

IQBAL'S APPRECIATIVE SELF

An Exposition

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The object of this article is to give an exposition of the appreciative self.

There are two ways of looking at the world. The world can be looked at either from without or from within. The natural gaze of man is directed outward, but reflection turns it inward.

The difference, however, of the outward and inward, external and internal, existence and experience, matter and mind, raises the question of their relation.

The ordinary view of this relation is that objects and events of the outside world produce certain sensations, which are the raw-material of human knowledge. These sensations are supposed to be different from objects, inasmuch as the objects are considered to be physical while the sensations are regarded as mental. The same view is expressed in more scientific terms by what is known as the physiological explanation of sensation.

The explanation runs as follows:

A stimulus, starting from an object, affects, let us say, the retina of the eyes. This affection creates disturbance in the nervous system. The disturbance in the nervous system produces a commotion in the brain and the commotion in the brain gives rise to sensation. The sensation, then, is the effect of the disturbance in the nervous system and the disturbance in the nervous system is the effect of the affection in the eyes and the affection in the eyes is the effect of the stimulus, starting from the object.

This is known as the representative theory of perception. According to this theory the sensation is a re-presentation of the object. The main difficulty in this theory is that if sensation is different from object and the object is known only through sensation then how can we ever pass on from sensation to object. The theory is, therefore, discarded and its place is taken by Realism, according to which the object is known directly as an immediate presentation. But what is this immediate presentation? What do we find in it? Colour, sound, size, shape, etc.? Or the notion of substance or thinghood? What are all these? Are they not the deliverances of sense? and what are the deliverances of reason or sense? Are they not the states of mind? Then whatever is presented is really mental or spiritual. The same object may produce sensations or ideas in different minds and all the ideas and sensations which an object is capable of producing may not be produced at any one time and therefore the object may remain different from its perception, but the point is that whatever of the object or event of the outside world is accessible or can be accessible to man is nothing but in the nature of a state of mind or consciousness. The difference between existence and experience holds good in our case because our experience, from a point in space and instant in time, does not comprehend all the aspects of existence. Otherwise, if the experience were equal to existence, there will be no difference between the two. Existence will be nothing but experience. The world as known to us is, therefore, spirit. Matter is only a form of spirit and is and can be apprehended, on account of the community of nature, as a state of mind, sensation, feeling, etc.

The distinctions of sensation and feeling, image and idea, will and intuition, inner and outer, subject and object, are therefore in the mind itself. There are certain characteristics which distinguish one state of mind from the other. The sensations are clear, distinct and appear to be given. On the other hand image is comparatively vague, indefinite and can be produced at will. But even this distinction is more of a degree than of kind. If we compare the waking half of our life with the sleeping half of it we find that in

the waking life perception becomes image and image becomes idea while in the sleeping life the idea becomes image and image becomes perception. What is it due to ? It is the more or less intensity of attention which makes an idea a sensation or a sensation an idea.

You may, then, ask what is the difference between the actual and the imaginary, between the truth and the falsehood. The difference between them lies not in the more or less intensity of consciousness but in their coherence or incoherence with other experiences. The dreams are untrue because they do not cohere with other experiences, while the facts of life are true because they fit in with each other. This is true even of the experiences of the waking life. So long as you have not been to a studio and do not know how pictures are made you are sure that there is motion in the picture, but once you know the process of making the picture you are disillusioned all about it. Therefore the wider the experience the greater is the scope of judging the coherence of facts and higher is the standard of truth. The absolute criterion of truth is therefore the all-comprehensive experience

It is the yearning of the human soul, therefore, to attain to such an experience. The way in which a man proceeds from the particular to the general or universal is by the processes of analysis and synthesis. First of all he analyses whatever he perceives into colour, sound, shape, size, etc., and then synthesises the instances of each, let us say for instance, a shade of colour, here and there, now and then, into the universal colour of this particular shade. The same is done with all other qualities, whether of space, time, touch, taste, smell, sound or colour, inaeesthetic sensation, feeling, will, imagination, thought, intuition, etc., and the self.

On the integration of all these qualities in the unity of the self what happens ? First of all the self is expanded. It is made co-extensive with space and time, as far as the human vision can take it. It is made one with the sphere of space encircled by time. It breathes the life of the whole and shines with its consciousness. All the manifolds are given in it. But they are given as

universals. Only their qualitative distinctions are left. These distinctions merge with each other like the various colours of a rainbow or the various notes in a piece of music. There is a tendency in the unifying process to assimilate_ all the distinctions in a unique state of unity. But Iqbal is not referring to the transcendental unity. The transcendental unity is as much implicit in it as in any other state of consciousness. He is referring to the unity of self-consciousness in which the diversity is also given.

This unity in diversity gives the sense of change. It must be remembered that change without permanence is not possible. Change implies a comparison and contrast between at least two things. Unless both the things can be held together, whether in thought or experience, there can be no comparison and contrast. Change therefore does not require necessarily succession but it certainly requires contemporaneousness. Within the simultaneous presence of two or more states of consciousness no comparison and contrast can be made and no change or difference can be discovered. Contemporaneousness is, therefore, necessary for change, but change can be had without succession. In the appreciative self it is had without succession.

There is also movement in the appreciative self. This movement, however, should not be understood as a movement in Space and Time. The movement in Space and Time is spurious. A genuine sense of movement is had in experience. For instance, when I move my hand with a jerk I have a sense of movement, but this sense is instantaneous, it is organic, it is a unity of peculiar variety, however complex it may be. Or to take another example, when I think of the past, present or future, with the advent of the present the past is gone, but unless the past and the present are held together the past cannot be judged as past and the present as present. Therefore there is a state of consciousness underlying the past, present and future which does not change and remains abiding in all the changes. This state of duration as consciousness is not dead, but is very much alive. It is movement but without succession.

The picture, therefore, which emerges out of this exposition is as follows:-

The work, as known to us, is experience. Experience is always of a self. It is within the States of the Self that all the distinctions of sensation, image, idea, intuition and the rest are given. Even the other is only a Self-Strangement of the Self. These distinctions are more of State than of Substance. The distinction between sensation and image is one of degree. The distinction between particular and universal is one of presence and absence of divisions in Space and Time. When these divisions, which are ideal in character, are removed and the like joins the like, with the intensity of attention of a Sensation an experience is had of Universal qualities gathered up in the unity of self in a state of change and movements without succession. This is the appreciative Self.