

THE NATURALISM OF IQBAL

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Iqbal is well-known more as a great poet---indeed he was a great poet --- than as a philosopher. In fact, he was not a philosopher in the technical sense of the -word 'philosopher'. He did not give any comprehensive metaphysical system, as the professional philosophers do. He was interested in philosophy of religion and this interest was shown in his lectures delivered by him in 1928-29 at Madras, Hyderabad and Aligarh. These lectures, alongwith the lecture delivered in English in 1932 constitute his major philosophical work 'The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam'. As one reads this book, one cannot but be impressed by his profound understanding of the Western thought, and sound grasp of Muslim philosophy and theology. This is a very difficult book and I must admit that I had to read it again and again to understand its contents. However, it is stimulating at the same time, and I have been inspired to reflect on the philosophical discussions undertaken therein. I propose to present some results of these reflections in my lectures.

Iqbal designed his lectures to meet the demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge. This demand, he thought could be met by attempting to reconstruct Muslim religious philosophy with due regard to the philosophical traditions in Islam and the more recent developments in the various domains of human knowledge'. Thus he undertook a philosophical discussion of some of the basic ideas such as religious experience, God, human ego, prophecy and ijtehad. By undertaking such philosophical discussion he wanted to provide a rational foundation for Islam, which, he thinks, "was begun with the Prophet himself. His constant prayer was: 'God! grant me knowledge of the ultimate nature of things". Indeed, Iqbal holds that "in view of its function, religion stands in greater need of a rational foundation of its ultimate principles than even the dogmas of science" of all the ideas that he discussed the one that pertains to Divine existence is the most important, because it is in the light of a certain conception of God that the nature of other ideas is determined. Hence he takes up the problem of Divine existence first.

Having found all the traditional proofs of the existence of God the ontological, the cosmological and the teleological open to criticism and as betraying “a rather superficial interpretation of experience” he looks to religious experience, which is identified with mystic experience, as the source of the knowledge of God. Religious experience, according to Iqbal, is a direct way of knowing God through intimate association or ‘encounter with God. Though it is essentially a state of feeling, it has a cognitive aspect also. The contents of this experience can be communicated to others in the form of judgements the truth of which Iqbal thinks, is guaranteed by the application of the intellectual test by which he means critical interpretation, without any presuppositions, of human experience generally with a view to discover whether our interpretation leads us to a reality of the same character as is revealed by religious experience²⁹ Human experience, Iqbal holds, presents three main levels - the level of matter, the level of life, and the level of mind and consciousness. Iqbal then undertakes a critical examination of these three levels of experience and interprets them so as to reach the conclusion that the ultimate Reality is a “rationally directed creative life”, and that the ultimate nature of Reality is Spiritual and that it must be conceived as an ego or self. This ultimate Ego or Self, Iqbal says, is the same as the Allah of the Quran. Since Reality that is revealed in religious experience is spiritual, it is also the same as that arrived at by the interpretation of religious experience. Thus Iqbal tries to show that both religious experience and the interpretation of the most important regions of experience give us the same conception of God as is proffered by the Quran: In this way, he thinks he has justified philosophically the Islamic conception of God and provided a rational foundation for Islam.

In my first lecture I shall examine Iqbal’s philosophical views in order to see whether he accomplished the task that he undertook. I would like to submit, with one reference to Iqbal, that in my view, he did not succeed in achieving his objective. Out of my interpretation of his views emerges a metaphysics which is naturalistic and as such, is not compatible with the Quranic conception of God. I shall try to show (a) how he throughout his discussion betrays his naturalistic trend and inclination and (b) how his views

²⁹ M. Iqbal. ‘The Reconstruction of Religious Thought In Islam’, Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1986, p.21.

about the nature of ultimate Reality can be interpreted in naturalistic terms. At the end, I shall argue how in a different way religious beliefs, including the Islamic ones can be rationally justified.

In the first lecture Iqbal makes some pronouncement which clearly betray his naturalistic approach to human life. After regarding man as a creative activity, an 'ascending spirit' he says that 'man's life and the onward march of his spirit depend on the establishment of connections with reality that confronts him'.³⁰ These connexions, according to Iqbal, are established through the scientific knowledge of nature which provides a conceptual framework for human life. This means that man lives in a world which is capable of sustaining and responding to his interests. Further he says that man possesses the faculty of forming concepts of things and that 'forming concepts of them is capturing them'. This means that the concepts in terms of which nature is known are the concepts which are capable of making human living possible -- a living which is so complex and rich as to include all different values social, aesthetic, economic and logical. Thus all, such varieties of human experience become natural events. It is the recognition of such relation of man with nature which Iqbal describes as 'the naturalism of the Quran' and which, he recommends, 'must be exploited -- in the nobler interest of free upward movement of spiritual life'.³¹ As regards 'spiritual life', Iqbal says that whereas in Christianity 'it could be elevated not by the forces of a 'world external' to the soul of man, but by the revelations of a new 'world within' his soul', in Islam content for spiritual life could be sought 'by a proper adjustment of man's relation to these forces'. After designating spiritual life as 'the ideal' and the external world as 'the real' he indicates the basic importance of the real by saying that Islam 'recognizing the contact of the ideal with the real, says 'yes' to the world of matter and points the way to master it with a view to discovering a basis for a realistic regulation of life'.³² In other words, spiritual life is to be lived in this world of nature and not in any other realm and that the knowledge and exploration of nature are of fundamental importance to human being. Indeed, spiritual life does not consist in the activity of any 'spiritual self' independent of and apart from this world. Spiritual activity arises out of man's relation with nature

³⁰ Ibid., p.10.

³¹ Ibid., p.12.

³² Ibid., p.8

established by him as a component but distinct part of nature through scientific knowledge. Iqbal holds that there are aspects of man other than the spatial one's. If spiritual life means an aspect other than the spatial aspects then spiritual life according to Iqbal, comprises such things as 'evaluation, the unitary character of purposive experience and the pursuit of Truth'. These aspects of man are taken as natural by naturalists who would agree with Iqbal when the latter suggests that 'it is pure dogmatism on the part of science to claim that the aspects of reality selected by it are the only aspects to be studied and to ignore those aspects which constitute his spiritual life. Indeed, they, like Iqbal, would suggest that the understanding of aspects other than the spatial ones require categories other than those employed by natural sciences. Naturalists would side with Iqbal in combating Materialism by recognizing non-spatial aspects of man and stressing the need of employing for the study of these different categories which must, of course, fit in the naturalistic programme.

Iqbal's inclination towards naturalism is quite evident when he speaks of (1) 'the naturalism of the Quran', (2) 'the concrete spirit of the Quran', (3) 'the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Quran' and (4) 'the general empirical attitude of the Quran'. By such references to the Quran, Iqbal makes the point that, under the influence of the Quran, the Muslim thinkers, by realizing that the spirit of the Quran was anticlassical revolted intellectually against the speculative philosophy of the Greeks who, according to Iqbal, 'enjoyed theory and were neglectful of fact, and set out for the search of a scientific method of knowledge. Thus, Iqbal asserts, that 'the birth of Islam is the birth of inductive intellect'.

Iqbal mentions three sources of human knowledge: (1) inner experience, (2) nature and (3) history. If it is the basic tenet of naturalism that knowledge can be acquired only by the use of scientific method, then Iqbal certainly adopted naturalism when he holds that these three sources of knowledge could be tapped by the employment of scientific method in these fields. As regards the study of nature there is hardly any doubt about the employment of scientific method. So far as history is concerned, Iqbal regards it as an art of firing the readers imagination, as only a stage in the development of history as a genuine science, which can be possible by 'a wider experience, a greater -maturity of practical reason and a full realization of certain basic

ideas regarding the nature of life and time such as the unity of human origin and a keen sense of the reality of time'.³³

It is not only in- respect of nature and history that scientific method is to be employed, but the religious or mystic experience is also according to Iqbal, to be subjected to critical examination before it can be accepted as a source of knowledge. Iqbal's account of the nature of mystic experience brings out his naturalistic tendency in a very clear manner. He regards mystic experience as natural as sense experience." The facts of religious experience are facts among other facts of human experience and, in the capacity of yielding knowledge by interpretation; one fact is as good as another. Iqbal does not regard mystic experience as self-authenticated. The validity of judgments based on such experience will be established only after these have been tested, And the tests to be applied here are not, according to Iqbal, different from those applicable to other forms of knowledge. These are: the intellectual test and the pragmatic test. While discussing the significance of the finality of the institution of prophethood, Iqbal observes that "the idea of finality does not mean that mystic experience has ceased to exist as a vital fact"; it means to create an independent critical attitude towards mystic experience by generating the belief that all personal authority claiming a super natural origin has come to an end in the history of man.³⁴ It is this independent critical attitude that will according to Iqbal, open 'fresh vistas of knowledge in the domain of inner experience, just as the spirit of critical observation of man's outer experience has divested the forces of nature of any divine character'.

The naturalistic character of mystic experience is further established when Iqbal compares it to prophetic experience. He says at more than one place that prophetic experience is not qualitatively different from mystic experience. The only difference between the two is that while the effects of mystic experience are confined to the person of the mystic himself, the effects of prophetic experience extend, beyond the person of the prophet, to mankind in general. The experience of the prophet awakes in him 'world shaking psychological forces which completely transform the human world'. Thus Iqbal defines a prophet as 'a type of mystic consciousness in which

³³ Ibid., p.112

³⁴ Ibid., p.101

unitary experience tends to overflow its boundaries and seeks opportunities of redirecting or refashioning the forces of collective life'. It is by examining' the type of manhood that he has created, and the cultural world that has sprung out of the spirit of his message' that the value of his religious experience is to be judged. All this implies that so far as the source and nature of the two experiences are concerned there is no difference between them; it is only in respect of their results that they differ from each other. The value and validity of a prophet's message are not to be judged with reference to its alleged divine source: it is to be judged with, reference to its effects or the state of affairs that is created by it in this world. When Iqbal says that in the prophet's personality "the finite centre of life sinks into his own infinite depths,"³⁵ he is regarding the source of the prophet's inspiration as something natural and not super-natural. At another place he describes the law given by the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) as 'arisen out of the depths of human conscience'. In the sixth lecture he refers to the revelation in Islam as 'speaking from the inmost depths of life'.³⁶ While describing Islam as a naturalistic religion he argues that it will be acceptable to the men's right nature as it arises out of the depths of life. All these pronouncements made by Iqbal about religious experience clearly suggest that, according to him, the source of ideas based on mystic or prophetic experience is natural and not super-natural. This view of religious experience is endorsed by the Quran which, as Iqbal has rightly stated, regards 'wahi' as a universal property of life. (Of course 'its nature and character, Iqbal adds, are different at different stages of the evolution of life'. Thus the plant growing freely in space, the animal developing a new organ to suit a new environment and a human being receiving light from the inner depths of life are all, according to Iqbal, cases of inspiration (wahi)'. From this it follows that just as the consciousness that accompanies the instinctive actions of an animal in an implicit manner as a part of the animal's nature, the intuitive consciousness in man is also a part of his nature. Besides the general naturalistic attitude of Iqbal shown by him in respect of religious experience his views of God and human ego are such as can he interpreted as naturalistic. After rejecting the three traditional arguments for the existence of God; the Cosmological, the Teleological and the Ontological, as betraying rather superficial interpretation

³⁵ Ibid., p.100

³⁶ Ibid., p.142

of experience, Iqbal himself undertakes the interpretation of the three main levels of experience: Ultimate Reality is 'pure duration in which thought, life and purpose interpenetrate to form an organic unity'. In other words, it is 'a rationally directed creative life'. But Iqbal conceives this unity as 'the unity of self --- an all embracing concrete self'. 'The introduction of the notion of self might suggest that he regards the ultimate Reality as a person, a being or entity, but, as it will be just agreed, this is not the case. He writes: "To interpret this life as an ego is not to fashion God after the image of man. It is only to accept the simple fact of experience that life is not a formless fluid but an organizing principle of unity, a synthetic activity which holds together and focalizes the dispersing dispositions of the living organization for constructive purposes".³⁷ Iqbal argues that intellect or thought will conceive life as 'a kind' of universal current flowing through all things' and that it is intuition which reveals life as a centralizing ego'. Here one would wonder how Iqbal admits this antithesis between thought and intuition, when earlier in the first lecture he clearly asserts that there is no reason 'to suppose that thought and intuition are essentially opposed to each other; they spring from the same root and complement each other'.³⁸ Here, in respect of the character of life, thought will complement intuition. if we reverse their objects and say that it is intuition which apprehends the dynamic and creative character of the universe and grasps the ultimate Reality as a pure duration and then it is thought which latter on interprets it as a centralizing ego. Ego or self as a centralizing agency is not intuited at all; it is conceived by intellect as such. Even if we may concede that the principle of unity is a person of ego who, through synthetic activity, organizes the world for some constructive purpose, such activity is not possible without conceiving such person or ego as having some ideal. But Iqbal does not admit the presence of any ideal which is being realized by the creative life. According to him 'God's life is a self-revelation, not the pursuit of an ideal'. If God's life is not the pursuit of an ideal,³⁹ there is hardly any warrant for holding that Reality is a rationally directed creative life'. And when he says that 'the ultimate ground of all experience is a rationally directed creative will', such will cannot be conceived without some ideal involved in its creative activity. Had Iqbal admitted the

³⁷ Ibid., p.48

³⁸ Ibid., p.2

³⁹ Ibid., p.84

presence of an ideal, one would have accepted his characterization of creative life as the unity of a person or ego. In the absence of an ideal, unity can not be the unity of self. This contention is further supported by his clarification that the centralizing ego shall not be fashioned after the image of man who organizes his dispersing dispositions under an ideal self. It appears that Iqbal conceives the Ultimate Reality as an ego or self with a view to avoiding the pantheistic view of Reality which would have been suggested otherwise. And this is understandable. Pantheism is opposed to the individualistic conception of the ultimate Reality which is the Quranic view of God and which would be naturally acceptable to Iqbal. This is why Iqbal interprets the-Quranic verse describing God as the light of heaven and earth⁴⁰ as implying that it excludes ‘the suggestion of a formless cosmic element by centralizing the light in a glass likened unto a well-defined star’. But on the other hand, his view of relation between the ultimate Ego or God and nature is such as would tend toward pantheism, though such pantheism would not mean that God and nature are one thing: It would identify God with the universe in the sense that it is this universe through which God carries out His creative activity of self-realization. This relation is described by him in these statements: “To the ultimate self, the not-self or nature ‘does not present itself as confronting other: it is ‘only a fleeting moment in the life of God’⁴¹ Space, Time and matter are interpretations which thought puts on the free creative energy of God;⁴² the world in all its details is the self-revelation of the Great I am.’ Divine life is in touch with the whole universe on ‘ the analogy of the soul’s contract with the body; the ultimate Ego⁴³ that makes the emergent emerge is immanent in nature’, nature is the behavior of God; it is a systematic mode of behavior organic to the ultimate self!⁴⁴ When Iqbal says that ‘a self is unthinkable without a character’, it clearly implies that self is nothing but a systematic mode of behavior’ without which self will cease to be what it is. One may or may not regard Iqbal’s view as pantheistic, but one point is quite evident from the above assertions; the Ultimate Self is immanent and not transcendent. If He is the creator of nature He is not a transcendent creator in the Cartesian sense or on that of theistic religion; He

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.51

⁴¹ Ibid., p.45

⁴² Ibid., p.53

⁴³ Ibid., p.85

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.45

is immanent creator in the sense that He animates and sustains the whole then one may doubt if He is a supernatural being or entity. On the other hand He should be something which is intimately and organically involved in the world of nature.

The above interpretation of Iqbal's thought is further supported by the analogy that he uses to show the relation of God to the world.

According to Iqbal, God's contact with the world of space, time and matter is similar to the contact that human soul has with his body. Now what is Iqbal's view of human soul, mind or ego? He does not accept the view that the soul is a substance or an entity. It is according to him, not a 'thing': it is an act, just as body is not a 'thing situated in an absolute void; it is a system of events or acts', 'the system of experience we call soul or ego is also', Iqbal argues, 'a system of acts'. This does not', he adds, "obliterate the distinction of soul and body; it only brings them close to each other'. By stretching this analogy further we can say that the Ultimate Self is also a system of acts or events just as the world of space, time and matter is, as Iqbal holds. a system of events and acts and that, as such, both are brought closer to each other. Indeed, Iqbal's view of human soul as a system of events or acts is very similar to the modern naturalistic view of mind according to which "mind must be analyzed as behavior, since behavior is the only aspect of mind which is open to experimental examination, and is taken as ability to perform certain kinds of tasks. Mind is not some thing residing in the body. From the foregoing discussion, we may conclude that Iqbal's interpretation of human experience does not lead to a reality of the same character, as according to Iqbal, is revealed by religious experience. Iqbal holds 'that the religious experience yields the knowledge of God as a supersensible Being who really exists and possesses moral and natural attributes. Now I propose to examine the argument of religious experience for the existence of God.

Iqbal says that just 'as regions of normal experience are subject to the interpretation of sense-data for our knowledge of the external world, so the region of mystic experience is subject to interpretation for our knowledge of God'. That it is the interpretation of mystic experience which makes it intelligible cannot be denied, but Iqbal nowhere suggests how this interpretation should be carried out so that it could yield only genuine propositions about God. Even if some method of interpretation is available,

the contents of religious experience are too indeterminate to yield clear knowledge of the God of theism. If the argument is sound, then the conception of God resulting from it must be intelligible and free from inner contradiction. But what is found is a 'viciously muddled confusion of concepts'. Interpretation, whatever it be, means the application of certain concepts which can be handled as well as mishandled. No wonder then that we have all sorts of interpretations: theistic, pantheistic and even agnostic. So divergent are the results of religious experience that one may doubt the validity of the source itself. Either the experience itself is unreliable or there is something wrong in the interpretation of it. It has been observed that the concepts that are used in the interpretative exercise are those which belong to some established theological doctrine. What appears to be true is that, in mystic experience the mystic has a vague feeling of coming into contact with "something larger", and since he is not satisfied with such vague feeling, he tries to interpret it more fully to himself and others. In the absence of any interpretative technique the simple course before him is that he should interpret his experience within the context of those beliefs which he already entertains. According to Iqbal, God reveals his symbols both within and without, and God can be known indirectly by 'reflective observation and control of (His) symbols as they reveal themselves to sense perception' and directly by 'direct association with Reality (God) as it (He) reveals itself (Himself) within. One is the way of sense-experience and the other the way of religious experience'. About the latter he says that it supplements the former. In other words, religious experience cannot yield at complete knowledge of God. This fails as much as the three other traditional arguments. Since he regards sense experience as inadequate, he thinks that it must be supplemented by what the Quran describes as 'Fuad' or 'Qalb', i.e. heart. Thus he relies on the Quran for establishing the authority of Religious experience or mystic experience as a source of knowledge of God. But, I am afraid the interpretation that has given of the word of 'Fuad' may not be acceptable in the light of the context in which it has been used in the Quran. Fuad means 'Qalb' i.e. heart in the sense it is used by mystics and poets who regard it as a seat of emotion which made it a kind of intuition or insight involving no thought or intellectual element'. In the Quran, 'qalb' has been used as a reflective faculty or as a seat of understanding as these verses show: 'They have hearts wherewith they understand not'. (vii.179), 'Lo!on their hearts we have placed covering so that they understand not. (viii.57). Have

they hearts Wherewith to reflect'. (xxii-46) It is very significant to note that the word 'fuad' has been used in the Quran alongwith the words 'hearing' Sam'a and 'seeing' Basar which suggest that these three things together constitute the source of knowledge. Iqbal also says that 'knowledge is sense-perception elaborated by understanding. Here, hearing and seeing, the two most common sources of sense-data, stand for sense-perception, and fuad stands for understanding. Iqbal further points out that, according to the Quran (ii-28.31), 'man is endowed with the faculty of naming things, that is to say, forming concepts of them. This function of forming concepts is naturally performed by fuad which works on data supplied by ears, eyes and other sense organs. This also shows that fuad means the faculty of understanding and not the seat of emotions and feelings:

Thus neither the religious experience yields the knowledge of God, nor does the interpretation of experience lead to the individualistic conception of God. Iqbal's metaphysical views, as all have interpreted, then lead to naturalism.

Here critic may object that a naturalistic metaphysics will rule out the reality of a supernatural Realm of supernatural Being or God. Indeed naturalism repudiates the view that there exists or could exist some entities or events which lie beyond the scope of scientific explanation; True, God, being a supernatural entity, cannot be known according to naturalism, nor can His existence be established by any argument, logical or empirical but this does not mean that if the existence of God cannot be known one cannot legitimately believe in His existence. The great skeptic and naturalist Hume held that though we could not have the 'knowledge' of the external world of ourselves and of necessary connection between bodies in the physical world, we can legitimately believe in their existences. Beliefs in the existence of these objects are, according to Hume, natural beliefs, because human nature is so constituted that men in the absence of their knowledge have to believe in their reality, otherwise life would perish. Nature will always maintain her rights and prevail, in the end, our abstract reasoning. Similarly Hume held that God is not knowable but He is the object of belief. Hume also said that belief in God is natural in the sense that there is a natural propensity to believe in God which is a 'general attendant of human nature'. Kant was also concerned with the problem of the knowledge of God. Is the knowledge of

God possible? Kant's answer is that such knowledge is impossible, for no synthetic a priori statements can be made about God. But though God, for Kant, cannot be known, He can still be thought or believed to be; we can have the Idea of God. To believe in God, according to Kant, is to have the Idea of God which has no object corresponding to it. This Idea is not a fiction, but possesses objective validity because it serves the interest of practical reason. According to Kant, God must be conceived not as the object of knowledge, but of faith. Kant also regards belief in God as natural in the sense that this belief presupposes the existence of moral sentiments which are present in every human being, for 'the human mind... takes a natural interest in morality'. Just as both Hume and Kant, after seeing the frailty of human reason and the inadequacy of his mental construction so far as the knowledge of God is concerned, concluded that, in the absence of such knowledge! it was legitimate to have belief in His existence, Iqbal also can, after the failure of all the traditional arguments for the existence of God and his naturalistic interpretation of all levels of experience - matter, life and consciousness, legitimately resort to belief-attitude towards Divine existence. Indeed, it is on account of this belief-attitude that Iqbal characterized the creative life as an ego and then equated this ego with the Allah of the Quran and conceived Him as possessing the attributes of creativeness, knowledge, omnipotence and eternity. It is in this way that Iqbal can reasonably retain religion along with his naturalism.

The logical empiricists hold that religious statements, especially statements about God, are meaningless, because they cannot be verified. The religious man may reply that his statement about God's existence is meaningful because when he says that God exists, he does not mean that he knows that God exists; he means that God exists. He would claim that his statement, 'I believe that he believes that God exists' is meaningful. "Then the question arises: how can a belief statement be meaningful? The reply is that the meaningfulness of a belief statement does not consist in its being a factual statement which can be verified; meaningfulness consists in its practical implication. Belief in Divine existence means commitment to lead a certain type of life or, to use the religious terms, complete surrender to the will of God. Belief and action go together. Belief not followed by action is mere verbal affirmation which has no meaning. The close link between belief and action explains the nature of those religious statements which refer

to super sensible facts. This may be illustrated with the following example. Let us take the two statements

1) Mohammad was born in Mecca.

2) Mohammad was the messenger of Allah. As regards the first statement, it is clearly a factual statement which can be verified empirically. A person can say, I know that Mohammad was born in Mecca; since it can be verified it is a 'knowledge-statement'. But when he makes the second statement he will say "I believe that Mohammad is the messenger of God". It is not a knowledge-statement; it cannot be verified. It is a 'belief statement'. The meaningfulness of the first statement consists in its being factual, but the meaningfulness of the second statement consists in its having practical implications. When a person says I believe that Mohammad is the messenger of Allah, he commits himself to a certain way of life; he surrenders to the will of Allah as revealed to Mohammad. This point is borne out when we examine the 'Kalma' which is recited by a believer. He says "I bear witness to that there is no ilah but Allah and that Mohammad is the messenger of Allah'. Here 'bearing witness' does not mean mere affirming something verbally, but performing the actions which bear to witness to the fact' that there is Allah'. And this is possible when all the believers who recite the Kalma act as servants of one Master. Being the servants of one Master, they will obey the commands of one Master. Thus they bear the witness not by words but by deeds which will embody the will of one Master. Their deeds will, indeed, point to one Master.

That the meaningfulness of a religious belief is established by the actions implied by the belief is well borne out by the repeated conjunction of the word 'faith' and 'righteous action'. In fact faith is the basic category of religious life and belief arises out of faith. Belief is only the conceptualization of faith. And Iqbal has rightly saw that 'the Quran is s book which emphasises deed' rather than 'idea'.