



“SIR MD. IQBAL AND AN OVERVIEW OF HIS PHILOSOPHY OF GOD AND REALITY”

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Md. Iqbal, a multi dimensional personality, a philosopher of human alienation and freedom, a philosopher poet is a staunch believer in Islam and its creed. But in his approach of the religion, he is markedly different from some other orthodox religious thinkers. His religious experience may be termed as ‘mystical experience’ as well. Freedom and creativity are the two basic components of his poetical endeavour. In this paper an attempt has been made to trace some of the significant elements in the thought system of the outstanding poet philosopher Sir Md. Iqbal. Some of the prominent and basic features such as emphasis on man’s existence and his personal involvement, responsibility, freedom, creativity, anti-intellectualism and anti-impersonal functionalism etc. are the features of philosophical insight of Iqbal.

KEYWORDS: Iqbal, Islam, Philosophy, self, God, Reality.

PERSONALITY:

Iqbal was born on 9th November, 1877 in Sialkot in the Punjab and died on 21st April, 1938¹ at Lahore. After completing his early education in Sialkot under the supervision and guidance of an able teacher, Shams-ul Ulama Mir Hasan, a great oriental scholar, Iqbal came to Lahore in 1895 for his higher studies. At Lahore Iqbal came under the influence of Sir Thomas Arnold, a renowned teacher. Arnold inspired Iqbal to visit Europe in 1905 so that he could well acquaint with the best and noblest western thought. Iqbal studied philosophy at the University of Cambridge under the guidance of J.M.E. the Taggart and James Ward. He was awarded with the degree of Ph.D. by the Munich University, Germany in 1908. The title of his thesis was “The Development of Metaphysics in Persia”. At London he was also qualified as a barrister at law.

On his return to India in August 1908 he joined the Government College Lahore and taught philosophy and English literature. But later on he resigned from professorship & concentrated on the legal profession. Iqbal practiced as a lawyer from 1908 to 1934,² after which he could not continue his practice due to illness. He was also elected to Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1927. In 1931 and 1932 he attended the Round Table Conference at London to frame a constitution for the Indian sub-continent. He was also invited to Oxford as Rhodes Lecturer in 1935 which he declined, due to his illness. His illness took a serious turn on 25th March, 1938 and in spite of the best medical aid and careful nursing by his friends and relatives, Iqbal breathed his last in the early hours of 21st April, 1938.

PHILOSOPHY OF GOD AND REALITY:

Iqbal is regarded with great respect by scholars, philosophers and religious leaders for his dynamic philosophy and prophetic vision.” Iqbal is undoubtedly the greatest Muslim Philosopher of the 20th century, and his philosophy has an inspiration and a message unique in the history of human thought. He had the good fortune to combine within him a through grounding and a deep existential involvement in the teachings of the Holy Quran, a rigorous formal discipline in philosophy, and numerous poetic visions bordering on the metaphysical

disclosures of reality. All this made him more than a philosopher: he was, indeed; a seer, a sage, a revivalist, almost a messenger from another world who opened our inner eyes to new possibilities of human experience and new horizons and dimensions of human existence."³ He was a heir to a very rich literary and philosophical scholarship. He imbibed and assimilated all that was best in the Islamic and oriental thought to which he added his own extensive knowledge of western literature, philosophy and culture both of the past and present."⁴ This helped him scrutinize various view points and reconfirm his view that Islam is the answer to all human problems. He therefore based the edifice of his thought on Islamic tenets. Thus the source of his inspiration and the foundation of his philosophical thought are the Quran and the Tradition of the prophet of Islam.⁵

The mystic writers such as Rumi and Ghazali, pantheist thinkers such as Ibn-Arabi and Al -Jili, and the Scholastic theologians have also influenced the philosophical thought of Iqbal. From the west, he came under the influence of Greek philosophers, German Idealists (such as Kant and Fichte), and more recent European philosophers such as Nietzsche and Bergson.⁶

As Iqbal's vision and intellectual grasp of the fundamentals of human culture and destiny widened during his stay in Europe, he began to look humanity as a whole without dividing it on the basis of caste, colour and creed, national and geographical divisions. In his philosophy and poetry he devoted himself to elucidating the real meaning of the great cultural and spiritual heritage of man. He looked upon Islam as a universal religion which could bring peace, prosperity and progress to the entire mankind. His study of history led him to believe that Muslims dominated every walk of life while they followed true Islam, which preached faith in the unity of God, laid emphasis on action in individual as well as social life and obliged its followers to love the prophet and practice his Traditions. According to him, when Muslims ceased to follow Islam in its true spirit, they became insignificant in the world. Iqbal was basically concerned with bringing about an Islamic Renaissance. In order to achieve this goal, he deemed it necessary to revive true Islamic spirit in the Muslim society which was miserably caught in the meshes of superstitions, inactivity, and ignorance. Iqbal's philosophical writings and poetical works aimed at awakening the Muslims from their slumber, and motivating them to give up their indifference towards the ideal of leading an active and dynamic life in accordance with the principles of Islam, which according to him, were opposed to any kind of withdrawal, renunciation and defeatism. He did not agree with those thinkers who considered religion as an escape from the struggle of life, or who preached as life of 'fatalistic resignation' or one of withdrawal. As mentioned above, he is deadly against 'retreat or renunciation' for in his view it is the negation of the Islamic spirit. His religion is not the 'opium of the people'. He advocated a religion of power, challenging men and women to the conquest of the universe."⁷

Iqbal has critically examined the three classical arguments for the existence of God viz. Cosmological, Ontological and Teleological, and seems to be in agreements with Kant that no one of these is conclusive. They are merely attempts on the part of the limited human intellect to comprehend the nature of God. Iqbal also dubs Kant's moral argument for the existence of God as "mere wish-fulfilment." He is also in arguments with Farabi and other Muslim thinkers who maintain that God Himself is the proof of all beings, and therefore, needs no proof for his existence. All the possible beings depend for their existence in Him. He is the proof of all possible beings. He is independent and beyond all proofs, because all proofs limit His existence. Iqbal's view is that God's existence as a necessary Being is revealed to man in his existential experience:⁸

According to Iqbal, God is 'Reality as a whole' and this 'reality as a whole' is spiritual. It is spiritual in the sense of being and individual and an Ego. Iqbal holds that the ultimate Reality, God, is the most unique Individual. He is to be regarded as an ego, because, like the human self, He is "an organising principle of unity, a synthesis which holds together and focalises the dispensing dispositions of His living organism for a constructive purpose."⁹ Again He is an ego also because he responds to human desires and prayers, for "the real test of self is whether it responds to call of another self;¹⁰ and on the grounds that supplication "is a declaration of man's internal longing for a reaction in the terrible quiet of the Universe".¹¹ Strictly speaking, according to Iqbal, God is not an ego but the Absolute Ego. He is Absolute because He is all inclusive and there is nothing outside Him. He is not a static spirit but dynamic and creative one. He is living energy and, since there is nothing beside Him to put a limit to Him, He is an absolutely free creative spirit. He is also infinite. But he is not infinite in the spatial sense, for spatial infinity is not absolute. Iqbal holds that "God's limitlessness is serious, not extensive,"¹² and comprises in the endless internal conceivable outcomes of His inventive movement. Thus God's being a free living energy with infinite creative possibilities means that He is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent.

Iqbal presents his extremely unique view while talking about the inventive movement of God and man that time space are understandings that idea puts upon the imaginative action of the Ultimate Ego. Additionally, existence are likewise viewed as potential outcomes of the Ego, just somewhat acknowledged in the state of our scientific reality. Past Him and separated from His inventive movement, there is neither time nor-space to deter Him in reference to other Egos.¹³ Iqbal recognizes human personality from the Ultimate Ego and keeps up that the last in neither as spatial vast nor limited in the feeling of the space bound human self image whose body deters him in reference to different inner selves. "The unendingness of the Ultimate Ego comprises in boundless internal conceivable outcomes of his 'imaginative movement' of which the universe, as known to us, it just a halfway articulation. In single word, God's boundlessness is concentrated, not broad. It includes an endless arrangement, yet that series."¹⁴

Examining the significance and fundamental solidarity of life which is profound in its inception, but has a material situation (world), says unmistakably: "The Ultimate Reality to the Quarn is otherworldly and its life comprises in its transient action. The soul discovers it opportunity in the common, the material and the mainstream. All that is common is along these lines, hallowed in the underlying foundations of its being. There is no such thing as a profane world. This giganticness of issue comprises a degree for the self acknowledgment of the soul. As the prophet so delightfully puts it: 'The entire of this world is a mosque.'¹⁵

Islam advocates the synthesis of love and reason. "Reason as informing the phenomena of physical nature as well as the mind of man has been presented by the Quarn to be in complete agreement with faith in God."¹⁶ Iqbal also endorses the view according to which intuition is 'only a higher form of intellect.' To him thought has deeper movement in which it becomes fused with intuition. He says: " In its more profound development, in any case, thought is equipped for achieving a fast approaching vast in whose self-unfurling development the different endless ideas are simply minutes. In its fundamental nature, at that point thought isn't static; it is dynamic and unfurls its boundlessness in time like the seed which, from the earliest starting point, conveys inside itself the arrange solidarity of the tree as a present reality.¹⁷ Iqbal finds its route in the Quran. He maintains that the Quran recognize that the empirical attitude in as indispensable stage in the spiritual life of humanity. Further, to Iqbal Intuition and Intellect are complementary, and not contrary to each other. Their route is the same, though their function is different. "The one handles Reality piecemeal, different handles it in its wholeness. The one fixes its look on the interminable, the other on the worldly part of Reality. The one is available pleasure in the entire Reality, alternate goes for the navigating the entire by gradually indicating and shutting everything down different areas of the entire for selective perception. Both need each other for shared revival.¹⁸ Iqbal says: "The ultimate end of human activity is life glorious, powerful, and exuberant. Al human art must be subordinated to this final purpose, and the value of everything must be determined in reference to its life yielding capacity. The art is that which awakens our dormant will -force and nerves us to face the trails of life manfully...The dogma of Art for the sake of Art is a clever invention of decadence to chat us out of a life and power."¹⁹

Pointing out the uniqueness of the heart, Iqbal refers to the Quranic text which says that God has bestowed on man "'hearing' and 'seeing' and 'heart.'²⁰ Once more, he gives the origination of 'heart' as indicated by Maulana Rumi, whom he thinks about his otherworldly coach, in the accompanying words: "The 'heart' is a sort of internal instinct or knowledge, which is delightful expressions of Rumi, benefits from the beams of the Sun and carries us into contract with that part of reality other than those open the sense observation. It is, as per in the Quran, something which 'sees' and its reports, if legitimately translated, and never false."²¹

According to Iqbal, 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 perspective of the Quran, man is identified with nature, and this connection is considered as a methods for controlling her powers, and not wicked with for mastery "but in the nobler interest of a free upward movement of spiritual life."²²

CONCLUSION:

It has been seen while discussing the philosophical education, sources of his thoughts, metaphysics, epistemology and religious and ethical philosophy of Iqbal that he tries to make a radical attempt to bridge the gulf between the East and the West. Iqbal was a religious and devout person from his heart. Throughout his life he endeavoured to reconstruct a complete theory of life reconciling Islamic thought system from the modern and

scientific point of view. According to Iqbal, "the greatest contribution of the western world to the Eastern World is the scientific attitude, and of the East to West, Love or intuition as epitomized by the prophet Muhammad, Christ, Ali, Buddha and an utmost emphasis on introspection and reflection in order to recognize the uniqueness of the human individuality. There is no doubt in the fact that Iqbal was an eloquent voice from the east and common denominator with west and helped to build a universal community and brotherhood and tolerates all differences of caste, creed, language, sex, region and geography. Thus it can be summarized that the greatness and importance of Iqbal lies in the fact that he synthesised both the Eastern and Western thoughts together in the modern scientific pattern the spirit of which was truly Islamic in the real sense.

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