

berpikir kritis, cinta melampaui penalaran dan memberikan kedalaman spiritual dan emosional yang dibutuhkan untuk memiliki hubungan yang lebih dekat dengan Tuhan. Meskipun intelek dan cinta merupakan kemampuan esensial dalam pengalaman manusia, Iqbal membingkai keduanya sebagai kekuatan yang saling melengkapi dalam hubungan yang dinamis, di mana intelek bersifat analitis, hati-hati, dan penuh perhitungan, sementara cinta bersifat intuitif, penuh gairah, dan transenden-diri. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menunjukkan bagaimana Iqbal menekankan keutamaan cinta dalam proses pencerahan spiritual, sekaligus menegaskan bahwa kedua kemampuan tersebut bekerja bersama-sama, tanpa meniadakan akal budi, tetapi menegaskan bahwa akal budi saja tidak dapat menuntun pada pencerahan spiritual atau tindakan transformatif. Bagi Iqbal, 'ishq-lah yang mengobarkan keberanian, pengorbanan, dan hubungan ilahi jiwa, yang pada akhirnya mengarah pada penguatan khudī. Melalui pendekatan komparatif dan analitis, penelitian ini menyoroti integrasi pemikiran Islam klasik Iqbal dengan keprihatinan eksistensial modern, menunjukkan bagaimana cinta menjadi prinsip kosmik, sementara intelek tetap menjadi alat yang berguna namun terbatas. Sebagai kesimpulan, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa jati diri sejati dan kepemimpinan moral muncul bukan hanya dari intelek, melainkan melalui interaksi yang harmonis di mana cinta memimpin, dan intelek mengikuti. Keseimbangan ini merupakan inti dari visi Iqbal untuk kebangkitan umat manusia.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Cinta, Intelek, Muhammad Iqbal, Realitas Tertinggi.*

Introduction

The Sufi philosophers, too, were keenly appreciative of the epistemological, methodological, and hermeneutical issues about philosophical discourse. The most outstanding Sufi philosophers and poets have made their substantive and methodological contributions to philosophy through the medium of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu *Ghazal* and *Mathnawī*, or both poetry and prose. Nevertheless, through their allegorical, parabolical, metaphorical, analogical and symbolic poetic expressions, Sufis launched an irresistible critique against our quest for 'rational', objective, universal, eternal and transcendental accounts of Reality long before postmodernists advanced potent assaults on the allegedly rational, universal, eternal, objective and transcendental accounts of Reality formulated by ancient, medieval and modern philosophers of East or West.

Generally, the epistemology that embraces 'Religious Experience' as a source of knowledge is commonly known as the Sufi epistemology. The Sufis believe that the heart of man is a mirror in which he can see the vision of God. However, the dust of worldly desires pollutes the heart mirror. To see the vision of reality, it must be cleaned completely. The inner esoteric knowledge that comes from within or from such a source is known as *'ilm al-bāṭin* or Intuition or *'ilm al-mukāshafah*, as envisaged by al-Ghazālī, *ma'rifah* or *'irfān*, according to Murtaḍā Muṭaḥḥarī and Sadra, and love (*'ishq*) or intuition as considered by Rūmī and Iqbal.

The celebrated Sufis such as al-Ghazālī and Rūmī have a consistent record of not only recognizing but also of using the heart as a vehicle

for the acquisition of knowledge. That experience of the heart through which it 'sees' and directly experiences 'truth', is frequently referred to in philosophy as 'religious experience'. In its wider sense, 'religious experience' also includes that internal intuitive spiritual grasp which delivers to the believer the 'substance' or 'reality' of things.

Rūmī and Iqbal also were in *deedawar* (the discerning sage), and surely it is with great difficulty that such a discerning sage, one who sees what others cannot see, appears in the garden of life. In this way, Iqbal's *deedawar* is clearly one who sees with an inner light, and this is the defining quality of a *khidr*. Iqbal is himself an example of a *deedawar*, and so too was his distinguished spiritual mentor, Rūmī (Khan and Tantray 2021).

Throughout philosophical history, it was always important for the seekers of knowledge to be able to penetrate the 'substance' or 'reality' of things. But this task has become essential in an age in which 'appearance' and 'reality' or, say, 'noumena' and 'phenomena' are in total conflict with each other. 'Appearance' is now so dangerous that, if accepted, it may lead to the destruction of faith. And so, in this age, survival has come to depend upon the capacity to penetrate beyond external form to reach internal substance and thus be saved from being deceived and destroyed. Islam has declared that such an age would appear at the end of history, and this reconfirms the abiding importance of not only in Sufi epistemology but also the capacity to use it to penetrate reality in the last age.

The quest for knowledge in Islam is enriched with many Islamic philosophers and scholars, whose research is acknowledged all over the world. Epistemology, or the Islamic concept, is not only theoretical but has a close bearing on human thought and behaviour. Different Muslim Philosophers and scholars presented different views to develop and evolve an epistemological system in the light of Islamic principles (Amin 2009, 2), and among them are al-Ghazālī and Rūmī. Let us understand and capture the essence of the epistemological views of al-Ghazālī and Rūmī, particularly how they conceive intuition (love) as a fundamental to understanding Reality in their works.

Al-Ghazālī is an integral epistemologist and has cited various definitions and features of knowledge in his works. He asserts the epistemological authority of Al-Qur'an and of the Prophet, which means that Al-Qur'an is the chief source of knowledge, whereas Sunnah is the practical analysis of that knowledge. Knowledge in the Islamic episteme is firmly anchored to purity of heart and ethical righteousness (Absar 1988, 12).

Al-Ghazālī's epistemology presents a hierarchical view of knowledge in which human understanding progresses from sense perception and rational inquiry to the higher levels of intuition and mystical unveiling. For him, true knowledge cannot be confined to intellectual reasoning alone, since reason, while valuable, remains limited in grasping ultimate

reality. In works such as *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* (Deliverance from Error) and *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, he emphasizes that the heart (*qalb*) functions as the locus of spiritual perception, capable of reflecting divine truth once it is purified of worldly desires. This purified heart allows the seeker to attain *'ilm al-mukāshifah* (knowledge by unveiling), which transcends both sensory data and rational demonstration (Rozi 2021, 202–24; Hasib et al. 2024, 81–106; Akbar and Soleh 2025, 218–28).

By integrating Sufi thought into his epistemological framework, al-Ghazālī highlights the centrality of love and intuition in attaining certainty (*yaqīn*), thereby affirming that ultimate knowledge of God is experiential and transformative rather than merely conceptual. He relies mainly on observation, contemplation, and intuition. Observation and contemplation result in intuition, which is the most reliable source of knowledge. It is the instantaneous apprehension of realities. But what is apprehended cannot be uttered in language (Husni et al. 2025, 1–14).

In this regard, Iqbal has also mentioned the five characteristics of intuition (mystic experience) in his book "*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*," where he says that it cannot be uttered in language, i.e., incommunicable. Ideal knowledge is possessed only by God, so that one's knowledge is truer and more absolute, the more one approaches God. Knowledge may be either dynamic or eternal; the eternal knowledge is the actions of God. It is this knowledge that constitutes real perfection. Whoever obtains this knowledge gets closer to God, and the perfection attained in this way continues to grow even after death (Umaruddin 2008, 151–52).

Thus, al-Ghazālī is no doubt a great exponent or advocate of 'intuition', 'mystical experience', 'religious experience', and 'revelation'. He repeatedly testifies to the epistemic validity of the contents of 'mystical experience' or 'intuition'. He, like other mystical experts, finds mystical experience or intuition to be immediate, unanalyzable, and incommunicable, and for a while liberating us from space-time, consciousness. In the same way, Rūmī is also an epistemological integrationist.

Rūmī is the greatest mystical poet across the globe whose approach to God, world, and man obviously differs from other mystics and theologians of the Islamic world. Indeed, it is Rūmī's greatness that he acknowledges the sources and history from which he drew for the development of his thought and personality. In a sense, he seems to be proud of the long and rich history and cultural legacy of the Islamic Unitarian tradition to which he actively related himself. On the Sufi poetic side of the theoretical side, he feels proud to associate himself with the company and mission of Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī, Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī, al-Ḥallāj, and al-Kharāqānī (Alhaq 1997, 246).

Rūmī's philosophy of Love has its intrinsic and pivotal role and function. He firmly believes that the world has a 'purpose' that we must

understand, realize, and appreciate. His metaphysics, epistemology, mysticism, axiology, and evolutionary cosmology are all rooted in his teleological framework. This universe is grounded in teleology. One cannot apprehend the Ultimate Reality through sense-experience, reason, and other categories of understanding. However, it is love or intuition through which the Ultimate Reality can be realized. In this way, intuition, Eros, or love can be the single operative principle, which may finally be responsible for the realization and fulfillment of God and His mission (Nafiudin 2024, 1-19).

Rūmī is an epistemological integrationist. Sense-experience, reason, intuition, etc., play a highly significant role in the attainment of knowledge, wisdom, self-realization, and self-transformation. Sense-experience has a fundamental role in the attainment of knowledge. Its significant contribution to human knowledge can never be overemphasized. However, man shares five senses with all living beings. These senses can furnish us only superficial knowledge about the phenomenal furniture of the world. We need to transcend the limitations of the knowledge furnished by sense-experience to attain universal, eternal, and transcendental truths. Sense-experience does provide us with perceptual knowledge. However, the limitations of sense-experience cannot be grasped if we fail to go beyond perceptual knowledge (Zinira 2016, 67-80; Shadiqin et al. 2024, 157-73).

Rūmī acknowledges the importance of reason in the pursuit of knowledge but highlights its inherent limitations. While rationalist philosophy has long emphasized reason as the path to ultimate truth, Rūmī contends that reason often overestimates its own capacity, attempting to reach reality beyond its scope. Influenced by non-rational factors, it dismisses perceptual and intuitive knowledge and instead produces elaborate theories that generate paradoxes and contradictions. Rational arguments, he warns, can become entangling and self-defeating, trapping the seeker in endless dialectical puzzles. For Rūmī, reason is useful but ultimately utilitarian and insufficient for attaining the ultimate truth, which requires a higher faculty of intuition and love (Mutlag 2022, 53-58).

The fundamental epistemological problem of Rūmī is not the attainment of certainty with regard to the knowledge of the phenomenal universe by recourse to sense perception or reason, but an appreciation and realization of Ultimate Reality through Intuition or Love. Love is the universal principle of appropriation, absorption, evaluation, growth, and reproduction. The manifestation of love is visible and understandable throughout the universe. Man's insatiable and indomitable will to understand, appreciate, and appropriate all manifestations of love itself is born out of love (Qizi 2025, 317-26).

Rūmī emphasized "Intuition" or "Love" by saying that it has all-

important epistemological and onto-cosmological functions. Reason, at best, operates within the parameters of space, time, and causality. So, the comparison between love and reason became a characteristic feature of Rūmī's Sufi epistemology. For Rūmī, metaphorically speaking, reason is represented by Shayṭān and love exemplified by Adam. Reason is the instrument of Greek philosophy, and love is the instrument of Sufism or spiritualism.

Iqbal's epistemology bridges traditional Islamic thought and modern philosophical perspectives, emphasizing the need for a dynamic and experiential approach to knowledge. He was influenced by both Islamic teachings and Western philosophy, especially by philosophers like Rūmī, Kant, Nietzsche, and Bergson, but he sought to develop a distinctly Islamic epistemology rooted in the Qur'an. Iqbal saw knowledge not as static or purely intellectual, but as something deeply integrated with human action, emotion, and spirituality. He believed that true knowledge stems from both reason (*'aql*) and intuition (heart or spiritual insight), arguing that an over-reliance on rationality alone can lead to a fragmented understanding of reality. For Iqbal, epistemology is tied to selfhood and the development of one's ego (*khudī*), suggesting that knowledge is deeply personal and grows with one's spiritual evolution. This view ultimately encourages a holistic, interconnected pursuit of knowledge that brings the individual closer to God and enriches their engagement with the world (Masruri 2020, 46–59; De Diego González 2023, 683; Hidayat and Alamsah 2024, 19–42; Yasrif and Arroisi 2025, 116–30).

In the pursuit of knowledge, human beings rely not only on reason and intellect but also on instinct, intuition, and innate disposition. Our thoughts, interpretations, and hypotheses serve as bridges to understanding and recognition, guiding us closer to the truth. The principles we apply in this journey form the foundation of philosophy, particularly the branch known as epistemology, which focuses on the study of knowledge—its nature, sources, scope, and limitations. Epistemology delves into how we come to know what we can know and the validity of that knowledge. At the heart of this quest lies a deep sense of wonder, a timeless force that has driven humanity to seek answers about the origins and purpose of the universe. Though we often believe we understand reality, in truth, our grasp remains partial, and the mystery continues to invite deeper reflection (Popp 2019, 201–29).

Epistemological Constructions of Iqbal's Philosophy

Iqbal's philosophical thought can be situated within the major domains of philosophy, which traditionally encompass ontology, epistemology, and axiology. These three branches are interwoven, forming complementary pillars that uphold an integrated structure of ideas. Although this paper concentrates primarily on the epistemological dimension of Iqbal's

philosophy, it does not disregard the ontological element; rather, they remain implicitly present and converge harmoniously within the broader discussion (Haluti and Munirah 2022, 83–97).

In Iqbal's epistemology, sense experience, reason, and intuition function together as an integrated and harmonious whole. He recognized that a single source of light cannot fully illuminate the vast and complex dimensions of reality. His writings clearly reflect a balanced perspective that cannot be confined to any one school of thought, whether rationalism, empiricism, or intuitionism. Instead, he weaves these three approaches into a unified framework, emphasizing that the mystery of existence must be examined from multiple perspectives, both scientific and religious (Khan and Seelro 2025, 1–15). Only through such a comprehensive approach can a firm, clear, and meaningful foundation of understanding be established. Iqbal offers a distinctive theory of knowledge that seeks to grasp ultimate reality not only through the indirect method of rational thought but more profoundly through the direct and immediate experience of intuition (Begum 2013, 145–53).

Iqbal maintains a balanced and rational outlook, refusing to elevate either reason or the senses above the other. He believes that senses alone, when left unguided and confused, cannot lead to true knowledge. It is reason that brings order, coherence, and direction to sensory experience, making the pursuit of knowledge possible. According to Iqbal, a complete understanding of reality requires both reason and sense perception, as they are fundamentally intertwined and cannot be separated. He places strong emphasis on observation and scientific inquiry, fully engaging with modern scientific theories while also recognizing that they are not the ultimate explanation of existence (Ja'far 2015, 80–106; Amir and Rahman 2024, 155–78; Hasanah et al. 2025, 10–17).

For Iqbal, the reality we perceive points toward a deeper, ultimate reality, and an empirical approach helps connect us to it. By bridging the gap between reason and intuition, Iqbal highlights the importance of sense-based observation, drawing inspiration from the Holy Qur'an. He also delivers a firm critique of Plato's stance that true knowledge cannot arise from sensory experience, challenging this view with conviction and clarity. Iqbal says:

Plato despised sense perception, which, in his view, yielded mere opinion and no real knowledge (Iqbal 2018, 3).

The verse mentioned above brings out two important insights. First, it affirms that knowledge gained through sense perception is a trustworthy source of understanding. Second, it highlights that observation and reflection through the senses are indeed valuable, but their true benefit is reserved for those who possess wisdom. In this way, the long-standing divide between rationalism and empiricism finds a point of convergence.

The accuracy and reliability of sensory knowledge ultimately depend on the wisdom of the individual who observes. It is the insight and discernment of the observer that determines the truthfulness of what is perceived. Iqbal says:

The Qur'an, recognizing that the empirical attitude is an indispensable stage in the spiritual life of humanity, attaches equal importance to all the regions of human experience. As yielding knowledge of the Ultimate Reality which reveals its symbols both within and without (Iqbal 2018, 13).

It becomes evident that there is a clear difference between those who can see and hear and those who cannot, especially when it comes to acquiring knowledge. The ability to see and hear leads a person to reflect and think deeply. As human understanding progresses, the senses play an important role in guiding the initial steps. However, the knowledge gained through the senses is only surface-level. A person must go beyond this to reach the deeper truths of reality. The journey begins with observation, and reason serves as a guide along the way. The truths discovered through sense perception are examined and confirmed through rational thought. According to Iqbal, there is also a third essential source that enriches this process, and that source is intuition. It becomes clear that both observation and reason are necessary companions in the pursuit of knowledge, each supporting and enhancing the other.

Iqbal's understanding of knowledge is shaped by the Qur'anic framework of epistemology, where sense perception and reason serve as the foundational steps in the process of acquiring knowledge. The Qur'an itself refers to three distinct categories of knowledge, guiding the individual from the physical and rational towards deeper levels of understanding.

1. *'Ilm al-yaqīn.*
2. *'Ayn al-yaqīn.*
3. *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn.*

Intuition and Other Dimensions of Intuition

Iqbal critiques the limitations of purely rational argumentation because he seeks answers to life's greatest and most complex questions. To achieve this, he sometimes relies on logical thinking and at other times turns inward to deep concentration and intuition. Nevertheless, he remains hopeful about gaining knowledge of reality through reason. He believes that rationality goes beyond just logical statements and abstract ideas, but also recognizes that it has its own boundaries. These boundaries are tied to concrete facts and specific functions that reason must fulfill.

Muḥammad Rafī' al-Dīn presents a compelling perspective on intuition as a vital source of knowledge, suggesting that the intellect serves to

awaken and guide our intuitive faculties, ultimately leading us toward a deeper sense of unity. The intellect focuses on understanding how the different parts relate to each other, but it cannot grasp the unity as a whole. Gaining true knowledge or perception of unity is beyond the intellect's usual capacity. When intuition arrives at the threshold of this unity, the intellect has already stepped aside. In this way, intellect guides us toward our goal but does not accompany us all the way to the final understanding (Begum 2013, 145–53).

Iqbal, like Bergson, regards intuition as a fundamental source of knowledge. Both philosophers see intuition as the cornerstone of their philosophies while acknowledging the important role of reason as a tool for gaining understanding. Iqbal explains that beyond ordinary experience lies a higher level—experience through intuition. This type of experience is unique and distinct from both perception and thought. It reveals a reality that cannot be fully grasped by either sensing or reasoning (Enver 1973, 19).

Contrary to the misconception that Iqbal rejected reason and sensory experience, he actually recognized their value while also understanding their limitations. According to him, reason and sense perception can only offer partial insight into reality. Intuition, on the other hand, represents a more refined form of reason, and its highest expression is revelation, through which the complete understanding of reality becomes possible. For Iqbal, the progression from partial knowledge through reason to the fuller grasp of intuition forms a natural connection between these faculties.

Iqbal insists that true knowledge of Ultimate Reality cannot be attained solely through reason or sensory experience but only through intuition. This does not imply that he dismisses the roles of reason and experience altogether. In fact, Kant argued in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that reason alone cannot justify the existence of metaphysical entities and that intuitive experience is essential for metaphysics and religion to exist. However, Iqbal's writings and lectures demonstrate his strong belief in the validity and possibility of intuitive knowledge. He argues that if intuition is possible, then both metaphysics and religion are indeed attainable. Iqbal disagrees with Kant's view that human knowledge is confined only to phenomena, or things as they appear to us. Instead, he maintains that knowledge of the Ultimate Reality is achievable, and this knowledge is accessible exclusively through intuition (Iqbal 2018, 2–4).

In addition to reason, intuition is another source of knowledge. The word *intuition* originates from a verb that means 'to look at,' and over time, its broader meaning has evolved metaphorically from the concept of sight (Haidar 2021, 57–70).

Iqbal links intuition or immediate experience with love, viewing it as a pathway to a higher form of understanding. Unlike intellectual knowledge,

which tends to be fragmented and confined by the boundaries of space and time, intuitive knowledge is whole and profound. It emerges from the depths of the inner self, offering a deeply personal and transformative insight. Both love and intellect aim to uncover the truth of reality, but they take different paths to reach it. The intellect focuses on specific parts of reality, isolating them from the whole and offering only a temporary view. Intuition, on the other hand, reveals reality in its entirety, presenting it as complete and unified (Khatoon 1977, 9).

Iqbal, by explaining the concept of reason and love, says in *Bal-e- Jibrīl*:

Reason gives sight to the wayfarer.

Reason? -it is the lamp that lights the path.

But that is going on inside the house.

What does the lamp outside know of it (Iqbal 1992, 148).

In simple terms, we can say that according to Iqbal, intellect (reason) is only a light of the path but not the destination for a *Momin* (Ideal Man). In *Zabūr-e 'Ajam*, Iqbal says.

Intuition and intellect together may be visualized as a double-edged sword in a person's life. With one, he invades the Ultimate Reality; with the other, he invades the universe. In other words, we can say that the ego has two eyes; with one eye, it sees and approaches the inner reality, and with the other, it sees the outer reality. If the ego sees with one eye, it commits a great sin; if it uses both eyes, it reaches its destination (Iqbal 1962, 207–8).

Iqbal further says that mere intellect is unable to take us to the destination all alone. He says:

Surpass beyond intellect, for this light.

Illumines the path but is not the goal (Qaiser 1989, 87).

Iqbal believes that when intellect is not guided by love, it becomes harmful and destructive, akin to a Shayṭān force. Without love, intellect produces darkness, leading to blind power, chaos, and ruin. An intellect without love is lifeless and aimless, wandering without purpose. However, when intellect is directed by intuition or love, it brings forth exceptional knowledge that is both good and essential. When infused with intuition, the intellect attains a divine, ultimate, perfect, and unquestionably true understanding. Intuition or love, therefore, serves as the very law of life and the guiding power that regulates it. Although intuition operates beyond sense perception, it offers knowledge that is just as concrete and real as any other form of experience (Iqbal 1930, 16).

In their exploration of human knowledge, both Muhammad Iqbal and Henri Bergson examine the relationship between intellect and intuition. Bergson, a renowned philosopher, highlights that intuition provides a unique and immediate way of knowing that is more holistic than analytical reasoning. He believes intuition grants a deep, almost

instinctive understanding of reality that pure intellect alone cannot fully capture. Iqbal, influenced by Islamic thought and Western philosophy, shares this view. He recognizes the limitations of reason and asserts that intuition, or what he calls “love,” opens the door to a more complete grasp of truth.

Iqbal agrees with Bergson's idea that intuition or love is essentially a higher form of intellect or reason. He suggests that intuition goes beyond ordinary analytical thinking, allowing a blend of emotional and intellectual insight. Throughout his writings, both in prose and poetry, Iqbal uses different terms for intellect, such as *khavar*, *khirad*, and *'aql*, while referring to intuition with words like *'ishq* and *nazar* (Saiyidain 1938, 107–8).

Iqbal asserts that intuition, or love, represents the highest level of experience through which one can directly perceive and connect with Reality in its complete and unique wholeness. This understanding comes suddenly, like a flash of insight into the human mind. It is at this level, Iqbal confidently states, that metaphysics becomes possible, directly opposing Kant's view that metaphysics is impossible. According to Iqbal, intuition is a distinctive kind of experience, fundamentally different from both perception and thought. Through intuition, we rise above the limitations imposed by these faculties (Enver 1944, 16).

Thus, in the evaluation of religion, philosophy must acknowledge the central role religion plays and accept it as a crucial element in the process of thoughtful reflection and synthesis. There is no reason to see thought and intuition as opposing forces; rather, they emerge from the same source and complement one another. While thought grasps reality in parts, intuition perceives it as a unified whole. Thought focuses on eternal truths, whereas intuition attends to the temporal dimensions of reality. Intuition offers an immediate experience of the entirety of reality, while thought carefully explores and defines its various parts. Both require each other for renewal and balance. They seek to understand the same Reality, which reveals itself to each according to their unique role in life. As Bergson wisely observed, intuition is simply a higher form of intellect (Iqbal 2018, 2). In beautiful verses, Iqbal says:

Only through love, intelligence get to know God.
Love's labor finds firm grounding in intelligence.
When love is accompanied by intelligence.
It has the power to design another world.
Then rise and draw the design of a new world.
Mingle together love with intelligence (Qaiser 1989, 84).

According to Iqbal, knowledge is not static but evolves continuously, beginning with what we learn through our senses and culminating in the deeper, more refined understanding that comes from the heart. He expresses this idea in the following couplet.

Thus, when reason is supported by intuition, it leads to a higher, almost divine form of knowledge. Throughout his poetry, Iqbal consistently tries to preserve a balance between the rational mind and intuitive insight. For him, intuition itself was a superior form of intellect. In the growth of the self, a person must draw from both kinds of knowledge, as neither can be complete without the other (Aman 2017, 42–44).

To Iqbal, intuition emerges as the radiant and transformative component of knowledge, an inner illumination that deepens human personality and endows man with a penetrating vision of Reality. It stands not in contradiction to abstract reasoning or sensory perception, but rather operates in seamless integration with them, enabling richer and more consequential outcomes within human life. Equally noteworthy is Iqbal's articulation of mystical experience, which he presents through insightful and profound generalizations worthy of serious contemplation.

1. The foremost feature of the mystical experience, according to Iqbal, is its immediacy. By immediacy, he refers to a direct and experiential awareness of God, comparable to the way sensory perception grants us knowledge of the natural world. For Iqbal, the Divine is not merely a collection of abstract concepts linked together without any grounding in lived experience; rather, God is encountered through a profound and immediate mode of knowing.
2. The second defining feature of mystical experience is its unanalyzable wholeness. Rather than presenting reality in fragmented pieces, it reveals an indivisible and organically unified totality. Iqbal illustrates this through the simple act of perceiving a table. Amid the abundance of sensory data in a room, the rational mind selects only those elements that, when synthesized, produce the singular perception of a table. In mystical experience, however, thought is reduced to its bare minimum, making analytical division impossible. Its uniqueness lies in its expansive and elevated vistas, which connect us with the full sweep of Reality. Here, diverse stimuli fuse into a singular unity where conventional distinctions between subject and object disappear. For Iqbal, there is no rupture between this state and normal experience, a point that William James, the American philosopher and psychologist of the late nineteenth century, misunderstood in his account of religious experience.
3. The third aspect of intuitive experience concerns the human soul's communion with the unique Other Self, namely God. In this divine presence, human consciousness expands beyond the boundaries of the universe and even momentarily surpasses the limits of its own individuality. Iqbal reinforces this idea by drawing an analogy with our ability to understand another person's emotions or thoughts

through their physical expressions. Their reactions to our gestures provide the essential context that completes and enriches our otherwise partial interpretations.

4. The fourth aspect highlights that intuition, as a direct encounter with an independent Divine Self, cannot be transmitted to others in its original and authentic form. What the mystic or Prophet conveys to humanity is only an interpretation of this inner experience, expressed through propositions or guiding directives. Although the mystical state resembles an intense feeling, it still contains a significant cognitive dimension that naturally evolves into the formation of ideas. Iqbal views both ideas and words as emerging from the deep matrix of feeling. Their unity reflects a non-temporal quality, while their separation belongs to the realm of time.
5. Iqbal's fifth observation regarding intuitive experience concerns the mystic's return from intimate communion with the Eternal back to the realm of ordinary life. As the mystical state recedes, it leaves behind a profound and compelling sense of certainty that continues to shape the mystic's consciousness (Bhat 2017, 15–32).

After discussing how both intellect and love guide us toward the ultimate reality, though they differ significantly in their nature, methods, and limitations. This contrast reveals the unique strengths and shortcomings of each. Iqbal presents *'ishq*, which is more powerful and provides a greater disclosure of the reality in comparison to other sources of knowledge. In the spiritual philosophy of Iqbal, the contrast between intellect and love is extensively present in his poetry and prose (e.g., *Asrār-e Khudī* and *Zabūr-e 'Ajām*). He views intellect as analytical, limited, and bound by logic, while love is intuitive, transformative, and transcendent, capable of accessing deeper truths. This contrast complements his epistemology, which integrates rational inquiry with spiritual insight.

Contrast between Intellect and Love

Since ancient times, intellect—the power of thought—and love, described as the all-encompassing force of action, have competed for dominance, each gathering its own followers. One of the earliest champions of love in Eastern tradition was Farhād-i Kūhkan, known as the mountain-breaker. Driven by his intense love for Shīrīn, Farhad immediately took on the daunting task of carving a milk canal through solid rock using only his adze, hoping to win Shīrīn's hand as his reward. In contrast, Prince Parvīz, another suitor of Shīrīn and Farhād's rival, embodied intellect. Using cunning strategies, Parvez first managed to send Farhād away to the mountains and later deceived him with false news of Shīrīn's death. Devastated by this cruel deception, Farhād took

his own life with the very tool he had used to pursue his love. Even in our modern times, this age-old struggle continues as a tug-of-war between spiritualism (*ma'nawīyat*) and materialism (*mādīyat*), with spiritualism representing love and materialism representing intellect (Ali 1988, 136).

In Iqbal's philosophy, the relationship between human intelligence and the emotion of *'ishq* is a central theme in both his poetry and his thoughts. His strong emphasis on *'ishq* has sometimes led critics to mistakenly accuse him of opposing the mind. However, a careful study of Iqbal's ideas quickly dispels this misconception. Iqbal's work is richly layered with meaning, making it difficult for the casual reader to fully grasp his message. For Iqbal, *'ishq* stands at a higher level than intelligence and holds clear supremacy over it. But what exactly is *'ishq*? It is the fundamental, life-driving emotion that surpasses intelligence and reason. It goes beyond argument, understanding, and perception and represents the basic enthusiasm that fuels human existence (Kartawinata 2016, 47–64; Roswanto 2017, 1–20).

In his poem *'Mind and Heart'* from *Bāng-i-Darā*, Iqbal presents a dialogue that explores the distinction between the mind and the heart, or *'ishq*. This early work holds a foundational place in his understanding of the relationship between intellect and love. While his later poetry continues to explore this theme, it does so with greater depth and in more developed contexts. The verses of this poem run as follows:

The poem explains how the mind attempts to comprehend life by observing the manifestations of nature through the five senses. This sensory knowledge brings the mind closer to understanding the workings of the universe and the truth it contains. However, *'ishq* perceives truth directly, without relying on any natural phenomena. Therefore, the mind cannot reach the highest level of reality, but *'ishq* strives to attain it. The mind is confined to cause and effect, bound by scientific and rational principles, whereas *'ishq* knows no limits, restrictions, or rules. It transcends boundaries and reaches a limitless state where the ultimate truth is revealed, representing true knowledge (Mubeen 2011, 49–59).

While the mind pursues knowledge as a means to truth, the truth it uncovers remains partial and incomplete. *'Ishq*, in contrast, guides the seeker to the final and complete destination. Iqbal describes the mind simply as a "seeker of God," but elevates *'ishq* to the role of the "true pointer of God." One of his most powerful metaphors compares *'ishq* to Khidr, the enigmatic guide in the Qur'an who leads the prophet Moses beyond the confines of rational understanding. In this metaphor, Moses represents perception or intellect, limited by surface knowledge, while Khidr symbolizes *'ishq*, revealing hidden and deeper truths beyond ordinary comprehension. Thus, love does not merely accompany reason; it surpasses and fulfills it (Ali 1988, 153).

Further, while comparing mind with *'ishq*, Iqbal makes a beautiful

comparison of love (*'ishq*) and Intellect by saying that intellect is not daring and thinks several times before taking an action, while love is madness and hence dauntless, as expressed by Iqbal thus:

Love leapt unhesitatingly into Nimrud's fire.
Intellect is still busy looking from the rooftop (Iqbal 2005, 499).

According to the stanza mentioned above, Iqbal refers to the powerful encounter between Prophet Ibrāhīm (AS) and Namrūd. Guided by the strength of *'ishq*, Prophet Ibrahim, embodying love itself, boldly stepped into Namrūd's blazing fire without any fear. The love for the Almighty shines like a radiant light that makes Namrūd's materialistic fire powerless, ultimately bringing shame to Namrūd. Had Prophet Ibrāhīm relied solely on his mind or intelligence, he would not have found the courage to proclaim the righteous and exalted word of God. Instead, his intellect alone would have left him stunned and overwhelmed with shock, allowing Namrūd's scheme to succeed.

In this connection, Iqbal refers to another marked distinction between love and intellect. Whilst every intellectual would say "why and wherefore," love would, without questioning, devote itself blindly. Iqbal says:

Amongst the attributes of love is blind devotion.
The Saint of Bistam, who in devotion was unique.
Abstained from eating a watermelon.
Be a lover constantly in devotion to thy beloved.
That thou mayst cast thy noose and capture God (Ali 1988, 155).

Bayāzīd's love for the Holy Prophet was so profound that he refused to eat watermelon simply because there was no evidence that the Prophet had ever eaten it. This intense love reflects the deep curiosity and wonder sparked in the same way as when Adam tasted the forbidden fruit. True love reaches its highest point when the ideal, such as the Prophet Muhammad, whom a person holds dear, completely governs and guides their entire being. For this reason, the poet says:

Intellect is busy criticizing and cannot spare time for anything else.
Found thy actions on love (Ali 1988, 155).

In other words, Iqbal places greater value on the heart than on the mind. He believes that the heart guides a person to successfully face every challenge that *'ishq* may bring in life, while the mind remains a quiet observer, constantly weighing the balance of gains and losses. It is through the profound experience of self-awareness, inspired by *'ishq* and the heart, that one attains true understanding of the actual truth.

In this connection, Ghulam Umar Khan explains this by saying that, according to Iqbal, "the intelligence of the mind is not fundamental; rather, the mind is a secondary creation born from the emotions of life. The mind's function is to wear away or erode, attempting to grasp truth by breaking down appearances. In contrast, *'ishq* or the heart does not

erode but synthesizes. While the mind is limited to surface appearances, 'ishq moves beyond them and directly confronts reality. Through a joyful and deep understanding of the self, 'ishq uncovers the ultimate truth" (Khan 1978, 49).

Again, Iqbal tries to point out that it is only love or 'ishq which goes beyond the limitations of reason and helps one penetrate to the innermost recesses of the sanctum sanctorum to which intellect has no access. Thus, he says:

In a single leap did love reach the end,
The earth and the sky—I had imagined them to be infinite (Ansari 1978, 128).

Iqbal explores the contrast between love and intellect in great depth in his work *Mysteries of Selflessness*. He draws upon the tragedy of Karbala, portraying Imam Hussain as the ultimate example of a true lover. Yazid, the ruler of the time, acted in defiance of Qur'anic principles, threatening the very foundation of Islam. Hussain, driven by his love for the divine world, stood firm with only seventy-two companions. Without hesitation or concern for the inevitable defeat and death that awaited him and his followers at the hands of Yazid's forces, he raised the banner of righteousness and embraced martyrdom on the battlefield. Though he lost his life, his sacrifice crushed the forces of tyranny in Islam forever.

Iqbal further explains that reason, despite its sharpness and analytical power, is often confined to the material world and serves personal interests and worldly ambitions. It is a precise and calculated tool, sometimes even cunning, shaped by intellect for practical purposes. In contrast, love, in Iqbal's view, is a divine and transcendent force emerging from the depths of the soul, characterized by steadfast faith and selfless devotion. Love neither seeks reward nor submits to logic; it surrenders entirely to a higher truth. Where reason questions, love believes, and where reason calculates, love commits wholeheartedly. For Iqbal, true spiritual growth is found not in the cold calculations of reason but in the passionate and complete embrace of love. He says:

Crafty Reason sets a snare.
Love overthrows prey with a strong right arm.
Reason is rich in fear and doubt, but love.
Has firm resolve, faith indissoluble (Qaiser 1989, 89).

Iqbal believes that while reason is necessary, it often takes on many different forms, adjusting to situations, guided by logic, and sometimes serving the ego. It can be clever, cautious, and calculating. In contrast, love remains a pure and steadfast force, untouched by religious formalism, intellectual arrogance, or worldly knowledge. Love does not hide behind any mask because its truth shines brightly and boldly. It is this genuine and unblemished nature of love that Iqbal champions as the true way to achieve spiritual growth.

Iqbal places love above all else, giving intellect a secondary role. He likens love to Plato's ruler, the ultimate authority, while intellect corresponds to Plato's auxiliaries, whose duty is to protect and obey. Love, in this view, is crowned as the true leader, with intellect serving as its devoted guardian (Ali 1932, 154).

Within Iqbal's epistemology, truth is understood not as a voice shaped by worldly authority but as a revelation that arises from a soul illuminated by the Divine. For Iqbal, Islamic religious knowledge serves as a transformative process that cultivates individuals who refuse to bow before material pride and instead uphold moral strength and spiritual lucidity. This perspective vividly reflects Iqbal's epistemological conviction that authentic knowledge springs from an intimate inner communion with God rather than from the mere gathering of external information (Jannataini et al. 2025, 83–99).

Thus, based on the above-mentioned discussion, we can say that according to Iqbal, the faculty of intellect, or '*aql*', is a process of seeking, searching, and discovering; it represents a state of not yet possession. In contrast, love, or '*ishq*', is a state of possession and fulfillment. Intellect functions as a guide or a pathway leading toward a goal, while love embodies the goal itself, the destination. Where intellect offers knowledge, love offers vision, which is the direct perception and profound experience of reality. Intellect brings understanding; love, on the other hand, brings immersion. The cautious nature of intellect contrasts with the bold and fearless nature of love. Intellect dissects and evaluates; love feels deeply and intuitively. Knowing that fire burns is the domain of intellect, but feeling its heat by stepping into the flames belongs to love. Intellect may lead to the knowledge of certainty (*'ilm al-yaqīn*), but love takes one to the reality of certainty (*ḥaqq al-yaqīn*). For Iqbal, love is not a rival to intellect, nor is it in contradiction with reason. Instead, love surpasses intellect by reaching a more elevated and complete state of understanding. Just as reading about fire or observing it does not fully reveal its truth, experiencing its heat does. In this way, love unveils the deepest reality of things as they truly are.

Conclusion

Iqbal envisions the human journey as a passionate movement toward spiritual realization where intellect and love work together in harmony. His thought transforms knowledge from a dry accumulation of facts into a vibrant unfolding of the self toward the Divine. While intellect sharpens perception and clarifies the path, it is love that carries the seeker beyond the limits of the visible world. True understanding arises only when reason becomes illuminated by the warmth and intuition of the heart. Iqbal, therefore, calls for a balance where analytical clarity and spiritual passion enrich one another.

Based on this interplay of intellect and love, contemporary seekers must adopt a more integrated approach that honors both rational inquiry and intuitive insight. Iqbal's vision challenges narrow rationalism by asserting that spiritual intuition and emotional depth are essential to true understanding. Love, in his view, is not sentimental but a profound force that complements the mind's analytical powers. Rethinking the divide between reason and emotion allows scholars to cultivate a richer and more holistic grasp of truth.

Iqbal acknowledges that both intellect and *'ishq* guide humanity toward Reality, yet he affirms that love ultimately transcends the inherent limitations of reason. The *Mi'rāj* beautifully symbolizes this truth as Gabriel, representing Universal Intellect, cannot move beyond the Lote Tree, while the Prophet ascends alone through the power of love. This demonstrates that reason prepares the path, but only love completes the journey to the Divine presence. His insights urge modern philosophy and education to balance analytical thought with emotional and spiritual depth.

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