

PHILOSOPHY OF SELF AND THE NATURE OF SOCIAL EXPERIENCE.

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Our examination of the Nature of Experience¹² in accordance with the Philosophy of Self shows that knowledge is a multi-level fact. Beginning as an ideation, it develops into perception; and passing through the activistic mode of formulation, it assumes new characteristics of disclosures in the Principle of Pathos. But it is in the Form of Revelation alone that it comprehends all the contexts of Being. Revelation designating the highest mode of experience transcending the categories of love-experience is grounded in an order which is comprised of inter-personal communication between egos. Consequently, in the nature of inter-subjective talk even of the 'Private Vacation' is given the ultimate matrix of all knowledge.

Philosophy of Self, therefore, is logically bound to develop a general theory of the inter-personal world as a necessary basis of its epistemology. Revelatory structure of knowledge, since it involves in its possibility the condition of social constitution of reality, presupposes social experience as its root-form of composition. Consequently, the epistemology corresponding to the Philosophy of Self is nothing short of the theory of social experience.

In the following paper, we make an attempt to analyse the social experience and bring forth its universal and necessary categories of composition. This sort of work has become all the more necessary because many philosophers who claim to represent the theory of self have failed to grasp the true nature of this philosophy on the score of social experience and have drowned the Philosophy of Self in the Philosophy of Ego. This discourse on social experience is expected to serve an essential purpose of clearly formulating the lines of demarcation between Idealism and our theory

¹² *Iqbal Review*, October 1960

of Self, between metaphysical Monism and the world of inter-subjective existence.

I

THE THESIS OF EGOISM

Social experience is earmarked by the universal characteristic that it contains a logical reference towards other sentient beings. In designating an order of experience, it affirms the existence of a distinguishable subjectivity in logical opposition to the experiencing subject. Consequently, social experience is a presentation of the manifold of inter-subjective existence.

Egoism is that philosophical creed which denies the generic irreducibility of this species of experience and derives it from the germinal form of ego-experience; it is the class-name of all those philosophies which are based on the premise of the Unity of Subject and Object in the Act of Knowing. Here we are to examine the possibility of social experience on the basis of this philosophical premise of the nature of Knowledge.

(a) A Stage of Universal Experience

Egoism applies its own basic principle and construes Social Experience as a stage in the self-realisation process in which Universal Experience undergoes the ordeals of diversification in the forms of the limited centres of experience, impressing upon the ego as phenomenon of Society. The onward push of the Experience, *i.e.* the universalising process, cuts across the appearance of the multiplicity of selves and elevates the divided Experience to the ultimate Unity of Absolute Consciousness.

Phenomenal character of the Society and neumenal reality of the Ego-Experience are the cardinal principles in the dynamics of the Monistic Spiritualistic philosophies, whether of Spinoza or of Hegel. Von Hartman, Wundt, Munsterberg, Royce, Bousanquet, Croce and Gentile in their

treatment of the archetype of the Social Experience, adhere to the convention of the Monistic philosophies.

(b) Multiple Personality

The closest analogy to Social Experience, accordingly must be sought in the phenomenon of the multiple personality, in which the self breaks down to three, four or five centres of self-identity, memory, responses, ideations, and activities. Each centre, being an off-shoot of the dispersion of self-identity, develops into an isolated matrix of autonomy having history, character and attitude of its own appropriation. These smaller units, in which the real personality is spread, are disassociated from each other; and emerge as self-contained and independent wholes. What does this phenomenon imply? The experiencing ego is the same indivisible self which has lost its solidarity under the intolerable weight of many separate and mutually revolting rings of experience. Passing through a ring of experience, the ego becomes oblivious of other action-systems and their corresponding fringes of experiences. As a consequence, the ring, with which the ego is completely identified, falls apart from the general stream of life; and appears as an independent self-maintaining whole experience. Rings after rings are formed and separated. The one general life stream of a single ego is dissipated in many co-existing disassociated passages of experience, simply because the self suffers a loss of communication between various clustres of its experience. The phenomenon of the limitation of consciousness paves ground for the scatteration of personality in terms of many limited centres of self-existence which are discontinuous with each other. The ego acting in one centre, however, is the same which acts in others. All the acts have one identical referent, *i.e.*, "The Ego", in every independent gestalt-like entity of experience.

Psycho-pathological case studies report that the multiple personalities have a vague awareness of the alternate personalities. The ego in its identification with one configurate of experience due to the degeneration in consciousness, rejects other hinges of its own life as if they were aliens. At

every centre, it is vaguely aware of the presence of other loci of experience, yet falsely disown them as something other than his own contents. Thus, displaced identification and blurred consciousness are the essential logical principles beneath the phenomenology of the split up personality, which suffers from the delusion of many selves in opposition and alternation, although it is the same indivisible self acting in differing and narrow unities of the experience. Restoration of the self from the agonies of its wretched division makes possible its recovery from the night-mare of separate personalities, and deliverance from the hallucination of the plurality of conflicting egos.

Society, construed on the model of this pathological case, in the philosophy of Absolute Idealism, is a re-integration of all Universal Consciousness, which in its self-alienation process is wrecked into countless particles of limited consciousness, and parochial self-identifications. In the very act of self-consciousness, the Universal Experience is split up into "ego" and "not-ego". Not-ego is a determination, immanent in the very logic of self consciousness, which throwing out some portion of the Universal Experience from its limits, posits the former in opposition to the ego. Thus, the phenomenon of disintegration is grounded in the very dynamics of the Universal Consciousness. The scatteration of human person occurs only in two, three or at the most five or seven personalities. But here is the case of the Universal Consciousness. It is torn to pieces in billion and billions of particles.

In every dispersed particle, it is the same self but freezed in false identifications, anchored to illusive idealities. Multiplicity is a pathological stage in the life of the acting ego, but one which is necessary as a vehicle of its absolute realisation.

"In no other way is a spiritual world conceivable. Whoever conceives it as spiritual cannot set it up in opposition to his own activity in conceiving it. *Speaking strictly there can be no others outside us, for in knowing them and in speaking of*

them they are within us. To know is to identify, to overcome otherness as such. Otherness is a kind of stage of our mind, although which we must pass in obedience to our immanent nature, but we must pass through without stopping. When we find ourselves confronted with the spiritual experience of others, as with something different from which we must distinguish ourselves... it is a clear sign that we are not yet truly in their presence as spiritual existence, or rather that we do not see the spirituality of their existence."¹³

(c) *Unity of Acting Ego*

As Gentile puts it very clearly in above lines, the social experience has no genuineness in the Absolutistic philosophy. The multiplicity of selves in this philosophy, is analysable without remainder in terms of the Acting Ego which itself is unmultipliable. He further says, "If we think of our selves empirically as in time, we naturalise ourselves and imprison ourselves within definite limits, birth and death, outside of which our personality cannot but seem annihilated. But this personality through which we enter into the world of the manifold and of natural individuals... is rooted in a higher personality in which alone it is real.

*"I am not one of the elements of manifold, I am the one, the activity, which in itself is unmultipliable, because it is the principle of multiplicity."*¹⁴

Thus, Absolutism completely dissolves the category of Sociation in the category of personality. This philosophy, then, has one task to perform, it traces out the historiography of the thinking from the stage of bare determination upto the heights of the Absolute Experience, wherein the spell of the plurality of spirits is completely dismissed. It is simply a philosophy of self-realization.

Self-consciousness, dialectical in character, is differentiating and assimilating, it is, at once, alienation and unification, estrangement, and

¹³ Gentile, G: *The Theory of Mind As Pure Act*", Translated by Carr, H. W. P. 13.

¹⁴ *ibid* P. 147, 149.

identification; and it is the only possible activity in the nature of reality. Cosmic stage is set in to unfold the enactment of the Drama of Self-development.

II

The Nature of Thinking Act

The thinking act dualizes the experience into subject and object. Self consciousness realises itself in the content of Experience. Posited in the very act of thinking, this self realization in the formation of and other, impels the self to negate and transcend it and return to the original indivisibility. By negating the determination, it regains the Universality. But, the thinking act, again expresses its dialectical and dualistic nature by positing the determinate Ideality, opposing the Reality of indeterminate Experience. Thus an eternal cycle from Reality to Ideality and from ideality to reality, from indeterminateness to determinateness and from determinateness to indeterminateness is set in motion. Experience identified with the articulate being returns back to the transcendental being, and united with the transcendental Being moves forward to the articulate Being. Limitation realizes itself in the Unlimited; the Unlimited discovers itself in the Limited. This structure is the archetype of the self-Conscious Experience which is reflected in every formation.

The above are the outlines of the idealism of Sheikh Ibn-al-Arabi.¹⁵ The Archetypal Experience is the First Determinate sphere of Being, under the sphere of Universal Experience; which is Absolute Simplicity beyond distinction.

"He was observant of his own self", says Sheikh-al-Akber, "before manifestation, but this observance was not the same as observance of self in

¹⁵ Muhyi-D-Din Ibn 'Arab: *Fas-Shualiya: Fusus al Hikm.*

another. In the former case, there is no necessity for an external figure while in the latter there is."¹⁶

(a) Personalism and Otherness

Ibn-al-Arabi unequivocally holds that the Universal Experience is personalistic; it is the experience of an Ego, infinite and unbounded; it does not require an otherness for its being. Consequently, the nature of self-consciousness is not dualizing *i.e.*, it is not in its mode subject-knowing-object. His philosophy, then, may be called Personalistic Idealism as distinguished from Hegelianism which conceives that Universal Experience is not Personalistic and contends that Ego is Posited in the self-consciousness of the Experience which simultaneously formulates Not-Ego as its opposite. Bradley similarly conceives that ego, as a relative Being is posited in the process of relational thought and hence means a determination in the Universal Experience. Gentile also conceives it as a consequence of the Thinking Act which polarizes the Experience into the opposition of subject and object, Ego and Nature. Thus, Hegelianism is Non-personalistic or Absolute Idealism, in which ego is dependent on not-ego as against the personalistic outlook of Sheikh-Ibn-al-Arabi.

According to Ibn-al-Arabi, objective being is a lower category and constitutes self-knowledge of the Universal and Self-contained Ego in the mode of otherness. The Ego adequately reflects itself in the mode of otherness and the Adequate Other comes into being in a single Reflection (*Tajalli*). The Adequate Other is the self itself in the garb of the stranger. The Ego in its ideal self-alienation constitutes an instantaneous single perpetual emanation for Ibn-al-Arabi and Hakim Ishraque Shahab Suharawardy. This level of emanation constitutes the First Circle of Determinate Being; the circle comprised of the Perfect Self in its self-reflection giving rise to the Perfect copy. This is the First stepping down of the Universal Ego, who exists in his own right even before the coming into being of the copy.

¹⁶ Ibid.,

In Hegelianism, self-reflection is the only form of self-knowledge. Ego is made in subject-knowing-object act. The first self-reflection is constitutive of a self-determination which is simply a bare "Isness". It is so much weak that except a bare givenness nothing is intuited in it. Therefore, self-reflection completes itself in successive acts; the bare isness is accumulatively made richer in content and spread so that ultimately it is adequate enough to express what the self is. It is only at the absolute stage that the object is appropriate projection of the subject. It is, therefore, necessary to call this process of successive improvement in self-reflection a process of development. Contrasting enough, with Hakim-Ishraque and Sheikh-e-Akbar, it is the very first act which is complete and adequate. Consequently they do not call their philosophy Evolution. Here lies the essential point of departure between Personalism and Absolutism: the two varieties of Idealism.

For us, however, it is very much relevant to understand that the first Descent is not a separate Ego. It is the Universal Ego appearing other to itself, out of its own free will. Therefore, the Ego and its Reflection do not form a Society. They are plural in appearance and 'one' in reality.

The first circle of being is self-expression, and expression is self-estrangement and descension. The second circle of Being is further self-estrangement and differentiation. It constitutes the circle of Attributes; the self reflects itself in every possible attribute, in this second level of self-projection. Since, the self is beyond differentiation, its emanation in the differentiation, implied at this level, amounts to isolation and holding up all of its attributes. Every attribute so grasped is self in otherness, formulates Distinct self-determination and self-expression in the Context of the second circle. The copy being the self-in-otherness at the First level also reflects itself and expresses in distinctive emanations. These emanations are also distinct from each other forming the opposite arch of the Attributes, and thus complete the Circle of Attributes. Corresponding to every attribute of

the self-in-itself there is an attribute of the self-in-otherness at this stage of being.

The self in this manner descends and disintegrates itself. Primarily it divides itself under the veil of otherness, thence it further distributes itself in the divisions of the Prime Divisions. Every attribute is the self in determination which excludes other determinations, and is lit up separately. The world, at large, is the incessant illumination of these distinct 'lights'. The objective world is the mode of the reflections of these separations of the second circle. Therefore, it is a spread; every point of it excludes other points. The attributes are the vehicle of self; every attribute is a living reality; it is charged with ego, and therefore Egoism is the essence of their separate existence. It is in man alone that the separate attributes lose their autonomy; overcome their limitations; and move towards 'oneness'. Their separate ego assertions perish in the emergence of one single ego in the form of man. Man is the mirror of the second Circle of Being. All the attributes of the self-in-itself and the self-in-otherness are together in his essence. He may rise up to become the minor of the First Circle; for it is in him that the Ego and the otherness meet in detail. Universe is the permutation of the tiny, isolated, unconnected radiations of the first sphere through the mirroring of the Second. But the man is the incarnation of the unified and synthesized reflection of the Circle. In the existence of man the separate radiations abandon their separatist tendencies, subdue their conflicting assertiveness and transcend their limits. They are annihilated in their separations and live in the largeness of man.

Man, too, is a limitation which can obtain immortality by annihilating its separate egoism.

The principle of Expression and then the principle of Annihilation are the two processes in the nature of determinate reality. From the stand-point of descention the principle is emergence and differentiation, expression and alienation; from the side of the particulars the principle is mergence and

annihilation, divestment and identification. *The relationship between the self and its copy is self determination; the relationship between the copy and the self is self-annihilation.* Hakim Ishraque Suhrawardy holds that the light of the Lights (the Infinite self-conscious Ego) is *Quahir* (Determinant/Dictator) of the First Light; and the First light is the Lover of the 'Light of the Lights'. *In all Idealistic philosophies Love connotes self-divestment and ego-annihilation; and it pertains to the lower determinate strata of beings.* Therefore, in Spinoza 'God' does not love us, it is we who love him.

The very act of self-mirroring is the cause of two processes: differentiation and identification. Perpetuation of the shining forth (*Tajalli*) of the self perpetuates the processes, *the copy ceaselessly annihilates itself in the Real; and the Real continuously mirrors itself in the copy.* The same movements and counter movements pervade the second sphere of Being and sweep across the objective Universe which is the profused detailed and variegated shining forth of the former.

Hakim Ishraque, Avicenna, and Averroes have a slightly different schema from that of Sheikh-e-Akbar in their presentation of the order of Descention. They conceive descention as a successive and logical order of mirroring and re-mirroring through a chain of intermediary intellects. The act of self consciousness of the First Intellect (the adequate copy of the Universal Being) results in the appearance of another Intellect, which in turn causes a third intellect in its self consciousness. This schema approximates the Hegelian dialectical process in which the self articulates itself in successive and logical chains of determination in the process of self-realization.

The mirroring and remirroring, dissipating the self in the form of the outer universe, recaptulates itself in the phenomenon of Love. Avicenna and Rumi represent Love as the Cosmic process operating in every particular being. It is the sheer love which transforms the inorganic matter into the organic botanical life, and it is the impelling power of love which gives rise to

the animal Kingdom; and again it is love that from the animal human life emerges so that love becomes conscious of its objects and expresses untiring restlessness radiant in ceaseless longing that breaks through the veils of separation.

III

(b) Absolutism and Not-Ego

Abdul Karim al-Jeili makes a radical departure from the convention of the Personalistic Idealism which takes descention as its necessary logical element. He builds it up on the principle of evolution¹⁷ as a successive attempt which, moving through the dialectical patterns of activity, gradually approximates its true expression. Adequate self-consciousness is not direct and instantaneous. It is a wholesale movement; penetrates the lairs of Darkness (ignorance); makes its way through the twilight zone of Darkness and Light, and finally obtains complete self-illumination. It moves from a point to another point in progressive march; attains a degree of truth and renounces it advancing for the new one; receives a determination and obliterates it in a more comprehensive stage of determination. It is this formulation which gives his philosophy the colour of Modern Idealism. He is the first philosopher to state and formulate the dialectical Phenomenology of Mind, which becomes at the hands of Hegel the History of self-movement. According to his Dialectic, Self-Consciousness passes through three stages (1) *Abadiya* (2) *Huwija* and (3) *Aniya i.e.* (1) Oneness (2) Hisness and (3) I-ness. Thus it is ultimately the philosophy of Egoism, in which 'Hisness' is a transitory experience to be consummated in the mobility of self-experience *i.e.*, 'I-ness'.

(c) Dialectical Law of Experience

Idealism admits only one principle of Knowledge: resolution of object into the subject. Avicenna is categorical on the issue that object is united with

¹⁷ Jili, Abd 'L-Karim: *'Insan-e-Kamel: al Muqudima:* P 4-24.

the subject in the act of knowledge. This principle is not only epistemical but ontological, hence the germinal law of Reality.

The object is perished in the expansion of the subject and passes over from the being-for-other (ANDERSSEIN) to being-in-itself (ANSICHSEIN).¹⁸ Hegel propounds the thesis that 'something' is inherently self-contradictory; "it is and is not; and therefore, it changes to become, waxes to overcome its nothingness. A thing perishes, and its perishing is not merely contingent, so that it could be without perishing." The process continues unstopped, till finally in the actualisation of Notion, it receives the concrete intensity of the subject. Notion connotes absolute self-determination. "The Notion, in so far as it has advanced into such an existence as is free in itself, is just the ego or pure Self-Consciousness."

The process of self-movement posits every condition and external presentation as its own movement. *This is the dialectical law of all experience: Otherness is a passing phase of a determination wherein it is governed from outside; in self-realising it is negated and reshaped as phases of self-determination.*

Social experience, to apply this philosophy, is transcended in self-experience. *Social Experience is essentially self-contradictory; it is self-experience and is not self-experience. It is partially determined by internality and partially by an externality. The self-expanding surge overwhelms the external determination and modifies its structure to make it a moment in the all embracing dynamics of self-determinations.* The limits are in one single subjectivity, which is self-controlled and self-existent.

Schelling, who starts from the matters of fact, reads demonstrations of the Identity of Being in the presentations of social experience. He departs from Hegel on the score of latter's apriorism. Hegel is occupied with the Abstract, and tries to trace out the whole course of reality from Notion to the concrete actuality. Schelling advocates a reversal of the process, and remarks, "if we had only a choice between empiricism and the despotic

¹⁸ Hegel, Fredrich: *Science of Logic*: Vol. I., Trans: Johnston, W.H. Pp. 85-90.

apriorism of extreme rationalism, no free mind would hesitate for empiricism."¹⁹

Empirical Orientation of Idealism means a change of starting point, a methodological innovation of first magnitude, a radical metamorphosis in the remiss tradition. In the recognition of concrete events, Idealism has to pay adequate attentions to matters of fact and has to perform a new job, the explanation of immediate experience. It was a work very poorly done in the classical tradition. Now, Idealism has to put at its disposal physical, psychological, social and other experiences as necessary data for philosophising. Such is the florescence of the revolution successfully thought about by Schelling in the name of the Positive philosophy (which should be distinguished from Comtean Positivism).

However, contemporary Idealism, instead of making airy allusions towards social events, tries to grapple with them directly; and many of the idealistic thinkers like Tonnies, Simmel, Sombart and Spann have made some of the most resonating contributions to the social sciences.

Idealistic approach with empirical bias in its analysis of social experience, visualizes a glimmering of the ontological nature of reality, of the all pervading Identity of Being.

Fechner²⁰ contends that each of us is aware of *multifarious sensations, strivings and feelings*; everyone of them negates the other. Their active intercourse, opposition and harmony, discord and compromise, is only possible on the ground that they are contained in one common consciousness of the Individual Ego. *They form small bits of the ego which is in them and also beyond them making possible their mutual relations and interactions; otherwise, they would not find each other neither check nor advance each other. Similarly, our individual human minds are contained in a super mind; they cannot depart from their individual positions, drift from their course and develop mutual*

¹⁹ Marcuse, Herbert: 'Reason and Revolution' Part II, P. 323f.

²⁰ Ibid.,

relations if they are not conditional by this Universal common reality which connects them all.

Lotze²¹ maintains that *if individual beings are not grounded in a unity, interaction among them is unintelligible*. Individual persons act upon each other by participating in the unity of absolute being. Hartman conceives social life as an emancipation from the fits of the will which has dashed off the undifferentiated stillness of the primeval reality of unconsciousness, in which it was indistinguishable from the Idea. The tread of the will in motion is demobilised in expanding consciousness, a task which is carried out in the multiplication of individuals. By dividing itself in the Swarming individuals, the will is tainted with feign weakness and is caught up in the meshes of growing ideas, which would finally dilapidate it by the redemption of Quiescence in the indistinct existence. An individual is a will to himself, and an idea to the other, two individuals would mean two wills, and two ideas, but three individuals are three wills and six ideas: the number of ideas to the number of will pieces is $n(n-1)$. The finiteness of will succumbs to the infinity of ideas.

Hartmann²² represents a synthesis of Idealism and Voluntarism, Schelling and Schopenhauer. Voluntarism differs from Idealism in respect of the 'content' of reality; the former conceives 'consciousness' and the latter 'striving' as the ultimate principle of existence, otherwise both are monistic in character. Consequently, Schopenhauer and Bergson are convinced that the individuals are expressions of the oboriginal striving, and in the experience of mutual communion, they forfeit their individuality, and gradually melt in the cosmic principle of collective existence.

IV

Identification: The Nature of Social Experience in monism

²¹ Ibid.,

²² Ibid.,

To these monistic philosophies and their different varieties, the essential core of social experience is concealed in the phenomenon of identification. Fichte's words 'if there are to be human being at all, there must be a plurality of them. So soon as fully define the concept of human being, we are impelled to pass beyond the thought of the individual, and to postulate the existence of a Second, for thus only we can explain the first'²³ very substantially set forth the spiritual Monistic ideology of experience down to the present day.

The limited human ego logically presupposes another human ego and as such is logically dependent on an alter-ego. This statement posits the organic view of society entrenched in Absolutistic traditions. It destroys the notion of self-sustained, self-propelling, and self-centered character of human individuals and points out that by nature they are bound to pass beyond their limited and self-contradictory determinations towards something higher. This passing beyond according to Monism, opens the perspective of social experience.

Social experience is a development out of the stage of atomic dispersions, in which everyone excludes the other, and every particular life is engulfed in the conceit of being all in all. This limited egocentric experience is outmoded in self-examination, which untiringly stirs up commotions against the wretches of bounded existence. The ego is bent upon to blot it out but comes to know that his bounds are social limits, he is in oppositions to other individuals; and this vision makes the first thin fulguration of social experience. *All the individuals try to outlive the opposition betaking them. Abandoning their confluent warp and weft, departing from their splintery strivings, they come closer to each other; outspan their lithic particularities and melt into each other. Their mutual fusion coverages into a self-identical unity, which accomplishes itself in the growth of a social mind and formation of a collective will.* It is the height of social experience, but it is no more social; there is no multiplicity of individuals. *It is, nonetheless, one single individuality in which all the oppositions are petrified as an imposing content of one continuous subject.*

²³ Fichte: *Collected Works*.

(a) *The Logic of Time*

If there are two individuals A and B; they are antithetical to each other. *A is a presentation to B, and B is an idea to A. This apprehension is external; never touches upon the core of the spiritual otherness which delimits self-hood.* Consequently, the experience does not come across a living individual, it is in possession of a dead nature. This naturalness pronounces a very primitive experience, which notoriously

proclaims every presentation as empty of life stream. This experience is superficial; does not convey the depth of the opposition; misses the texture of the inner continuity; fails to contact with the living dynamics of the given, and plays up with it in obedience to the static laws of formal logic. This apprehension is not concrete but abstract,²⁴ because it is given as 'posited' and 'finished' structured and completed; it stands confronting the subject divorced off the movement of life in the act of envisioning. It is distanced and spatialized, hence is intelligible only in *the logic of Space*. But as soon sentience leaps into the immediate life flow of the acting subjectivity, it swims in the logic of time; it is now apprehension as becoming, knowledge as positing and sentience as structuralizing. Real Experience is *ringing inwardness surging forth in perpetual change, which does not admit segmentation. Only in this flux of immediate life, in pure Time and Duration,*²⁵ *in unimpeachable wholeness which is experiencing intuiting acting and doing one immediately dives and thrusts into the very heart of the life-crust that is held as a mere presentation to the external spatial knowledge. Total self-abandonment to pure Duration, at once, implies shunning off the externality, embarkation from fixation and validiction to formality.* Negation and departure open the gateway to the immediate merge with the Life-Force, that throbs beneath the dead forms and agitates in spatial distances. Being one with immediacy, A intuites A-ness and B-ness as external vehicles of the life-flow. Now the subject of experience ceases to be A; it is the life itself which

²⁴ C. H. Cooley: *Social Theory and Social Research*, pp 289-3C9.

²⁵ Bergson, Henri: *The Creative Mind* Ch. VI. Section VI to VIII.

is experiencing its ramifications in the moulds of A and B. Similarly, B in his self-divestment says good-bye to B-ness and returns to the life-flux which has contrived A-ness and B-ness and radiates through them. *It is the Logic of Life which governs the Ontology of Social experience. A and B, consequently, both are negated and both are united in a super-life flux, completely merged in a deeper reality, which is consciousness and conation, knower and maker; it is one continuous acting subjectivity.*

(b) *Collective Ego*

It is this method of knowledge and mode of reality in which all the presentations are clipped off their spatiality, and every life form is merged with others in the formation of a collective ego which is the highest the richest and the most durable Reality. To it alone belongs the 'specious presence'.

'Collective ego', 'general will' or 'social Mind' is not the sum of the individuals, nor is it the similarity of strivings, nor does it imply the consensus of views. It is outrightly a self-consistent self-identical ego directly enjoying its own experience, moving according to its own volition and governing its own forms of activity.

The above exposition is a resume of the meaning of Social Experience as generically implied and vouchsafed in the philosophy of ontological Monism. Social Experience accordingly, is a consciousness of higher self-individuality and society is posited as the higher ego.

This view is to be contrasted with the general outlook of Enlightenment. Humanism of that period discovered in individual human person an 'intrinsic value' and conceived human society on the pattern of a contract. It denied to Society a position of its own, and took it as an aggregation of individual persons under the law of Reason. The Rationalistic philosophy of enlightenment was interested in the rational shaping of human life, which

could be corroborated in the contrivance of intelligent contracts. Thus, the position was Social Nominalism and Individualism.

Philosophical Monism, which succeeded Humanism of the Enlightenment Period, as a reaction against its over-optimistic Rationalism under the impulse of Romanticism, although, is a tremendous advancement in its admission that society is never a sum of individuals neither is comprised of the contracts of the individuals yet could not rise up to conceive in society an unfolding of a quite distinct order of being, and consequently equated it with the imagery of a super-individual. In defence of the irreducible character of the social experience, it merely designates a higher centre of experience and thereby reduces Society to Personality. Consequently *there is no formal difference between Individualism and Collectivism; both of them take the egocentric experiences as frame-works of systematization and explanation of the social facts; both of them involve social Nominalism rather than Social Realism.*

(c) Socialization in Monism

Spiritual Monism picks up, as we have examined above, in the phenomenon of identification the Kernel of social experience. The degree of identification between the individuals itemizes the extent to which socialization is operative. *Total identification and complete unification for the spiritual Monists, singularizes the culmination of social formation which rules out even the minutest pocket of lock out existence.* The principle of Identification which is the ground process in spiritual Monism of the composition of social phenomena consequently becomes the Rule of Construction of the Social experience. Dissolution of the other in identification with oneself institutes the necessary and universal methodology of social knowledge according to the basic premise of this philosophy. The object is unified with the subject and the self

is projected into the other in the act of knowing. This methodology is acclaimed by Dilthey²⁶ as the "Philosophy of Understanding."

But does it really refer to social phenomenon? Does Identification formulate the essence of social experience?

V

Examination of the Principle of Identification

Hegel defines the Real as the Totality of Negations. Social Mind in its highest, is the Reality which institutes the Totality of the Negations of individual minds.

Concerned with the individuals and their progressive negations in a developing Ego-unity, Egoism, thus hits beyond the marks, for Society does not lie in the negations of Individuals, but in their affirmation. It is a system, which obtains between the individuals. We hold that *Realization of the unitary Ego is the very antithesis of social formation. Consequently, the process of identification cannot be the essential component of social experience.* To demonstrate this view; it is necessary to apprehend the class-characters of the social experience.

(i) *The Character of Social Experience*

Monistic theory does not distinguish between the knowledge of other individual and the social experience; and reduces the latter to the knowledge of other minds. It conceives a field of experience, wherein some breach has occurred, with the consequence that pieces of experience are sprinkled here and there. The drops of experience, so spread, are the individuals. Their only connections are gaps in knowledge rather absence of the continuity of experience. They stand to each other in this discontinuity, so that everyone is a natural (lifeless) presentation to other experiencing point. It is in the

²⁶ Dilthey, Wilhelm: *From Fragment*, G.S. VII, Pp. 191-192. and Hodeges, H.A.: *'Wilhelm Dilthey' An Introduction'*; P. 114.

identification process, accordingly, which restores the continuum, that each individual sets aside his claim to be a self-contained whole and moves forward to become one with others. It is in this becoming one with other, unity and identification, that the external presentation is intuited in its expressiveness of one single selfhood. These are the implications of the monistic philosophy and exactly in them it may be discerned that identification horribly misses the essence of Social Experience.

Social Experience is not the knowledge of other minds, rather it is an apprehension of the relationships which bind one another; the attention in its experience is not directed upon the individuals, but upon the connections which are between them. The individuals, in social experience, are relegated to the relative periphery of the attention field; only their mutual links and bonds capture the central position. It is not necessary in Social Cognition that we must know what the individuals are between whom the connections are found. The only thing of importance is to cognize the network of connecting wires that are spun from person to person and *vice versa*. It is not A's knowledge of B, it is his awareness of 'A-B' relation (and its reverse) which embraces the social experience. Similarly, it is B's awareness of the 'A-B' relations which is involved in his social experience.

This experience means that A and B distinctly hold themselves up in face of each other; they do not lose their individuality; nor do they deny the intrinsicity of otherness which pertains to each other. *It is on the basis of mutual recognition that the experience of mutual relationship is built up. Consequently, identification is something which is quite foreign to the nature of social experience.*

(ii) *Refutation of Identification in Love Experience*

Monistic philosophies grant a special treatment to the facts of Love, and contemplate in its expressions the most general form of union of which all other forms of social life are particular exemplifications. They claim to find out cases of self-negation in the phenomena of Love, and thereby

demonstrate the Law of Identification as the central principle in the nature of social system.

Love, being a relation, presupposes at least two individuals who must be distinguished and separate from each other; and between whom it should stand as a connection. *Since, there is love, there is multiplicity of individual existence.* Mutual distinction is inviolable, and it is this principle which is integral to the Love-experience. The lover, as he advances on the path of love becomes more and more aware of the distinctive otherness towards which he is moving, and this revelation gives him an ever increasing impetus to still deeper and impassionate movement towards the one, he idolizes. The rising surge of eros intensifies the intrinsic opposition inherent in the mutual exclusion and consolidates the distinct individualities given in the nature of the Lover and the beloved. Even in companionship and closeness, love is unaccustomed to peace and tranquility; direct and unmediated presence sharpens the immeasurable otherness of the beloved and stirs up the glowing heart. The lover nourishes the distinction, sustains the discrimination and shields the difference. He is the one to whom the glory of separation is most thoroughly revealed.

(a) Vivacious Otherness

It is the experience of vivacious otherness, and not of supine unity which occupies the unfathomable depths of love experience.

The absorbent never loosens his identity and never does he replace himself for his beloved. The heaviness of experience exercises otiosity in his life. It happens that the bearer of experience goes far advance in his way, withdrawing himself from all other things; his thought and mind are gravitated to the shining forth of the beloved drifting him away from all other presentations in its constant display. Now, he becomes oblivious to the *Masiva* (all else) in his absorption in the one. The absorbed does not give himself up; he is not lost; his identity is not liquified; he is merely inattentive to every thing else. It is this withdrawal of attention which is wrongly pronounced as the

phenomenon of identification. The pinnacle of Love is reached in the direct communion, face to face contact with the beloved, and it is the privilege of a devotee that he shares the secrets of companionship.

(b) I and Thou

'The most elevated and loftiest rung of love' I hold 'commands the towering category of 'I and 'Thou' relationship'. Love starts, when the beloved is far away, and is merely He; its immeasurable heights are reached, when 'He' becomes the unmediated 'Thou'. It is here that devotion steals away its final march ever deviation. As I have said somewhere else 'I and 'Thou' are unbridgable gulf, corresponding banks, irreducible positions, and unmistakable status, and no other than the worshipper knows it better.

The principle of self-love, which keeps one a beloved of oneself, is transcended in the position of an absorbent. He is a complete lover. *A clear cut distinction, a very sharp division, a very bright demarkation of positions, Lover and Beloved, crystallizes in the progressive blossoming of Love in the life of an individual.* The ultimate revelation and disclosure is that of this discrimination and difference, duality and separation; and the lover does not allow it to be dismissed or confused.

(c) Denial of Mergence

Sheikh-e-Akber Ibn-al-Arabi, monist in ontology, is not only a philosopher, but a sufi shaped in the concretion of Love experience. In a very forceful tone, he denies *Hulul* (Unification) and says that the '*Abd* (servant) never becomes identified with God; there is no finality (*le Nahaiyat*) to the levels of '*Abdiyyat* (Servitude) and no finality is also there to the stature of *Ma'budiyyat*²⁷ (Mastership). *Abd* and *Ma'bud* are the heighest corresponding categories, the ultimate truths, which

²⁷ Walliudin, Mir Dr. '*Quran Aur Tassawuf*'.

are revealed to the one, who has travelled in the path of Love. These categories involve distinction as essentialised in mutual otherness. Between them is a delineation irreplaceable; a delimitation uncorruptible.

The category of Otherness (*Ghairiyyat*), holds Sheikh-e-Akber, constitutes the ultimate link between the Universe and God, Man and his Creator, Lover and the Beloved. It makes the ultimate character of the relational order and there is no *Hulul* (unification) between these separations.

But what is the nature of this 'Otherness' ? It is on this issue, that the Sheikh is not conceptualising his own intuitive experience, but is engaged in speculative philosophising. He is talking about a realm not open to his experience. It is here that the indomitable sufi assumes the role of a conjecturing theoretician.²⁸ He suggests that it is the 'One' who appears dressed in otherness and it is this view we criticise as it renders impossible the social experience, invalidates even the experience given to the Sheikh himself. *It makes the 'Abdiyyat a mode of the Ma'budiyyat: and the lover that of the beloved: and renders the rhythm of love a thoroughbred delusion.* We stress on the point that if love relation has reality then this speculative philosophy of 'self-in-otherness' is unreal; if it is true, then the former is false. *The logical consequences of the Monistic Philosophy of the 'self-in-otherness' are nothing short of HULUL, which relegates the intuitive grasps of the unmistakable otherness in love to the sphere of unreality.* Abdul Karim al-Jili, like Sheikh-e-Akber, distinguishes his philosophy from the encroachments of HULUL, and reiterates that the servant remains the servant, however, enhanced he has become, and the master remains the master, however, close he may look. This reaffirmation of the distinctiveness between the two ultimate terms of the system of reality sets a limit to his own dialectical principle, which conceives the movement of the reality and experience as transformation of 'He' (¬HUSVIYAT) into 'I' (ANAIYYAT). The principle of movement must be, indeed, rephrased: 'He' descends to be

²⁸ Nicholson, R.A.' *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*' Pp 152-53, and Affiti, A.E: *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid 'Arabi*', P. 141.

'Thou' and his descension is the ascension of self movement. Consequently reality does not move to organise itself as a single Ego-structure; it progressively marches forward as a system of plurality. al-Jeli recapitulates the soaring heights of the *Insan-i-Kamel* in his installation at the rank of '*Abd*' in the presence of the sublime Master. The ultimate form of reality, disclosed in the path of love, is a *Nisbat* (Affinity) between individuals under the definitions of the Servant and the Master. Al-Ghazali denies mutual fusion between the two terms of the NISBAT, and intuits that the supreme one is linked in the relation without being fused in the other (alter) *i.e.* the Obedient. Ruler and the Obedient are the ultimate Form of Reality, for Ghazali, in the articulations of Love and processes of becoming.

Thus the vibrations of love are engendered in the irrevokable marking off the positions; it is always posited as a bond between two distinct individuals, and the lover becomes the most disciplined, sensitive, and iron will to defend the holiness and protect the sublimity of his dear most. *It is not unity of being, but duality of existence, which is the structural law of the profound character of love.* It is the category of Mutual Otherness which is the universal principle laid down in the mysteries of love. (Almujaddid) Ahmed Sirhindi refuses to go beyond the evidences of experience, and consequently, he formulates in language what he had found in his mystic journeys. His critique of the idea, *that Otherness is Self-in-Otherness*, is lively and refreshing. He says that such a speculation *is a false and loose play with the concept of Otherness.* Its idealisation to be a mode of self-existence totally overshadows its worth and completely extenuates its givenness. *'Otherness and 'mutual exclusion' are facts of the reality.* Otherness, in its being actual and genuine, is a real invention ($\equiv A$), an incontestible creation (*Kbulque*). It is the invention and creation of God, *Those who deny the reality of otherness really mitigate the element of novelty and the piece of originality in the Universe, and thereby deny a perfection (KAMAL) to Divinity. Multiplicity is not phenomenal it is a commandment (AMR) of God and so it is there.* God transcends it and transcends everything that exists (and by implication every existing entity transcends every other thing).

It is in this philosophy that love becomes a real relation, a genuine link between the separate and living existing individuals. *The living individuals transcend each other in their individual essence and as such mutual coalescence, mutual amalgamation is ruled out from the nature of their community.* The individuals are not planted into each other, it is their mutual love which takes root in their separately throbbing hearts.

VI

Mutual Otherness: Structural Principle of Social Experience Consequently, *love if granted the status of arche type of social experience, does not prove the case of identification.* On the contrary, it demonstrates the thesis of dualization; it flourishes on the repeated and recurrent affirmation of mutual transcendence; and ceases to exist as any side of the experience, lover or the beloved is denied.

"Love calls explicitly for an understanding entry" writes down Max Scheller, "into the individuality of *another* person distinct in character from the entering self, by him accepted as such, and coupled, indeed, with a warm and whole-hearted endorsement of 'his' reality as an individual, and 'his' being what he is. This is profoundly and profoundly expressed by the Indian Poet Rabindranath Tagore, when he depicts the sudden revulsion from (erotic) subjection and the yearning for the willing self-devotion of love:

Free me from the bonds of your sweetness, my love.

I am lost in you, wrapped in the folds of your caresses.

Free me from your spells, and give me back the manhood Offer you my heart.

This giving and receiving of freedom, independence and individuality is of the essence of love. And, in love, as it gradually re-emerges from the state

of identification, there is built up, within the phenomenon itself a clear cut consciousness of two distinct persons."²⁹

Iqbal pronounces in clear terms, "it is with the irreplaceable singleness of his individuality that the finite ego will approach the infinite ego to see for him the consequences of his past action and to judge the possibilities of his future. The unceasing reward of man consists in his gradual growth in self-possession, in uniqueness, and intensity of his activity as an ego. And the climax of this development is reached when the ego is able to retain self-possession, even in the case of a direct contact with the all-embracing Ego, As the Qur'an says of the Prophet's vision of the Ultimate Ego: "His eye, turned not aside, nor did it wander!"³⁰ (53:17)

Thus, Mutual Otherness is the defining category of the structure of Social Experience. It defines a relational order, which persists between individual persons; and does not remain social as soon as it lapses into a Unitary experience. Love, hate, sympathy, fellow-feeling, etc. are relational. Monistic philosophies have an irreversible tendency to deny or explain away relations. Their notion of Negation is a denial of the relational character of reality; and as such by their very nature they are disqualified to have an access to the essential nature of social experience, and by implications to the nature of revelation.

Royce says, " .. none of us finds it easy to define the precise boundaries of the individual self, or to tell wherein it differs from rest of the world, and in particular, from the selves of other persons.

"But to all such doubts our social commonsense replies by insisting upon three groups of facts. These facts combine to show that the individual human selves are sundered from one another by gaps which *as* it would seem, are in some sense impassible.

²⁹ Scheller, Max: *The Nature of Sympathy*'.

³⁰ Iqbal, Mohammad, Dr: *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*'.

"First, in this connection, our common sense insists upon the empirical sundering of the feelings — that is, of the immediate experience of various human individuals.... As a fact the sufferer does not feel the sufferer's pain....

"The facts of the second group 'one man', so says our social common sense, 'can only indirectly discover the intentions, the thoughts, the ideas of another man'

"We are individuated by the law that our trains of conscious thought and purpose are mutually inaccessible through any mode of direct intuition

"The third group of factno other man can do my deed for me. When I choose, my choice coalesces with the voluntary decision of no other individual." Royce develops an idea of community and concludes, " the selves sundered by the chasms of social Vond, should indeed not interpenetrate there would be no melting together, no blending, no meptic blur, and no lapse into mere intuition."³¹

The fulfilment of the law of Mutual otherness lays down the ultimate foundation of the possibility of social experience and the realization of social order in the nature of Reality. This order in its turn, becomes the ground of the structure of Revelation in consonance with the Philosophy of self as distinguished from all modes of Spiritual Monism like Egoism, Absolute Volunterism and Idealism.

³¹ Royce, Joshua: *'Christianity and Individual'* Lectures No. VII to X.