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Summary

This article deals with the subject "concept of self-consciousness and the man in Iqbal's Poetry". Dr. Mohammad Iqbal was a great poet-Philosopher of the east who being motivated by the poor plight of the muslim all over the world, wrote such a poetry as could rouse in them a new spirit of self-reliance and determination. For this purpose he construed a doctrine called "Khudi" ie self-consciousness or ego, which stirs up all human desires, feelings and ideals.

**"Concept of self-consciousness
and the Man in Iqbal's Poetry"**

Fall of the muslim empires all over the world started in second half of the 18th century and it reached its climax in the 19th century. Tunis, Egypt, Sudan, Libya and many other African and Arab states fell prey to the aggression of Britain, France and Italy. Persia became a target of Russian ambition. Britain annexed India and subjugated the people of the Sub-continent. Turkey was also at the brink of disintegration and disaster. Allied forces occupied Istanbul, whereas Greek army entered Izmir. But at this critical conjuncture Turks, were the only muslim nation which did not lose heart, rather rose to the occasion. With such a great leader as Mustafa Kemal Pasha at its head, the Turkish army inflicted a humiliating defeat to the Greek Forces and exhibited such a valour that led to the withdrawal of the allies from Istanbul. But this was a unique example of bravery by an individual nation, otherwise all other muslim states, were virtually licking the dust.

*Dr. Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) was a great Poet-Philosopher of the east. He is known as a national poet of Pakistan, because he put forward an idea of separate state for the muslims of the Sub-Continent. Iqbal loved Turkey and the Turkish people and wrote many magnificent poems about them.

This poor plight of the muslini all over the world motivated Iqbal to write such a poetry as could infuse in them a new spirit of self-reliance and determination. So through the luminous spark of his poetry he gave a message of hope for freedom, love for action and a spirit for endless struggle. For this message Iqbal construed a doctrine called "Khudi"-ie self-consciousness or ego, which "illuminates all human desires, feelings and ideal, It is a living principle of the universe, the foundation of all human endeavor and achievement¹ Iqbal says:-

The luminous point whose name is the self,

Is the life spark beneath our dust!²

Since the life of the universe comes from the strength of the self

Life is in proportion of this strength³

When a drop of water gets the self's lesson by heart,

It makes its worthless existence a pearl!⁴

When life gathers strength from the self

The river of life expands into an ocean!⁵

According to Iqbal, constant struggle and conflict are inevitable for the development of "Khudi". in this respect, Iqbal seems to be influenced by Hegel's philosophy of Dialectics. Friedrich Hegel, a German philosopher, held that evolution of life depended upon endless struggle and conflict. Marx's theory of "Dialectic-Materialism" was also evolved from Hegel's doctrine. Life as viewed by Iqbal, is always at war. It is an arena for constant adventure and endless struggle. This struggle is not confined to this

¹ A history of Urdu literature by Dr. Muhammad Sadiq p 359.

² English translation taken from "some selected verses of Iqbal by Khawja Ghulam Saïyidan, "Iqbal Vol 43 No.3 July 1996.

³ English translation taken from "some selected verses of Iqbal by Khawja Ghulam Saïyidan, "Iqbal Vol 43 No.3 July 1996.

⁴ English translation taken from "some selected verses of Iqbal by Khawja Ghulam Saïyidan, "Iqbal Vol 43 No.3 July 1996.

⁵ English translation taken from "some selected verses of Iqbal by Khawja Ghulam Saïyidan, "Iqbal Vol 43 No.3 July 1996.

material world, but it stretches itself beyond the heavens and the stars as well. Iqbal says,

*Beyond the stars there are still other worlds,
There are other fields to test man's indomitable spirit,⁶*

*Not devoid of life are these open spaces of heaven
There are hundreds of other caravans in them as well!⁷*

*Do not remain contented with this sensible world;
Beyond it there are other gardens and nests as well!⁸*

Similarly in "Javed Nama" Iqbal says:-

*Life is nought but the joy of soaring,
The nest is not congenial to its nature!⁹*

According to Iqbal the source of strength to self-consciousness is love (Ishq). Love is not a cliché in Iqbal's poetry. It is a centre of gravity for Iqbal's philosophy. This is the passion which leads life to a supreme goal. Once again I quote from "Israr-e-Khudi",

*When self is fortified by love,
It becomes the law-giver to the world!¹⁰*

*By love it is made lasting
More living, more burning, more glowing!¹¹*

⁶English translation from "A history of urdu literature by Dr. Muhammad Sadiq . 361

⁷ English translation from "A history of urdu literature by Dr. Muhammad Sadiq . 361

⁸English translation from "A history of urdu literature by Dr. Muhammad Sadiq . 361

⁹ Iqbal Vol. 43 no.3 July 1996

¹⁰ Iqbal Vol. 43 No.3 p49, 65

¹¹ Iqbal Vol. 43 No.3 p 49, 65

And a verse from Urdu ghazal,

*When the self is fortified by intellect,
It is envy of Gabriel:
If it is fortified by love,
It becomes the trumpet call of Israfil!*¹²

Freud Sigmund - An Austrian Physician and founder of Psycho-analysis also thought this passion a source of life, but he took it only a sex-passion. On the contrary Iqbal attached wide meanings to this word. As viewed by him, love passion is not separate from reason or intellect. Mystics also held that love carries insight as well as ecstasy at the same time.

This idea comes very close to Bergson's "Elan Vital", Iqbal says,

*The ecstasy of vision is also hidden in the same dust,
O oblivious ! thou artnt only a believer of intellect!*

*If vision is the goal of the intellect
It becomes both the path and the guide!*¹³

Iqbal has specified three stages for the training of one's ego. First step is the submission and obedience that is yielding to the will and the commands of Almighty Allah. Confinement of air in a flower makes it fragrance , whereas fragrance in a belly of a deer becomes musk. Similarly when one yields dutifully to the restraints and instructions of the Almighty and becomes completely obedient to Him, one is bound to acquire such a strength that everything created will obey one.

¹² Iqbal Vol.43No.3p49, 65

¹³ Iqbal Vol. 43 No.3 p56

*O oblivious! Try to be obedient.
Authority comes but through submission.*

*Anyone who conquers the moon and the stars,
Yields oneself to the commands and the laws.*

*Imprisonment in a flower makes the air fragrance,
Confinement of fragrance in a belly of deer becomes musk.*

*The law of attraction makes the drop a river,
And specks of dust turn into desert under the same law.*

*In this world everlasting joy lies in observing the law of nature,
The lawlessness of the waves ends in mourning.*

Second stage is to control one's baser self that tends to lead astray. It instigates mean desires ie greediness, debauchery, perversion, rudeness, obstinacy and so on. Baser self or being, as laid down by Iqbal, is like a self-centred camel who is self-loved, self-seeking and repugnant. Iqbal says:-

*Thy baser self is like a self-centred camel,
Who is self-loved, self-seeking and repugnant,
Be a man and keep its rein in thy hands,
So thee shalt cease to be a stone and become a pearl.*

After passing through these two stages, one could reach at the culmination of one's self elevation. Here comes into view Iqbal's supreme individual who is an embodiment of Iqbal's philosophy and thoughts. When all the conditions to strengthen the "Khudi" are accomplished in an individual, there appears Iqbal's ideal man ie Insan-e-Kamil. According to Khalifa Abdul Hakim and some other critics of Iqbal, the most pervasive influence on Iqbal was that of Nietzsche. But Iqbal himself, in a letter to professor Nicholson, refuted this idea. No doubt Iqbal liked the philosophy

¹⁴ A History of urdu literature p 382

of development, strength, self-confidence and achievement, put forward by Nietzsche, yet there is a world of difference between the two thinkers, Nietzsche was an evolutionist, who imposed no limits to the expansion of an individual. His superman has no faith in humility, goodness, obedience, forbearance, pity, justice, kindness and other values of life. All these he calls the ethics of the slaves. The ethics of the masters are ruthlessness, independence, unlimited strength, self-effort and boundless progress. The weak has no right to live. Merciful God has no role to play, rather He has ceased to live.

Being a muslim thinker Iqbal could not go all the way with Nietzsche. Iqbal's ideal man is a blend of modesty, humility, humanity, pity, forbearance, justice and other ethical values of life. In other words Nietzsche's ideal man is manifested in the shape of Janghiz khan, Haluku and Hitler etc. where as Iqbal's "insan-e-kamil" is the most virtuous personality of Muhammad, the messenger (PBUH), who stands unparallel in the annals of humanity. So keeping in view the teachings of the prophet, Iqbal advises us to be kind, loving, courageous, determined, upright and just. He says:-

*What is Admiyat (humanism) ? Respect for man,
To learn to appreciate true place in life's economy!*¹⁵

*The man of love learns the ways of God,
And is benevolent alike to the believer and the unbeliever!*¹⁶

*Hold fast to the ways of truth,
Rid thy self of the fear of kings and nobles,
Do not forsake justice in anger or in joy,
In poverty or in affluence!*¹⁷

Iqbal's ideal man is visionary and has creative faculties in him. If, he lacks the power of creation, he cannot be a true muslim. In his verses Iqbal says:-

¹⁵ "Iqbal" p.38

¹⁶ "Iqbal" p40,52

¹⁷ "Iqbal" p40,52

*He who lacks the power of creation,
Is naught to us but an atheist and an agnostic
He has not taken his share of our Beauty,
He has not eaten the fruit of the Tree of Life!
Man of Truth! Be sharp and incisive like the sword,
And become the destiny of thy own world!*¹⁸

"Insan-e-Kamil" is like a lightening sword against falsehood, but for Truth and righteousness he is a protecting shield . His affirmation and negation are the criteria for Good and Evil. Ever great are his forgiveness, his justice, his generosity and his grace. Even in anger he knows how to be kind and merciful.

Abdul Karim Aljelli also presented an idea of a singular man (Insan-e-Kamil). But his individual is a mixture of metaphysical and spiritual elevation only. He ignored the importance of this material world altogether. Whereas Iqbal's insan-e-kamil is a combination of social, psychological and spiritual values of life. Similarly Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, Iqbal's spiritual teacher, also yearned for a man to appear in this world full of devils and Satan, to replace them all. According to Dr. Anne Marie Schimmel, "The search of this man forms an integral part of Mulana's poetry. No less than three times has he alluded to the story of the philosopher(sheikh) who goes around with the lantern in search for man, and it is not astonishing that in the most famous of his poems 'Javid Nama' Iqbal has inserted as a kind of incantation to call back the spirit of Maulana"¹⁹.

But the concept of Rumi about the relationship between man and his society is not clear. Whereas Iqbal's ideal man devotes all his faculties of both head and heart to the welfare of his "millat". In his Masnavi "Secrets of self-devotion" (Rumuz-e-Bekhudi) he has dealt with this subject at length. In his view an individual and his society are mirrors to one -another. An individual is respected due to his nation and nation derives esteem from her individuals. More over in the words of Dr. Anne Marie Schimmel, "In his way towards the ideal state of things and that means towards the ideal man, one has to throw out every thing that hampers one's productivity and when an ideal community is supposed to emerge, it is necessary that the individual

¹⁸ "Iqbal" p52

¹⁹ "Lectures on Allama Iqbal " by Anne Marie Schimmel edited by Dr. A.B. Ashraf B.Z. university, Publication II p31,56

too has a firm stance of his own; the Asrar-I-Khudi" are a pre-requisite for the Rumuz-e-Bekhudi"²⁰.

I here by quote some verses from "Rumuz-e-Bekhudi" to illuminate my point.

*Man and society are mirror to each other,
They are like thread and pearls, the galaxy and the Stars*

*An individual gets esteem from his society,
A society finds its system from individuals.*

*When an individual absorbs himself into society,
A drop turns as wide as an ocean!*

*The unity of hearts brings the community into being,,
This sina is a glow with that single flame!²¹*

I should end my article by quoting a translation from a poem of a German poet-Philosopher Pannwitz²² (D.1969) who was extremely appreciative of Iqbal's philosophy and thoughts. He says:

"Every great poetry is part of the time and at the same time more than the time. It completes time, takes out its not yet unfolded germinal layers, eg that what it lacks, what future should bring, and what is valid for eternity. It is time's mirror, it is not passive but active history, prophesy which helps creating history. Great poetry opens in the souls of the contemporaries a productive process which is stranger than any presence, and which is able to tear out of it the future, or to deliver future from it. "²³

This perfectly applies to Iqbal's poetry.

²⁰ "Lectures on Allama Iqbal " by Anne Marie Schimmel edited by Dr. A.B. Ashraf B.Z. university, Publication II p31,56

²¹ "Iqbal p.42

²² For more details please see my translation of Dr. Anne Marie Schimmel's article " Iqbal and Rudolf Pannwitz" Published in my book

(Galib and Iqbal)-Beacon Book Multan 1980.

²³ "Lectures on Allama Iqbal p. 58.