

IQBAL'S IDEAL PERSON AND RUMI'S INFLUENCE

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A cursory glance at any part of Iqbal's philosophy, in particular his conception of "Mard-e-Mo'min", would reveal Rumi's profound influence. Rumi was Iqbal's acknowledged 'murshid', Professor Hakim has observed, "If a free man like Iqbal could be called the disciple of any man, it is only of Rumi".²²⁵ Rumi is Iqbal's intellectual progenitor, and it is only with reference to this great mystic-poet that Iqbal admits with frank pride:

تو بھی ہے اسی قافلہ شوق
میں اقبال
جس قافلہ کا سالار ہے
رومی 226

You too belong to the caravan of Love—that caravan of Love whose chief is Rumi.

Iqbal's view of evolution has been greatly influenced by Rumi whose ideas on the subject were a message of hope and joy and did not bring the

²²⁵ Hakim, K.A., "Rumi, Nietzsche and Iqbal", Iqbal as a Thinker, Lahore, 1966, p. 201.

²²⁶ Bal-i-Jibril, p. 200.

gloom and despair which came in the wake of Darwin's theory.²²⁷ For Rumi the lowest form of life is matter but matter is not dead or inert:

باد و خاک و آتش بنده اند
بامن و تو مرده باقی زنده
اند²²⁸

Air and Earth and Fire are slaves,
for you and I they are dead, but not for God.

According to Rumi, the self originated in the form of matter consisting of dimly—conscious monads. Rumi's theory is stated thus

آمده اول با قلمم جهاد
و زچهادی در نباتی او فتاد
سالها اندر نباتی غمر کرد
و از جمادی یاد ناورد از نبرد
وزنباتی چون بحیران او فتاد
نامدش حال نباتی هیچ بساد
جز همان میلی که دارد سوی آن
خفاصه در وقت بهار و ضمیران
همچنین اقلیم تا اقلیم رفت
تا شد اکنون غافل و دانا و زفت

²²⁷ The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Lahore, 1962, pp. 121-122

²²⁸ Rumi, J. Masnawi-e-Ma'nawi, (edited by Furuzanfar, B and Dovish, M) Tehran, 1963, Book I, p. 53.

First man appeared in the class of inorganic things Next he passed therefrom
into that of plants

For years he lived on as one of the plants,

Remembering nought of his inorganic state so different, And when he passed
from the genitive 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. Which knew not the
case of their inclination to the breast. Again the great Creator, as you know,

Drew men out of the animal state 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.

(Translation by Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, pp.
121-122.)

Iqbal's concept of the evolution of human beings expressed in lines such
as the following is strongly reminiscent of Rumi's thought on the subject:

²²⁹ Masnawi-e-Mo'nawi, Book IV, pp. 173-174.

جو ہے بیدار انسان میں وہ گہری نیند سوتا ہے
شجر میں، پھول میں، حیوان میں، پتھر میں،
ستارے میں²³⁰

That which is conscious in human beings sleeps a deep sleep in trees,
flowers, animals, stones and stars.

And

کس کس جتن سے میں نے بنایا
رتبہ بہ رتبہ پایہ بہ پایہ
جامد کو جامی، جامی کو حیوان
حیوان کو وحشی، وحشی کو انسان²³¹

With great effort have I made,
rank by rank, part by part,
inorganic into organic, organic into animal, animal into brute, brute,
into, human.

For Iqbal, as for Rumi, God is the ultimate source and

²³⁰ Bang-e-Dara, p. 143.

²³¹ Cited in Badvi, L. "A Forgotten Composition of Iqbal", Iqbal Review, January 1965, pp. 77-78.

ground of evolution.²³² He does not regard matter as something dead because from the Ultimate Ego only egos proceed

نریزد جز خودی از پر
تو او
نخیزد جز گهر اندر
زو او!²³³

From its ray nothing comes into being save egos,

From its sea, nothing appears save pearls.

(Translation by Dar B.A. Iqbal's *Gulshan-e-Raz-a-Jadid* and *Bandagi Namah*, Lahore 1964, p. 36.

The Ultimate Ego is immanent in matter and makes the emergent emerge out of it. There are various levels of being or grades of consciousness. The raising note of egohood culminates in human beings.²³⁴

Iqbal shares Rumi's belief that evolution is the outcome of an impulse of life manifesting itself in innumerable forms. The vital impulse determines the direction of evolution as well as evolution itself. Life is that which makes efforts, which pushes upwards and outwards and on. All the striving is due to the *elan vital* in us, "that vital urge which makes us grow, and transforms this wandering plant into a theatre of unending creation"²³⁵

²³² Khatoon, J. *The Place of God, Man and Universe in the Philosophic System of Iqbal*, Karachi 1963, p. 121.

²³³ *Zabur-e-'Ajam*, p. 224.

²³⁴ *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 71-72.

²³⁵ Durant, W. *The Story of Philosophy*, New York, 1933, pp. 345-346.

Like Rumi, Iqbal also looks upon evolution as something great and glorious, not as something signifying human sinfulness and degradation. The "Fall" is the beginning of self-consciousness—the stage from where persons of God would begin their conscious search for perfection. Greeting Adam, the Spirit of Earth says

خورشید جہاں تاب کی ضو تیرے
 شرر میں!
 آباد ہے اک تازہ جہاں تیرے ہنر
 میں!
 جچتے نہیں بخشنے ہوئے فردوش
 نظر میں!
 جنت تری پنہاں ہے ترے خون جگر
 میں!
 اے پیکر گل کوشش پیہم کی جزا
 دیکھا!²³⁶

The light of the world-illuminating sun is in your spark,

a new world lives in your talents ;

unacceptable is a paradise which is given

your paradise lies hidden in your blood.

O form of clay, see the reward of constant endeavour.

One of the most notable characteristics of Rumi's thought is his ardent belief in the efficacy of constant endeavour.²³⁷ Iqbal shares with Rumi this

²³⁶ Bal-e-Jibril, p. 179.

²³⁷ Vahid, S.A. Studies in Iqbal, Lahore, 1967, p. 102.

special kind of mysticism—sometimes referred to as the mysticism of struggle—the kind of mysticism which strengthens and fortifies, rather than weakens or puts to sleep, the potentialities of the Self. In his Introduction to *The Secrets of the Self*, Professor Nicholson comments, "As much as he (Iqbal) dislikes the type of Sufism exhibited by Hafiz, he says homage to the pure and profound genius of Jalaluddin though he rejects the doctrine of self-abandonment taught by the great Persian mystic and does not accompany him on his pantheistic flights".²³⁸ Although, as has been observed above, Iqbal could not follow Rumi into all the regions of mystic ecstasy, yet their mysticism—Rumi's and Iqbal's—have a lot in common. It was 'positive', it affirmed life and upheld passionately both the dignity and divinity of human beings. This mysticism may perhaps be best described in terms of Love—a concept which forms the chief link between Iqbal and Rumi. For both Rumi and Iqbal the ideal person is an embodiment of love, a paragon of "Ishq". For both of them love is assimilation and expansion. It is linked with the doctrine of hardness, and the sole mean of attaining "the Kingdom, the Power, and the glory". It is this attribute which distinguishes more than anything else, Iqbal's ideal person from Nietzsche's Superman and places him or her in close proximity to Rumi's "Mard-e-Haqq"

Not only do Rumi and Iqbal regard the advent of human beings on earth as a happy event, they are also staunch believers in the personal creation of destiny and the freedom of the will. In numerous places Rumi has reiterated the thought of the following lines:

اختیارے ہست مارا بے گمان
حس را منکر شافی شد غیابان²³⁹

²³⁸ Nicholson, R.A., *Introduction to the Secrets of the Self*, Lahore, 1964, pp, xiv-xv.

²³⁹ Masnavi-e-Ma'nawi, Book V.

It is certain that we possess freedom of the will

you cannot deny the manifest evidence of the inner sense.

خورشید جہاں تاب کی ضو تیرے
شرر میں!
آباد ہے اک تازہ جہاں تیرے ہنر
میں!
جچتے نہیں بخشے ہوئے فردوس
نظر میں!
جنت تری پنہاں ہے ترے خون جگر
میں!
اے پیکر گل کوشش پیہم کی جزا
دیکھ!²⁴⁰

Through action life is made heaven or hell,

for this person of clay, by origin, is neither from heaven nor hell.

Both Rumi and Iqbal go beyond upholding the freedom of the will to a belief in "tawwakul" or trustful renunciation. "Tawwakul" is born not out of an awareness of one's helplessness, but is the result of "Iman", the vital way of making the world our own.²⁴¹ "Iman", says Iqbal, "is not merely a passive belief in one or more propositions of a certain kind, it is a living assurance

²⁴⁰ Bang-e-Dara, p. 307.

²⁴¹ The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 109.

begotten of a rare experience".²⁴² Only "strong personalities are capable of rising to this experience and the 'higher fatalism' implied in it".²⁴³

This 'higher fatalism' described thus by Tennyson:

"Our wills are ours, we know not how,

Our wills are ours to snake them Thine"²⁴⁴ is described variously by Rumi and Iqbal. The former says:

لفظ جبرم غشوق را بے صبر کرد
وانکه عاشق نیست جسو جبر کرد²⁴⁵

The word 'Determinism' causes Love to grow impatient,

only one who is not a lover regards 'Determinism' as a prison.

and the latter writes:

چوں فنا اندر رضاءے حق
شود
بنده مومن قضاءے حق
شود²⁴⁶

²⁴² Ibid., p. 888.

²⁴³ Ibid., pp. 109-110.

²⁴⁴ Tennyson, A "In Memoriam, A.H.H.", The Poetical Works, London, 1954, p. 239.

²⁴⁵ Masnawl-e-Ma'nawi, Book I.

²⁴⁶ Pas Che Bayad Bard A Aqwam-a-Sharq ? p. 14.

When he (she) loses himself (herself) in the will of God The Mo'min becomes God's instrument of destiny.

Both Rumi and Iqbal believe that the Ideal Person's life in God is not annihilation but transformation. "The Ideal Man freely merges his own will in the will of God in the ultimate relation of Love".²⁴⁷ It is more than likely that Iqbal's ideas about the deep love between human beings and a personal God which form one of the most profound and inspiring part of his writings, were clarified and strengthened through his contact with Rumi's thought.

The resemblance between Rumi's "Mard-e-Haqq" and Iqbal's "Mard-e-Mo'min" is quite unmistakable. In both cases the Ideal Person is a combination of the contemplative, person and the person of action. Iqbal places more stress on action than Rumi does but this hardly constitutes a fundamental differenc.

Both Rumi and Iqbal believe that the whole course of evolution is steered towards the creation of the Ideal Person. "He is the final cause of creation and, therefore, though having appeared last in point of time, he was really the first mover. Chronologically, the tree is the cause of the fruit but, teleologically, the fruit is the cause of the tree".²⁴⁸ To his Ideal Person, Rumi says:

پس بصورت غالم اصغر توئی
پس بمعنی عالم اکبر توئی
ظاہر آ آں شاخ اصل میوہ است
باطنا پھر ثمر شد شاخ ہست
گر بنودی میل و امید ثمر

²⁴⁷ Hakim, K.A. The Metaphysics of Rumi, Lahore, 1959, p. 110.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 93.

کی نشاندی باعبان بیچ شجر
پس بمعنی آن شجر از میوه زاد
گر بصورت از شجر بودش نهاد²⁴⁹

Therefore, while in form thou art the microcosm, in reality thou art the macrocosm

Externally the branch is the origin of the fruit ;

Intrinsically the branch came into existence for the sake of the fruit.

Had there been no hope of the fruit, would the gardener have planted the tree ?

Therefore in reality the tree is born of the the fruit, though it appears to be produced by the tree.

(Translation by Nicholson, R.A. Rumi, Poet and Mystic, London, 1950, p. 124.)

about his 'Na'ib-e-Ilahi" Iqbal says:

مدعای	علم	الاسماستے
ستر	سبحان	الذی
	اسراستے	²⁵⁰

He is the final cause of "God taught Adam the name of all things."
(Sura, 2: 29)

²⁴⁹ Masnawi-e-Ma'nawi, Book IV, p. 27.

²⁵⁰ Asrar-e-Khudi, pp. 50-51.

He is the inmost sense of "Glory to Him that transported His servant by night" (Sura, 17: 1)

(Translation by Nicholson, R.A. The Secrets of the Self, Lahore, p. 81)

and then turning to "the Rider of Destiny" proclaims

نوع انسان مرغ و تو حاصلی
کاروان زندگی را منزلی²⁵¹

Mankind are the cornfield and thou the harvest,

Thou art the goal of Life's caravan.

(Translation by Nicholson, R.A. The Secrets of the Self, p. 84)

For both Rumi and Iqbal, the concept of the Ideal Person constitutes a democratic ideal which does not have the aristocratic bias of Nietzsche's Superman. Both Rumi and Iqbal believe that the Ideal Person can work miracles which do not, however, "mean the annihilation of causation but only bringing into play causes that are not within the reach of common experience".²⁵² Iqbal, we may remember, said the "the region of mystic experience is as real as any other region of human experience."²⁵³

It is not possible within the purview of these few pages to discuss in any depth the subject of this essay. However, an attempt has been made to indicate-in broad outline-some of the most striking similarities between the

²⁵¹ Asrar-e-Khudi, pp. 50-51.

²⁵² The Metaphysics of Rumi, p. 110.

²⁵³ The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p, 23.

thought of Rumi and Iqbal in so far as they have a bearing on the genesis and growth of the Self and the emergence of the Ideal Person. Rumi's influence on Iqbal has been so all-pervading that it is not possible either to describe or to circumscribe it exactly. *Asrar-e-Khudi*—with Iqbal began his preaching of doctrine of incessant struggle, carries as its introduction the following lines of Rumi (quoted again in *Javid Nama*

دی شیخ با چراغ همی
گشت گردی شهر
کز دام ورد بلوم و انسانم
آرزوست
زین پمربان سست عناصر
ولم گرفت
شیر خدا و رستم و ستانم
آرزوست
گفتم که یافت می نشود
جسته ایم ما
گفت آنکه یافت می نشود
آنم²⁵⁴ آرزوست

Last night the Elder wandered about the city with a lantern Saying, 'I am weary of demon and monster: man is my desire. The Lion of God and *Rustam-e-Dastan*, are my desire. I said, 'The thing we quested after is never attained!' He said, 'The unattainable—that thing is my desire'. (Translation by Arberry, A. J. *Javid Nama*, London, 1966 p. 29)

²⁵⁴ *Asrar-e-Khudi*, p. 2.

and in conclusion one can hardly be better than to observe with one of Iqbal's biographers that "a more accurate and difficult description of Iqbal's own approach to ideals would be difficult to find".²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ Singh, I, *The Ardent Pilgrim*, London, 1951, p. 103.