

IQBAL ON DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY

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“One must think of the highly negative significance in Persian of the word Khudi, Self, with its implications of selfishness, egotism and similar objectionable meanings.” Iqbal gives this word a new meaning as Self, Personality, Ego in an absolutely positive meaning. But still, deepest dismay was caused by his new ideas; brought up since centuries with the idea of seeing in the Self, something which has to be annihilated in the Divine Essence. A stoically inclined group of Muslim mystics could not easily accept a philosophy that taught them to watch over the growth of their personality, to strengthen it, instead of melting away in the highest bliss of union with the Only Reality. Iqbal held that the Muslims of the Sub-continent had been corrupted by the influence of Persian pantheistic ideas, and had forgotten almost everything of true Arabic Islam and its ideals now he wanted to show here real Islam without veil. The accustomed ideals of self-surrender, and quietism were abandoned, and a new doctrine of the Self is put forth; man is the vicegerent of God, he has to strengthen his personality, and to cooperate with his Creator.

All our instincts and passions are to be regulated by the principle of harmony or balance. No instinct is to be altogether thwarted, nor is it be allowed to override others. All instincts have their functions within limits. In Iqbal’s opinion this demarcation of limits is the Shari’ah or the “Divine law” and to respect the “limits” is “justice”, which, according to Taha Husain, is the central principle of all Islamic injunctions. According to the Quran, one who transgresses the “limits”, is a mu’tad (معتد) or zalim, and God Almighty does not like him. This is why in the Islamic jurisprudence “hadd”, i.e. the “limits: is synonymous with “punishment”. The long and short of it is that to remain within “limits” is to be harmonious, good and beautiful. Imam Ghazali makes a very clear pronouncement in this regard. “Beauty”, he says, “has almost universally been recognized as a thing of intrinsic value. It means the orderly and systematic arrangement of parts, and this is not the quality of material things only; it lies in the activities and the behaviour of man and in

his ideas and concepts. Whatever is beautiful is loved by us for its own sake. This immediately recalls to our mind Iqbal's beautiful lines in praise of Mard-i-Musalman and more particularly the following:

فطرت کا سرود ازلی اس کے شب و روز
 اہنگ میں یکتا، صفت میں سورۃ رحمن

Sometimes it is held that Iqbal's concept of Ego - the very pivotal notion of his philosophy - stands for the glorification of power. Nothing can be more misleading than this. Power, according to Iqbal, must be qualified; it is with him not blind and aimless and thus sheer ruthlessness. Whatever power there is for man, it is on account of his respect for "limits", (hudud). Bowing before "limits" is the very essence of power. In his opinion there is no power without some sort of compulsions or obligations.

Says Iqbal, it is not the beginning that counts. It is the "uppermost reach of the emergent that matters". At the animal level a human being is incapable of becoming self-conscious. To outgrow animality is not an easy job. It needs lot of determined effort on the part of the "grower". Man naturally, as is the wont of every earth-treading animal, feels comfortable in proportion to his nearness to earth. Nearer the earth the lesser the discomfort. Lethargy getting the better of energy, Says Iqbal:

"A spirit, on accepting the companionship of earth, is taken hold of by the luxury of sleepiness.. It wakes up when it creates "I" i.e. ego or self. And when the self succumbs to flesh, it dies out."

دلے چوں صحبت گل می پزیرد
 ہماں دم لذت خوابش بگیرد
 شود بیدار چوں "من" آفریند
 چو "من" محکوم تن گردد، بمیرد

What Iqbal tries to explain is, his feeling that the physical part of man which is normally predominant, keeps man in a state of forgetfulness. He remains away from self-consciousness. Yet, through effort, he may shed forgetfulness and come to his own. This “coming to his own” is in Iqbal’s words, the emergence of his “I”, his ego, his self. For a while ego may get the better of his carnal companion. As long as this state continues all is not lost. A person asleep, anyway, is not a person dead. But when spiritual element surrenders to that of physical then the “I”, ego or self, meets its death. To remain sleepy is one thing, to sleep away, the other.

The gist of Iqbal’s thought is the problem of man’s self-consciousness. Does man try to know his station and rank in the universe? The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, opens up with the following words:

“What is the character and general structure of universe in which we live? How are we related to it? What place do we occupy in it, and what is the kind of conduct that befits the place we occupy?”

Man does not know his status in the universe. Rather he does not dare to know it. He avoids to know of his own greatness. His real splendour is too big. He covers before his grandeur. He shrinks from the very thought of his expense. He feels comfortable within his limits i.e. the limits of his sense-perception. Even when the scope of sense-perception expands to limits to which an individual is not accustomed it becomes awesome. Let an enormously vast stretch of land bust upon an unfamiliar eye. Let a person ascend a high minaret for the first time in his life. Let there be a blast causing a loud sound. Let a person experience some unusual smell. In short, whatever a person is not used to and for him is not normal or familiar, creates fear. It makes him shrink, shiver and crouch. Yet it is the same two-legged animal who through training and determination surmounts the Mt. Everest. He flies to the moon and alighting on it establishes dialogues with friends and advisers on the earth.

Man’s capabilities unfold to him by and by and that also with determined effort on his part to this effect. But man’s knowledge, as such, deals with the material world. It is attained with the help of sense-perception. It is the outer world being dealt with by the outer weapons of man. His

sense-perception is his outer world. His inner world remains hidden from him. Man's outer capabilities have been progressing and hence accordingly have been discovering and conquering the outer world steadily. Man, no doubt, works wonders in the field of material world. And whatever he performs, he tries to proclaim, propagate and institutionalize. All material progress which in other words, is the advancement of scientific knowledge, is in reality the extension and enhancement of man's faculties of sense-perception. All inventions and discoveries are performances of sense-perception. Not only that, they all turn to a sort of "foreign aid" to man's senses and enlarge his possibilities by opening up new vistas before him.

Man's inner senses are much more acute and far reaching than outer ones. His potentialities remain unrealized. Those who know themselves and hence try to become what they should, are a rarity. Hardly one in millions. It is a pity. Every animal reaches its ceiling because he lives instinctively. Animals have no choice hence no animal can commit a sin. Every animal has been vested with the nature of the specie to which it belongs. No animal can be other than itself. A jackal cannot be anything other than a jackal. A tiger is a tiger. A lamb is a lamb. This shows that every animal is a dependable entity. Hypocrisy is beyond the capacity of animals. They are true to their respective natures. But what about a kind called mankind? Mankind has been equipped with the faculty of choice. A human being is responsible for his deliberate actions. Therefore, he is accountable to God for what he does. To attain to his true self, he has to work hard. He has to out-grow animality. He has to rise above his material surroundings in the sense that he has to live not according to the animal instincts, he, rather has to bridle the fairy horses of his desires, emotions and ambitions. He has to conquer his material self. He has to be the captain of his fate and 'master of his soul. But this he would not do. He will try to gain the knowledge of the world. He will calculate. He will criticize. He will analyse. He will establish scientifically, this fact and that. He will philosophize. He will do every thing imaginable. But he will not seriously try to probe his own person. He persistently and deliberately will remain far aloof from himself. He is too big for himself to comprehend. A human being may be a fighter, a student, a scientist, a physician, an explorer and astronaut and what not. He may be anything but he will not dare survey his own self, and will never get to know what he

potentially is and to what spiritual heights he can rise. His inner world is much more expansive than the outer one. Says Iqbal and pathetically so:

بینی جهان را، خود را نہ بینی
تا چند نادان غافل نشینی!
نور قدیمی شب را بر افروز
دست کلیمی ذر آستینی!
بیرون قدم نہ از دور آفاق
تو پیش ازینی، تو بیش ازینی!

“You behold the world but you do not behold your own self. How long will you remain sitting (wrapped in ignorance.”

“You should enlighten the night with divine light in you. You are the hand of Moses but hidden in the sleeve.”

“You should set your foot out of the boundaries of the circling world. You are older than it, you are greater than it.”

Jacques Maritain states:

“In the flesh and bone of man there exists a soul which is a spirit and which has greater value than the whole physical universe. Dependent, though he may be upon the slightest accidents of matter, the human person exists by virtue of the existence of his soul, which dominates time and death. It is the spirit which is the root of personality.”

Person is concrete, tangible, hence “Sensible”. Personality is abstract, intangible, hence for a scientist it is “non-sense”. Person is matter. Personality is value. Values stand out of the ken of science. Person is body. Personality is spirit bestowed on our body by the soul. Person is one. Personality should also be one. But we observe, generally more than one personalities possessed by one person. This shows that the great majority of human beings do not possess one integrated “self”. Self has to be one. Self means one entity. If there are “selves” in one person then he is a person without a self -- without unity, without inner and outer truth becoming one. Such a person has “split personality” — He remains 'unrealized as a human

being. Oneness begins to take shape when soul begins to overwhelm a person's existence. If the case is otherwise then the result also is otherwise. And the tragedy is that human beings try and go on trying to know what is out there. They seldom try to know what is within them. But the question is, does man really know even the outer world? Every mystery which is solved points to a multitude of mysteries. What is within is much more mysterious, a thousand time more mysterious. Therefore, a being who partakes of both the microcosm and the macrocosm is his own greatest mystery as long as he does not dare to comprehend his reality. Lincoln Barnett states:

“He (man) does not understand the vast veiled universe into which he has been cast for the reason that he does not understand himself. He comprehends but little of organic processes and even less of his unique capacity to perceive the world about him to reason and to dream. Least of all does he understand is his noblest and most mysterious faculty; the ability to transcend himself and perceive himself in the act of perception.”

This ability to transcend himself enables man to perceive himself in the act of perception i.e. he can sit in judgement on his own self. He can be the critic of his own critical sense. This means he possesses that something also which he got from above. It is a particle of divine light. It is a particle of something definitely unearthly. This shows man is neither soul nor body. Man is above both because he possesses them. Here it is that we come face to face with the question as to who says “I” and “My”. Iqbal puts the same question and offers the answers as well:

اگر گوئی کہ "من" وہم و گمان است
 نمودش چوں نمود این و آن است
 بگویمان کہ دارائے گمان کیست؟
 یکے در خود نگر آن بے نشان کیست؟
 جہاں پیدا و محتاج دلیلے
 نمی آید ب فکر جبرئیلے
 خودی پنہاں زحجت بے نیاز است
 یکے اندیش و دریاب این چہ راز است
 خودی را حق بدان، باطل مپندار
 خودی را کشت بے حاصل مپندار

Translation of these verses is given by Iqbal himself and it is as under:

“If you say that the “I” is mere illusion - an appearance among appearances. Then tell me who is the subject of his illusion?”

Look within and discover The world is visible.

Not even the intellect of an angel can comprehend it;

The “I” is invisible and yet needs no proof. Think a while and see thine own secret.

The “I” is truth, it is no illusion. Do not think self to be a field without yield. (I have ventured to add the last line) (Thoughts and Reflections)

As expressed by Iqbal the “I” is truth. It does not belong to the realm of appearances. According to Lord North bournie the “I” entails as follows:

“I am not anything that I can observe or feel or think about, since observation, sensation and mentation imply a duality between myself and some subject that is not myself. We commonly speak of “my feelings” or “my hand” or “my soul” as we speak of “my head” or “my hand” or “my dog”.

I am, however, certainly nothing that I can be said to possess. We also commonly use phrases like “I” said to myself or “I am ashamed of myself”. Then who or what is the “I” that says these things. It is not my body: it is not my soul. It cannot be myself of which I am ashamed not can it be said to be anything in particular other than these — what am I?”

This is why Iqbal has to say:

“This magic play of being and nothingness, called Adam is God’s secret.

Since the morn of eternity, time is on the move but all its forceful dashes could not render him archaic.” (Man has retained his vigor).

If you are not perturbed, I may tell you in clear words, that man is neither body nor soul:

Man being the master of his body, soul, intellect and imagination, is surely much more than all these put together. This is demonstrated by his

saying “my body”, “my brain”, “my heart”, “my thought”, “my reason”, “my argument”, “my honour”, “my shame”, “my emotions”, “my ambitions”, “my spirit”, “my soul” etc. If he is a genuine human being then he possesses all these phenomena, otherwise he is possessed by them. In that case his “I” and “my” is just a voice, a sound and a statement carrying no significance. Normally these faculties remain dormant and these potentialities lay idle. When ego comes to itself it shakes off this dust of idleness and dormancy. Ego’s coming, to itself means the state of transcending the realm of sense-perception. In the words of Jacques Maritan:

“It is this mystery of our nature which religious thought designates when it says that the person is the image of God.”

Explaining the meaning of the concept of Khudi, in his introduction to the first edition of *Asrar-i-Khudi*, Iqbal puts this question:

“What is this luminous center of the unity of intuition or mental awareness which intensifies human thoughts and feelings, this mysterious thing which is the repository of the diversified and unlimited potentialities of human nature, which is the make of appearances, yet cannot bear to be seen itself. Is it an eternal fact has life, in order to fulfil its immediate practical needs that invented this fanciful delusion or plausible deception? From the view point of ethics, the way of life of individuals and nations depends on the answer to this question.” The answer to this question says Iqbal does not depend on the intellectual capacity of individuals or nations, as much as it does on their attitude.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal as a poet-philosopher of Islam makes philosophy sing in his verses the message of love, hope and dignity of man. For him, as for almost all great thinkers of the world, the self of man has been a big and intriguing problem. Paragraphs that follow deal basically with the same problem: can a self actualize, i.e. can a homo sapiens become really a human being? The main source of inspiration for Allama Muhammad Iqbal is the Holy Quran and the Sirah of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). He believes in the fact that man can realize fully his potentialities only through abiding by the commandments of Allah, and following the illustrious example of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) in all aspects of life.

Every individual is a unique phenomenon. He comes to the world alone; he goes out of it alone. And alone is he called upon by his Creator and Sustainer to account for the deeds he performed in this world. There is no proxy in birth. There is no proxy in feelings of pleasure and pain. There is no proxy in death. There is no proxy in accountability - accountability according to the degree of self-consciousness of the individual. To be conscious is to be responsible.

Yet the question remains whether a self really becomes conscious and is ever fully realized. All sensate and insensate existences, barring human beings, mature into what they ought to. A seed grows into a full tree according to its genre. An animal is a born animal and grows into a complete animal of its kind. All plants are earth-rooted from the beginning to the end. All animals remain almost at the same level of animality throughout their lives. They cannot outgrow their animality. They are not created for doing that.

And what about man? Does he remain at the same level from birth to death? He does not. He rises. He can soar higher than solar heights. His uppermost reach cannot be defined or delimited. Le Compte du Nouy ends his book *Human Destiny* with the following words that flatter as well as warn and caution:

“And let him [man] above all never forget that the Divine spark is in him and in him alone and that he is free to discard it or to come closer to God by showing eagerness to work with Him and for Him.”

Man in his spatial aspect is a material existence - a handful of clay. But that is just the start. And in the words of Allama Iqbal already quoted:

It is not the origin' of a thing that matters, it is the capacity, the significance, and the final reach of the emergent that matters.”

As a spatial aspect a man is bound to be ordered and governed by material pulls only, a state that manifests the dominance of unbridled instincts. There is nothing essentially wrong with instincts. Their running riot is wrong. All forces need control, but control does not mean elimination. Controlled instincts are like broken horses, who are much more useful than

the unbroken ones. It takes long to reach the stage where instincts bow before the commanding rational self. This means the dominance of spirit over matter. The impulse for change is an ingrained quality of man. Factors from outside only shake into wakefulness the slumbering inner possibilities. Without the inner capability no foreign aid can be of any use. Man learns and achieves what animals cannot. Man does so because he can. Iqbal says:

“Indeed the evolution of life shows that though in the beginning the mental is dominated by the physical, the mental, as it grows in power, tends to dominate the physical and may eventually rise to a position of complete independence.”

First of all, a man should be conscious of what he wants to prefer and to what. This consciousness is the starting point towards consolidating one's self - a self has to progress to achieve oneness. If a human existence is mentally not one, it is none. If there are many “selves” in one “self”, then the self concerned is without one particular entity. Achievements in the realm of genuine manhood are not possible for a man unless he succeeds first in achieving “oneness” within him.

Learning in a general sense may make a good physician of a homo sapiens. Experience may build an ordinary artisan into a renowned architect; training may turn a rough farmer into a competent commander of a well-equipped army; instruction and knowledge may shape an ordinary political worker into an intelligent diplomat, a carter may evolve into a Jimmy Carter, so on and so forth. But an individual's evolution towards this stage or that does not necessarily entail his genuine manhood. He may inwardly remain an animal, ruthless, covetous, avaricious, and cruel. Any such highly placed person can do anything. Benevolence, sympathy and sacrifice may have nothing to do with him. He may not even possess an idea of fairplay and justice. How could it be without moral training?

Even a learned judge may have no plain notion of justice. There is no contradiction in this stance. Judges themselves know that they pronounce judgements according to the legal code to be followed. They are supposed to know the law and decide cases brought before them accordingly. Legal justice is one thing, moral justice is quite another. Hence, even a judge, just by virtue of being a judge, cannot be adjudged to be a moral person. He can

be anything. A judge may even be really just, but outside the court when justice is not just a legal justice.

Man is a microcosm. He possesses the essence of all qualities possessed by everything in the universe, sensate as well as insensate. He has within himself the elemental principles of Nature that govern the universe. This necessarily implies that a particle of divinity should also be his. Keeping all this in view, we proudly declare: "O God! Man is great". No doubt, man is great potentially. It is the essential vocation of man to realize his true .manhood which necessarily brings him nearest to God, surpassing angels.

God is one. He who endeavors towards God should also, in the long run, be one. Man's conviction is the state of his directing all faculties possessed by him towards one point. Conviction is the central point of one's personality. A determination, aided by conviction is the manifestation of the sum-total of one's powers. In other words, the determined conviction means the readiness of personality for some achievement. The stronger the determination, the greater the achievement. Yet the fact is that efforts which are not God-oriented cannot make an individual necessarily a unified self for ever. Only a lasting purpose can give a lasting oneness to the seeker. The purpose of all purposes asks for an all-compassing singleness of man's personality.

Every purpose has an impact on the personality of the pursuer. Look at the mental quality of an idol-worshipper versus that of a worshipper of One God. No single god is an embodiment of all godly attributes. Every idol has some particular quality or qualities, hence so many idols. This gives the devotees, inevitably, split personalities, one person having more than one personality. Or suppose some wooden or golden idol possesses many heads, tongues and hands. Can a worshipper then be expected to possess coherence in his thought process, or uniformity in his dealings with others, or congruity in the import of his words of promise and pledge? If the thought process be one, the word one, and similarly the outlook one, then a god should not have many heads; tongues and hands. This is the clear case of many personalities in one. An idolater, howsoever civilised and sophisticated, can never be an integrated single person, hence essentially never a reliable entity. The character and behaviour of an idolater may be congruent with millions of other devotees of the same idols, yet it remains fundamentally different from

the genuine believer in one imageless and transcendent God. The condition for the believer in God is genuineness. A.M. Hocart, discussing Greek gods, observes:

“As the gods so must be the sacrificer, for the sacrificer and his acolytes represent the gods. It is necessary that he should know the myth which describes how gods succeed.”

Man forgets that the universe is “universe” only because it is created and sustained by one encompassing Divine Law of the Almighty Who is one. Says Khalifa Abdul Hakim:

“All nature is one because its creator is one. Everything is connected with everything else nearly or remotely. If there were more than one creator the universe would have had different laws of Nature and conflicting

spheres of sway. Could that universe turned multiverse last?”

Man begins to cultivate oneness in him when he starts rising above material pulls. Conquering his material self brings him near to conquering the universe, because in his own self he is a microcosm. He who rules the microcosm should be capable of ruling the macrocosm. Man’s God-ward journey frees him by degrees from earthly bondages. He rises above flesh. He fears God only. He seeks no favour from anyone other than God. Fear of material loss or hope of material gain, by and by, lose their grip and significance. This state comes when, in Iqbal’s words, the “mental dominates the physical and independence is achieved”. Man feels he has become his own master. What a thrill! In Iqbal’s opinion:

چیست دیں؟ برخاستن از روئے خاک
تاز خود آگاہ گرود جان پاک

“What is Islam? It is rising above the level of dust, so that the soul, purged of matter, becomes self-conscious.”

Bergson also said the same thing;

“Evolution is the history of the effort of life to free itself from the domination of matter and to achieve self-consciousness.”

This shows that man's journey towards the One is a unifying experience. His unity within, grows in proportion to the height from matter. He should become one provided he imbibes the attributes of God, a state attainable only through abiding by God's Law and thus becoming God-centred. George D. Kelsay stated in this regard:

“Man is truly man and truly person only if he responds in obedient love to the Divine Call. He is so created that he has no true life except in God. He is an ‘independent’ being who can only be himself in free response to the call of God in every detail of his life.”

The best concrete example of godly persons whose lives were bodily presentation of God's guidance in all aspects of their lives were the Prophets of God. All Prophets had superior selves, compared with the peoples of the societies they were enjoined to live with and preach. The basic teachings of all of them were the same. The Prophets of God epitomised God's mercy on human beings, because, left to themselves, they could have no clear idea of good and evil, truth and falsehood, justice and transgression, pride and humility, covetousness and sacrifice and so on. This means they could have no notion of an integrated personality and character. They could not become truly men.

This potential of a human being is indicated by God Almighty Himself when He announced that He puffed His own spirit into the structure of Adam (). This puffing of the spirit has been accepted by the religious scholars in its literal sense as well as metaphorical one. For example, Jauhari Tantawi takes it metaphorically meaning by it that God has honoured Adam gracing him with the status of a special affinity. There are others who maintain that puffing of God's spirit into Adam denotes the potentialities of man which are capable of imbibing the attributes of God. Anyway, Adam stands out as a unique creation in the universe who has within him the World of Command as well as the World of Creation. He is a creation reflecting the attributes of the Creator. He is a lump of dust with a fraction of an iota of the Divine Light. This unique aspect of man's existence distinguishes him from all other existences. That Divine particle, howsoever minute, gives the “Self” of man an ego, essentially different from all other egos. Allama Iqbal vehemently stresses this point:

نقطہ نورے کہ نام او خودی است
زیر خاک مائشرار زندگی است

“That particle of Divine Light which we call “Self” is a spark of life under the crust of clay.”

There is then another honorific status of man. It was Adam’s knowledge of the names of things. This knowledge was imparted to Adam by God Almighty Himself. It was this qualification of Adam, before which angels had to surrender, stating that they did not know more than what God had taught them, names of things not being a part of that knowledge. Thus, according to Allama Shariati Shaheed Adam’s first teacher was God Himself. And it was God Himself who knew what kind of knowledge and how much of it could be given to the angels and Adam according to their capacities to accept them. It is obvious that Adam and not the angels were to deserve the title of the “Vicegerent of God on earth:”. Capacities differed, deserts differed, hence gifts differed.

Puffing of the Soul, with all shades of its meanings as well as the knowledge of the names of things, with all its connotations, make it incumbent on man to continue to grow spiritually imbibing attributes of God, with the help of light within and knowledge of things around. For this purpose proper potentialities were vested in man. These potentialities were called the Trust of God of which man was made the trustee. None else from all the created entities could take upon themselves this enormous burden of responsibility. Not even the angels could do it. Potentialities were granted commensurate with the extent of Trust. Have the sons and daughters of Adam risen to demand of that Divine Trust? Have they ever understood the meanings of accountability on that account? Allama Iqbal exhorts the whole mankind to know the glorious Trust and awful responsibilities ensuing thereof:

مشو غافل کہ تو او را امینی
چہ نادانی کہ سوئے خود نہ بینی

“Forget not, you are His trustee. How inadvertent you are not to look upon yourself, (to know your significance)?”

It is obvious that man can do justice to his function as caliph of God on earth only when he attains “humanity” in the real sense of the word. His “manhood” cannot become perfect unless he reaches the degree of excellence as the, i.e. servant of God. And this is in fact the gist of Allama Iqbal’s thought i.e. make man feel how he can realize his proper ego, his self, his “Manhood”.

Adopting the ways of God transforms a non-entity into an entity, by and by, and thus turns non-existence into existence evolving it gradually to a level where its potentiality to become a reflection of Almighty Allah’s attributes begins to show itself. A non-entity could grow to that height of excellence only because God had gifted his nature with this possibility and capacity. Here we have a verse from the Holy Quran:

فأقم وجهك للدين حنيفاً فطرة الله التي فطر الناس عليها لا تبديل لخلق الله ^ط ذلك الدين القيم. و لكن أكثر الناس يعلمون. (30-30)

“And so, set thy face steadfastly towards the (one ever-true) faith, turning away from all that is false, in accordance with the natural disposition which God has instilled into man; (for) not to allow any change to corrupt what God has thus created - this is the (purpose of the one) ever-true faith, but most people know it not.”

This means that belief in one God is man’s essential will to conform with his own nature whereas to worship things other than God is man’s assault on his own true nature.

Muhammad Asad in his commentary of the Holy Quran, explains the above quoted verse:

“The term Fitrah, rendered by me as ‘natural disposition’, connotes in this context man’s inborn, intuitive ability to discern between right and wrong, true and false, and thus, to sense God’s existence and oneness, as in the famous saying of the Prophet, quoted by Bukhari and Muslim: ‘Every child is born in this natural disposition, it is only his parent that later turn him into a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian. These three religious formulations, best known to the contemporaries of the Prophet, are thus contrasted with the natural disposition which, by definition, consists in man’s instinctive

cognition of God and self-surrender (Islam) to him. (The term “parents” has here the wider meaning of “social influences” or “environment”)

This stage of higher determinism, i.e. surrender of one’s power of choice for the sake of conformity with the fundamental law of one’s own nature, is the first of the three stages which Iqbal regards as essential for the development of the ego. He calls this stage “obedience to the law”. It may suffice to say that without proper self-restraint, as is imposed by obedience, freedom of choice enjoyed by the individual is sure not only to lead him astray and defeat the very purpose of evolution but it will be equally disastrous for the maintenance of social relationship without which the individual cannot hope to attain his desired end. If everybody were to be absolutely free accepting what he thinks to be true or false, there would be no knowledge, no science, no morality and no religion. According to the Quran, all objects, lower in the scale of being than man, obey the law of Nature and never, for once, swerve from the path laid before them. But their obedience to the law does not arise out of their own free choice. It is man alone who is given full option to follow the path or go astray. The two alternatives are open to him and the history of mankind affords sufficient evidence that man often chose to disobey the law of his own nature with, of course, unfavourable consequences. The Quran claims that the message which the ancient prophets brought to mankind at different stages of its history was meant to give concrete shape to the general law which God wished humanity to follow. In Islam this concreteness of law has assumed a final shape and therefore Iqbal recommends that an individual should surrender himself, of his own sweet will, to this law.

در اطاعت کوش اے غفلت شعار
می شود از جبر پیدا اختیار
ناکس از فرماں پذیری کس شود
آتش ار باشد ز طغیان، خس و شود

Endeavour to obey, O headless one!

Liberty is the fruit of compulsion.

By obedience the man of no worth is made worthy; By disobedience his fire is turned to ashes.

شکوه سنج سختی آئین مشوا!
از حدود مصطفی بیرون مرد

Do not complain of the hardness- of the law,

Do not transgress the limits of the Shariat of Muhammad.

Iqbal's idea of balance or harmony is no other than that of compulsion accepted by the component parts of an organic whole. Take the example of music: it is only the discordant sounds compelled to harmonize; it is to this compulsion that music owes its strength and its magic-power. Again, what is Taj Mahal, the exquisite poetry in marble, one of the greatest wonders of the world? It is only the building material of different kinds compelled to obey some laws, without which raw material could never have created such an awe in the hearts of the onlookers. What is an army? It is only a horde of individuals compelled to organise themselves and observe discipline, wherein lies its power to conquer and defend. Without a self-imposed discipline and compulsion the army is merely a lawless mob. The whole idea has been beautifully expressed by Iqbal in a number of verses such as the following:

برگ گل شد چون ز آئین بسته شد
گل ز آئین بسته شد گلدسته شد
نغمه از ضبط صدا پیدااستے
ضبط چون رفت از صدا غوغااستے
در گلوی ما نفس موج بو است
چون ہوا پابند نے گردو نواست

“The petal becomes a rose when bound by law, And the rose bound by law becomes a nosegay. The music is a controlled sound;

When the control is gone, the music is turned into noise. Breath in our throat is a wave of air, which imprisoned in a reed becomes a melody.”

The second stage of this discipline is self-control which, in the words of Iqbal, is the “highest form of self-consciousness or Ego-hood”. In order to

bring out full realisation of the spirit of law, it is essential that the individual should gain control over himself. In the absence of such control, obedience usually degenerates into a mere mechanical and automatic conformity. The real driving force in that case would not be the individual's volitional submission to the law but farther the idea of merely conforming to a spiritless social code and following habit formed under this external compulsion. Adam was born of clay and in his making, according to Iqbal, "love and fear were mingled...; fear of this world and of the world to come, fear of death, of all the pains of earth and heaven; love of riches and power, love of country; love of self, kindred and wife". In him, "clay is mixed with water, (he) is fond of ease, devoted to wickedness and enamored of evil". All these elements of his nature are dragging him down to the lowest level of degradation. Immunity and protection against these tendencies lie only in self-control and obedience to the law without which the individual's life would be a mere playground of blind instincts and capricious impulses.

بر کہ بر خود نیست فرمانش روان
می شود فرمان پذیر از دیگران

"He that does not command himself becomes a receiver of commands from others."

Instead of controlling himself he will be under the control of his lower nature.

To help the individual attain self-control, Iqbal suggests him to follow the moral and religious code of Islam in its entirety. First, belief in the fact that there is no supreme power in the world except God. This refusal on the part of an individual to accept any power in the world more supreme and more sublime than his Creator destroys the possibility of submission to a life of fear and superstition.

تا عصائے لا اله داری بدست
بر طلسم خوف را خوابی شکست
خوف را درسینه او راه نیست
خاطرش مرعوب غیر الله نیست

So long as thou hold'st the staff of "there is no god but he, Thou wilt break every spell of fear.

Fear finds no way into his bosom,

His heart is afraid of none but Allah.

He then recommends all the four remaining obligatory acts of Islam. The daily prayer for a Muslim “is like a dagger, killing sin and waywardness and wrong”; fast “breaches the citadel of sensuality”; almsgiving “causes love of riches to pass away and makes equality familiar”, and “fortifies the heart with righteousness”, while increasing wealth “diminishes fondness for wealth”; pilgrimage “is an act of devotion in which all fell themselves to be one” and “which destroys attachment to one’s native land”. All these practices are a means of strengthening the higher nature of man and enable him-to achieve full control over body and the baser tendencies. As a logical consequence of both these disciplines, obedience to the law of Islam and control of one’s lower self through the prescribed means, the ego attains to the highest stage in life on this earth, viz. God’s vicegerency. Such an individual “is the completest Ego, the goal of humanity, the aim of life both in mind and body, in him discord of our mental life becomes a harmony. The highest power is united in him with the highest knowledge. In his life, thought and action, instinct and reason, become one. He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity and all the trials of a painful evolution are justified because he is to come at the end. He is the real ruler of mankind; his kingdom is the kingdom of God on earth. Out of the richness of his nature, he lavishes the wealth of life on others and brings them nearer and nearer to himself.

اے سوار اشہبِ دورانِ بیا
اے فروغِ دیدہٴ امکان، بیا

The more we advance in evolution, the nearer we get to him. In approaching him we are raising ourselves in the scale of life. The development of humanity both in mind and body is a condition precedent to his birth. For the present he is a mere ideal, but the evolution of humanity is tending towards the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents. Thus the Kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth.