

Prof(Dr)Rukaya

Head

P-G Department of Persian

Iqbal's Philosophy of "SELF"

Philosophy is the name given to the efforts of probing deep into the nature of things and phenomena and of arriving at the final and ultimate reality of the same. And by self is meant what one is. Thus it is clear that in answer to the question as to what is Iqbal's philosophy of self we have to discuss what did Iqbal think about self and what is the final and ultimate reality of self he ascertained after he probed deep into it.

Iqbal was a born philosopher and a born poet and the relation between his philosophy and poetry is clear i-e his philosophical views and ideas found expression in the language of his poetry. To the Muse of poetry he offered various topics over which he mused and pondered and formed his own views and ideas. These (his own views and ideas) got the name of Iqbalic philosophy or Iqbalism or in vernacular Iqbaliyat . one of the topics which he very seriously and very deeply thought over and to which he devoted his great power

of thinking throughout his life is the man, the purpose of his creation, his position in the universe, his relation with his creator=Allah and the creation = **ما سوي الله** and therein comes the self I,e the human self , the topic of this article.

Iqbal has a very high, sublime and divine philosophy of self which is spread over his work. It must first be noted about him that he had his own way of thinking and philosophizing . it was in his self to revolt against the very idea of being a slave of any thing , say of a custom, a usage a fashion , and an obligation a time----honoured practice or even of borrowing words from others and hence he avoided the beaten track of others and found out and paved one of own . This is a very important phase of his self. He felt it a chastisement to tread on the path of others and has therefore advised his follower to carve out one of his own.

تراش از تمیش خود جاده خویش

براه دیگران رفتن عذاب است

Hence, for self he ingeniously used if not coined- the word **خودی** avoiding the beaten track of using the most popular word **نفس** till then very freely and frequently used by all philosophers, theosophists, thedogians and Sufis. That is the first distinction of his philosophy of self .If we pause here just for a minute to make out the minute and subtle difference

between the two synonymous words **خودی** and **نفس**. We shall see that the word **خودی** being a derivative of the word **خُدا** is, by far, a sub-lime, noble, splendid, grand, glorious, impressive, dignified and sanctified word for human self pointing to his divine and God-like capabilities and connotations as compared with **نفس** which detonates all sorts of self, say noble and ignoble, virtuous and vicious, material and spiritual, animal and human self and implies simultaneously greater inclination towards, passion, vice, criminal capabilities and moral turpitude. This is one greater grace and elegance of the human self which Iqbal has with the gift of his gab revealed. This word **خودی** has elevated and exalted a man's position in the universe and it is a very meritorious service done to mankind by Iqbal.

In the elucidation of the word **نفس** all earthly and worldly scholars have shown the man to have been created and constituted of matter i.e. clay and water on one hand and the spirit on the other and to be a sum total of body and soul with greater aptitude for wrong, and have ignored or lost sight of his divine self which according to them has been darkened by its confinement in, so to say, the dungeon of the animal, dusty, dangy, torpid and lustful self **نفس اماره** Iqbal the ethereal philosopher and the poetic prophet cannot afford to differ from

them in the point of a man having been created of dust and water . But he despises a man for looking down to his low self and deeming himself to be dust and water and as such incapable of heavenly strides and godly attainments. In اسرار خودی he rebukes a man:-

تا کجا خود را شماری ما، و طین

How long thou countest thyself dust and water?

And in پیام مشرق he says:-

تو می گوئی که آدم خاک ز اداست

Thou says that Adm is created of dust:-

اسیر عالم کون و فساد است

Is a captive in the world of to be and not to be:-

و لے فطرت اعجازے کہ دارد

Yes, but of the miracles he possesseth.

And in other verses

خویش را آدم اگر خاکی شمرد

نور یزدان در ضمیر او بمرد

If an Adm deemeth himself dusty divine light in him is dead.

Iqbal's greatness lies in his making Iqbal an apostle of the philosophy of self , a prodigy of nature by teaching about self a philosophy directly opposite and entirely contrary and contradictory to the of his predecessors. His doctrine of self is

an innovation of his own . It has caused the world to whirl with wonder and has given a sensational puzzle to the intelligential. To quote "on its first appearance the "ASRARI KHUDI" took by storm the East and West thought so highly of it that Prof.Nicholson wrote to Iqbal for permission to prepare an English translation of the same. Why so ? Because Iqbal declared self so precious a thing as merited to be nurtured , nourished and developed and rendered a valuable capital or say to be animated , refined exalted and rendered most venerable even in the eye of God so that He may ask of this sort of self *بتا تیری رضا کیا ہے* it is not to be effaced , annihilated , crushed and killed as hitherto taught by Reshis, Sofis, Saints and Sages .

One who denied his own Ego and self and minimized its importance was declared and decreed by Iqbal as a greater infidel than an atheist.

Oh ! what a great courage it is to say:-

*منکر حق نزد مولا
منکر خود نزد من*

An attiest is decreed infidal by a Mulla

A self denying person a greater infidal to me.

In a very beautiful parable of sheep and tiger in *سرا خودی* he has moralized that "negation of the self is a Doctrine

invented by subject races of man - kind in order that by this means they may sap and weaken the character of their rulers" as done by the sheep on the tiger . The parable shows that Iqbal believed that negation of self weakened the character polluted the morals and retarded the spiritual progress. In melodian verses of اسرار خودی he has stated that the system of the universe originates in self and the continuation of life of all individuals depends on strengthening the self.

Iqbal made self as the only important thing for man and advised him.

گرد خود گردنده چون پرکاش باش
قدم بے باک ترنہ در رہ زیست

Turn round thy own self like compasses.

On the path of life step fearlessly. In this wide world there is none other than thyself.

In his enthusiasm for self which he attached utmost importance, being the theme round which his whole philosophy, faith and conviction rotate, he goes to the extent of commending the satan who stands condemned and accursed both by man and God. The satan's vanity is wounded when commanded to prostrate before Adam created of dust and his ego's this sort of wound is healed up by his defiance of the divine command and refusal to prostrate. His egoistic hymn

which he relishes to melodiously sing is:-

نوری نادان نیم سجده به آدم برم
او به نهاد است خاک من نثر اد آزر

Of light I am . a fool not to prostrate to Adam, he is by constitution dust and I am of fire origin.

In Hallaj's slogan of the so called blasphemy of *انا الحق* Iqbal has heard the echo of his own teaching and preaching about self ,the slogan is the assertion of the un-imaginable and infinite powers and potentialities of *عبد* the worshiping creature i.e. human SELF and its stupendous capacity of flight to the inconceivable position of the union with *معبود* the worshipped creator the Almighty or as Iqbal himself put it "to the realization and bold affirmation in an unending phrase of the reality and permanence of the human ego in a profounder personality" This paradoxical approbation of the infernal satan and blasphemy of Hallaj has caused the scholars to dance in ecstasy of stand dumb confounded . This is the topmost height of the poetical vision which none so far has, perhaps, attained .

Iqbal has praised our great Gani of Kashmir not for his poetical talent but for his mania of closing up his Door of the house bolting it from inside when in and throwing it open when out in utter disregard of his movable property therein. It is

Iqbal, the exponent of the philosophy of SELF, who could make out a meaning of this so called mania and understand the significance of Ghani's explanation *درین خانه جز من متاع کجاست* it is the ego, the SELF, that speaks in the mania.

Unlike all other sages who enunciated the theorim of *بقا در فنا* i.e. morality being the meaning of immorality, Iqbal boldly proclaimed *گر بقا خواهی بنخود آباد شو* and declared death to mean delinquency of one's own SELF. The difference between the two can well be pointed out in an English poet's verse:-

Two men looked from Prison bars

One saw the mud, the other stars

Iqbal saw the stars in human self

And others the mud.

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