

# The Inquiry of Religion Mysticism from the Perspective of Muhammad Iqbal

Fatimah Fraya<sup>1</sup>, Naupal Asnawi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>(Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia, Depok - Indonesia)

**ABSTRACT:** *This article dissects the ideas and discourse from Allama Muhammad Iqbal, a Muslim philosopher who launched his critiques to the mysticism of Islam, which is known as Sufism. The Mysticism in religion, particularly Islam all this time had the notion of high spiritual ways that historically were influenced and came from an amalgamation of several other religions and cultures such as Persian Hellenistic to Pantheism. The research used qualitative method with literature study, mainly The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam as Iqbal's written ideas. This study also discusses a glimpse of the mysticism journey, a background in a wider scope when referring to the concept of annihilation of the ego. The research explains the Sufism point of view to balance the argumentation in a clearer picture when it goes into Iqbal's criticism of the practice. The reconstruction of Iqbal's thinking mentions several philosophers regarding metaphysics, religion, and the self, such as Immanuel Kant, and Iqbal's conceptualization of Khudi in a perspective parallel with the Quran, as well as the influence it has on religious life, specifically in Islam. The goal of the study is to enlighten the frame of mind in mysticism which hopes to broaden its rituals, more than just individualistically, but to prosper the life of all Muslims around the world which will continue to evolve in the future.*

**KEYWORDS** –Iqbal, Sufism, Philosophy of religion, Mysticism

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Religious mysticism often became a prolonged debate in philosophy of religion on the causality and subjectivity aspects. How the ineffable spiritual experience come into being and its complexities managed to be understood as a unique phenomenon that involves matters outside the mechanistic process and indeed, far from physicalism or rational beliefs. Considered to be highly subjective, mysticism were insinuated leading to an individualistic behavior, concerning only personal fulfillment and strayed from the societies. As a form of deep faith, mysticism belongs as a spiritual practices, reserved for those who seeks an extraordinary experience reaching a point of ecstasy, where transcendently, individuals are no longer apart and unified with The Creator. Mysticism has its historical background known far since the Greek Mythology. *Hermetism* for instance, a spiritual and philosophical flow which emphasized a secretive and mystical knowledge to absorbed a certain depth of comprehension on the cosmological and the self, patroned by Hermes Trismegisius. The term of mysticism also used amongst Christians during the patristic era (Bagir,2004). While in Islam, the mystical experience of uniting with God are named *Wihdah* or *WihdatulWujud*, derived from the arabic number Wahid, means one in sufism manner. Inquiring critics towards mystical religion, this study focuses on the perspective of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, a well-known philosopher from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are assumptions that mystical experience frequently tied with individualism and the common knowledge which negates the hypothetical premises of individualism itself. Mysticism are considered to be an experience of consciousness changes based on the relationship with God (Sururin,2004) Instead of a dogmatic faith, there are meanings in mystical experiences, a substance more than just a religious rituals. Numerous of scholars or devotees ; such as the fundamentalist or the Syafi'i School have their particular opinions on religion mysticism, which in relevant to

this context of discussion stated that sufism were considered deviated from the true orthodox teachings of Islam. Iqbal notably, criticized sufism to its core of understanding of the self and God from his literature, starting his dissertation, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. The dissertation is the front gate of his critique towards the influences in islam mysticism, from Persian Hellenistic; Neoplatonism up to Vedanta core teachings. Iqbal's literature which became his Magnum Opus was *The Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts in Islam*. Thus, this research will follow a rigor investigations on mysticism in religion as a form as spiritual experience at several perspectives of criticism from Iqbal to few philosophers, which considered strayed from the corridor or his discourse. The influences which historically had shaped sufism in their journey to the west during, and in between the 13th and 19th century. The characteristics are regarded as a constituting single-belief system, alongside a denial of the historical and temporal realities (Russell, 1949). With pantheism which has emerged since the ancient Greece, as an early form of mysticism (ibid, p.16). Furthermore, the stages of the Ego or Khudi, as articulated by Iqbal, represent a central concern in the understanding and the significance of religious life, particularly in relation to the metaphysical dimensions of its humanistic evaluation. Therefore, this study aims to disclose mysticism in religion ; does it entirely needed to be reformed in its practice which denied the realm of the world, and in the end came to certain degradation of the Ultimate. Eventually, research will also reveal the criticism which plays a constructive role in matters to religion philosophy from Iqbal's viewpoint. Departing from this objective, the research target is to illuminate the perception that mystical religious practice can contribute to human well-being, provided it does not annihilate the self (Ego), but rather seeks to regulate and cultivate it as a personal responsibility for advancing both individual and social life.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The method applied in this research is qualitative, literature-based in philosophy of religion literatures, mainly revolving on Muhammad Iqbal's discourses and emphasized more on his writing, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts in Islam*, and *Secrets of The Self (Asrar-i-Khudi)* and moderately supported with other journal's articles references. The focus will draw upon the path established from the introduction of mysticism in religion, the etymology, foundation of its practice, and how it should be addressed in Sufism in the light of Muhammad Iqbal's point of view. The subject literature to obtain an abductive hypothesis on Islam mysticism, in conceptual interpretation of key philosophical terms such as *Khudi* (the self), will, agency, and spiritual realization, examines how these concepts relate to both classical Sufi doctrines, Islam teachings and the external influences. While also discussing historical facts from the side of Sufi's literature from Martin Lings's *What is Sufism?*, this method is being exercised to remain resolute in a proportionate view of the criticism served by Muhammad Iqbal which resonates to nowadays spiritual practice.

## III. DISCUSSION

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Hearing mysticism or the word *mystic*; is tightly defined with mystery, though the etymology of the word mystic derived from the Greek word *Myo / Meyein / Mytes* which means covering the eyes or 'covering'; The usage of the word begins in the early civilizations even in ancient Greek, where definitions of mystic shows up at the era of Bacchus God, as a cult known for its slightly barbaric mannerisms. Then, Phytagoras, as Cornford (*From Religion to Philosophy*) said The School of Phytagoras is the mainstream of mystical tradition which we considered contradicts with the scientific tendencies (Russel,1949)". This tradition was adhered then by Plato. The meaning of mystic came in biblical diction referring to a sacred and spiritual matter in a contemplative dimension, and in the European Christian era of St.Agustinus. During the early modern period, the definition of mysticism grew to include a broad range of beliefs and ideologies related to "...extraordinary experiences and states of mind" (King,2002, p.15-18). Iqbal then stated that Islam mysticism gained its influence from the Greeks. The mystical elements were carried and spread around, assimilating with the Persian Hellenistic which had priorly been indoctrinated by Buddhism on the concept of self-annihilation and pantheism. These elements are the ones who eventually brought into the self-union

with the Islamic God in Sufism. A controversial figure in Sufism, Al Hallaj recognized also as Abu Al-Mughits Al-Husain bin Mansur bin Muhammad Al-Baidhawi with his teaching's discourse known as 'Ana Al Haq' or 'I am the Truth' (Hammam/Neohistoria,2024) which describes an individual who has found his metaphysical identity through Sufism experience which negates the self to unite with God. From Iqbal's point of view, this was not part of the Islamic elements.

## 2. **Mysticism in Islam (Tasawwuf Teachings)**

Islam mysticism which is related closely in Sufism or known as *Tasawwuf* teachings is the dominant reach of its epistemology. The schools or ideology implementation can derive variously, though fundamentally it searches for the experience of being one and merged with the Creator (*Khalīq*). Aside from acknowledging the monism of Allah which is singular, *tasawwuf* also paved the road to self-unification with two elements according to A.R Badawi in *Tarikh al-Tasawwuf al Islami*, which is *Ittisal*, defined as having a spiritual experience within a mystic communication with God and *Imkan al-ittihad* which is recognizing the encounter and unity of a sufis and God (Roswantoro,2017). A question arises in this discourse, is Sufism an esoteric doctrine amongst the Muslims? Iqbal, in his book, made a comparative statement between the Muslims of Spain and Muslims in Western and Central Asia in how they perceived Islam away from the enervating influences from Western and Central Asia, and closer to the original spirit character of Islam (Iqbal, 2015, 364). In Iqbal's point of view on rationalism specifically religion, in terms of how Ibn Rushd with Aristotelian influences in philosophy, is concerning on the doctrine of Active Intellect, which is immortal. This philosophy is also known to be dispersed as an influence amongst the intellectual life in Italy and France. Unfortunately, Iqbal perceives Ibn Rushd had also lost the main ideas in the Quran, which reside on the value and destiny of the human ego.

Ghazali, Ibn Rushd's opponent, has a different perspective in his skepticism, similar to Immanuel Kant in the 18th century, how religion can be accompanied by rationalism, on which then Kant changes his mind that religion and dogmas are not capable of having a demonstrative dimension, this is what happened in Germany during that time. Theologically, *Critique of Pure Reason* from Immanuel Kant revealed the limitations of human reason and reduced many of the rationalism thoughts to merely nothing but destroyed structures. Ghazali was also considered to have a similar perception but opted to have more skeptical views in a way where shallow rationalism had before Kantian rationalism in Germany, which Kant could not affirm of a knowledge of God, Ghazali's failing in his analytical defense, had to moved to a mystical experience. Thus, his mystical experience choosing, made Ghazali did not see how the mind and intuition work hand in hand in relation to capturing the Infinite. He did not see conclusiveness because he did not understand how the movement of thought in knowledge can be conceived in serial time. Iqbal understands this concept as how multiplicity cannot be captured in logical understanding. Based on Henri Bergson's intuitionist ideas, Iqbal argues that when humans use the generalization method for resemblances, is only fictitious unities, and cannot affect the reality of concrete things. Thoughts according to Iqbal, is not static and continue to unfolds with the internal infinitude in time, so the self-expression, which is dynamic, reappeared through temporal vision, can be comprehended when it finds a reciprocal reference" The presence of total Infinite in the movement of knowledge that makes finite thinking possible. Both Kant and Ghazali failed to see that thought, in the very act of knowledge, passes beyond its finitude" (ibid,54). If in Nature the finitudes are exclusive, not in our thoughts. They are incapable of limitation and should be liberated from the cage of individuality, through the progressivity of participation in life. This indirectly also criticizes the discourse from Andalusia's sufi, Ibn Arabi which in his well-known poem say "Deliver us, O Allah, from the Sea of Names" (Lings, 1975). When he meant *the sea of names* is God's divine names that should not bear any limitations to our worship. Or the poem of Ghazali, written just days before his passing away, which says :

*I am a sparrow and this is my cage. It was my prison, and so I left my prison.*

According to Martin Lings (1975), the soul or spiritual realization towards the Divine Source can be understood as the movement to the center of consciousness. Within Sufi tradition, the path of awakening unfolds gradually, before they return to their roots of being. Throughout this journey, the seeker remains oriented toward the Supreme Self --an infinite reality, beyond an individual's ego, as it will be the locus of return. Sufism often employs a metaphor of the garden as the world's analogy, wherein human beings are its trees. The noble trees are the souls, and as in Hindu Vedanta teachings it has been liberated in life so that they realized what the Sufism called "The Supreme Station", or the highest degree "A way and a means of striking a root through the 'narrow gate'; in the depth of the soul out into the domain of the pure and imprisonable Spirit which itself opens out onto the Divinity" (ibid,p.14). There are a couple of aspects that became the fundamental method in Sufism which is *qabdh* (shrinkage) and *basth* (expansion). Martin Lings explained, how the shrinkage or contraction of the self is able to be conducted, for example with fasting as the *qabdh*. When the fast is broken at sunset, those nights are the aspect of their *basth*. This teaching is basically a prescription from the Qur'an 57:11 a command to do fasting in the month of Ramadhan. A balance of the primordial soul where *qabdh* will be replaced with the transcendent *basth* in a controlled path. "The initial effort to establish The Name as the center of consciousness and based all movements towards the Divine's way to achieve *qabdh*. The contraction is to control its concordant reaction of *basth*, not to diminish its amplitude but on the contrary to rescue it from being a return to the limitations of mundanity. The growth of the soul to primordial stature is none other than an aspect of this spiritual expansion as the complement of spiritual contraction" (ibid,82).

Sufi teachings emphasize that the mature mystic, having undergone spiritual ripening, attains *fana'*—a state of annihilation of the self, wherein one is liberated from the attachments of the material world. While many Sufis assert that such transcendence does not negate their consciousness of humanity, Muhammad Iqbal offers a critical counterpoint. For Iqbal, the ethical imperative in Islam lies not merely in personal spiritual fulfillment but in the active orientation of the self, to do good deeds for others. Mysticism, though offering a renewed introspection of the ego, remains, in his view, entangled in a mode of thought that no longer resonates with the demands of a modern, rational consciousness—particularly in its failure to offer a concrete experiential comprehension of the Divine. Iqbal adds that prayers and worshipping are an intellectual activity necessary to observe nature and that the search for knowledge is also demanded as another form of prayer. The real object of prayer, however, is better achieved when the act of prayer becomes congregational. The spirit of all true prayer is social (Iqbal, 2013, 270). This collective dimension of prayers, he argues, is imbued with psychological significance: it amplifies human perception, deepens emotional resonance, and cultivates the strength of free will through its associative power among fellow worshippers. It is precisely this communal and sensibility-enhancing aspect of religious practice that, according to Iqbal, the Sufi tradition often overlooked. Iqbal believed in reciprocity between religion and humanity are intertwined. Humanity is built within the framework of religion, while religion is the practice in the framework of humanity (Lidinillah et al, 2023)

### 3. Muhammad Iqbal: A Philosopher born and raised closely with mystical teachings

Muhamad Iqbal was born in Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan, in an era still under the colonial rule of British India. He was a philosopher, a mystical poet known for his phenomenal works such as *Shikwa* and *Jawab-I Shikwa*, and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Many of his readers are having trouble understanding the inherent meaning of his writings which is not only challenging semiotically, it took further contemplation in order to comprehend it. Iqbal grew up in a middle-class family of Hindus descendants who lived in Kashmir, from which one of his grandfather converted to Islam before the third century (Anim, 2025). He came to know Sufism from his father, Noor Mohammed, who kept Ibn Arabi books, one of them was taught to his children *Fusus Al Hikam*. Iqbal was also raised familiar with the term *wahdah al wujud*, the basis of Sufism and Jalaluddin Rumi

writings; Mathnavi, which became the spiritual teachings in his home in his boyhood (Roswanto,2017). Aside from Western philosophy, Iqbal often made comparative studies between Indian, Western, and Islamic Philosophy. Thus, his writings which criticize Sufism or mystical religion can be understood as a deeper comprehension of multidimensional religious life.

Sir Muhammad Iqbal has his first education in Lahore public school. His teacher, Mir Hasan, intensively gives out lessons of many Islamic literatures and languages. In 1895, Iqbal continued his upper-level school and became an undergraduate in the Public University of Lahore, where eventually he obtained a law degree in 1899. Iqbal had major influences from his philosophy lecturer Sir Thomas Arnold. They were quite close, that when Arnold returned to England, Iqbal wrote him a poem which strings his intentions to follow Arnold, and study in Cambridge. Iqbal did exactly as he wrote, the next year he went to Cambridge and successfully earned his bachelor's degree from London Middle Temple in 1906. Soon, he also earned his doctoral degree in Munich University in 1907, just as his teacher, Arnold recommended him to take a degree in Germany (ibid). Iqbal's dissertation, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (Parekh,2024) reveals the unknown aspects of Islam mysticism in the European world during that time. He then returned to Lahore and taught at the exact same school he was in, and decided to resign in 1911 to focus on law practice (Roswanto,2017). Iqbal authored numerous works on Islamic philosophy, many of which were written in Urdu and are deeply interrelated through both theme and vision. These writings—especially his poetry—have since been translated into different languages across the world, both during his lifetime and following his death in 1938. Among his most renowned works is *Asrār-i-Khudī* (*The Secrets of the Self*), first published in 1915 and later translated into English in 1920 by Professor Reynold Nicholson of Cambridge. The poem is said to have been inspired by a dream in which Iqbal was visited by Jalaluddin Rumi. This foundational text was followed by several other influential works, including *Rumūz-i-Bekhūdī*(1918), *Payām-i-Mashriq* (1913), and *Bāng-i-Darā*(1924), among others.

#### 4. Iqbal's Rationalism Discourse and His Reconstruction in Religion's Mysticism

In his early writing, Iqbal offered his in-depth analysis of the Qur'an verses which dissect the rationalism roles in human life. Starting with his dialectics; Is there a permanent element in the constitution of this universe? How are we related to it? What place do we occupy in it? What is the kind of conduct that befits the place we occupy? (Iqbal,2013). He is also questioning whether in Kantian philosophy, the understanding of reason owns a certain capacity to reach the true Ultimate Reality. Quoting from Alfred North Whitehead in reference to his grasp towards religion, in which he said :

*the ages of faith are the ages of rationalism*

The statement according to Iqbal attributed to the function of religion: "Who is in need of a rational foundation of its ultimate principles than even the dogmas of science. Science may ignore rational metaphysics; indeed, it has ignored it so far. Religion can hardly afford to ignore the search for a reconciliation of the oppositions in experience and a justification of the environment in which humanity finds itself"(ibid,44-45). Iqbal views and ideas are distinctive in mysticism compared to other Sufi poetries, where it revolves around the annihilation of ego for the sake of soul purification stages. Religion mysticism, such as Buddha, Hindu Vedanta, or Islam Sufism, and Teresa of Avila choose to subdue the ego as their spiritual experiences. Iqbal offered a philosophical perspective where ego should not be banished, but to sink into the psyche to bring out all latent manifestation from the inside. To him, the ego has its point of departure in God, and since it has a divine origin, it is embedded with positive energy and limitless potential. As such, a man who explores his personality must bring out the best that is ingrained in his/her soul and utilize it for the betterment of oneself and humanity (Abdul Razak, 2023)."Iqbal's writings gave influenced not only India or Pakistan, but also Southeast Asia and European countries stretched out to Africa. More than just on the religious side, politically and philosophically Iqbal's writings made him one of the big figures in between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. His



thoughts on politics, religious, and philosophical issues led him to be one of the greatest thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His point of return seemingly began from the time he went back home from Europe, where he drastically became almost ‘an apostle of orthodoxy’, specifically in Islam in his 1990s writing. Iqbal considers mysticism as hidden metaphysics where it uses a verification system through experience (Khan,2012).

The beginning of his career started precisely in his dissertation *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, he claimed that Sufism was an amalgamation and further development of both Semitic and Aryan thought (ibid). The Semitic part was largely dominated, and the influence came as an act of salvation in the concept of “Transform your will” in the age of enlightenment, which for Iqbal is the essence of a human being. While “Transform your understanding” from the Aryan side, perceives the human essence is from his thoughts. The Sufis assimilated both trends and developed the formula further from will and thought to love, which for them was the supreme principle in creation, Iqbal believed Sufism to be more Aryan than Semitic (ibid). In his seminal work *Asrār-i-Khudi*—widely regarded as one of his profound poetic expressions—Muhammad Iqbal defines his concept of Khudi, or Ego, against the backdrop of a Muslim world grappling with the erosion of identity, slightly coerced and abandoned from its spiritual traditions. Composed during the turbulence of the First World War and under British colonial rule in India (Rassool&Luqman, 2024, pp. 242–244), Iqbal’s text emerges as a revitalization way of thinking. Here, Iqbal believes, that the purpose of life lies in the discovery and actualization of the Self (Khudi), where a dynamic and limitless potentiality is inherent within every individual. He insists that Khudi should not be extinguished, as in some mystical traditions, but rather comprehended. Though Khudi is an enigma, still the affirmation of one’s individuality—of “I-am-ness”—constitutes, for Iqbal, the very foundation for the reconstruction of the human being.

## 5. Jihad of The Self

Contemporary Sufism has a tendency in its teachings from three major influences. First is Buddhism, which to escape from suffering, must annihilate their ego or individualism. In Christianity, there is fundamental faith, a belief that we are all born out of sin (Psalm 51:5) or known as original sin, which is inevitable and needs the help of The Sin Redeemer. In Sufism, according to Lings (1975), there are several terms and conduct necessary in the Tasawwuf method. One of them is *khalwah* (solitude), a religious process that takes place in a specific chamber with the supervision of a Shaykh. The practice constitutes the practice of *qabdh* or the contraction, for a certain period in the retreat with orders to abide so that the surroundings come as natural as they can be.

Another practice is the sacred dance, which is usually known as *The Whirling Dervishes*, or *Darvis*, inspired by Jallaluddin Rumi. The ritual begins with the dancer crossing his arms over his chest, entering a state of inner stillness, before reciting chants accompanied by traditional musical instruments. As the rhythm builds, the Shaykh enters the formation—his presence is now the orbit, acknowledged in reverence by the other dancers. Gradually, the participants open their folded arms and begin to rotate their bodies, transitioning from slow to an increasingly accelerated turn, until it reaches a steady pace. With arms fully extended, the gesture symbolizes *basth*—expansion—an embodied expression of spiritual receptivity. This ritual, practiced within various Sufi *ṭarīqah*, conceives the body as the cosmic axis, or the tree of the universe, revolving in remembrance of the Divine. Through the rhythmic chanting of God’s names (*dhikr*) and the continuous motion of the dance, the practitioners often describe entering an altered spiritual state—one in which the self appears to dissolve and merge with the presence of the Divine’s name. While not all Sufi orders incorporate this form of ritual dance, many defend its legitimacy by grounding it in sacred scripture, a Qur’ān verse from Surah Ibrāhīm (14:24): “A good word is like a good tree—its roots are firm and its branches reach into the heavens.” The salvation from the mediator in this case, and other religions, which are often called as teacher, pastor, or Shaykh in Iqbal’s analysis felt unnecessary since it opened the gap for despotism which brings them into a

leader with absolute power and no rules. Iqbal rejected the idea of intermediaries between humans and God, asserting that individuals have direct access to their own will and power, and thus do not require a mediator, as is sometimes believed in Christianity (Iqbal, 2013, p. 76).

Iqbal believed in the power of will "... unit of force, an energy, a will, a germ of infinite power, the gradual enfoldment of which must be the object of all human activity" The will that continues to grow eventually constructs a human's spiritual awakening. Where ego is a journey towards a personality and instead of being vanquished.. The struggle in this world is what delivers us to the form of our personalities that going to survive in crucial Muslim events named as mujahadah derived from the word jihad. These battles are not always internal as the grapples described in Sufism, but more on ourselves and the world surrounding us so that we can obtain a golden ticket towards eternity or *baqa* (Khan, 2012) Iqbal gave out references to the concordance between Islam and science from Zeno, a Greek philosopher regarding the movement in space, aligning with Whitehead's thinking that nature is not static, but more of a structure with creative character and flows continuously. Zeno in his arguments stated how the space can be divided limitlessly so that the movements above are impossible. He argued that movement is only a deceptive appearance and that Reality is one and immutable. The unreality of movement that calls the definition of there can not be any real space. The Muslims of Ash'ara did not believe in the infinite divisibility of space and time, because they consist of smaller points or particles that are unable to be divided smaller than it has been. Then came Bergson that thinks how Paradox of Zeno is not viewed from the right perspective. He argues that intellectual views alone are not sufficient without treatment of metaphysics thoughts. While Einstein rejected the idea, for him space is relative to the observer, and on the contrary to what Newton thinks, space is not absolute. Thus, the relativity theory believes that shape, size, and position are determined from the point of angle. "Nature as the subject of science is a highly artificial affair, the result of the selective process to which science must subject her in the interest of precision. Everything is relational and inseparable and this is valid for religion, which when it is placed under the experience of a human being does not own a doubt on the Ultimate Reality.

Faith is at the center of consciousness from the synthesis of all information that humans obtained through their experiences, just as the Qur'an 39:5, and 31:29 divulged, that nothing is static in this world as it was reflected in the change of night and day. In Islam, the word *Taqdar* or known as destiny, often misinterpreted as a term where the time it was meant in the word is referring to a different one. Destiny is time regarded as prior to the disclosure of its possibilities. It is time freed from the net of causal sequence-the diagrammatic character that the logical understanding imposes on it. In one word, it is time as felt and not as thought and calculated (Iqbal, 2013, p. 164).

In this interpretation, indeed there is no one who can reveal the end of the destiny except determined by God. Thus, for the time being, jihad should continue as how the exchange of day and night. Human beings are required to keep moving and evolving into resilient figures, expanding science in reading the signs of Nature, and in order to move closer to the Ultimate Reality.

#### **6. Critique towards Pantheism and Persian Hellenistic: On Khudi (The Ego)**

In Persian Sufism which carries the influence of ego annihilation in the idea of *fana*', needed to reach nirvana, a Buddhist teaching. The purification of the soul through the spiritual experience of *fana*, which is the disappearance of the consciousness of the self to enter the next phase which is *baqa*, which continues to obtain intuitive knowledge directly appeared from God, and finally reaches happiness and serenity. Lings (1975) explained based on Qur'an verses 55:26 and 55:27, that the two basic Sufi concepts of *fana* (extinction) and *baqa*' (eternal); is not as himself but as the Self that one who has been extinguished can be said to subsist. The tasawwuf teachings became exclusive due to the given subjective experience and feelings which are personal. Iqbal wishes to cleanse the Islam teaching from the distortion of such external philosophies, as Buddha pantheism and Vedanta's Atman towards Brahman, also from Persian Hellenistic. Pantheism's influence is a religious belief that the universe and

the rest of nature are God's form or manifestation. Islam mysticism should not avoid worldly living, since it is not merely an illusion and has been stated in the Qur'an. He criticized *fana* as a deluded concept of the self from the world, which had an effect of Muslim denial of their existence amongst social dimensions which contradicts the true teachings of Islam itself. Persian Sufism, influenced by teachings of this kind, seeks to attain spiritual insight based from the manipulation of their own consciousness. In response, Iqbal proposes a dialectical question: is not the self or personality something that ought to be preserved and cultivated, rather than annihilated? Referring to the Qur'an, we find numerous verses urging human beings to act towards goodness—implying that it is through such wisdom that religion fulfills its proper function. The presence of will in human life, continually navigating the path paved by our choices, gives our decisions to be significant in shaping the impact of the causalities. Iqbal also divulged a criticism that stems from the spirituality of Persian people including the mystical philosophers of the great Persians, Mulla Sadra and Hadi Sabzawari. Iqbal valued that the philosophies of these both were majorly neo-platonism from the influence of Hellenistic through Plotinus. Their pantheism had a strong color on their religious philosophy, thus the color of its mystical is believed to be monism. This tendency contaminates the original color of Sufism which often neglects the human reality that occurred because of avoiding the actual-concrete life and fleeing from worldly business. They chose to direct their insights to what they describe as 'illumination'. Reality emerged from the overworked brain cells. Remain passive as a Muslim indicating a spiritually egoistic religiosity (Roswanto, 2017). Although Iqbal suggested that not all Islam mysticism falls into this type of mysticism, his criticism poured into his poetry called *Javid-Nama* ;

*You who seek your goal in annihilation*

*Non-existence can never be discovered existence.*

Iqbal conceives of God as a unique Individuality (Iqbal, 2013 p. 50), and views the human being as a creature endowed with agency and power over their actions—granted by divine permission. This stands in contrast to the pantheistic conception found in Spinoza's philosophy, which posits a unified cosmos as a single substance intertwined with the Divine. In Spinoza's framework, everything is governed by an absolute natural order, leaving no room for free will, whether in the physical or the transcendent mental realm. Iqbal disagrees with the incorporation of such a view into Sufi teachings. Pantheism, in this form, risks negating human action, whereas Iqbal sees the human being as a co-architect of their own destiny—capable of altering the course of causality in life through deliberate effort. Islam itself confirmed human capacity for agency through the concept of Qada (Divine decree) and Qadar (preordainment). While some aspects of life such as death, birth, and fate—are written beforehand, but the judgment of human deeds remains contingent upon choices humans made during their worldly life. This tension is reflected in the theological debates of the 7th century Umayyad period, notably between the Qadariyyah—who affirmed free will, represented by Ma'bad al-Juhani of Basrah—and the Jabariyyah, who leaned toward fatalism, made example by Ja'd ibn Dirham (Hairani & Maesaroh, 2024). Iqbal's position aligns more closely with the Qadariyyah, emphasizing that the Ego or Khudi must be preserved, cultivated, and directed toward beauty and moral excellence (ihsan). He also clarifies that the concept of Khudi should not be mistaken for arrogance, as it is commonly used in the Urdu language (Rassool, p. 243). In his writings, Iqbal emphasizes that human will and action play a decisive role in shaping one's path in life, as affirmed throughout the Qur'an. The cultivation of the Ego, in this light, becomes a form of jihad in the broader existential sense. This view is supported by the Qur'an 5:35: "O believers! Be mindful of Allah and seek what brings you closer to Him and struggle in His Way, so you may be successful". Iqbal describes the ideal Sufism in his thoughts are in three stages of Khudi or the Self. These stages are written in his early work, the Secret of the Self (1915), they are :

5.1. The Self and Ego or *I am-ness* (Intrapersonal): This refers to a state in which one possesses knowledge only of oneself, without thinking beyond it. In his writing, Iqbal (2013, p. 20) notes: "It must,



however, be noted that the mystic feeling, like all other feelings, has a cognitive element as well; and this, I believe, is because of this cognitive element tends to develop into an idea. It is natural for a feeling to seek expression in thought. It will be seen that both feeling and idea are the non-temporal and temporal aspects of the same unit of inner experience”.

5.2. The Self and the other (interpersonal) ; The need of the Self for social life to form a connection is just in accordance to the Maslow hierarchy. This dimension of the Self is able to be influenced by other external factors. Iqbal discusses Nietzsche's thoughts on *Übermensch* (overman) also known as the *Perfect man*, where the concept of humans of able to achieve in many aspects of their life with the power of will. The struggle and strive for the highest goals in life as a state of self-existence. Nevertheless, in facing the final fate of a man and Judgement Day, it is essential to pertained the individuality's uniqueness, and allow the Ego to grow and flourish.

5.3. The Self and God (transpersonal), this is where Khudi reaches its introduction to God as also a part of the self-realization. In *The Secrets of the Self*, Iqbal explains that the center of life and the essence of its existence lies in the tension of it. Preserving this tension up to the point of what grants a person their sense of immortality. Love strengthens the ego or personality as a form of striving, whereas begging or dependence weakens it (Khan, 2012).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Sufism in the mindset of Allama Iqbal did not deny the concept of their teachings which aim to bring peace and serenity, an experience of closeness to the Ultimate Reality. However, in practice, Iqbal is deeply concerned about several things which did not land properly or simply misplaced the conduct, specifically in aspiring to the pure Islam teachings. This invokes Iqbal, as a highly educated philosopher, particularly in this research discussion in which his position as a rationalist has a slight disagreement on how Immanuel Kant and IbnuRushd's perspectives towards religion and mysticism, which in Iqbal's defense is able to deliver numerous positive aspects in humanities and life, especially for the Muslim societies, if the accurate doctrines were fulfilled. There are life-concrete matters which must be maintained instead of sunk into the obsession of spiritual manifestation contained in the misguided teachings of self- annihilation. There are differences in tafsir, and takwil of the Qur'an verses romantically defined contrastly between the common tasawwuf, with Iqbal's interpretation intrinsically. It carries an abundance of contributions and development on the spiritual life of Islam devotees, including unraveling the deviated minds and perspectives in the practice of Sufism, such as the dependency on spiritual mediator. Dhikr in tasawwuf should possess the essence of goods to be preserved, which there are three of them according to Lings (1975); An epitome of Sufism which is often said to consist of fear (makhafah), love (mahabbah), and knowledge (ma'rifah), in as much as these, three standpoints comprise between them the whole of man's subjective obligation towards God. The essential element of tafakur (fikir) or thoughts lies inside of it, rationally, to confront certain events at a certain station degree (maqam). The word 'fear' can be taken here to include both its modes and this station has already been illustrated from other verses. The two modes of love are 'peace' and 'eager to desire' whereas the last verse affirms the two stations of knowledge as bases for the invocation. In reality, the absence of the Beloved is a pure illusion, as was expressed by the Moroccan Sufi poet, Muhammad Alharraq (Ibid, p.89) The truest humility, as enacted in the prostration (sujood) of the ritual prayer, is no less than fana' extinction. As to secrecy, it is a question of 'Let not the left hand know what the right hand doeth';. The 'left hand' in this case is the human ego which is excluded from participating in this pro-foundest of all invocations where the Self is the Invoker as well as the Invoked (ibid) Without fikir, the dzikr does not add any benefits, as well as the other way around, without dzikr, fikir or thoughts seems to be aimless. This research finally can conclude Iqbal's criticism was not holistic or not thoroughly against mysticism. He is making his way to purge the Islam teachings from external influences of Persian Hellenistic, Neoplatonism, and even pantheism which are considered to be disruptive in the Islamic mysticism.

Iqbal is also unable to distinctively separate his life from the Sufism since it has embedded in his soul shown from his writings, particularly his poetries.

His ideas strongly emphasized the power of will, affirming the self's freedom while remaining within the rules of Shariah. However, this freedom found a transformed expression—one shaped by love and conduct rooted in Khudi, or the Ego, as he explained. "Iman is not merely a passive belief in one or more propositions of a certain kind; it is a living assurance gained from rare experience (Khan,p.340). Instead of surrendering to fate in the first base, there should be faith escorting humans to the journey of these experiences which instills the belief in fatalism. God was mentioned by Iqbal as the final chain of the causalities, the true author that orchestrated the universe. This research appreciates though Sufism is still practicing the five pillars of Islam, on the social elements towards maintaining the bonds between Muslims, the solitude of Sufism carries an individualist air which is not aligned with Islam doctrines. Islam teaches to conduct prayers in togetherness, to strengthen the solidarity and faith of jihad, in striving to obtain goodness in life along with other Muslims. Moreover, there is no further need for a mediator which can contaminate the relationship between the devotee and God at a certain level and trigger despotism or idolatry (*taqlid*) by choosing to rely in other than the Divine.

As a side note, Iqbal's reconstruction ideas were also influenced by Semitism, in which the essence of humans is measured by their will. Thus, it made his views projected Sufism in his grasp of understanding and not entirely neutral from personal values. His critiques towards Sufi figures, such as Ghazali, whom he labeled as skepticism for drawing the line between reason and spiritual experience in raising the mystical element. Another critique of his towards Immanuel Kant's thoughts on the finitude of human reasoning in understanding the Ultimate Reality, is if there should be a continuous argument to be conceived in emphasizing the worldly element. Iqbal repeatedly stresses the importance of seeking knowledge as part of a Muslim's life, this departs from his sympathy for seeing the Muslims that are left behind in the modern era at that time. Nevertheless, how far is self-actualization in the face of God to remain to uphold, above surrendered or *tawwakal*? A religious creature is surely in need of a place to lay their weary heart or discover the solid ground in confronting their helplessness when they no longer can depend on empirical and substantial matter or reality itself. Answering the discourse, Iqbal gave an explanation; 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 of causality of free personal system for a purpose (purposive act), but not the final expression of Reality or the world (Iqbal,2013,327). Islam is known for a fact the struggle of humans psychologically, as how the timing of prayer has been determined to rescue the ego from a mechanizing of sleep and worldly business. Prayer is a place to shelter upon, for ego to escape from mechanism to freedom (ibid,329). A Muslim is supposed to not avoid the real, concrete things by fleeing from worldly errands. As Iqbal emphasized further, Sufism or Islam mysticism are rather passive in their existence as muslim and this gave an impression of a religion which egoistically spiritual, while mysticism in

Islam in the arms of Prophet Muhammad emulated differently in the course of history. The prophetic mysticism shown are those who embrace the reality of events in the world and unite it with The Ultimate Reality (Roswanto,2017). A person who is deeply focused on worship does not abandon their vitality through spiritual absorption; rather, they carry their mystical experience into worldly life, allowing it to be reflected and transformed into the creation of a better, more meaningful existence. Thus, the harmonization between Iqbal's critique and religious mysticism, specifically in Sufism can serve as a way to sustain equilibrium between both the material and immaterial dimensions of life. This balance constitutes a meaningful path toward becoming a homo religious—a religious human being—who remains aware of human limitations, exercises self- reflection in relation to the society, and embodies ethical piety in the pursuit of true happiness.

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