

MAKING OF THE PERFECT MAN

Dr. Abdul Khaliq

ABSTRACT

Man alone has been described as the bearer of the Divine Trust which was granted to him by God on his own consent and which the heavens and the earth and the mountains had earlier refused to accept. Neither according to genuine sufism nor in the thought-system of Iqbal himself does this personality-denying phenomenon stand for self-mortification or asceticism. Iqbal's emphasis on the disclosure of the inner being of man is simply aimed, as shown above, at the realization of one's own Divine nature. Another requirement for the attainment of moral perfection is faith in, and gnostic awareness of, the existence of God. This is because in order to be assuredly stationed at the highest level of moral excellence man is to realize that he is also answerable to God Himself in the capacity of being His vicegerent on earth. It is not man who, by assimilating more and more of Divine attributes, is finally absorbed in God but rather it is God Who in a way is absorbed in him. 'Immortality in the life hereafter' is another postulate that is generally identified by writers on moral subjects. Iqbal has in general conceived the nature as well as importance of this one of the basic articles of Muslim faith against the context of the character of life that man lives here and now. Quranic emphasis on rebirth after death, followed by the impending system of rewards and punishments for an unending span of time, is intended for one thing to persuade human beings to perform good actions and to dissuade them from performing evil ones. Every individual, we know, continues to make choices throughout his practical life. There are various degrees of the authenticity of these choices relevant to the different levels of the refinement and sophistication of the corresponding free acts.

The self in man as such, his ego or I-ness, has specifically earthly antecedents. There are a number of Quranic verses which in different phraseologies and against different contexts assert that he has been created out of clay. Iqbal, in this connection, refers to the verses 23: 12 -14 which read as follows:

Now of fine clay We created man, then We placed him, a moist germ, in a safe abode, then We made the moist germ a clot of blood, then made the clotted blood into a piece of flesh, then made the piece of flesh into bones, and We clothed the bones with flesh, *then brought forth man of yet another make...*

Given here is in brief a description of the various stages that occur during the conception and the subsequent gradual development of each and every human individual in the womb of his/her mother. Anyhow, this is not the type of development wherein different consecutive stages all of them could assuredly be explained and interpreted in the light of the earlier ones and in accordance with certain well-defined scientific principles. Instead, the Quran appears to conceive that man is the result of a process which may be termed, after Lloyd Morgan, "the process of emergent evolution"¹, i.e. a process in which at a particular stage some novel characteristics appear in the species suddenly and unexpectedly. Thus man can be declared as a new recreation in spite of his declared earthly base. This is particularly evident from the sentence "... then brought forth a man of yet another make" in the quotation from the Quran given above. Elsewhere, man alone has been described as the bearer of the Divine Trust which was granted to him by God on his own consent and which the heavens and the earth and the mountains had earlier refused to accept². The phenomenon of extraordinary and special creation of man is also clear from the verses of the Quran like the following:

So when I have made him (i.e. man) complete and *breathed into him of My spirit...*³

(God) said: O Iblis! What prevents thee from prostrating thyself to one whom I have created with My own hands.⁴

Iqbal interprets the incident of the breathing of the Divine spirit into man as 'a kind of waking from the dream of nature with a throb of personal causality in one's own being'⁵ or as 'a rising from simple

consciousness to a state of self-awareness”⁶ carrying alongwith it a keen sense of accountability to God.

There is a controversy, specially in Islamic literature, as to what does the Quranic word آدم (Adam) stand for. The orthodox have always been of the opinion that it was the proper name of the first-ever human individual (and the first-ever prophet also) who, after having been specially made by God and having been equipped with His own soul or spirit, was sent down to the earth, alongwith his conjugal partner, to stay on there and be in due course the progenitor of the entire human race. Some modernists, Allama Iqbal being one of them, are, however, of the opinion that the Quranic descriptions on this subject belong to the category of *mutash-abihat* and therefore are to be regarded as symbolic in nature. “The word ‘Adam’, says Iqbal, “is retained and used more as a concept (connoting all human beings) than as the name of a concrete human individual”⁷ [*parenthesis mine*]. He quotes a Quranic verse in his favour. The Quran, addressing men in general, says:

We created you; then fashioned you; then said We to the angels, prostrate yourself unto Adam.⁸

He further says:

The Quranic legend of the Fall (of Adam) has nothing to do with the first appearance of man on this planet. Its purpose is rather to indicate man’s rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and disobedience.⁹

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, his elder-contemporary, had also held on to the view that in the Quranic story, told in some detail, as regards the creation of man, and its subsequent events, the word Adam is just a symbol — as is in fact the whole story in all its ramifications — and stands for the human race¹⁰. He specially refers to the Quranic verse 7 : 11, which has just been quoted above, and points out that in it God is described as having addressed all men and then, in the same context, the verse mentions the name Adam, which fact signifies the identity of both the referents. Anyway, I need not dwell on this controversy in any detail as it is not very relevant to the present discourse which is confined to Iqbal’s concept of the human individual and specially of the Perfect Man.

From the verse ‘I breathed into him of My spirit’, quoted above, and others of this kind some thinkers, incidentally, have ventured to derive the thesis that soul or spirit or mind is a separate, independent substance in the human organism. This is also the layman’s point of

view. Dualism of mind and body thus conceived has further raised a host of psychological, metaphysical, ethical as well as eschatological problems that have kept most of the Muslim mystics and philosophers busy working out their details and implications. However, the Quran itself when carefully perused does not appear to subscribe to the substantiality of the human soul and, consequently, to the possibility of its disembodied existence — neither in the world herebefore nor in the world hereafter. For instance, it is commonly believed that, long before man appeared in the present spatio-temporal world of ours, God convened a meeting of the souls of all men who were to be created till the Last Day and got a commitment from them that He is their Lord. The only Quranic verse supposed to have mentioned this incident reads as follows:

When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam — from their loins — their descendents and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying). “Am I not your Lord”. They said: “Yea, we testify”. Lest ye should say on the Day of Judgement: “Of this we were never mindful”.¹¹

Obviously, there is no mention here of a gathering of souls or spirits as such. The verse perhaps is rather a symbolic way of saying that faith in the Godhood of Allah is ingrained in the very nature of man. Hence the well-known *sufi* saying: whosoever recognizes himself recognizes his Lord¹². Incidentally, the celebrated Ontological Argument¹³ for the existence of God is grounded in this very fact of ‘God-in-man’. Also, the commonly used phrase ‘immortality of soul’ does not mean that it is the ‘soul-without-body’ that will live forever after the death of a man here and now. The fact is that all descriptions of the Quran regarding the affairs of the residents of heaven as well as those of hell clearly imply man’s total psycho-physical resurrection in the Afterlife. Every individual, during the tenure of that life, will not only remember his past deeds but will also recognize other individuals who were known to him in the world there-before.

Further, the upholders of the dualism of human nature i.e. of the mutual independence of the substantialities of soul and body sometimes point out that soul and body both depend for their development and progress on different sets of factors which have nothing to do one with the other: body requires the consumption of food and drinks whereas soul requires the inculcation of moral and spiritual values. The Quran would not as well permit an absolute distinction which would incidentally amount to an estrangement between the religious and the worldly. According to the Quran,

bodily needs are to be fulfilled only in the manner that is approved by the valuational standards of spiritualism: and, correspondingly, the spiritual values are to be implemented not entirely independently but with due regard to the natural comforts of the body. No less than a comprehensive development of man as a whole, taking into consideration both his aspects, is the explicit as well as the implicit aim of the Quranic teachings. When terms like *nafs*, *ruh*, *insan* are used in the Quran to refer to the human individual in different contexts, they signify his entire personality.

The word ‘human ego’ or *kbudi* used by Iqbal likewise is taken by him to mean the unity and totality of the human person. He rejects the dualist theory of mind and body because parallelism and interactionism — the theories most often offered in this connection — both lead to various sorts of oddities and contradictions. The former (alongwith the ‘pre-established harmony’ of Leibniz) “reduces the soul to a merely passive spectator of the happenings of the body”; as to the latter, “we cannot find any observable facts to show how and where exactly their interaction takes place and which of the two takes the initiative. The soul is an organ of the body which exploits it for physiological purposes, or the body is an instrument of the soul, are equally true proposition on the theory of interaction”¹⁴. Mind and body, in fact, belong to the same system, says Iqbal. Matter is “spirit in space-time reference”¹⁵. It is “a colony of egos of a low order out of which emerges the ego of a higher order when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of co-ordination. It is the world reaching the point of self-guidance (i.e. in the person of the human individual) wherein the Ultimate Reality, perhaps, reveals its secret and furnishes a clue to its ultimate nature”¹⁶.

The ego or self that man is has two aspects, according to Iqbal — the ‘efficient self’ and the ‘appreciative self’.¹⁷ The latter, for which he also uses various alternative phrases like the ‘deeper self’, the ‘inner centre of experience’, the ‘root of being’ etc., lives in pure duration while the efficient self deals with serial time. In our day-to-day life we are so much absorbed with the world of space and time that we entirely lose sight of the fundamental or the appreciative ‘I’ within. It is, for Iqbal, incumbent upon a person to realize it not only in order to qualify himself for an encounter with the ‘Great I Am’ and prepare himself for authentic relations with other human beings but also because this achievement would make him a ‘human person’ in the full sense of the term. “To exist in pure duration”, says Iqbal, “is to be a self and to be a self is to be able to say ‘I am’. It is the

degree of intuition of I-amness that determines the place of a thing in the scale of being”.¹⁸

How do I discover and recognize myself? Iqbal’s answer is that, being most simple, fundamental and profound, I-amness is neither an object of perception nor simply an idea to be logically inferred and rationally conceived. It can, in the final analysis, only be known through a flash of intuitive insight. David Hume, the British empiricist, for instance, is well-known for his attempt to reach the self through channels which are purely of sensory, empirical nature. In his *‘A Treatise of Human Nature’*, he wrote : “... when I enter most intimately into what I call ‘myself’ I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch ‘myself’ at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep, so long am I, insensible of ‘myself’ and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death... I should be entirely annihilated”¹⁹. He thus concluded that there is no such thing as ‘I’ or ‘self’ and that a person’s mind is nothing but a medley of different perceptions. Hume’s supposition here is that all knowledge is to be furnished by sense experience. This leaves no scope for a permanent, non-successional being. Decartes, on the other hand, represents those who followed the course of reason. Being himself a brilliant mathematician and a discoverer of Analytical Geometry, he was firmly of the opinion that for philosophy a method could be discovered on the analogy of the one used in mathematical sciences, where we start with certain simple, self-evident principles, rising by degrees to the more and more complex ones — thus building up an entire system of thought. So he set out in search of the indubitable and the self-evident. This he did by a grand process of elimination. He doubted away everything he could possibly doubt: the testimony of his senses, his memory, the existence of the physical world, his own body and even the truths of mathematics.. One thing, however, he found, he could not possibly doubt and that was the fact of his own existence, his own self, his I-amness. It is he after all who had been performing the activity of doubting all the time! Doubting is a form of thinking. ‘I think’, he concluded, ‘therefore I am’, meaning to say, ‘I exist’. This argument, the critics have pointed out, is fallacious on many grounds. For one thing, the conclusion to which the entire reasoning leads could only be that “there is a veritable state of doubt”, and that’s all. At the most a logical ‘I’, which in fact is the subject of all propositions that are made in one’s my everyday life

can be asserted. From this to skip over to the factual existence of an 'I', as Descartes really does, is a leap which cannot at all be justified.

Iqbal thus appears to be right when he holds that both sense-experience as well as reason, forms of perception as well as categories of understanding, are only meant to equip us for our dealings with the spatio-temporal world: they are not capable of reaching the core of one's being. In fact "in our constant pursuit after external things we weave a kind of veil round the appreciative self which thus becomes alien to us. It is only in the moments of profound mediation", he goes on to observe, "when the efficient self is in abeyance, that we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner centre of experience"²⁰. On these premises, neither the *mutakallimun* nor the philosophers but the devotional sufis alone have truly been able to understand the nature of the human soul. The mediation, referred to here, is either pure mediation through which ideationally I remove from myself all that is not essentially 'me' i.e. all that I possess due to my specific 'historical' and 'geographical' situation, in the broadest sense of these terms. Or it may be the meditation charged with activity in which case I practically eradicate from my nature all of the exclusive love for, and involvement with, the world which is the cause of my alienation from the source and ground of my existence. The second meaning particularly is accepted by the mystics of Islam. The sufistic path formally begins with the inculcation of the virtue of *tawba* (repentance) which signifies purification of soul and the deliverance of it from all extraneous material so that the Divine within it stands realized. "The adherents of mystical religions", says G.S. Spinks, "feel compelled to empty their psychological life... in order to achieve by personality-denying techniques an emptiness that will prepare the way for the incoming of the Divine"²¹.

It is to be hurriedly pointed out here that neither according to genuine sufism nor in the thought-system of Iqbal himself does this personality-denying phenomenon stand for self-mortification or asceticism. The world is not to be disparaged and renounced because in fact there is nothing detestable about it as such. It could be as sacred as the spiritual realm. Iqbal's emphasis on the disclosure of the inner being of man is simply aimed, as shown above, at the realization of one's own Divine nature. There is a tradition of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) which says: Verily God created man after His own image²². God is above all determinations and limits; man must therefore try to shed off limitations that make up his efficient personality and tear away the web that he has woven—

warily or unwarily— around his original self. It is to this original self that the Quran refers when it says: He is indeed successful who causes it to grow; and he indeed fails who burries it²³. This discovery necessarily gives to man a simple, fresh, uncontaminated point of view with which to look at everything, a sure ground from which to take off and move towards a truly authentic existence.

Realization of the appreciative self is thus not an end in itself. It only amounts to revolutionizing the behaviour of the man-in-the-world. This fact is well-evidenced by the way of the prophets as conceived by Iqbal. He defines a prophet “as a type of mystic consciousness in which unitary experience tends to overflow its boundaries and seeks opportunities of redirecting or refashioning the forces of collective life. In his personality the finite centre of life sinks into his own infinite depth only to spring up again with fresh vigour to destroy the old and to disclose the new directions of life”²⁴. Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) has, in fact, been declared by Iqbal as the ideal of perfect manhood in Islam.

Iqbal is a process philosopher. In the preface to his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, he significantly points out that the Quran emphasizes ‘deed’ rather than ‘idea’.²⁵ The Quran says: “God created death and life that He might try you — which of you is best in deeds”²⁶. Not fatalism and inactivity but ever-continuing formation of fresh goals and their perpetual realization is the desirable style of life for the soldier of the moral ideal. The essence of perfect manhood lies in a constant state of tension. The ego, throughout its career, continues invading the environments and the environments invading the ego. The appreciative self, being a pure receptacle of Divine illumination, as shown above, plays the role of a directive agent in this mutual series of invasions in order to shape the person’s own destiny as well as that of the universe; sometimes he is even called upon to adjust with the forces of the universe. Thus, gradually and surely, his personality continues to be integrated more and more so that ultimately it is ensured stability and perpetuity against all possibilities of dissolution or extinction. “That which tends to maintain the state of tension tends to make us immortal,” says Iqbal. Further, “the idea of personality gives us 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”²⁷. On this standard, passionate desire for the realization of goals, supreme indifference to exclusive, evanescent material benefits, sterling self-confidence and courage to overcome obstacles, tolerance for the views and behavior

of others etc. are good, whereas ill-founded fears, undeserved possessions, disrespect for humanity, false sense of dignity, malicious attitude towards others are all bad. There being degrees of individuality, God is the most integrated Individual. One who is nearest to Him in this respect is thus the completest man. This ‘nearness’ may of course at the most amount to ‘withness’ but would not at all imply that man can finally be absorbed in God; rather man absorbs God into himself insofar as he assimilates His attributes into his person to the maximum to which it is humanly possible. Even such a voluminous upheaval as the phenomenon of Universal Destruction preceding the Day of Judgement will not affect the individuality, tranquil and quietude of the well-integrated ego. The Quran says:

The Trumpet will (just) be sounded, when all that are in the heavens and the earth will swoon *except such as it will please God to (exempt)*.²⁸

“Who can be the subject of this exception”, asks Iqbal, “but those in whom the ego has reached the very highest point of intensity?”²⁹ And the pinnacle of this development is reached when the ego is able to retain the state of self-possession, calm and absolute peace of mind which is not disturbed even when in contact with the Ultimate Ego. It sometimes occurs to me that this state of ‘peace of mind’ (*itmeenan-e qalb*) is the highest level of, or even the level higher than, faith (*iman*). It is this very state which once Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) asked God to grant him, and the same was duly granted to him³⁰. See how God will address the human ego *par excellence* — peaceful through and through — in the life hereafter:

O soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back thou to thy Lord — well pleased (thyself) and well-pleasing unto Him. Enter thou then among My devotees and enter then My heaven³¹.

Allama Iqbal regards Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) as the ideal of perfect manhood in Islam. On the occasion of *Mi’raj*, the apex event of Spiritual Ascension, when he was nearest to, and face to face with, God, his poise was not the least shaken. The Quran describes this incident:

His sight never swerved; nor did it go wrong³²

On the way towards the approximation to this ideal of perfection, an ordinary human ego has to make a graduated progress. There are, according to Iqbal, roughly three stages through which, one after the other, he must rout his journey. Obviously, they are not mutually exclusive but they are definitely collectively exhaustive. These have been described by him in some detail in the 9th section of his *Asrar-e*

Khudi. The first stage is that of *ita'at* (obedience) which comprises unreasoned obedience to a lawful mundane authority, to one's own conscience congenitally entrusted to him as well as to the *shari'ah* commandments. A life properly lived at this stage ensures discipline, decency and decorum in the behavior of the incumbent, unwarily instills in him qualities of patience, perseverance and steadfastness against heavy odds— all sorts of possible distractions and deviations— and gives him the desirable sense of direction. This phase of life is, by and large, the phase of compulsivity. The constraints, as if from without, under which the moral soldier works are in fact a necessary part of his initial training. Determinism thus envisaged would alone grant authenticity to the initiatives and choices made off and on by each and every individual during his lifetime. Freedom of will is no doubt one of the cardinal rights of man but freedom without determinism is, as a matter of commonsense, absolute licentiousness and would thus amount to his abasement to the level of animals. Incidentally, I am inclined to think that this earliest stage of self-realization has a similarity to the preparatory stage of *fana fi'al-sheikh* at which the *salik* is required to carry out unhesitatingly the directives of his spiritual guide without at all asking about the 'how' and the 'why' of these directives.

The second stage is that of *zabt-e nafs* (self-control). At this level the individual makes an effort to discover the meaningfulness, the rationale and justification of the commandments that had earlier been appreciated and accepted on their face value and obeyed as such. He carries out a sort of self-analysis, becomes aware of the hidden dynamics and potentialities of his person and in general tries to control its infirmities and failings. All this is an attempt to find out a workable relationship between the 'law' and the 'self' How very like the famous dictum of Kant: 'A principle of moral conduct (which is an unconditional, categorical commandment) is morally binding on me if and only if I can regard as a law that I impose on myself!' As to the constituents of the human self-in-contact-with-the-world, Iqbal says, the Creator infused into it two very strong basic sentiments: fear and love — fear of the antagonistic forces in the environments, of his own impending death, of the Hereafter and so on; love of the material wealth, of his wife and children and the closest relatives, of his country and so on. These sentiments, if not properly chiseled, pruned and disciplined, can play havoc with their incumbents and put up impassable barriers in journeying towards the fullest development of their egos. In order to manage them and channelize them in the desirable direction what is required is to subscribe to the

doctrine of *Tawbeed*, to have a strong faith in, and a strong commitment to, One Supreme God to Whom alone uncompromisingly all allegiance is due. *Tawbeed* is a power by dint of which one gets preponderance over the inborn tendencies of his nature instead of being a servant to them. God being the Absolute Power, fear of everything else becomes practically ineffective; He being the Ideal *par excellence* in every respect, all love and fascination is really directed towards Him and all the other so-called objects of love – and fear also – simply subserve.

The two stages, referred to above lead to the third one, *viz.*, *ni'abat-e Ilahi* (Divine vicegerency). The agenda of Allama Iqbal given here comprising the moral-cum-spiritual development of an individual is sometimes interpreted, by an undue stretch of imagination, as that of a so called *sufi* who aims at the purification of his own soul that ensures just the personal happiness of his one-to-one relationship of the contemplation and *ma'rifat* of God, the Ultimate Reality. The efforts of a *na'ib- Ilahi*, on the other hand, are too of course directed to the cleansing up of his ego with lesser and lesser irrelevant concern for the world around including other human beings in the society but he is in fact 'the moral individual' in the most authentic sense of this term. He is a man of vision, a man of conviction and commitment and a perpetual creator of higher and higher values which he also makes an attempt— knowingly as well as unknowingly— to implant in the society to which he belongs and revolutionize it thereby. The ground of all this in fact lies in the second stage i.e. *zabt-e nafs* where a journeyer towards the summum bonum of self-realization, we have seen, tries to allay the exclusively this-worldly loves and fears with reference to faith in the Oneness of God. This faith, which Iqbal defines as 'a living assurance begotten of rare experience'³³ naturally further prepares him for the assimilation of all the attributes of God idealized in His Beautiful Names (*Asma' al-Husna*). Human individual thus coloured in Divinity is the Most Perfect Ego, the *Mard-e Mo'min*, the *Mard-e Qalander* in his own person as well as in regard to his role in the society comprising human beings in general who are no less important than, what the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) described, '*ayal Allah* (the family of God)'³⁴. In the words of Iqbal,

the *na'ib* is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is the completest ego, the goal of humanity, the acme of life both in mind and body; in him the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony. The highest power is united in him with the highest knowledge. In his life, thought and action, instinct and reason, become one. He is the last fruit of the tree

of humanity and all the trials of a painful evolution are justified because he is to come at the end. He is the real ruler of mankind; his kingdom is the kingdom of God on earth.³⁵

Most of the popular readers on the subject of ethics, besides identifying various moral ideals, talk of the essential metaphysical assumptions, prerequisites and postulates of moral behavior. Iqbal in his descriptions of the morally perfect individual too registers a due cognizance of them. The most basic one of these as recognized by him is the unity, solidarity and perpetuity of the moral agent so that whatever he does is accepted by him to be entirely his own doing for which he alone is thus responsible to his own conscience as well as to the society at large. This requirement has been explained in detail, directly or indirectly, in the entire above account.

Another requirement for the attainment of moral perfection is faith in, and gnostic awareness of, the existence of God. This is because in order to be assuredly stationed at the highest level of moral excellence man is to realize that he is also answerable to God Himself in the capacity of being His vicegerent on earth. In regard to the ultimate destiny of man as a moral agent the concept of God to which he must subscribe is, according to Iqbal, theistic rather than pantheistic.³⁶ It is not man who, by assimilating more and more of Divine attributes, is finally absorbed in God but rather it is God Who in a way is absorbed in him³⁷ so that, symbolically speaking, he stands divinized. Introducing the English translation of *Asrar-e Khudi* he elucidates his position against pantheism on which he further elaborates in his *Reconstruction* and specially in the chapter 'The Conception of God and the Meaning of Prayer'. In this chapter he brings out the uncompromising individuality of God with reference to the Quranic *surah Ikbilas*. He further refers to the verse:

God is the light of the heavens and of the earth. His light is like a niche in which is a lamp – the lamp encased in a glass – the glass, as it were, a star...³⁸

The verse is sometimes understood, particularly by western orientalist, to support a pantheistic view of the Ultimate Reality. "The opening sentence of the verse", Iqbal admits, does give "the impression of an escape from an individualistic conception of God. But when we follow the metaphor of light in the rest of the verse, it gives just the opposite impression. The development of the metaphor is meant rather to exclude the suggestion of a formless cosmic element by centralizing the light in a flame which is further individualized by its encasement in a glass likened unto a well-defined star.... The metaphor of light as applied to God therefore

must... be taken to suggest the Absoluteness of God and not His Omnipresence which easily lends itself to a pantheistic interpretation".³⁹

However, besides this declared attitude, there are a number of implicit, though quite significant, references in the writings of Iqbal which exhibit a tendency towards pantheism. For instance, he says:

(i) "From the Ultimate Ego only egos proceed"⁴⁰ (the word 'proceed' here suggests a sort of emanationism).

(ii) The universe... does not confront God as an 'other' existing *per se*... From the standpoint of the all-inclusive Ego there is no 'other'. In Him thought and deed, the act of knowing and the act of creating are identical.⁴¹

And so on.

The above apparently ambivalent position of Iqbal is obliquely due to his almost equally strong allegiance to orthodoxy as well as to the mystico-philosophical traditions in Islam. Really, I hold, pantheism and theism do not refer to two diametrically opposed and mutually contradictory ontological truths in the usual sense of the term 'ontology'. They are simply existential points of view. The difference between them can be understood analogically with reference to the difference between *tariqat* and *shari'at* or that between the inner and the outer aspects of religious awareness. In one of his letters Iqbal writes:

A proper appreciation of the limits of the self is known as *shari'at* (the Islamic code of life) and to realize this code in the very depths of one's being is *tariqat* (the mystic way to perfection). When God's commands get so suffused in the self that the private affections and attachment cease to exist and the only object of life for the self becomes fulfilment of God's will, the condition is described by some eminent mystics of Islam as *fana* (self-annihilation) and by others *baqa* (self-preservation)...⁴²

Hence the controversy regarding whether Iqbal was a pantheist or a theist that has long been carried on by the scholars of Iqbal appears to be a little misconstrued. He may justifiably be both.

As we look more closely at the position of Iqbal, we find that he neither holds on to absolute pantheism in the sense of sheer identity of God with the universe nor does he subscribe to theism in the sense in which a layman would do such that he fails to conceive God as having a constant, living contact and a companionship with man : this contact being available to him only when invoked in petitionary prayers. Iqbal's characteristic view in this regard is that which has

been known as ‘panentheism’ i.e. ‘God is in the world and at the same time transcends it’. Such a relation, for instance, exists between a human person, on the one hand, and his habits and character, on the other. Behaviour of the universe comprises the habits of God, according to Iqbal, and the evolution and growth of nature, in general, and of man, in particular, amounts to no less than the realization of the potentialities of Divine Being Himself.⁴³

‘Immortality in the life hereafter’ is another postulate that is generally identified by writers on moral subjects. Iqbal has in general conceived the nature as well as importance of this one of the basic articles of Muslim faith against the context of the character of life that man lives here and now. Quranic emphasis on rebirth after death, followed by the impending system of rewards and punishments for an unending span of time, is intended for one thing to persuade human beings to perform good actions and to dissuade them from performing evil ones. Most of the moral thinkers have toed the same/a similar line of argument on this subject. For Iqbal, on the other hand, who regards the life of each and every individual here and in the hereafter as one continuity —the so-called death being just a sojourn on the way — faith in immortality is more than just a presupposition of morality: it is rather a fact grounded in man’s robust optimism. He says:

It is highly improbable that a being whose evolution has taken millions of years should be thrown away as a thing of no use.⁴⁴

Anyway, immortality, according to him, is not ours as of right: it is to be won by constant effort; we are only candidates for it. A detailed appreciation and critical review of Allama Iqbal’s concept of immortality has been given elsewhere in this book.⁴⁵

‘Free will’ of man too is a postulate of morality. It is a commonplace, patent fact that for a person to be regarded as accountable for an action that action must have been freely chosen and intentionally performed by him. Any action done entirely compulsively has no moral worth — neither positive nor negative. In fact freedom, according to Iqbal, is the essential component, if not the entire meaning, of that trust (*amanah*) that was offered to the heavens and the earth and to the mountains but they all declined to accept it: man accepted it at his own risk. The risk involved is that though freedom is an instrument through which we choose a good alternative, yet, at the same time it is the one through which we may as well choose the evil alternative. After having accepted that trust, we have been told, Adam tasted the fruit forbidden to him by God.

That act of disobedience by man was also his first act of free choice,⁴⁶ says Iqbal.

Every individual, we know, continues to make choices throughout his practical life. There are various degrees of the authenticity of these choices relevant to the different levels of the refinement and sophistication of the corresponding free acts. The lesser are the existential pangs and pricks of the antagonistic determining factors while going in for a good alternative, the more authentic is that choice. Soldier of the moral ideal struggles hard to continue warding off evil alternatives that he comes across in life. He thus makes his good will more and more a part and parcel of his mental and physical culture. Ultimately, his 'good will' becomes the 'holy will'. In the latter stage he of course does make choices between the good and the bad but irresistibly these choices are, as a matter of habit, always in favour of the former. Disregardfulness of the routine mechanics and sheerly mundane comforts of the material universe around us and an impassioned craving for the divinized moral excellences makes more and more of the room for genuine freedom. Ritual prayer, the climax of man's closeness to God, in which the prayee – body and soul together — faces entirely towards God, is described by Allama Iqbal as "ego's escape from mechanism to freedom".⁴⁷

Notes And Reference

¹ C.L. Morgan, *Emergent Evolution*, *passim*

² Quran, 33:72

³ *Ibid*, 15:29

⁴ *Ibid*, 38:75

⁵ Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p.68

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 68

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 67

⁸ Quran, 7:11

⁹ Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.67

¹⁰ Cf. Sayyid Ahmad, *Maqalat-e Sir Sayyid*, Vol. I, pp.216 – 234 etc.

¹¹ Quran, 7:172

¹² من عرف نفسه، فقد عرف ربه

¹³ Ontological Argument, originally offered by St. Anselm, in simple language, proceeds like this: There is a concept of perfect being — howsoever vague that concept may be — in our mind. Now if this being does not have the quality of existence it cannot be really perfect because non-existence is a defect. So, Perfect Being i.e. God must exist.

¹⁴ Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.84

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.122

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 84-85

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp 38 – 39

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.45

¹⁹ Book I part IV

²⁰ Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.38

²¹ *Psychology of Religion*, p.128

²² ان الله خلق آدم على صورته

²³ Quran, 91:9

²⁴ Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.100

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. XX1

²⁶ Quran, 67:2

²⁷ Cf. Allama Iqbal's Introduction to his '*The Secrets of the Self*'

²⁸ Quran, 67:2

²⁹ Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.94

³⁰ Cf. Quran :

Behold! Abraham said:My Lord ! show me how Thou givest life to the dead. He said:dost Thou not have faith (*iman*)? He said:yea! But that my heart be satisfied

يطمن قلبي (3:260)

³¹ Quran, 89:27 – 30

³² *Ibid*, 53:17

³³ Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.87

³⁴ الخلق عيال الله

³⁵ Introduction to *Secrets of the Self*

³⁶ For a detailed account of Iqbal's concept of God see below Chapter No

³⁷ Cf. saying of the Holy prophet (peace be on him):تخلقوا باخلاق الله(create in yourself the qualities of God).

³⁸ Quran, 24:35

³⁹ Allama Muhammad, *op.cit.*, p.51

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.57

⁴¹ *Ibid*, P.62

⁴² *Iqbal Namah*, p.202 (translated into English by Syed Abdul Wahid, *Iqbal — His Art and Thought*, p.235)

⁴³ For a more detailed discussion of Iqbal's concept of God see below Chapter VI

⁴⁴ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p.95

⁴⁵ See below Chapter 4

⁴⁶ Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, p.68

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.87