

IQBAL'S CONCEPT OF EVOLUTION

DR. M. RAFI UDDIN

We can have two different views about the manner in which the Universe, as we know it at present, has come into existence. We can believe either that it is the outcome of a sudden act or of a series of sudden isolated acts of creation in the past, or that it is the result of development through the ages. The latter view, which, of course, implies not only the evolution of a matter from previous states but also the evolution of all species, including man, from earlier and lower forms of life, is held by the evolutionists, while those who subscribe to the former view are known as the creationists.

Iqbal is definitely an evolutionist; for, according to him, it is a law of nature that an object can come into existence only gradually, as a result of a process of development stretched over an appropriate period of time;

چو فطرت مے تراشد پیکرے را

تمامش مے کند در روز گارے

This law applies as much to the Universe as a whole as it does to every object in the Universe.

یہ کائنات ابھی ناتمام ہے شاید

کہ آرہی ہے دما دم صائے کن فیکون

As the first couplet above indicates, Iqbal's view that creation takes the form of evolution is derived from his view of the attributes of Reality to which, of course, nature (Fitrat) holds the mirror.

According to Iqbal the reality of the Universe is an all-powerful consciousness which is conscious of itself. This entity which he denotes by the name of Self-consciousness or self (khudi) is the creator of the world:

خویشتن را چوں خودی بیدار کرد

آشکارا عالم پندار کرد

Since life is an attribute of consciousness and consciousness cannot be imagined apart from life, Iqbal sometimes uses the word Life (Hayar or Zindagi) for consciousness:

نقطہ نور مے کہ نام او خودست

زیر خاک ما شرار زندگی ست

At other places, however, he uses the word life not so much for world-consciousness itself as for the force of the desire or the will of world-consciousness as it operates and incarnates itself in the material world:

چوں حیات عالم از زور خودیست

پس بقدر استواری زندگی ست

The central and the most fundamental attribute of this self-consciousness or self of the world (of which a full reflection is to be found only in the human being who alone of all the creation has acquired self-consciousness) is to love an ideal and to act and strive for its realization. Its activity is caused entirely by the love of an ideal and is, therefore, entirely purposive. Love alone can create a wave of restlessness in the tranquility of its being and make its activity to flow like a tumultuous river:

آرزو هنگامه آرائے خودی

موج بیتابے ز دریائے خودی

“Reality” says Iqbal “is not a blind vital impulse. ...Its nature is through and through teleological”. As the self-consciousness of the world acts and strives for the realization of its ideal, it expresses and asserts itself and thereby actualizes its potentialities and displays its qualities and capacities in creation. Self-assertion or self-display is thus revealed as one of the characteristics of self-consciousness:

The Universe is the result of the creative activity of the World-Self and the ideal that the World-Self is realizing through this activity is the Perfect Man, i.e., the Perfect Human Society, of the future:

ما از خدائے گم شده ایم او بجستجوست

چوں ما نیاز مند و گرفتار آرزوست

گاهے به برگ لاله نویسد پیام خویش

گاهے درون سینہ مرغان به هاؤهوست

در نرگس آرمید که بیند جمال ما

چندان کرشمه داں که نگاهش بگفتگوست

آه سحر گہی که زند در فراق ما

بیرون و اندرون زبر و زیر و چارسوست

ہنگامہ بست از پیئے دیدار خاکئیے

نظارہ را بہانہ تماشائے رنگ و بوست

The Perfect Man who is yet to come is the real meaning of creation. He is the final objective of all the creative activity of the World-Self which has already expressed itself in such a colourful variety of creation:

آیہ کائنات کا معنی دیر یاب تو

نکلے تری تلاش میں قافلہ ہائے رنگ و بو

Since the creative activity of the World-Self in the Universe has a single purpose—the perfection of man--it must be a single and continuous process

from its beginning to its end. This is not possible unless every state of the Universe emerges and evolves out of a previous state as every condition of a growing organism emerges and evolves out of its previous condition. This means that the universe as a whole and the various objects which make up the universe did not come into existence suddenly at a particular moment in the past but have acquired their present shape by a process of gradual development.

The whole of the creative activity of the World-Self which occurred in the past now belongs permanently to history and we have no means of reproducing it. But since the process of creation

is still going on and a portion of this creative activity is stretched before our eyes into the present we are eminently in a position to study it and to understand its nature as a whole. We see that nothing in this world happens abruptly and without passing through a series of earlier phases of development. A tree grows out of a seed by stages; an organism develops gradually out of a sperm; a gigantic industrial or commercial concern evolves slowly from an insignificant start; a mighty state has a modest beginning. There is no reason to suppose that objects used to come into existence suddenly in the past and that nature has now changed its old habit of creating abruptly and has started creating gradually and by stages. On the contrary, as far as the study of history enables us to penetrate into the past, we see that every state of the world was a growth out of a previous one. The modern civilized man has evolved out of the caveman of an ancient age who was only a little better than animals, and there have been innumerable stages of civilization from the cave-man to the man of today. We can infer most reasonably that the cave-man too must have had a career of his own with a beginning disappearing into the mists of a distant past of biological evolution.

The fact that the creative activity of the World-Self in the Universe has a single purpose, the perfection of man, means also that the cause of evolution is the desire of the Creator for the realization of that purpose. All the attributes and qualities of the Perfect Man of the future exist potentially in this desire of the Creator and become more and more actualized as the desire achieves a greater and greater realization. This desire alone was the driving force of the evolutionary process in the past and will continue to be its driving force in the future. It created Space and Time and the earliest form of

the universe.

It is not possible to love an object or an idea without hating its antithesis. Hate, therefore, becomes a necessary concomitant of love. The love of the Creator, too, has its concomitant of Hate. Since the Creator loves everything that is favourable to His ideal, He hates everything that is unfavourable to it. The result is that the driving force of evolution expresses at each level of creation in particular forms of attraction and repulsion which are suitable to that level. During the material stage of evolution, it expressed itself in the attraction and repulsion of the particles of matter on account of which matter continued to develop in complication and organization till all the physical laws came into existence and matter became ripe for the production of the first living cell. This explains why every physical law is either a form of attraction or a form of repulsion. On reaching the biological stage the driving force of evolution expressed itself in the animal's instinctive attraction for everything that is favourable to its existence and repulsion from everything that is unfavourable to it. As the animal expressed its instincts of attraction and repulsion in its activities, its biological constitution became more and more complicated and organized and its instincts, too, developed in number and quality, till man, the most highly organized animal, came into existence. This explains why every animal instinct or innate tendency we know of is either a form of attraction or a form of repulsion. Effort or struggle continued to be the key to biological progress and evolution throughout. As living creatures strove to realize their desires and purposes arising from their instincts their efforts or struggle brought the driving force of the desire of the world-self more and more into play with the result that they developed new characters and capacities needed by them for the realization of their ends and thus actualized a little more of the potentialities of life and came a step nearer to the final objective of evolution, namely, the human form of life, with all its qualities and characteristics. It is by effort or struggle that birds have grown wings and learnt to fly or walk or sing and we, on our part, have developed such complicated organs as the eyes, the ears, the hands, the teeth and the brain or such useful faculties as thought, intelligence, imagination and memory.

چيست اصل ديده بيدار ما

بست صورت لذت دیدار ما

کبک پا از شوخئی رفتار یافت

بلبل از سعی نوا منقار یافت

دست و دندان و دماغ و چشم و گوش

فکر و تخییل و شعور و یاد و هوش

زندگی مرکب چو در جنگاه تاخت

بهر حفظ خویش این آلات ساخت

In man life has come to its own and regained its quality of self-consciousness with its fundamental attribute of love for an ideal, i.e., an idea of the highest beauty and perfection. As a self-conscious being man's urge for Beauty can be satisfied only by an ideal of the highest beauty and perfection, i.e., an ideal which has all beautiful and admirable attributes that he can imagine and is free from all the defects and shortcomings that he can think of. That idea can be the idea of the Creator; for man cannot think of any idea more beautiful and more perfect than that. The driving force of evolution expresses itself again at the human stage. in man's love of everything that is favourable to the realization of his ideal and the hatred of everything that is unfavourable to it. This means that the greater the approach of man to his ideal, the greater is his approach to the stage of his own perfection which is the ideal of the Creator. Man has thus become a conscious and willing participant in the creative activity of the World-Self. Effort or struggle continues to be the key to progress at the ideological stage as it was at the biological stage of evolution. As man acts and strives for the realization of his ideal, he expresses and asserts himself and thereby brings the driving force of the desire of the Creator more and more into play with the result that he actualizes more and more of his potentialities and comes nearer and nearer to his own perfection. The more he actualizes his

potentialities, the greater is the manifestation of the qualities of the Creator in His creation:

تلاش خود کنی جز او نہ بینی

تلاش او کنی جز خود نہ بینی

نمود اسکی نمود تیری نمود تیری نمود اسکی

خدا کو تو بے حجاب کر دے خدا تجھے بے حجاب کر دے

To say that struggle is necessary for evolution means that life meets, at every step, with some resistance which it has to overcome. This resistance comes in the way of life from life itself; it comes from the whole of life's past. Life that has grown offers resistance to life that has yet to grow. The reason is that the tendencies of life are not only hormic but also mnemonic. Life not only acts and strives for the realization of its ends but also safeguards and preserves the ends it has already achieved. For unless it preserves its achievements of the past it cannot make fresh achievements. The emergence of new qualities and characters is the direct result and the immediate end of the creative activity of life. But as soon as life has achieved an end its achievement becomes fixed, automatic and permanent which enables life to leave it there and pass on to the achievement of new ends. When it does so it meets with resistance from ends it has already achieved.

During the material stage of evolution the achievements of life are represented by the physical laws. They are automatic, permanent and immutable not because they were always so, but because they do not need to change now. They kept changing and growing for a long time in the past and when they had evolved themselves into a form most suitable for the development of animal life, they became set and fixed while change manifested itself at higher levels of life. During the animal stage life met resistance from the physical laws which it had itself evolved with a purpose. Living creatures had to struggle against these laws in order to protect and feed themselves and thereby to continue their life and race. The result of their struggle was the evolution of instincts in various directions consistent with the potentialities of life and the emergence of a large variety of species

in the process. Thus the efforts of life to conquer the resistance of physical laws enabled it to achieve new victories in the form of instincts which, like the physical laws, became fixed, automatic and permanent in due course of time. We have also to note that the past of life at every distinct step of its biological evolution included not only the physical laws but also the instincts of all the species which had come into existence previous to that step. Hence every species of animals met resistance not only from the physical laws but also from the instinctive purposes of all the contemporary species; it had to participate in a widespread war between different species. The struggle of every species proceeded in accordance with a mode of behaviour prescribed by the instincts which it had already developed.

During the ideological stage of evolution that is now going on life is meeting resistance not only from the physical laws but also from the instincts which like the physical laws it had itself developed for its own protection. For, human beings have not only to struggle against the physical laws in order to continue their existence but also against the exaggerated demands of the instincts in order to satisfy their urge for beauty and perfection which is their fundamental characteristic as self-conscious beings. The result of their struggle is the evolution of ideals in various directions consistent with the qualities of beauty and perfection and the emergence of a large number of ideological communities in the process. The past of life at every distinct step of its ideological evolution includes not only the physical laws and the instincts in man and other species but also the ideals of all the ideological communities which had come into existence previous to that step. Hence at this stage of evolution every ideological community meets resistance not only from the physical laws and the instincts but also from the objectives of all the contemporary ideological communities. The struggle of an ideological community proceeds in accordance with a moral code which exists potentially in its ideal and becomes actualized gradually in the life of the community. In due course of time it becomes fixed, automatic and permanent and is known as the constitutional, the civil and the military law of the community. At this stage if the members of the community desire to change over to a higher ideal they have to struggle against this law, in order to shatter its resistance. If they succeed the event is known as a Revolution, otherwise, a Rebellion.

The resistance that life meets from itself, however, does not retard its

progress in the direction of its goal. On the contrary impediments stimulate its efforts and quicken its progress. As a river flows the hardest when it has to pass through a narrow gorge in the mountains and wears away the rocks that obstruct its passage, so the current of life is never so powerful as when it is facing a resistance and making an effort to overcome it. Life is not the least tolerant of resistance to itself in any form or shape and never makes a compromise with it. On the other hand, whenever it meets with resistance it musters the whole of its power in an effort to crush it and it never fails, no matter how formidable the resistance. The it has already achieved. For unless it preserves its achievements of the past it cannot make fresh achievements. The emergence of new qualities and characters is the direct result and the immediate end of the creative activity of life. But as soon as life has achieved an end its achievement becomes fixed, automatic and permanent which enables life to leave it there and pass on to the achievement of new ends. When it does so it meets with resistance from ends it has already achieved.

During the material stage of evolution the achievements of life are represented by the physical laws. They are automatic, permanent and immutable not because they were always so, but because they do not need to change now. They kept changing and growing for a long time in the past and when they had evolved themselves into a form most suitable for the development of animal life, they became set and fixed while change manifested itself at higher levels of life. During the animal stage life met resistance from the physical laws which it had itself evolved with a purpose. Living creatures had to struggle against these laws in order to protect and feed themselves and thereby to continue their life and race. The result of their struggle was the evolution of instincts in various directions consistent with the potentialities of life and the emergence of a large variety of species in the process. Thus the efforts of life to conquer the resistance of physical laws enabled it to achieve new victories in the form of instincts which, like the physical laws, became fixed, automatic and permanent in due course of time. We have also to note that the past of life at every distinct step of its biological evolution included not only the physical laws but also the instincts of all the species which had come into existence previous to that step. Hence every species of animals met resistance not only from the physical laws but also from the instinctive purposes of all the contemporary species; it had to participate in a widespread war between different species. The struggle of

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resistance is swept away completely but also that life is able to acquire new powers and qualities and to rise to a still higher level of evolution. That, in fact, is the reason why life creates resistance for itself out of itself. Iqbal alludes to this aspect of the nature of life as follows:

در جهان تخم خصومت کاشت است

خویشتن را غیر خود پنداست است

سازد از خود پیکر اغیار را

تا فزاید لذت پیکار را

In a poem entitled *irtiga'* (evolution) Iqbal explains that it is the nature of life to court hardships and to meet and shatter its impediments boldly. Struggle, according to him, is the process by which life progresses at the material, biological and ideological stages of evolution. Hence the Muslim community has to struggle in order to live and progress.

حیات شعله مزاج و غیور و شور انگیز

سرشت اسکی هے مشکل کشی جفا طلبی

سکوت شام سے تا نغمہ سحر گاهی

ہزار مرحلہ ہائے فغان نیم شبی

کشاکش زم و گرما تپ و تراش و خراش

ز خاک تیرہ درون تابہ شیشہ حلبی

مقام و بست و کشاد و فشار و سوز و کشید

میان قطرہ نیشان و آتش عنبی

اسی کشاکش پیہم سے زندہ ہیں اقوام

یہی ہے راز تب و تاب ملت عربی

Iqbal compares the irresistible onward march of life through the various stages of its evolution to a swiftly running stream which faces the rocks and turns in all directions to avoid them or washes them away to make a smooth passage for itself:

وہ جوئے کہستان اچکتی ہوئی

اٹکتی لچکتی سرکتی ہوئی

اچھلتی پھسلتی سنبھلتی ہوئی

بڑے پیچ کھا کر نکلتی ہوئی

رکے جب تو سل چیر دیتی ہے یہ

پہاڑوں کے دل چیر دیتی ہے یہ

ذرا دیکھ اے ساقی لالہ فام

سناتی ہے یہ زندگی کا پیام

دما دم رواں ہے یم زندگی
ہر اک شے سے پیدا رم زندگی

اسی سے ہوئی ہے بدن کی نمود
کہ شعلے میں پوشیدہ ہے موج دود
گراں گرچہ ہے صحبت آب و گل
خوش آئی اسے محنت آب و گل

چمک اس کی بجلی میں تارے میں ہے
یہ چاندی میں ، سونے میں ، پارے میں ہے
اسی کے بیابان ، اسی کے ببول
اسی کے ہیں کانٹے ، اسی کے ہیں پھول
کہیں اس کی طاقت سے کہسار چور
کہیں اس کے پھندے میں جبریل و حور
کہیں جرہ شاہین سیماب رنگ
لہو سے چکوروں کے آلودہ چنگ

ٹھرتا نہیں کاروان وجود

کہ ہ لحظہ تازہ ہے شان وجود

سمجھتا ہے تو راز ہے زندگی

فقط ذوق پرواز ہے زندگی

بہت اسنے دیکھے ہیں پست و بلند

سفر اسکو منزل سے بڑھکر پسند

الجھ کر سمجھنے میں لذت اسے
تڑپنے بھڑکنے میں راحت اسے
ہوا جب اسے سامنا موت کا
کٹھن تھا بڑا تھامنا موت کا
اتر کر جہان مکائفات میں
رہی زندگی موت کی گھات میں
مذاق دوئی سے بنی زوج زوج
اٹھی دشت و کہسار سے فوج فوج

زمانے کے دریا مین بہتی ہوئی
ستم اسکی موجوں کے سمہتی ہوئی
سبک اسکے ہاتھوں مین سنگ گراں
پہاڑ اسکی ضربوں سے ریگ رواں
سفر اس کا انجام و آغاز ہے
یہی اس کی تقدیم کا راز ہے

At the biological stage of evolution some of the species succeeded in adapting themselves to their environment but proved unfit to evolve into

superior forms of life and hence continued to exist in the form they had achieved. Some of them, however, failed even to adapt themselves to their environment and, therefore, perished entirely. Although consciousness lost some of its achievements in this way, yet it more than compensated for their loss by creating new and more promising species to take the place of those that had disappeared. Similarly, at the ideological stage of evolution, some ideological communities disappear and others appear in their place. Again, individuals of every species belonging to one generation die in the course of time and a new generation is born to take its place and thus the process of evolution is continued. Iqbal alludes to this fact when he says:

گل اس شاخ سے ٹوٹتے بھی رہے
 اور اس شاخ سے پھوٹتے بھی رہے
 سمجھتے ہیں ناداں اسے بے ثبات
 ابھرتا ہے مٹ مٹ کے نقش حیات

The waste and destruction involved in the process of evolution are more than compensated by the valuable results achieved:

بہر یک گل خون صد گلشن کند
 از پیئے یک نغمہ صد شیون کند
 عذر این اسراف این سنگیں دلی
 خلق و تکمیل جمال معنوی

Life that was struggling slowly and steadily along the tedious path of evolution since the creation of the world emerged finally in the human form of life.

ازل سے ہے یہ کشمکش میں اسیر

هوئی خاک آدم میں صورت پذیر

The self-consciousness of man reflects the Self-Consciousness of the Universe as the pupil of the eye reflects the firmament.

خودی کا نشیمن ترے دل میں ہے

فلک جس طرح آنکھ کے تل میں ہے

Since man developed the capacity to love ideals the process of evolution which was so far biological changed its character with the emergence of man and became ideological. The inevitable goal of ideological evolution is the emergence of an ideological community which loves and strives after an ideal of the highest beauty and perfection. The love of that ideal—and that ideal is no the than the Self-Consciousness of the Universe itself—alone will lead man to the stage of his highest perfection. As he will admire, adore and serve his Creator he will develop more and more his love and knowledge of the Creator as well as his knowledge of himself. In other words he will become more and more self-conscious. As his able to express for the attributes of Beauty able to express more and more and Perfection externally in his moral, material and social life and thus comes nearer and nearer to the stage of his internal and external perfection. When the stage of his perfection will actually arrive, the war of nations will end and perfect peace will reign over the earth. Iqbal yearns for the arrival of the Perfect Man of the future who, he says, is a potentiality that is being actualized gradually by the process of evolution (the motion of the black-and-white horse of time: *ash'hab-i-dauran*).

اے سوار اشہب دوران بیا

اے فروغ دیدہ امکان بیا

رونق ہنگامہ ایجاد شو

در سواد دیدہ ہا آباد شو

شورش اقوام را خاموش کن

نغمه خود را بہشت گوش کن

Iqbal is the harbinger of the glorious age of human perfection which is approaching irresistibly as a result of the evolutionary process, Hence the true realization of his greatness will come only in future:

سبزہ نا روئیدہ زیب گلشنم

گل بشاخ اندر نہاں در دامنم

بامم از خاور رسید و شب شکست

شبم نو بر گل عالم نشست

انتظار صبح خیزان مے کشم

اے خوشا زردشتیان آتشم

نغمہ ام از زخمہ بے پرواستم

من نوائے شاعر فردا ستم

نغمہ من از جہان دیگر است

ایں جرس را کاروائے دیگر است

The emergence of self-consciousness in man as a result of the process of creation and evolution is a proof that it was the same self-consciousness that started this process in a distant past. As the seed which is the final product of the growth of a tree is also the source and the ultimate cause of its growth, so self-consciousness which has revealed itself in man as the final product of the

evolution of the Universe must also be the source and the ultimate cause of its evolution. The nature of human self-consciousness is, therefore, an adequate guide to us to understand the nature of world-self-conscious.

اسرار ازل جوئی بر خود نظرے واکن

یکتائی و بسیاری پنہانی و پیدائی

This is the meaning of the well-known saying:

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه

(He who understands his own self, understands also the self of the Creator).

We know that the human self-consciousness loves an ideal and expresses and asserts itself in a creative activity for the realization of that ideal. Hence we conclude that the World-Self too loves an ideal and expresses and asserts itself in a creative activity for the realization of that ideal. When we study the creative activity of the self-consciousness of a human individual, say that of a potter who is molding a pitcher of clay on his wheel, we find that it exhibits the following characteristics:

(1) It has a beginning and an end.

(2) It advances continuously from its beginning to its end passing through a number of intervening stages.

(3) Its continuous progress from its beginning to its end is caused by the single purpose of the potter which makes it a single, indivisible act of creation.

(4) Its purpose is no other than the ideal of the potter to create a perfect pitcher. It is, therefore, a search for beauty and perfection.

(5) At each of its various stages its object is to refine and improve the product of the whole of its past in a particular direction implied in its final purpose and not to create anything new or special unrelated to the past.

(6) The internal purpose of the potter manifests itself in the external form of his creation and its manifestation be-comes more and more definite

and clear as his creative activity proceeds.

Even when we consider the whole of the creative activity of the potter as an individual having a particular ideal of life we shall find that it has the same characteristics. These are in fact the characteristics of the creative activity of every human individual. This means that if self-consciousness is really the seed, the source and the ultimate cause of the universe, the creative activity of the World-Self-Consciousness in the universe has the following characteristics:

(1) It has a beginning and an end.

(2) It is advancing continuously from its beginning to its end passing through a number of intervening stages.

(3) Its continuous progress from its beginning to its end is caused by the single purpose of the World-Self which makes it a single indivisible act of creation.

(4) Its purpose is no other than the ideal of the World-Self to create a perfect Universe. It is, therefore, a search for Beauty and Perfection.

(5) At each of its various stages its object is to refine and improve the product of the whole of its past in a particular direction implied in its final purpose and not to create anything new and special unrelated to the past.

(6) The hidden purpose of the World-Self is manifesting itself in the external universe of its creation and its manifestation is becoming more and more definite and clear as its creative activity is proceeding.

Thus the Creator's attribute of self-consciousness is itself enough to lead us to the conclusion that the Universe cannot but be the result of a process of gradual evolution. This is what Iqbal means when he says:

چو فطرت مے تراشد پیکرے را

تمامش مے کند در روز گارے

This conclusion naturally implies that the human being has evolved out of the lower and less organized forms of life. The idea of evolution is perfectly consistent with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. Iqbal writes in his

Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam:

ye know not! Ye have known the first creation. Will you not reflect? How did man first emerge? This suggestive argument embodied in the last verses of the two passages quoted above did in fact open a new vista to Muslim philosophers. It was Jahiz (d. 225 A.H.) who first hinted at the changes in animal life caused by migrations and environment generally. The association known as the 'Brethren of Purity' further amplified the views of Jahiz. Ibn. Maskawaih (d. 421 H.), however, was the first Muslim thinker to give a clear and in many respects thoroughly modern theory of the origin of man. It was only natural and perfectly consistent with the spirit of Quran that Rumi regarded the question of immortality as one of biological evolution and not a problem to be decided by arguments of a purely metaphysical nature, as some philosophers of Islam had thought. The theory of evolution, however, has brought despair and anxiety, instead of hope and enthusiasm for life, to the modern world. The reason is to be found in the unwarranted modern assumption that man's present structure, mental as well as physiological, is the last word in biological evolution and that death regarded as a biological event has no constructive meaning. The world of today needs a Rumi to create an attitude of hope and to kindle the fire of enthusiasm for life. His inimitable lines may be quoted here:

First man appeared in the class of inorganic things, Next he passed there from into that of plants.

For years he lived as one of the plants,
Remembering naught of his inorganic state so different;
And when he passed from the vegetive to the animal state,
He had no remembrance of his state as a plant,
Except the inclination he felt to the world of plants,
Especially at the time of spring and sweet flowers;
Like the inclination of infants towards their mothers,
Who know not the cause of their inclination to the breast.
Again the great Creator as you know,
“According to the Quran man is not a stranger on this earth,

'And we have caused you to grow from the earth" says the Quran". (p. 84)

Again he says

"The teaching of the Quran which believes in the possibility of improvement in the behaviour of man and his control over natural forces, is neither optimism nor pessimism. It is meliorism, which recognizes a growing Universe and is animated by the hope of man's eventual victory over evil." (p. 81)

Sometimes the Qur'anic story of Adam is interpreted as an account of the first appearance of man on earth which is, therefore, considered to be sudden and not gradual as the theory of evolution implies. Iqbal, however, does not think that the story of Adam has anything to do with the first emergence of man on earth. Thus he writes:

.. The purpose of the Quranic narration (of the legend of Adam) is not historical as in the case of the old Testament Indeed in the verses which deal with the origin of man as a living being the Quran uses the words *Bashar* or *Insan* and not *Adam*." (p. 83)

"Thus we see that the Quranic legend of the fall 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." (p. 85)

While discussing the re-emergence of man he writes:

"The Quran argues the phenomenon of the re-emergence of the ego on the analogy of his first emergence."

"Man saith: 'What! After I am dead, shall I in the end be brought forth alive? Doth not man bear in mind that we made him at first when he was nought? (xix: 67-68) (p. 120, 121).

"It is we Who have decreed that death should be among you. Yet are We not thereby hindered from replacing you with others, your likes, or from producing you in a form which Drew man out of the animal into the human state. Thus man passed from one order of nature to another, Till he became

wise and knowing and strong as he is now, Of his first souls he has now no remembrance,

And he will be again changed from his present soul.”¹

The two main aspects of the theory of evolution are (1) the fact of evolution and (2) the cause of evolution. We have seen that according to Iqbal (1) evolution is a fact and (2) the cause of evolution is the desire, the will or the purpose of an all-powerful Creator operating in the Universe. Every philosophical truth is supported sooner or later by scientific discoveries. It is very good that the scientists have already arrived at a complete agreement among themselves as regards the fact of evolution. They are now unanimous in their belief that evolution has actually occurred. "To-day," say the writers of *The Science of Life*, 'there is no denial of the fact of organic evolution, except on the part of manifestly ignorant, prejudicial or superstitious minds.' The scientists are, however, still divided into two main sections so far as their views about the cause of evolution are concerned. Some of them, led by Darwin and commonly known as the mechanists, believe that evolution results from the aimless functioning of the mechanical forces of nature. Others believe that it is the outcome of some hidden purpose working in and through living organisms. The views of the latter, known as purposivists, are, of course, favourable to the Iqbalian theory of evolution.

Unfortunately the common intellectual too often identifies the fact of evolution with its cause and ignores that to say that evolution has occurred is not the same thing as to believe in its cause as explained by a particular philosopher or scientist. It is, however, easy to see that to know a fact is not the same thing as to know its cause. A person, for example, may know that a railway engine moves and yet he may not be able to explain the cause of its motion or he may give an extremely erroneous explanation of it. A man who believes in the fact of evolution is generally imagined to be a Darwinist, although Darwinism is a theory relating to the cause of evolution and not to its fact. Darwinism is not evolution, nor evolution is Darwinism.

Darwin, moreover, was not the originator of the idea of evolution.

¹ Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*—p. 814

Several thinking men in the history of our race have thought of the possibility of the Universe having come into existence by a process of evolution. Adumbrations of the idea of evolution are clearly traceable in such ancient writers as Lucretius and Empedocles. Aristotle, too, was inclined towards it. Schelling, Fichte, and Hegel were definitely evolutionists. The idea became a subject for scientific study even in the domain of science long before Darwin had said anything about it. The European who first put forward the idea of evolution in its modern scientific form was Buffon, the French naturalist. Goethe in Germany and St. Hilare in France received it with enthusiasm. The latter in fact called attention to the embryo-logical evidence in its favour. But the true father of the modern theory of evolution is another French naturalist Lamarck whose epoch-making work on Zoological Studies was published in 1809. Unfortunately, however, Lamarck did not receive in his lifetime the recognition that he deserved. The idea of evolution was widely known and understood only after Charles Darwin (1809-82) had published his Origin of Species and Wallace had stated that he, working independently, had arrived at similar results. Darwin soon followed up his first publication by his Descent of Man. Since then the theory of evolution has found an increasing confirmation in practically every field of science especially in Physics, Astronomy, Geology, Biology, Sociology, Embryology, Paleontology and Comparative Anatomy. Darwin not only collected and systematised all evidence for evolution that could be available in his own days, but also put forward the view that Natural Selection, through the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence, is in itself a complete explanation of the cause of evolution. It is this particular explanation of evolution that is known as Darwinism. Darwin's books, however, created a fierce controversy about the fact of evolution because they attracted the attention of the common intellectual, for the first time, to a theory which questioned his age-old beliefs and assumptions and which, though long in existence, was so far going unnoticed. In this controversy some eminent biologists like Thomas Huxley and Ernest Haeckel championed the cause of evolution and defended the views of Darwin both as regards the occurrence of evolution and the factors responsible for its occurrence. Their critics on the other hand, refuted these views wholesale with the result that Darwinism and evolution came to be identified with each other on both sides. While the scientists have now accepted the fact of evolution, the controversy about Darwinism still persists although it is

perfectly true to say that Darwinism is rapidly losing its ground and its opponents are already on the way to a complete victory. Indeed if we take into consideration what we hear and read in scientific circles and journals again and again we have to conclude that even now there is no dearth of serious students of evolutionary science who believe that Darwinism has already collapsed.

Briefly the theory of Darwin is that it is in the nature of life to vary. The whole organism and its individual organs and functions are subject to minute variations which occur blindly and haphazardly in any and every direction. Moreover, all species of animals have to struggle against a hostile environment, against their enemies and dangers of every kind in order to feed and protect themselves and their offspring. In this struggle only the fittest species are able to maintain their race; all others perish. This means that nature favours the maintenance and further development of only that accidental change of shape, colour, structure, function or instinct which renders the animal better able to secure food for itself, to grasp its prey, to avoid or defeat its enemies, to protect its off-spring, to propagate its species and so on. Without choice, without aim and without conscious purpose nature offers a wealth of variations, the conditions of existence act as a sieve, variations which correspond to them maintain themselves gliding through the meshes of the sieve, those that do not disappear. In this process of passive adaptation the forms of life are raised from the originally homogeneous to the heterogeneous, from the simple to complex, and from the lower to the higher. The absence of purpose is the very essence of Darwinism. Variations arise fortuitously out of the organism and present themselves for selection in the struggle for existence,

They are not actively acquired by means of the struggle. If there is any purpose in evolution it is, according to Darwin, apparent and not real. Darwinists endeavour to explain the emergence of even the most complicated organ such as the eye and the most puzzling function such as the instinct of a bee, as a result of a series of accidents. This position is, of course, completely antagonistic to that of Iqbal.

Darwinism has passed through several stages and undergone several differentiations and transformations since its birth but its essence and main features have remained the same. Although it is primarily a biological theory, the Darwinists use it to answer all questions relating to Psychology,

Metaphysics, Logic, Epistemology, Ethics, Aesthetics and even History, Economics and Politics. Indeed if Darwinism with its radical opposition to teleology and its stress on mechanical selection is really an adequate explanation of a part of the evolutionary process, it ought to be an adequate explanation of the whole of it. As was only natural, Darwinism has deeply influenced all subsequent developments of the human and social sciences. It has yielded many bitter fruits and the bitterest of them all is Marxism on account of which the world is now divided into two hostile camps, each ready to blow the other to atoms.

“My theory”, said Darwin 'will lead to a whole philosophy’. He was right. But the philosophy that results from the theory of Darwin is a terrible shock to man's justified conviction of his own dignity over the rest of creation, which he thinks he enjoys by virtue of the nobility of his mind and spirit and the sanctity of his reason and free-will. For the implications of his theory are that the whole of this wonderful world of life is nothing but the blind and fortuitous play of the reckless forces of nature. It is completely devoid of plan or method. What is now a human being may have been a worm crawling in a gutter. The higher activities of man like Religion, Morality, Politics, Art, Science, Philosophy, Law and Education have no worth or value of their own, since their very basis, i.e., the conscience of man and his desire for ideals of Beauty and Perfection, is the result of an accident, a chance product of ignoble tumult of animal impulses, desires and sensations, which may not have come into existence at all.

The spirit of man revolts against such ideas and their scientific accuracy at once becomes doubtful. No wonder, therefore, that there were soon many powerful rebels in the Darwinist camp. Wallace, the co-discoverer of the Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence, ultimately came to believe in a spiritual explanation of evolution. Romanes, a prominent disciple of Darwin, ended in Christian theism. Fleischmann kept illustrating the orthodox Darwinian stand-point during many years of personal research, but finally developed into an outspoken opponent of not only the theory of selection but also of the doctrine of descent. Friedmann did the same. Driesch started with a mechanical theory of life but wrote a series of essays to show that life is fundamental and evolution is purposive. Among the founders of constructive theories of evolution opposed to Darwinism may be counted Lamarck, Etienne Geoffroy, St. Hilaire, Ersner, Kassowitz, W. Haacke,

Nageli, De Vries, Driesch and Bergson. The scope of the present article does not permit me to give here even a brief outline of these theories. Suffice it to say that the commonest and the most prominent feature of all these theories is that a living organism has not to wait passively for natural selection and prolonged accumulation of minute variations. On the other hand there is a hidden purpose working in and through the organism which enables it spontaneously and of itself to bring forth what is necessary for self-maintenance, often what is new and different with an extensive range of possibilities. It is, for instance, able to produce protective adaptations against cold or heat, to regenerate lost parts, often to replace entire organs that have been lost and under certain circumstances to produce new organs altogether. There is no end to illustrations that have been adduced in support of this view. As such it is a mere caprice on the part of those Darwinists who still cling to the theory of natural selection and do not take into account the spontaneous capacities and characteristics of living organisms which constitute a definite proof of the teleological nature of evolution.

The emergence of conscious purpose in man itself, as one of his most important characteristics, constitutes an evidence in favour of purposive evolution. The very word evolution implies purpose, since it means growth or movement towards higher and higher stages of development. Every kind of growth or development must have a destination from the very beginning, otherwise it will not be any growth or development at all. The highest product of the growth of a tree is the seed and the seed is implied in the tree at every stage of its growth. If the Universe has really evolved and developed upto its present stage does it not mean that purpose, one of the most precious products, of its development, was implied in it from the beginning, that purpose of some sort was present at every stage of its development? At the material stage it was entirely unconscious, at the biological stage it was half conscious, at the human stage it became completely conscious and deliberate.

Although science has proclaimed the justification of a belief in evolution, we have seen that Iqbal's belief in evolution is not the outcome of a desire for fashionable thinking. It is derived by him independently from the attributes of Reality as stated in the Holy Qur'an.

It does not depend upon the discovery of fossils or the successful search of the missing links in the theory of any particular scientist. Nor does it

imply, as Darwin and other evolutionists of the West seem to believe, that man descends from the ape or any other non-human species, known to us to be in existence at present or to have been in existence in the past. The Iqbalian or the Qur'anic theory of evolution implies that man has developed out of man, out of his own earlier forms and not out of any other non-human species.

A human embryo passes through various stages of its development, but at no stage it is anything other than a human embryo. Similar is the case with the development of man as a species; it has passed through a number of stages of its own development but at none of these stages it was anything other than a human species. From the moment of its first emergence in matter, life continued to progress steadily and continuously along the line of evolution that was leading to the human form. All other species that came into existence were branches that shot out of this main trunk of the tree of evolution. The main line of evolution was the right path of life that was destined to persist indefinitely while all other lines were deflections from this path that were doomed to disappear or vegetate without evolving.

WHITHER CIVILISATION?

The world's thinkers are stricken dumb. Is this going to be the end of all this progress and evolution of civilization, they ask, that men should destroy one another in mutual hatred and make human habitation impossible on this earth. Remember, man can be maintained on this earth only by honouring mankind, and this world will remain a battleground of ferocious beasts of prey unless and until the educational forces of the whole world are directed to inculcating in man respect for mankind. Only one unity is dependable and that unity is the brotherhood of man, which is above race, nationality, colour or language. So long as this so-called democracy, this accursed nationalism and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long as men do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole world is the family of God, so long as distinctions of race, colour and geographical nationalities are not wiped out completely, they will never be able to lead a happy and contented life and the beautiful ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity will never materialise.