CHAPTER VII

CONCLUDING REMARKS
CONCLUDING REMARKS

In our comparative study of the conception of freedom as advocated by Sartre and Iqbal, we have drawn certain parallels as well as certain points of mutual difference between the two. Such a study may be considered by some as misleading because of two reasons: Firstly, the Weltanschauung of the two is apparently radically opposed, that is, one is a theist while the other is an atheist; secondly, Sartre's philosophy is the culmination of the anti-intellectualistic tradition of Western philosophy, particularly representing a revolt against the Platonic-Christian world-outlook, while Iqbal's philosophy is a radical point of departure within the framework of Eastern thought, particularly the Islamic tradition of philosophy.

Iqbal's position is unique in the Eastern world that has been under the influence of a passive, ascetic and other-worldly outlook of Sufistic philosophy. Moreover, it is to be noted that the period in which Iqbal composed his poetry and developed his philosophy of ego with emphasis on freedom was an era of total surrender of the East to the colonial domination of the West and the manifold exploitation which the imperial system practised. The people of the East in general and the Muslim countries in particular,
from the far end of the North Western Africa, that is Algeria up to the middle East and further extending to the Indian sub-continent and the far Eastern Muslim countries such as Malaysia and Indonasia, were forced to passively accept the loss of their identity and individuality in the face of the aggressive racial policies of the Western powers, particularly the Britishers. Iqbal was educated under the 'British Raj', a product of the English system of education conceived by Lord Macaulay (1800-59). He was a pupil of Sir Thomas W. Arnold, who motivated him to go to England and complete his education there. Moreover, he was bestowed the title "Sir", a title much cherished by all the feudal Lords and the servants of the British Empire. It is interesting that his contemporary poet and reformer, Rabindranath Tagore, declined to accept this title at a particular juncture of the struggle for freedom of India, but Iqbal never did this act of asserting his hatred for the British Rule. Despite this apparent weakness on the part of Iqbal and his admiration for and his intimate relations with some of the feudal lords like Amānullah Khān, the king of Afghānistān, the Nizām of Ḥyderābād and his chief minister, Māhārāja Sir Kishan Prashād, Nawāb of Bhopāl and many minor zamāndārs of Punjab, he could advocate and develop a philosophy that ultimately led not only the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent but also Hindus of India to attain freedom from the slavery of the British Rule. There is a basic difference in temperament and character of a purely creative genius and a philosopher or an ideologue of revolutionary
outlook. J.P. Sartre, a Western French philosopher and litterateur, who was a militant combatant in the French Resistance Movement against the Nazi Occupation of France during the second world war, could develop a conception of freedom on the basis of existential approach to human existence. He was a declared atheist. Iqbal is acclaimed as the champion of freedom of the East all over the Muslim world, particularly by the post-Islamic Revolution Iran. Iqbal never participated as a militant combatant in the struggle for freedom. For a few years he was a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly under the 'British Raj' and he also acted as the president of the Muslim League for a while. During his tenures as the president of the Muslim League and a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, he fought and advocated for greater freedom for Indians, and championed the cause of the Indian Muslims. Taking into consideration the entire career of Iqbal as a philosopher, as a poet and as a political activist, it may be said that he never proved himself to be a revolutionary political ideologue. The present policy of the Pakistani rulers and the peoples is directed towards projecting him as a creator or founder of Pakistan and the advocate of pan-Islamic movement, yet he is equally respected and admired in secular India for his advocacy of the uplift of the Indians irrespective of their caste, creed and religion.

Apparently Sartre seems to be a much more radical revolutionary philosopher as compared to Iqbal. Sartre's position
attains greater prominence in this role in view of his active opposition to the imperialist designs of his own country, France, against the Algerians and the U.S.A's aggression against and occupation of Vietnam. He also emerged as one of the chief advocates of the New-Left in Europe. These peculiar characteristics of Sartre's political activity project him as one of the chief advocates of human freedom in the context of the contemporary political struggle for freedom throughout the world as well as at the level of developing a philosophy to support his politics. On the other hand, apparently, Iqbal's interest is confined to the East and the Muslims only. Occasionally he is depicted by the anti-Muslim, communal fanatic, chauvinist Hindu separatist tendencies represented by the parties such as the R.S.S., and some dogmatic advocates of literal interpretation of Marxism.

In this historical context any study of Iqbal on the basis of his philosophical notions of human freedom, egohood (Khudi) and human creativity seems to contrast with the political activities of Sartre. We, in the present study, have tried to put these trivial considerations aside and emphasized Iqbal's purely philosophical notions that are pregnant with revolutionary socio-political implications regarding human freedom that includes man's capacity to create his own being along with his environment, both at the social and political levels. Iqbal may be regarded as a visionary rather than a revolutionary.
This study, as objective as possible, has led us to certain definite conclusions. These may be enumerated as follows:

(1). The distinction between the two versions of exist­ential philosophy as theistic and atheistic is superficial so far as the positive affirmation of human existence and individuality is concerned.

(2). Iqbal's theistic position, as compared to others' theistic positions regarding human freedom, has more points in common with Sartre than any other existentialist thinker, who far from being a theist is a staunch atheist.

(3). Iqbal's position is unique in the history of Muslim thought as regards freedom. No Muslim philosopher, either in the past or at the present has ever regarded freedom as the supreme value or rather the value of all values (Summom Bonum).

(4). Sartre and Iqbal, living in the 20th century, which despite all its claims to technological and bureaucratic advancement, reduces individual man to an infinitesimal part of the gigantic socio-political machinery of the present day, emphasize ontologically the right of individual human being to live and act as a free being. Their theistic and atheistic approaches, in spite of the fundamental difference in their respective world-views, converge on the issue of human freedom.
(5). So far as human freedom is concerned, no humanistic philosophy, either theistic or atheistic, can deny man's right to freedom. Iqbal, on the basis of his firm commitment to the Absolute Sovereignty of Allah, according to the Qur'anic teachings, and Sartre, according to his denial of the existence of God, affirm the same fact, that is human freedom and his inherent and innate ability to create his own self, his values, his environment and also the entire universe in which he lives.

(6). The minor differences between Sartre and Iqbal, in the context of the present historical situation of man, seem to be insignificant. However, man's belief in God and his unbelief in God makes a significant difference. Iqbal's man (\textit{mu'imin}), who attains freedom through submerging his absolute freedom—a freedom that may be ascribed to God only—is freer in the view of Iqbal than the free individual whom Sartre advocates.

(7). In our view, whether a self-conscious thinker is committed to a particular religion or to humanism, devoid of any conception of a Sovereign-Free Being, that is God, has to affirm his faith in man's freedom.

Sartre and Iqbal seem to agree on this issue. Whether one believes in God or not, it is the individual human being's right to freedom that is to be accepted, supported and believed in. It is this point on which an atheist Sartre and a theist Iqbal converge to agree.
Such a study that was undertaken by us needs further elaboration by comparing and contrasting various philosophers having divergent world-outlooks, ontologically, politically, socially and psychologically, regarding the nature of human being and his capacity for freedom and creativity. We feel that such a study is indispensable in the contemporary situation, which threatens to deprive human individual of his freedom and endeavours to submerge all differences within an all-embracing physicalism and technocracy, wrongly called pan-humanism, a modern atheistic version of pantheism. Iqbal revolted against the Sufis' pantheism like Kierkegaard, while Sartre's revolt has been against the modern pan-physicalism. Both revolted with a view to affirm and assert the right of individual beings to freedom, for without freedom human existence becomes absurd and meaningless.