it 'made hand, eye, and ear of no account', which are the true instruments of scientific intelligence, *inductive reasoning*.

In this break then, what is sought by Muhammad Iqbal, more than a critique of the *falsafa*, is in fact, once again, a *reconstruction*: that of an attitude toward the world and toward matter composed from a sense of the concrete in its

approach to reality and of inductive reasoning in its approach to acquiring knowledge of it. This approach is the true Quranic spirit, when it is not clouded by the reading that a speculative and deductive philosophy can make of it.

The very general character of this 'disqualification' of the *falsafa* and the Greek philosophy from which it was constituted shows that a *critical* concern – which would aim to present the 'true Plato' and specify the real influences of his thought – is not the primary issue here. In the presentation of *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, the concern for accuracy and nuance is real, in virtue of its context of course, even if in this work there is also general support for the idea that there is a concrete thought that can be erected against a Greek philosophy that is essentially speculative, deductive, and more turned towards the subject than towards external things. 'With the study of Greek thought', writes Iqbal in this text for example, 'the spirit which was almost lost in the concrete, begins to reflect and realise itself as the arbiter of truth. Subjectivity asserts itself, and endeavours to supplant all outward authority. Such a period, in the intellectual history of a people, must be the epoch of rationalism, scepticism, mysticism, heresy – forms in which the human mind, swayed by the growing force of subjectivity, rejects all external standards of truth'.¹⁶⁸

As a result, the notion of an anti-classical spirit to be rediscovered, and empirical or naturalist attitude that would be the Quranic conception itself, acquires above all the meaning of a will to promote *for the sake of the present* the scientific spirit, in its most current form, the one under which it is revealed in the methods and procedures of the sciences of today, and which the philosopher considers to be the spirit of induction. It is this spirit that allows the ego not to go, 'as if it were deaf and blind', past the signs of the 'ultimate Reality' such as revealed in nature and such as can, on the one hand, lead it to knowledge of self and of this Reality, and on the other to the mastery of the universe that is part of its destiny.

Regarding the spirit of induction, Muhammad Iqbal points out that it was part of the principle of the important contributions of the Islamic world to the history of the sciences in many areas, through the implementation of the method of observation and experiment which it showed. And Iqbal especially insists on its non-Aristotelian beginnings, to the extent that it originated in what a title of Ibn-i-Taimiyya's called the *Refutation of Logic*. In other terms, it was a question, for this author and for others, against the claims of the *ars demonstrandi* – or the art of arranging propositions deductively once their truth has been established – to be the instrument of knowledge *par excellence*, of implementing an *ars inveniendi*, an art of inventing that would present itself as a new logical *organon*. We know that Descartes also objected to logicism in these terms, in the name of science.

The reference to Ibn-i-Taimiyya assumes moreover another importance regarding the significance of inductive reasoning for Muhammad Iqbal. He stresses especially the break this author made, in the name of the necessity of

ijtihād, with the conformism of the Muslim legists of his time: 'The tendency to over-organization by a false reverence of the past as manifested in the legists of Islam in the thirteenth century and later, was contrary to the inner impulse of Islam, and consequently invoked the powerful reaction of Ibn-i-Taimiyya, one of the most indefatigable writers and preachers of Islam, who was born in 1263, five years after the destruction of Baghdad'.¹⁶⁹

It is thus a matter of reintroducing the very dynamism of social life, or rather of restarting it, like a stopped clock. And we can thus understand that at bottom, beyond its significance as a scientific method, the inductive spirit has above all the value of a principle of movement: *ijtihād*.

***Ijtihād* and Open Society**

In the cultural and intellectual history of the Islamic world, the year 1258 appears as a turning point. It is the date of the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols, then the capital of the dynasty of Abbasid caliphs and the centre of the intellectual life of the Islamic world. This event concentrated the fear of this world disintegrating and the shattering of the Community following the weakening of its central power.

The nature of the circumstances brought by the flow of events as well as the sense of threat may thus have led, historically, to such a concern for preservation and fidelity that this was then conceived as a veritable immobilism. Against the force of divergence naturally borne by the effort of interpretation, cohesion had to be put above everything, and this was assumed to depend on a spirit of conformity. No doubt this reaction – which was certainly neither premeditated nor immediate – was inevitable, and Muhammad Iqbal began by recognising all the importance of this imperative of cohesion in the following lines:

Follow the path of your fathers, that is where unity is found
Conformity means the coherence of the community.¹⁷⁰

He later returns to this response offered by the legists of the community to the disturbances, instability and threats of dislocation: that consisting in declaring closed the gates of *ijtihād*. As understandable as this reaction was then, it was condemned to turn against itself, or rather against its own ends, by thwarting the only effective power against the forces of decay: the indefinitely open process by which a society aims continuously to be equal to its own principle, and whose impetus, ultimately, is the power of innovation which is always the result of 'self-conscious individuals' in a position to reveal 'the depth of life'.¹⁷¹ This is why it is the same thing to understand that Islam posits the end of prophecy and that it marks the birth of inductive intelligence.

In the idea that prophecy is now sealed, we are not to understand simply that the message is now finished, having succeeded in unfurling its significance in its own closure on itself. In this case, the only thing left for man is to be invited to resistance, to what has been called, by Gaston Berger, a 'retrospective stubbornness' so that, *despite* time, *despite* becoming – thus conceived as a threat to being – it may be permitted to him to remain within what has been achieved for him: time, thereby, is *what fidelity is defined against*.

But in remembering that we must not 'speak ill of time, for time is God', that it is thus not the enemy of being, but one of its modalities, we can understand further this idea than of a sealing of prophecy. Its meaning is illuminated by the scene that has marked the history of Islam, between the companions of the Prophet concerning the question of the future, when, faced with the sickness of their master, they had to confront the idea of a world in which he would no longer be physically present to indicate, without any possibility of controversy, how best to act in each new situation. And we know that in what he knew to be his final moments, the Prophet of Islam had the greatest concern for what would have preserved his community, for ever after, from the test presented by time; that it is Umar who then reminded them energetically that the provisions *vaticque* were already in place, which could be nothing other than the Quranic word itself.

Muhammad Iqbal sees in this the complete expression of the spirit of reflection and he writes that Umar was 'the first critical and independent mind in Islam who, at the last moments of the Prophet, had the moral courage to utter these remarkable words: 'The Book of God is sufficient for us'.¹⁷²

If he finds these words 'remarkable' and if he sees in them the mark of 'moral courage', as well as the sign of a critical and independent mind, it is essentially because it expresses the notion, which precisely establishes the link between *ijtihad* and inductive reasoning, of a human reason that has become mature, a human judgement henceforth in a position, when it knows how to effectively draw on the Quranic message, which is to say understand it as a living word always in the present, to formulate new responses to the questions that always arise.

These words of Umar thus express the full significance of the end of the prophecy: to seal this is to signal that humanity, in its capacity to examine and reason, has left its state of minority to enter adulthood: 'In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition. This involves the keen perception that life cannot for ever be kept in leading strings; that in order to achieve full self-consciousness man must finally be thrown back on his own resources. The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Quran, and the emphasis

that it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality'.¹⁷³

It is in the very nature of life to be incompleteness and opening, and this is why fidelity is not *despite* time: far from being a rigid resistance to movement and becoming, it proves itself in time, in the sense that it both tests itself there and encounters there its own significance. Because finality, for humanity, lies in attaining full consciousness of self, *fidelity lies in movement*. Movement is thus not a distancing of principles and a fatal draining of their initial meaning but a creative deployment of their significance and, in a manner of speaking, their continuous deepening.

This idea that becoming – far from being a loss of being is, on the contrary, creative – is typical of modernist thought and is also encountered in Muhammad Abduh. He thus expresses perfectly what we could call a *historical optimism*, that 'turns us away from an exclusive attachment to the things that come to us from our fathers' and reveals as 'ignorant and limited those who blindly follow the words of the ancestors': as 'the fact of having come before us constitutes neither proof of knowledge nor superiority of mind or reasoning; ... ancestors and their descendants are equal in their critical spirit and natural faculties; ... the descendants moreover know the events of the past, they have the leisure of meditating on them and weighing the utility of their consequences, all these things were unavailable to the ancestors'.¹⁷⁴

Against the concept of a Golden Age whose evolution represents a progressive and inexorable loss following a descending scale of generations, this historical optimism of Abduh's finds an echo in the thought of Iqbal in which we read the same refusal to think of being in a nostalgic mode. This conception is therefore at the heart of what he calls a *meliorism*, which is, he says, neither optimism nor pessimism but responsibility and action in the recognition of a growing universe, with the hope of a final victory of man over the forces of corrosion.¹⁷⁵

Overall, within the Message that declares itself to be essentially inexhaustible, the philosopher sees above all a call, a clearing, an imperative to become that doesn't hold any sociology sacred but commands it to always aim to be equal to its own principle in the indefinite process of continuous self-creation.

It is a matter, for example, of the clear and firmly established principle in the Quranic text of the radical *ontological* equality of man and woman, sharing a humanity identically emerging from a same and single breath; and on the other hand the diverse and varied sociological realities and becomings of cultures gathered by this Text into a single spiritual world, itself open to the world in general. We will thus call *ijtihad* the interminable movement, with multiple centers, of the according of this principle and these realities.

The question of the status of women is no doubt the one that is at the heart of this general set of problems concerning fidelity and movement. It is the

content to be given to the notion of equality between man and woman, rather than its principle, which is absolute, that is the topic of a discussion of Iqbal's of the imperative, as expressed by the Turkish poet Zia, of their equality in divorce and inheritance. His position on these two points is entirely emblematic of the spirit in which the philosopher proposes to conceive an open society, which is to say, to use Karl Popper's terms, 'a society which is not only *open* to reform but anxious to reform itself'.

Thus, on the question of inheritance, he accuses the Turkish poet of ignoring a principle of prudence necessary in the implementation of *ijtihad*, which is the consideration of all of the elements of the family economy in general at the heart of a given social structure: thus, alongside inheritance, it is also necessary to take into account the dowry system as well as the general organization of the distribution of wealth in order to try to conceive the content of equality in relation to the concept of fairness. Concerning the question of the right to divorce, Iqbal follows the tendency of the poet by producing a reasoning *ad absurdum* starting with a consideration of the specific case of Punjabi women who, in order to rid themselves of an undesirable husband, are obliged, he says, to resort to apostasy: thus it is that a right whose highest aim is to protect the religion leads to its abandonment. We can add here a remark concerning the status of women in general by pointing out that Iqbal is clearly in favor of monogamy even if he sometimes considers that the universalization of this principle should be deferred for prudential reasons: the reasons thus express, in his opinion, society being as it is, the necessity to protect all women by marriage.¹⁷⁶

Because infidelity is, in the final analysis, in the arrest of the movement that is the very life of the principle, the lesson is this: sociologies must always seek to be adequate to the imperative that founds them and which is placed ahead of them, so to speak. Thus it is that when questioned on the status of women in Islam, Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch, precisely referring to the philosophy of Iqbal, declared that on this model 'sociologies do not follow'.¹⁷⁷

We already find in the philosopher Al Farâbi, in the 10th century, this idea that beyond a particular present content that determines human actions, there always remains an indeterminacy that, far from being simply residual, is on the contrary desirable and necessary, because it signifies the ability of a society to always trace its path toward an open future. Thus, for Al Farâbi, to faithfully follow the example of the first lawmaker is also to know how to determine actions differently.¹⁷⁸ Such is the meaning of inductive reasoning for the philosopher: it is the *reasoning* of principles of determination and not simply the *memorizing* of the acts posited using these principles. It is, in an essential way, this freedom, which Iqbal's thought refers back to, of a movement that unhinges

tradition (in the sense as well in which we speak of a train, for example, sputtering off) that is clearly expressed in these lines which conclude *The Message from the East*:

How good it would be for man with a free step
To go, unfettered by the chains of the past!
If imitation were a good thing,
The prophet would himself have also followed
the path of his forebears.