

IQBĀL'S ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

Sir Muhammad Iqbāl (1877-1938), the greatest twentieth-century Islāmic poet-philosopher of the East, was also an outstanding exponent of Islāmic Renaissance with a distinct conception of man, universe and God. He was nourished in the Indo-Islāmic tradition. His ancestors were Kashmiri Brahmins. However, Iqbāl was deeply nourished in Islāmic beliefs and value. He was also an heir of such an Islāmic tradition, which could imbibe all the essential reconcilable elements of diverse faiths and cultures. In fact, his philosophical system is an amalgamation of both Eastern wisdom and Western Enlightenment. He has discussed various aspects of human life but his Religious and Ethical Philosophy stands out prominently reflecting his deep vision and appropriate philosophical direction. Though ethics is a separate branch of philosophy that deals with the rightness and wrongness of human actions and his behavioral activities but when it becomes a part of any religious system, the question of reward and punishment emerges as well. In the present research article, discussion concerning Iqbāl's ethical and religious thought is, in the main, directed in the context of his philosophy of action which constitutes the essence of religious commitment experience, as well as his attack on passive Sufism.

Keywords: Ethics, Iqbāl, *Khūdī*, Qur'ān, Sufism, *Taqdīr*, *Wahdat al-Wujūd*,

A. INTRODUCTION:

Ethical philosophy has always been concerned with the problem of how human actions are to be judged, controlled and guided. This search of ethical values and principles for the guidance of conduct has led to the formulation of various systems of thought. In a modern scientific era, it is generally accepted that the development of physical and biological sciences is a significant landmark in human history, and it is believed that 'reason' is the sole criterion providing all-round guidance to human conduct. In a word, it can be said that Intellect is considered capable of solving the problems of the world. K.G. Saiyidain, while discussing the implications of such experimentalism as a philosophical attitude, gives the views of an American experimentalist, Childs, who appropriately remarks,

“experimentally controlled experience is an adequate means for guiding and regulating human affairs, provided men develop the attitudes and the dispositions which the critical, constructive use of this method demands.”¹ Moreover, pragmatists like Dewey and Kilpatrick and scientific thinkers like Russell and others hold in common that all the social, political, ethical and psychological problems of the modern world can be solved through the Intellect.²

As far as the solution of worldly problems and control over the forces of nature are concerned, as stated before, Iqbāl agrees that Intellect or Reason is sufficient for these purposes. Iqbāl points out that according to the Qur’ān the Universe has a serious end. He further adds: “Its shifting actualities force our being into fresh formations. The intellectual effort to overcome the obstruction offered by it, besides enriching and amplifying our life, sharpens our sight and thus prepares us for a more masterful insertion into subtler aspects of human experience.”³ Iqbāl says that there are two ways of apprehending the Ultimate Reality, which is the Highest Good and the source of the whole universe: Intellect and Intuition (as discussed before). “One indirect way of establishing connexions with the reality that confronts us in reflective observation and control of its symbols as they reveal themselves to sense-perception; the other way is a direct association with that Reality as it reveals itself within.”⁴

B. LIFE IS BOTH SPIRITUAL – MATERIAL BALANCE:

According to Iqbāl, life is not simply material satisfaction. He says that a human being consists of both body and mind, and therefore while mastering the physical world, his quest moves upward to the spiritual world. In the view of the Qur’ān, man is related to nature, and this relation is considered as a means of controlling her forces, and not of unrighteous wish for domination “but in the nobler interest of a free upward movement of spiritual life.”⁵

Iqbāl says that the failure of the one-way approach of the Asian cultures and the whole of the ancient world was due to the fact that “They approached Reality exclusively from within and moved from within outwards.”⁶ It is due to this approach of theirs that Iqbāl attacks Sufism. He fully realizes the loss of individuality in modern scientific society and in the Muslim world that in his opinion a world-negating approach has been encouraged by Pantheistic Sufism which was enunciated by Ibn al-‘Arabi and others. Pantheism or its Islāmic version *Wahdat al-Wujūd* (unity of being) emphasized the

¹ Cf, K.G. Saiyidain *Iqbāl’s Educational Philosophy*, (Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1942),p. 91.

² K.G. Saiyidain, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

³ Iqbāl, M., *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Shaikh Mohammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1962, p.14,(Hereafter *The Reconstruction*).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*,

⁶ *Ibid.*,

annihilation of the self as means of attaining union with God and this absorption and negation of the self, led Muslims to adopt an otherworldly outlook and an attitude of renunciation of socio-political life. Iqbāl criticized the great exponents of this philosophy and rejected *Wahdat al-Wujūd* which, in his opinion contained inherently some negative attitudes.⁷

In simple words, man's highest achievement or distinction, according to Iqbāl, does not lie in seeking self-negation or detachment from the material world and, in the annihilation of his ego-hood in the Ultimate Reality-God, as the Sufis have proclaimed, but it is essentially rooted in self-affirmation and conquest of the universe:⁸

کمال ترک نہیں آب و گل سے مہجوری کمال ترک ہے تسخیرِ خاکی و نوری!

The height of renunciation is not a renunciation of the world of phenomena,
The highest of renunciation is in the conquest of the corporeal and the celestial.

Iqbāl challenges this doctrine of pantheistic Sufism and successfully formulates his new, positive philosophy under the unique name of '*Khūdī* (Self-hood, Ego, Individuality or Personality). In his 'Introduction' to the *Secrets of the Self*, R.A. Nicholson writes, "The idea of personality gives a standard of value: it settles the problem of good and evil. That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it is bad. Art, religion and ethics must be judged from the standpoint of personality."⁹ Iqbāl maintains that human ego possesses in its very nature the attributes of freedom and creativity. Good and bad acts of an individual can only be judged when he is free. Goodness is not a matter of compulsion; it is the self's free surrender to the moral ideal and arises out of a willing co-operation of free egos. A being whose movements are wholly determined like a machine cannot produce goodness. Freedom is thus a condition of goodness."¹⁰ Iqbāl suggests that though freedom is the condition of goodness yet it is not an easy task in the ethical philosophy of Islām to choose and do good because the freedom to choose good involves also the freedom to choose what is the opposite of good. Being a finite ego, with its full freedom and to consider several open relative values, actions, it is really an uphill task to choose good only. God has taken this risk and shown His immense 'faith' in man. Therefore, it is up to man to justify this faith. He says, "Such a risk alone makes it possible to test and develop the potentialities of a being who was created of the 'goodliest fabric' and then

⁷ Hafeez Malik, *Iqbāl: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, (Columbia University Press, London, 1971), p. 287.

⁸ *Kulliyāt i-Iqbāl*, (Urdū), (Aligarh Book Depo, AMU, Market, Aligarh (India), 1975).p. 334 (self-translation).

⁹ Nicholson, R.A., *The Secrets of the Self* (Translation of Iqbāl's *Asrār-i-Khūdī*) Shaikh Mohammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1955, (Introduction). p. XXII.

¹⁰ Iqbāl, M., *The Reconstruction*, *op.cit.*, p.85.

‘brought down to the lowest of the low’.¹¹ Therefore, man’s freedom and creativity, in the sphere of Ethics must be under the kind direction of Highest Good and Absolute Freedom – God. Moreover, in the sphere of an ethical system, man exercises his normative science in the community and his individuality is essentially related to society.

C. SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL LIFE AS NORMATIVE ETHICS:

Iqbāl, in his second ‘*Maḥnawī*’: *Rumūz-i-BeKhūdī* (*The Mysteries of Selflessness*), has very eloquently described this relationship of the individual and the cultural life of the community (*Millat*) in the midst of which he lives, moves, exercises his norms and has his being. Alone, man is weak and powerless and his aims are narrow. It is the active participation and living membership of a vital community that confers on him a unique sense of power and makes him aware of great collective purposes, which deepen and widen the scope and significance of his very Individual Ego. He says:

افراد کے ہاتھوں میں ہے اقوام کی تقدیر ہر فرد ہے ملت کے مقدر کا ستارہ
فرد قائم ربط ملت سے ہے تنہا کچھ نہیں موج ہے دریا میں اور بیرون دریا کچھ نہیں

‘The destiny of the nations’ lies in the hands of the individuals;
Every individual is the guiding star of the community’s destiny.’¹²

‘The individual is alive only due to his relationship with the community, alone, he is nothing;
The wave’s existence is on the river; outside the river, it is nothing.’¹³

Once, when criticized for narrowing down his vision of the world of humankind to the world of Islām, Iqbāl very lucidly replied. “The object of my Persian poems is not to ‘plead’ for Islām. Really, I am interested in the search for a better social order; and in this search, it is simply impossible to ignore an actually existing social system the main object of which is to abolish all distinction of race, caste, and colour.” In fact, Iqbāl advocates close contact and an unbreakable relationship between the individual and the community in which man exercises his moral freedom. In this respect, he says, in his *Rumūz BeKhūdī* and *Jāwid Namah*:

فرد می گیرد ز ملت احترام ملت از افراد می یابد نظام
ملت از یک رنگیء دلہاستے روشن از یک جلوہ این سیناستے
چیست ملت اے کہ گوئی لآلہ با ہزاراں چشم بودن یک نگہ
رشتہء این قوم مثل انجم است چون نگہ ہم از نگاہ ما گم است

¹¹ *Ibid.*,

¹² *Kulliyāt- i-Iqbāl, op.cit.*, p. 657.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

Individual wins respect as being one of them,
And society is organized
As by comprising many, such as he...
When several hearts put on a single hue
That is the community, which *Sinai*
Grows radiant in one epiphany.¹⁴
O thou who sayest “There is no god (except God)”, What is
A nation, dost thou know? It is to have
A thousand eyes and yet a single sight.
The cord that links this folk
Is like the thread which keeps the star in place,
And, as the sight itself, invisible.¹⁵

Regarding the conception of the ‘Unity of being’ (*Wahdat al-Wujūd*) as Sufis proclaimed, Iqbāl agrees with Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (better known as *Mujaddid Alf-Thāni*) who refuted the conception of the ‘identity of man with God’ by emphasizing the separateness of human personality and stressing the need for retaining man’s individuality. Iqbāl, too, maintains that even after man’s highest spiritual attainment he remains man and does not become one with God and discourages this goal as the ideal of life. Discussing the declaration of Hallaj “I am the creative Truth”, Iqbāl points out that the true interpretation of human experience “is not the drop slipping into the sea but the realization and bold affirmation in an undying phase of the reality and permanence of the human ego in a profounder personality.”¹⁶ This movement towards the ‘Most Unique Individual’ is not merely confined to the life of man but it is also there in the development of all living organisms. Iqbāl says, “Through the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of ego-hood until it reaches its perfection in man.”¹⁷ Bergson, Nunn and some other leading biologists believe that all living organisms are continuously struggling to achieve a more or less complex individuality.

D. STATUS OF MAN AND HIS *KHŪDĪ*:

According to Iqbāl, in the highest among creatures--man, the creative impulse has triumphed and he has developed all his latent powers and realized his ego-hood. All life is individual, and the entire universe, as McTaggart points out, is an association of individuals. The highest form of life, according to Iqbāl, is ‘*Khūdī*’ in which the individual becomes a self-contained exclusive centre. In *Bāl-i-Jibrīl* Iqbāl says:

¹⁴ *Dīwān-i-Iqbāl Lāhorī*, (Iqbāl’s Persian Collection), (Intishahrāt-i-Pagah, Tehran, Iran, (1st. ed. 1361 Shamsi), pp. 129 and 134, (tr. *The Mysteries of Selflessness* by A.J. Arberry, pp. 5 and 12).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 412 and 134, (tr. A.J. Arberry, *op.cit.*, p. 13).

¹⁶ Iqbāl, M., *The Reconstruction*, p. 96.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-2..

ہر چیز محو خود نمائی ہر ذرہ شہید کبریائی
بے ذوق نمود زندگی موت تعمیر خودی میں ہے خدائی
رائی زور خودی سے پرہت پرہت ضعف خودی سے رائی
ہیں عقدہ کشا یہ خار صحرا کم کر گلہء برہنہ پائی

Everything is bent on self-revelation,
Every particle is dying for expansion to Divinity!
Without the urge for self-expansion life is but a living death;
The cultivation of self makes men Divine.
Development of self turns a mustard seed into a mountain,
Its neglect makes the mountain but a seed of mustard !...
The road of success lies through these very thorns of the desert,
A truce to this complaint about barefootedness!¹⁸

Thus, according to Iqbāl, the negation of the self or its absorption into some Eternal Self should not be man's moral and religious ideal. In his opinion, religion and morality are for man's self-affirmation, and he can attain moral and religious ideal "by becoming more and more individual more and more unique."¹⁹ For Iqbāl, 'Khūdī' is everything and it covers the whole kingdom of God in its unique existence. Thus in *Bāl-i-Jibrīl* Iqbāl says:²⁰

خودی کی جلوتوں میں مصطفائی خودی کی خلوتوں میں کبریائی
زمین و آسمان و کرسی و عرش خودی کی زد میں ہے ساری خدائی

The manifestations of the Egohood spell Prophethood,
The solitudes of the Egohood spell Godhood;
The earth the heaven, the Divine seat,
Nay the entire Kingdom of God
Is in the grasp of the Egohood.

E. ROLE OF LOVE IN HUMAN MORAL LIFE:

Again, in the sphere of ethical and religious philosophy, Iqbāl considers love and passion essential for human society and individual man, for it strengthens the individual as well as the social and spiritual ego. He holds that the ego of an individual and the society cannot be strengthened without love. It is essential that the Islāmic *millah* and all other human beings who desire to strengthen their selves should kindle the fire of love in their hearts. It is remarkable that he himself determines an

¹⁸ *Kulliyāt i-Iqbāl*, *op.cit.*, pp. 345-46, (tr. S.A. Vahid, *op.cit.*, p. 140).

¹⁹ Nicholson, R.A., *op.cit.*, (Introduction) pp. XVIII-XIX.

²⁰ *Kulliyāt i-Iqbāl*, (Educational Book House, Muslim University Market, Aligarh, 1992), p. 375.

object of love, a point around which the Muslim *Ummah* has to rally. Therefore, one can easily understand here how intelligently Iqbāl, a man of awareness and deep insight, comprehended the necessity of the socio-spiritual unity of the Muslim world.²¹ His quest for the rallying point led him to believe that the love of the Prophet Muhammad al-Mustafa (S) was the only passion that could motivate and rally the Muslim *Ummah* around a new consciousness. Highlighting the deep spiritual significance of love Iqbāl says that it works miraculously in the very life of an enlightened Ego:²²

از محبت اشتعال جرهرش	ارتقاء مكنات مضمورش
فطرت او آتش اندوزد ز عشق	عالم افروزی بیاموزد ز عشق
در جهان هم صلح وهم پیکار عشق	آب حیوان تیغ جوهردار عشق
عاشقی آموزد محبوبی طلب	چشم نوحی، قلب ایوبی طلب

Through love, its essence is blazed up,
And its, hidden treasures are evolved.
The ego acquires lire from love,
And learns how to illuminate the universe with this lire.
It is love that brings peace as well as a conflict to the world.
Love is the Water of life as well as the well-tempered sword.
Learn the art of being a lover and aspire for loveliness,
Strive to attain the eyes of Noah and aspire for Job's heart.

Iqbāl has great regard for love and is deeply aware of its miraculous dimensions. In this way, he tells us that it is the fine quality of a true lover (*'Āshiq*) that he always keeps his beloved in his heart and enjoys his company. Similarly, a firm believer and true lover always keep God and the Prophet in his heart and esoterically and blissfully enjoys their sacred company. Therefore, the true and faithful Muslims should love devotedly and faithfully to their beloved ones— God and the Prophet—, because they are more beautiful, more elegant and more loveable and unique.²³

²¹ Cf. *Sayyid Ali Khamene'i*, "Iqbāl, The Poet-Philosopher of Islamic Resurgence", (Translated from the Persian by Mahliqa Qara'i), *Al-Tawhīd*, Vol. III, No. 4, Shawwal-Dhu al-Hijjah 1406 (July-September 1986), pp. 129-153.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 129-153.

²³ *Ibid.*,

چشم اگر داری بیا بنمایمت	هست معشوقی نهان اندر دلت
خوشر و زیبا تر و محبوب تر	عاشقان او ز خوبان خوبتر
خاک هم دوش ثریا میشود	دل ز عشق او توانا میشود
آمد اندر و جدوبر افلاک شد	خاک نجد از فیض او چالاک شد
آبروی ما ز نام مصطفی است	در دل مسلم مقام مصطفی است
کعبه را بیت الحرم کاشانه اش	طور موجی از غبار خانه اش
طاق کسری زیر پای امتش	بوریا ممنون خواب راحتش
قوم و آیین و حکومت آفرید	در شبستان حراء خلوت گزید
تابه تخت خسروی خوابیده قوم	ماند شبها چشم او محروم نوم

The beloved is hidden in Thy heart.
If thou art gifted with eyes, come, I will show thee his face.,
His lovers are lovelier than all the beloved of the world,
More beautiful, more elegant and more loveable.
Through his love, the heart gains strength,
And the earth attains the exalted status of the Pleiades.
The land of Najid was made vigilant ingenious through his grace,
In a state of ecstasy, it flew higher than the heavens.
The heart of the Muslim in the seat of al-Mustafah.
Whatever respect we command is due to his name.
Mount Sinai is nothing but dust that arose from his House,
His parlour is sacred even for the Ka'bah.
The mat is grateful to him that he prefers to sleep on it,
The *Taq-i Kisra* is trampled under the feet of his *Ummah*.
He retired to the privacy of the Cave of *Hira'*,
And brought forth a nation, a constitution, and a government,
Night after night passed by his bedside finding him awake,
So that his people could rest on the throne of Khusrow.

In fact, Iqbāl gives a detailed account of the Prophet (S) personality and his highly impressive qualities. Not only here, alone, but throughout his prose and poetical works we can see an unceasing stream of his love for the Prophet (S) gushing out wave after wave. It is this love with the Prophet, which unites the *Ummah* and keeps the believers to work for the welfare of the whole humankind.

Moreover, he also strongly warns us of our present twenty-first century unfortunate state of affairs that we are very ignorant of the great personality of Islām, Prophet Muhammad(S) and his *Sirah*. We must earnestly try to reach him, re-understand his mission, work and preach under his *Sunnah* and *Ahadith*, for all to say is that if we approach the Prophet of Islām, we get the whole religion (*Dīn*)

and everything here in this world and the world-hereafter, conversely, everything is originated from evil in the form of *Bu-Lahabic* cruelty, as Iqbāl says:²⁴

بمصطفیٰ برساں خویش را کہ دین ہمہ اوست اگر بہ او زسیدی تمام بولہی است !

Again is another place he maintains that '*Khūdī*' is a boundless ocean having no bank.²⁵

خودی وہ بحر ہے جس کا کوئی کنارہ نہیں تو آجو اسے سمجھا اگر تو چارہ نہیں

Man is an Ocean, of which
Every drop is in itself a boundless ocean.

Another aspect of the self to which Iqbāl draws our attention is that the affirmation of one's ego is also an affirmation of others. When the presence of the ego in a human being is posited, it automatically posits the presence of egos other than one's own. Therefore, there is a self as well as the non-self, that is, the existence of another is also posited. Hence, it may be inferred that the whole universe is contained as a possibility in the self. There are various selves that are at war with one another. This struggle, this perpetual conflict brings the world into existence. It is the ego that is responsible for the selection of the fittest and its survival as well. So often thousands of selves are sacrificed for the sake of one higher self. The concept of ego is a graded one and its grades vary in intensity and weakness. The degree of intensity and weakness of the ego in each one of the beings is the factor, which determines their strength and firmness. Finite ego is never absolute. It always refers to a graded essence, which is present in things and human individuals, as well as in cosmic elements in diverse measures. He concludes this theme with the following verse:

چو خودی آرد بہم نیروی زیست می گشاید قلزمی از جوی زیست

When ego embraces *Élan Vital*,
The stream of life is transformed into an ocean.

Iqbāl agrees with the basic principle of mysticism that it is an attempt to reach the Ultimate Reality through inner experience and that it discards Intellect or reason as insufficient and relies on '*Ishq*' (Love) or Intuition. He says the human ego proceeds from the directive energy of God. Moreover, "the ego has been endowed with a free personality so that it may take part in the creative movement of the universe. This is the purpose of the ego's existence. It is also the purpose of the Infinite as revealed through the Ego."²⁶ In fact, Iqbāl is most emphatic in asserting that in the higher Sufism of

²⁴ *Kulliyāt i-Iqbāl*, p. 691.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

²⁶ Siddiqui, Z.A., *Dialectical Materialism and other Essays*, (Aligarh, 1958), p. 69.

Islām, “Unitive experience is not the finite ego. Effacing its own identity by some sort of absorption into the Infinite Ego; it is rather the Infinite passing into the loving embrace of finite.”²⁷

It can be concluded that Iqbāl does not wholly agree with Sufis unlike them, he believes that the moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation, but self-affirmation. He does not believe in man’s seeking union with God, since, according to him, the complete union between the Creator and the creature is not possible. In this connection, he remarks, “How can I meet Him. I am the servant and He is God. My relation to Him is only that of a servant. If I am told that God is coming to meet me, I shall run far away. Because if the ocean unites with a drop of water the drop will certainly lose its existence. I want to maintain myself as a drop of water; I do not want to perish myself, but wish to create in me the qualities of the ocean.”²⁸ Therefore, unlike the Sufis, Iqbāl seeks *Firāq* (Separation) instead of *Wisāl* (Union) with God, He says:²⁹

عالم سوز و ساز میں وصل سے بڑھ کے ہے فراق
و صل میں مرگِ آرزو! بجز میں لذتِ طلب!
گرمی آرزو فراق! شورش ہائے و ہو فراق!
موج کی جستجو فراق! قطرہ کی آبرو فراق!

In the realm of a passionate quest
Separation from the beloved gets better of a blissful union,
For union snuffs out our yearning
Separation sustains our taste of longing....

Separation from the beloved leads to the intensity of yearning, to the tumultuous celebration of the pathos,
Separation from the beloved sustains the quest for life and guarantees the dignity of the drop (lest it mingled with the ocean).

Thus, unlike the Sufis, Iqbāl does not teach renunciation of the world. On the contrary, he endeavours to make both religious life and material world harmonious in the light of the teaching of Islām. According to him, “the mystic forgets that reality lies in its own appearances, and the surest way to reach the core of it lies through its appearances.”³⁰ Addressing the Sufi, he says:

تری نگاہ میں ہے معجزات کی دُنیا
میری نگاہ میں ہے حادثات کی دُنیا
عجب نہیں کہ بدل دے اسے نگاہ تری
بلا رہی ہے تجھے ممکنات کی دُنیا

Your eyes are fixed on miracles that amaze,
But the world of events strange attracts my gaze
A call to you is sent by World of Chance,

²⁷ Iqbāl, M., *The Reconstruction*, p. 10.

²⁸ Cf. *Iqbāl: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan* by Hafeez Malik, pp. 298-99.

²⁹ *Kulliyāt i-Iqbāl, op.cit.*, p. 406 (self-translation)

³⁰ Dar, B.A., *A Study of Iqbāl’s Philosophy*, (Shaikh Mahmmd Ashraf, Kashmiri Bazar, Lahore, 1944) p. 400.

Perhaps you may transmute it with your glance.³¹

Again, highlighting the same theme of active participation of *Khūdī* in both the material and spiritual life, he asserts:

یہ حکمتِ ملکوتی، یہ علمِ لاهوتی
حرم کے درد کا درماں نہیں تو کچھ بھی نہیں
یہ ذکرِ نیمِ شعی، یہ مراقبہ، یہ سرور
تری خودی کے نگہاں نہیں تو کچھ بھی نہیں

If angelic art and celestial lore
The ills of Muslims cannot cure,
They are worthless and of no use,
In fact, so true you must be sure.
Your reveries deep and rapture sweet,
Your worship in the middle of the night,
I fail to keep a watch of the Self
Are useless quiet and have value slight.³²

F. ROLE OF CREATIVE IMPULSE IN HUMAN LIFE:

Another important aspect of Iqbāl's thought is his philosophy of action or say man's 'Creative Impulse.' 'Activity', according to Iqbāl, is the fundamental aspect of reality. Introspectively, it is ego; outwardly, it is movement. Worldly life is a life of man's coming out of inactivity and passive and servile obedience and a completely static state. In a real sense, according to Iqbāl, worldly life directs the individual to lead a life of desire, activity, effort, and tension. Moreover, he maintains that this life is an intense urge to live as a free individual and to create values. Due to this free creative urge, man exiles himself from Heaven. In the Preface of his *Reconstruction*, Iqbāl writes that the Qur'ān "emphasizes 'deed' rather than 'idea'."³³ Again, he says that according to the Qur'ān the earth is not a "torture-hall where an elementally wicked humanity is imprisoned for an original act of sin".³⁴ Iqbāl's conception of the 'fall of man' is somewhat different from that of Christian existentialists (theist and atheist) who place the dogma of the 'fall' and divine grace at the centre of their philosophy and regard men alienated from the source of being, from the world and from God. Iqbāl is of the opinion that the 'fall' does not mean any moral depravity but "it is man's transition from simple consciousness to the first flash of self-consciousness, a kind of waking from the dream of nature with a throb of personal causality in one's own being."³⁵

This phenomenal world is not vain, or a torture-hall. As has already been mentioned, it is, according to the Qur'ān, "the dwelling place' of man and a 'source of profit' to him for the possession of which

³¹ *Kulliyāt i-Iqbāl*, op.cit., p. 495, (tr. Syed Akbar 'Ali Shah, op.cit., p. 15).

³² *Ibid.*, p. 496, (Syed Akbar 'Ali Shah, op.cit., p. 16).

³³ Iqbāl, M., *The Reconstruction*, (Preface), op.cit., p. V.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³⁵ *Ibid.*,

he ought to be grateful to God. ‘And we have established you on the earth and given you therein the supports of life.’ (7:9)³⁶ Iqbāl emphasizes the two essential attributes of man, viz, freedom and creativity. It is in this world that man creates new things and makes his life as he wills. “Man’s first act of disobedience was also his first act of free choice; and that is why according to the Qur’ānic narration, Adam’s first transgression was forgiven.”³⁷ This means that freedom and creativity have been bestowed on man by God due to which he evolves his own world and creates his own values. Iqbāl points out that if the existing world gives no meaning and importance to human personality, it should be destroyed and reshaped in accordance with human aspirations and ideals. In one of his poems *Zindagī* (Life) he says:

اپنی دنیا آپ پیدا کر اگر زندوں میں ہے سر آدم ہے ضمیر کن فکاں ہے زندگی
زندگی میں گھٹ کے رہ جاتی ہے اک جوئے کم آب اور آزادی میں بحر بیکراں ہے زندگی

Create thy own world if thou be amongst the Living,
Life is the secret essence of Adam, the hidden truth of creation...

Life is reduced to a rivulet with little water is bondage;
In freedom, Life is a boundless ocean.³⁸

Again, in the same poem stressing the same theme, he declares:

پھونک ڈالے یہ زمین و آسمان مستعار اور خاکستر سے آپ اپنا جہاں پیدا کرے
وہی زمانے کی گردش پہ غالب آتا ہے جو ہر نفس سے کرے عمر جاواں پیدا

Burn up this borrowed earth and sky,
And raise a world of your own from the ashes’ ...

‘Only he overcomes the revolution of Time,
Who creates an eternal life with every breath.’³⁹

For human activity, Iqbāl uses a very expressive and inclusive phrase, *Kasb-i-halāl*, which stands for ‘lawful acquisition’ according to orthodox theologians. However, according to Iqbāl, this *Kasb-i-halāl* has a wider meaning as “acquiring things or ideas solely through one’s personal effort and struggle.”⁴⁰ This interpretation stipulates that all egos have to undergo an intensive life of active effort and continuous struggle and totally excludes all ideas of self-renunciation. In *Jāwid Namah* (*The Pilgrimage of Eternity*), Iqbāl says:

³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³⁸ *Kulliyāt i-Iqbāl, op.cit.*, p. 259, (tr. A.A. Ansari, *op.cit.*, p. 135).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 260 and 563..

⁴⁰ Vahid, S.A., *op.cit.*, p. 38.

طرفگهادر نهاد کائنات نیست از تقلید تقویم حیات
زنده دل خلاق اعصار و دهور جانش از تقلید گردد به حضور

The cosmos shapes
Unceasing wonder even new; the stuff
Of life is not blind following. A heart
Which is alive creates an epoch new,
And repetition makes it contract, sag
With its own inner soul.⁴¹

Man's freedom and creativity occupy the great value and importance in the philosophy of Iqbāl. In the following verses of his, assert this view-point:

زندگی هم فانی و هم باقی است این همه خلاق و مشتاقی است
زنده‌ی مشتاق شو، خلاق شو همچو ماگیرنده‌ی آفاق شو
بنده‌ی آزاد را آید گران زیستن اندر جهان دیگران
در شکن آن را که ناید سازگار از ضمیر خود دگر عالم بیار

Life is mortality
And everlasting as well; it is
Compact of both creativity and Zeal.
Dost live? Then learn to love and to create
And hold the heavens in grasp like us.
For the Freeman, it is not unwelcome
That he lives in the universe of others.
And shatter all that suits thee not, and make
A fresher world grows from thy mind.⁴²

Emphasizing the same theme of personal striving and maintaining human dignity, Iqbāl points out that enjoying anything, which has not been acquired by work, or struggle is bad for the human ego. He does not even consider acquiring anything through inheritance as *Kasb-i-halāl*, and says:

پشیمان شو اگر لعل زمیراث پدر خواهی کج‌عیش برون آوردن لعل که بر سنگ است

Be ashamed if you want to inherit a ruby from your forebears;
This pleasure of quarrying a ruby from a stone on one's own is incomparably superior to sitting
ancestral wealth.⁴³

⁴¹ *Dīwān-i-Iqbāl Lāhorī*, *op.cit.*, p. 245, (tr. S.M. Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p. 55).

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 411, (tr. S.M. Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p. 182 and self-translation).

⁴³ *Dīwān-i-Iqbāl Lāhorī*, *op.cit.*, p. 81, (self-translation).

Iqbāl is of the view that it is the constant struggle, inner yearning, devotion, and life of activity that develops the ego. Only creative and original activity can sustain and fortify the ego. Mere mimicry, imitation, borrowed things or ideas are of no use of strengthening the ego:

تقلید سے ناکارہ نہ کر اپنی خودی کو کر اس کی حفاظت کہ یہ گوہر ہے یگانہ

Demean not thy personality by imitation;
Guard it, as it is a priceless jewel.⁴⁴

Maūlānā Rūmī also preaches a life of ceaseless activity and the endless struggle to attain personal freedom and immortality. He goes to the extent of saying:

کوشش بیہودہ بہ از خفتگی

Useless striving is better than inaction.⁴⁵

Both Rūmī and Iqbāl agree that the Perfect Man can work miracles in the sense of creating a new world of values. Iqbāl says that the Perfect Man (*Mo'min*) is a miracle in himself and a creator of new values. Under the title of *Niyābat-i Ilāhi*, 'Divine Vicegerency' in *Asrār-i-Khūdī* Iqbāl describes the characteristics of the Perfect Man:

فطرتش معمور و می خواهد نمود	عالم دیگر بیارد در وجود
زندگی بخشد ز اعجازِ عمل	می کند تجدید اندازِ عمل
زندگی را می کند تفسیر نو	می دهد این خواب را تعبیر نو

'His genius abounds with life and desires to manifest itself:
He will bring another world into existence.
He bestows life by his miraculous action,
He renovates old ways of life.
He gives a new explanation of life,
A new interpretation of this dream.'⁴⁶

In a similar way, he writes in his *Bāl-i-Jibrīl* that both thought and action are essential aspects of human life. The freedom of the human ego, in the true sense, lies in the creation of new ideals and values and in their realization. A creative product or art is living only in so far the poet or artist has poured his heart-blood into it. Without freedom, thought and creativity, a human being is as alive as dead:

⁴⁴ *Kulliyāt i-Iqbāl*, *op.cit.*, p. 630, (tr. S.A. Vahid, *op.cit.*, p. 39).

⁴⁵ Cf. Vahid, S.A., *op.cit.*, p. 68.

⁴⁶ *Dīwān-i-Iqbāl Lāhorī*, *op.cit.*, pp. 106-7, (tr. R.A. Nicholson, pp. 80-82),

مجزہء فن کی ہے خونِ جگر سے نمود! رنگ ہو یا خشت و سنگ، چنگ ہو یا حرف و صوت
خونِ جگر سے صدا سوز و سرور و سرود! قطرہء خونِ جگر، سِل کو بناتا ہے دل
ندرتِ فکر و عمل کیا شے ہے؟ ملت کا شباب ندرتِ فکر و عمل کیا شے ہے؟ ذوقِ انقلاب!
ندرتِ فکر و عمل سے سنگ خارہ لعلِ ناب! ندرتِ فکر و عمل سے معجزاتِ زندگی!

(The material) maybe brick or stone or the harp or the letter or the sound:

The miracle of art is the result of heart-blood.

A drop of heart-blood makes the stone a heart,

From heart-blood and sound and burning and joy and melody...

‘What is originality of thought and action?

An urge to revolution!

What is originality of thought and action?

A renaissance of national life!

It is the source of life’s miracles,

Transforming granite into the purest of pearls!’⁴⁷

Regarding creativity and innovation, Iqbāl says in one of his poems – *Takhliq* (Creation) in his *Darb-i-Kalīm*:

جہانِ تازہ کی افکارِ تازہ سے ہے نمود! کہ سنگ و خشت سے ہوتے نہیں جہاں پیدا!
خودی میں ڈوبنے والوں کے عزم و ہمت نے اس آبجو سے کیے بحرِ بیکراں پیدا!

New worlds derive their pomp
From thoughts quite fresh and new:
From stones and bricks a world
Was neither built nor grew
The firm resolve of those,
Who depths of Self explore,
Transforms this stream to the sea
That has no merge or shore.⁴⁸

Iqbāl stresses that the human ego is not a datum, but a creative possibility, an active effort, a struggle, a creator of new ideals and values, and a co-worker with God. Man smashes the world which does not suit him and evolves his own world and creates his values. According to Iqbāl, through creative activity, man shares in the deeper aspirations of the universe around him and shapes his own destiny as well as that of the universe. The man has to adjust himself to cosmic forces and put the whole of his energy to mould them to suit his own end. In this whole process of progressive change, God also becomes a co-worker with him, provided that man takes the initiative. The Qur’ān declares:

⁴⁷ *Kulliyāt i-Iqbāl*, op.cit., pp. 387 and 442-3, (tr Annemarie Schimmel in her *Gabriel’s Wing*, Leiden: E. J. Brill (Netherland), 1963, p. 71, and K.G. Saiyidain in *Iqbāl’s Educational Philosophy*, op.cit., p. 36).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 562-3..

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ط (الرَّعَد: ١١)

“Verily, God will not change the condition of men till they change what is in themselves.” (XII: 11).

This injunction of the Holy Qur’ān clearly asserts that man is originally *creative* and *free*. He can make or mar his life because of his actions. Man makes his Heaven and Hell with his action:⁴⁹

عمل سے زندگی بنتی ہے جنت بھی جہنم بھی یہ خاکی اپنی فطرت میں نہ نوری ہے نہ ناری ہے

It was an action that makes life either Paradise or Hell;
The earthly creature is neither sacred nor profane in his nature.
تپیدن و نرسیدن چہ عالمی دارد خوشکسی کہ بدنبال محمل است هنوز

Yearning, but never achieving has a charm of its own,
Most fortunate is he, who is still after the moving camel.

Thus, according to Iqbāl, man being co-partner in the creative activity of his Maker (*Allah*) does not subscribe to the oft-repeated notion of *Taqdīr* (Fate). He holds that man himself is his fate and the maker of his destiny:

زندہ دل سے نہیں پوشیدہ ضمیر تقدیر خواب میں دیکھتا ہے عالم نو کی تصویر!
اور جب بانگ اذال کرتی ہے بیدار اسے کرتا ہے خواب میں دیکھی ہوئی دُنیا تعمیر!

Decrees of Fate are not concealed
From a man whose heart throbbing seems:
He sees the image of a new world
In a slumberous state, during dreams.
When Prayer *Call* at early morn,
Transports him to Morpheus’ domain.
He tries to build the world beheld
With utmost might and utmost main.⁵⁰

Again, Iqbāl says that creative activity and invention of new meanings are the gifts of God bestowed on man:

ہر چیز کہ ایجاد معانی ہے خدا داد کوشش سے کہاں مرد ہنرمند ہے آزاد!

It is a gift by God bestowed,
To coin fresh words with new meanings:
Yet a skillful artist must work hard,
As in born trend is owned by the few.⁵¹

G. ROLE OF LOVE IN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE:

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 274, and *Dīwān-i-Iqbāl Lāhorī*, *op.cit.*, p. 54, (tr. Shaikh Akbar ‘Ali, *op.cit.*, p. 272).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 592, (tr. Syed Akbar ‘Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p. 82).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 593, (tr. Syed Akbar ‘Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p. 82).

According to Iqbāl, the experience could be interpreted partly philosophical and partly from a religious viewpoint. The essential spirit of philosophy, he says, is one of free inquiry and “it suspects all authority.”⁵² The philosophical justification lies in the primacy of experience over thought, in the vision of Reality as a non-cognitive entity in its deepest aspects, and in the reality of the ego which philosophical thought postulates but fails to establish and which can be affirmed through experience only.

On the contrary, it is generally accepted that the justification for religion lies in the very nature of religion itself. The life of a common religious person begins with intensive ‘faith’ and ‘humble submission to a discipline accepted unconditionally and without regard to any understanding of its meaning and purpose.’ The essence of religion is ‘faith’ and “the faith”, as Iqbāl conceives “like the bird sees its ‘trackless way’ unattended by intellect which, in the words of the great mystic poet of Islām, ‘only waylays the living heart of man and robs it of the invisible wealth of life that lies within.’”⁵³

According to Iqbāl, the true religious spirit is to make an effort to know rationally and understand the principles and disciplines of one’s religion and to seek justification for ‘faith’ in terms of its conception of reality. Moreover, since the transformation and proper guidance of man’s inner and outer life are the essential aims of religion, it is obvious that the general truths which it embodies must not remain unsettled. Under such conditions, it is clear that no one would hazard actions on the basis of doubtful principles of conduct and character. Iqbāl maintains that “in the view of its function, religion stands in greater need of rational foundation of its ultimate principles than even the dogmas of science.”⁵⁴ He points out that science has ignored rational metaphysics, but as far as religious yearning is concerned, it is not yet satisfied with the temporal aspect of reality only; besides, it inculcates an ambition in the followers to have direct contact with the Ultimate Reality. Furthermore, the truth that one has so far firmly believed a matter of faith is, indeed rational or thoughts discovered as facts of one’s own personal experience. Professor Whitehead rightly remarks, “The ages of faith are the ages of rationalism.”⁵⁵ However, Iqbāl suggests in this connection that to rationalize faith is not to admit the superiority of reason over revelation. Faith has a unique position in itself.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*,

It is generally held that religion at its higher level is an experience. But the question arises what is the nature of this religious experience? Iqbāl seems to identify it with “mystical experience” which is a source of Divine Knowledge. Discussing the character of knowledge and religious experience Iqbāl points out the “the main purpose of the Qur’ān is to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his manifold relations with God and the Universe.”⁵⁶ In the first Lecture of his *Reconstruction*, where Iqbāl takes up the question of religious experience as a source of knowledge, one does not find much difficulty regarding the identification of the two kinds of experience – religious and mystical. But when one goes through the last Lecture “Is Religion Possible”, in which Iqbāl deals with the nature and importance of religion, one clearly finds the uses ‘religious’ and ‘mystical’ or ‘intuitive’ experience synonymously. Anyhow, mystical experience refers to ‘unitive experience in which man has a direct association with God. Religious experience is not merely confined to an extraordinary urge for self-transformation and miraculous help in distress. Iqbāl makes a bold attempt to reconstruct religious thought from the viewpoint of Islāmic teachings. He points out that reason and its higher form ‘intuition’ are two ways of apprehending Reality. One way leads one to acquire Reality piecemeal while the other as a wholeness. In a poem, *Masjid-i Qartabah*, Iqbāl says:

عقل کی منزل ہے وہ عشق کا حاصل ہے وہ حلقہء آفاق میں گرمیء محفل ہے وہ

He is the goal of Reason, and the end of Love;
He is the very life of the Assembly of the universe.⁵⁷

Iqbāl does not deny the importance of Intellect, because he says that through it one establishes connections with the Reality that confronts one as reflective observation and one can also control the forces of nature as they are revealed through sense-perception. In a word, through intellect man solves worldly problems and brings forth his creative skill and other latent capabilities in this physical world as a co-worker with God. This is *‘ilm-al-mu‘amalah*. While, on the other hand, the mystical experience or Intuition (or) ‘*Ishq*’ the term that Iqbāl often uses) is a direct association with the Ultimate Reality. Intuition or ‘*Ishq*’ according to him, as indicated before, is an immediate, unanalysable whole, a moment of intimate association with a unique other self, and incommunicable.⁵⁸ The mystic or ‘*Āshiq*’ does not lose his individual identity in the Absolute like a drop of water which slips into the ocean. On the contrary, in Iqbāl’s view, the unique individual ego absorbs God into himself.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁷ *Kulliyāt i-Iqbāl, op.cit.*, p. 390, (tr A.A. Ansari, *op.cit.*, p. 22).

⁵⁸ Iqbāl, M., *The Reconstruction*, pp. 18-22.

Thus, through *Ishq* or mystical experience man knows the hidden realities (Secrets of the Spirituality). Iqbāl points out that when human self is strengthened by love or *Ishq* it gains *dominion* over both the outward and the inward forces of the universe and after conquering both the worlds approaches the Ultimate Reality:

از محبت چوں خودی محکم شود	قوتش فرمانده عالم شود
پیرگردون کز کواکب نقش بست	غنچه ها از شاخسار او شکست
پنجه ی او پنجه ی حق می شود	ماه از انگشت او شق می شود
در خصومات جهان گردد حکم	تابع فرمان او دارا و جم

When the Self is made strong by love,
Its power rules the whole world
The Heavenly sage who adorned the sky with stars
Plucked these buds from the bough of the Self.
Its hand becomes God's hand,
The moon is spilt by its fingers.
It is the arbitrator in all the quarrels of the world,
Its command is obeyed by Darius and *Jamshid*.⁵⁹

It is through this Intuition or *Ishq* that one approaches Ultimate Reality. In a word, it is *'ilm-al-Mukāshifah*, a unique state in *Ṣūfism* which cannot be expressed through words or explained by any rational methodology.

While discussing Iqbāl's philosophical education, sources of his thought, metaphysics, epistemology and his ethical and religious philosophy, it has been seen that he tries to make a radical attempt to bridge the gulf between the East and the West because in the modern era there is a great need of inter-philosophical understanding for the fruition of highest intellectual potential. Iqbāl was a passionately religious and devout person. He has reconstructed a complete theory of life reconciling Islāmic thought system with a modern scientific outlook. The greatest contribution of the West to the East is the scientific attitude, and of the East to the West, Love or Intuition as epitomized by the Prophet Muhammad(S), Christ, Imām 'Ali, Buddha and Rūmī; and an utmost emphasis on introspection and reflection in order to recognize the uniqueness of the human individuality. No doubt, Iqbāl's was an eloquent voice from the East which found a common denominator with the West and helped to build a universal community and brotherhood that tolerates all differences of caste, colour, creed, sex, language, geography and religion.

⁵⁹ *Dīwān-i-Iqbāl Lāhorī*, *op.cit.*, p. 97, (tr. R.A. Nicholson, *op.cit.*, pp. 43-4).

H. CONCLUDING REMARKS:

Iqbāl has a unique position in the Eastern and Western philosophical systems. His ethical and religious thought is, in the main, directed towards his philosophy of action which constitutes the essence of religious experience, as well as his attack on passive Sufism, which negates the self and is responsible for inaction, stagnation, and otherworldliness of the Muslim *Ummah*.

Rightly speaking, his philosophy is a composite fruit of the East and the West. In reconstructing such a comprehensive system of thought, Iqbāl refers to Muslim thinkers from the East, like Fārābī, al-Jili, Ghazālī, Rūmī, Tūsī, Shah Walī Allāh, Mir Dard, Jalāluddin Dāwānī, Mulla Bāqir, Jāhiz., Ibn-i-Maskawaih, Ibn-i-Rushd, Ghālib, Bedil, Al-Junayad, Ibn-al-‘Arabi etc. and the non-Islāmic thinkers from the West, like Zeno, Plato, Aristotle Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Nietzsche, Bergson, Newton, Russell, McTaggart, Einstein, Eddington, Cantor, James Jeans, Ouspensky, Royce, Spengler, William James, C.D. Broad, Whitehead etc. Thus, having deeply studied the above-mentioned Eastern and Western philosophers, theologians and the mystics, he has constructed his own system of thought by assimilating different elements of their various philosophies through a process of synthesis. The importance and greatness of Iqbāl, in fact, lies in his synthesis of the Eastern and the Western thought-systems in the light of modern scientific knowledge in a truly Islāmic spirit. *He advocates a spiritual-material life as espoused by Islām*. In fact, Iqbāl’s Ethical and Religious Philosophy helps the generation of the twenty-first century to pave the way for their better socio-political as well as scientific and technological life of the time. In the real sense, a value-oriented educational philosophy can change the structure of human life for better living in the present turmoil in which humanity around the globe is caught.

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