CHAPTER - III

CONCEPT OF WORLD, MAN AND GOD IN IQBAL

Here it is important to explain Iqbalian notion of World, Man and God and their relations. For Iqbal and Rumi, the world does not follow a fixed line of destiny. It is not a pre-ordained, pre-destined and pre-conceived cosmic plan such that its growth follows a fixed path and God retires from all its activities. The Cosmos does not evolve in a determined manner. So it is free and evolves according to the will of God.

3.1 Concept of world

Like all contemporary Indian thinkers, Iqbal also comes to assert the reality of the world. He is a realist and also maintains that the external world exists and is real. In his view, an intuitive insight will reveal the reality of the world. That is, without accepting the reality of the world, we shall not be able to explain our experiences and behaviors. To explain this, Iqbal says, “one kind of intuition makes us conscious of ourselves and makes us aware of a principle of unity that organizes our experiences. Another intuition tells us that we are pitted against a world of non-ego. That is, in all of our actions, we feel that forces other than the ego obstruct
us. This intuition forces us to accept the reality of the obstruction and of the environment".\footnote{Iqbal, \textit{Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam}, (Delhi: Surjeet Publications, 1976), PP.208-09.} It is believed that the physical world is the world of matter extended in space and time. It is held that there are certain basic material particles which come in association with each other in space and time and thus constitute the material world. But in Iqbal's view, such a materialistic account of the world is not acceptable. So in order to understand Iqbal's view of the world, it is necessary to see Iqbal's conception of space and time.

Everything is in a flux and constant change. Change indicates the temporal sequence and serial order, and thus it can take place in time only. In this way, the reality of change implies a direct indifference of the acceptance of the reality of time.

3.1.1 Space and Time in Iqbal

The major portion of his lectures is dominated with the notion of space and time. From these he has tried to discuss the various problems of religious faith. He thinks that the solution of the problem of time and space is a matter of life and death for the Muslims. He says in his lectures, “in the
history of *Muslim* culture, on the other hand, we found that both in the realm of pure intellect an religious psychology, by which term I mean higher Sufism, the ideal revealed is the possession and enjoyment of the Infinite. In a culture with such an attitude the problem of space and time becomes a question of life and death.”

In the course of these discussions, Iqbal has brought under review all the diverse conceptions of space and time held by thinkers from the classical to the present time. Hence it is very essential to analyze these conceptions and to point out the extent of Iqbal’s agreement with or difference from them. There will thus emerge a picture of Iqbal’s own conception of the nature of space and time.

3.1.1.1 The concept of *Space and Time in Muslim thinkers*

Iqbal discusses the view of different schools of thought like the Ashaira and the Mutazila and particularly of the Savants – Al – Ashari and Ibn Hazm.

The Ashaira did not believe in the infinite divisibility of space and time, but put forth a quantum theory of space and time in which they

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2 ibid., p. 184.
considered movement of space, time and motion from one point of space to another is possible in a finite time, which cannot be further subdivided.

The Ashaira regarded space as generated by the aggregation of atoms, and hence they could conceive of motion only on the atom’s passage through space. They could not say that a body in its motion passed over all the intervening points in space, as this would be tantamount to the belief in the existence of vacuum as an independent reality. They put forward the notion of ‘quantum’ theory that the changes of state of a dynamical system are not continuous but discontinuous.

But Iqbal confesses his inability to understand this solution of the difficulty about the independent existence of space. He believes that motion is inconceivable without time, and since time comes from psychic life, the latter is more fundamental than motion. Here he arranges psychic life, time and motion in a descending order of implication and argues that there can be no motion without time and no time without psychic life. Thus to Iqbal also, time loses its absolute character and becomes dependent on the psychic life.

Here Iqbal also agrees with the Ashaira and with the modern relativists that space and time are not two distinct and absolutely
independent categories, but rather there is one point - instant. But Iqbal differs from the Ashaira in his view of the mutual relation between the point and the instant.

Iqbal also criticizes the doctrine of atomic time put forward by the Ashaira, according to whom 'time' is a succession of individual 'nows'. This objective viewpoint leads to the absurd conclusion that there is a vacuum between every two individual 'nows' or moments of time.

Again, Ibn Hazan refuted the Ashairite notion of atomic time and atomic space. For him space and time are continuous, a view shared by the modern mathematician. In the modern theory of number and sets of points, it is shown that between any two points A and B, however close to each other, we can always find an infinite number of points. This 'compactness' of the set of points can be illustrated as, we cannot say that a point 'B' is next to point 'A', because 'B', is not next to 'A', nor is any other point C, D etc. that is we cannot name any other position next to a given position, nor any instant next to a given instant. Whether a body is said to be moving, what we mean is that we observe it in a number of positions at a number of instants and so one. Thus to any given instant of time corresponds a position of the body, and to any given position of the body corresponds at instant of time. This mutually unique relation or
correspondence between the sequence of positions and the sequence of instants is called 'movement'. This doctrine makes it possible for us to affirm the reality of space, time and movement.

But Iqbal thinks that even this doctrine does not resolve the difficulties arising out of the infinite divisibility of space and time. In his view, the mathematical conception of a mutually unique correspondence between positions and instants applies not to movement regarded as an act, but rather to the picture of movement as viewed from outside. The act of movement, that is movement as lived and not as thought does not admit of any divisibility.

3.1.1.2 The conception of Space and Time in modern science

Newton based his conception of space and time on the doctrine of fixed universal ether, it required that there must be a point in 'space' which is absolutely at rest. Here we can consider his first law of motion, which is called the 'law of Inertia', according to which, a body on which no force is acting, moves uniformly in a straight line. Suppose that if we let a smooth spherical ball roll on a smooth table, we observe that the ball is moving in a straight line. But an observer, who follows and measures its path from another planet say Mars, would assert that the path is not a straight line but
a curved line from his point of view, because the earth is going round the sun. Thus we cannot prove the ‘principle of Inertia’ by experimenting on a moving body. So here the question arises, ‘where can we get to a place which is absolutely at rest’. Here we can assert that if we experiment on that place, that the place which is, absolutely at rest, we can prove the ‘principle of inertia’. But such a place cannot be situated on a planet, on the sun or on the stars because all of these are known to be moving with more or less fast speeds. In all our wide world, we are not acquainted with a single body which is absolutely at rest. Hence Newton was obliged to postulate the existence of the ether and along with it the existence of an objective and absolute space.

Newton also expresses similar views about the nature of time, the flow of which receives expression in the uniform motion due to Inertia. But Iqbal has serious objections to raise against the objective view of time expressed by Newton. Thus in his lectures he says, “if time is something which in itself and from its own nature flows equally, we cannot understand how a thing is affected on its inertia in this stream of time and how it differs from things that do not participate in its flow. Nor can we form any idea of the beginning, the end and the boundaries of time if we try to understand it on the analogy of a stream. Moreover, if flow, movement, or passage is the last word as to the nature of time, there must be another time
to time, the movement of the first time, and another which times the second
time, so one to infinity."³

Here Iqbal also thinks that there are serious flaws in the objective
conception of time. All the same, he admits that we cannot regard time as
something unreal.

3.1.1.3 Nietzsche’s view of Space and Time

Nietzsche expressed his views on time and space in connection with
his doctrine of Eternal recurrence or immortality. This doctrine is based on
the principle of conception of Conservation of Energy. Nietzsche agrees
with Kant and other philosophers that space is only a subjective form. It is
meaningless to say that the world is in space, in the sense that it is situated
in an absolute empty void. But at the same time, his notion of time is
opposed to that of Kant and Schopenhauer. He does not think that time is a
subjective form. Rather he believes, it to be a real and infinite process
which can only be conceived as periodic. There can be dissipation of
energy in an infinite empty space. Since the amount of energy is constant
and consequently finite, the number of energy centre is limited and their
mutual actions and reactions exactly calculable. There is no beginning or

ibid., p. 18
end of this ever acting energy, no first or last change. And since our universe consists only of the changes of energy, believes that, the world has lasted from eternity and will last up to eternity. Now since time is infinite, therefore all possible combinations of energy centers have already been exhausted. Every event repeats itself in a cyclic order over and over again. The order of events in the universe also fixed.

But Iqbal is against Nietzsche’s view. He considers this view of Nietzsche as only a mere rigid kind of mechanism based not on any ascertainable fact but only on the hypothetical constancy of the quantity of energy.

3.1.1.4 Einstein’s view about Space and Time

Einstein has shown that the conception of an absolute time and an absolute space is untenable both on theoretical as well as experimental grounds. He has analyzed the notion of the simultaneity of two events, and has shown that there is no such thing as absolute simultaneity. That is, the events which are simultaneous for one person 'A' need not be simultaneous for another person 'B', they can happen one after the other for him. That is even the rate of the flow of time can differ for 'A' and for 'B'. For e.g.:- If A finds from his clock that there is an interval of one hour
between two specified events, B can very well reckon that the interval between the same two events is more or less than an hour. This time is not absolute but relative. Similarly, Einstein shows that space is also relative and not absolute because the distance between two moving bodies has no meaning unless we specify which observer is measuring this distance, and at what time he is doing it. And since time itself is relative, therefore distance which varies with time must also be relative.

Then Einstein in his theory of relativity says “time and space are not absolute and separate from each other but relative and mutually dependent”. The universe does not consist of two separate categories - time and space, but of a single space-time continuum, in which both space and time have the same status.

The fundamental postulates of the relativity of time and space is that there is a mutual and reciprocal contraction in length, duration in time and increase in mass for two observers in relative motion. Iqbal put it into his lectures that, “the object observed is variable; it is relative to the observer, its mass, size and shape change as the observer’s position and speed change, movement and rest, too, are relative to the observer”.

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Secondly Einstein has shown that energy and matter are two different states of one and the same thing. Energy can be transformed into matter and matter can be transformed into energy according to certain formulae discovered by Einstein.

That is, this theory of relativity and the quantum theory have combined to show that everything in the universe has a dual character. It behaves sometimes like a wave and sometimes like a particle. But there is an intrinsic difference between matter and energy. But this theory becomes useless to the materialists. The argument of the materialists and the atheists was that matter could not have been created by a being that is non material. But now we know that the matter is not essentially distinct from energy. Iqbal recognizes this Philosophical value of the theory of relativity. So Iqbal in his lectures adds, “there is therefore no such thing as a self subsistential materiality of the classical physics. It (the theory of relativity), destroys, not the objectivity of nature, but the view of substance as simple location in space- a view which led to materialism in classical physics. Substance for modern relativity- physics is not a persistent thing with variable states, but a system of interrelated events.”

6 ibid., p. 130.
In another passage, he says, "the concept of matter has received the greatest blow from the hand of Einstein, whose discoveries have laid the foundation of a far reaching revolution in the entire domain of human thought". Then Iqbal is in general agreement with ideas of the relativity theory.

Here Iqbal also points out that Einstein's theory is a scientific theory deals only with the structure of things. It does not throw light on the ultimate nature of things which possess that structure. That is, this theory negates certain characteristics of time as experiences by us.

3.1.2 Iqbal's final idea about space and time

There have been various conceptions of space and time, but they can be broadly brought under the two general heads - Absolutistic and relative conceptions of space and time. The most popular version of the Absolutistic notion of space and time is that space and time are objective frame - works in which objects exist. Space is conceived as the form and order of co-existence and time as that of succession. It is on such a conception of space and time that the materialistic conception of the world bases itself.

ibid.
In Iqbal’s view, the objective type of space and time is not tenable. It is obvious that it is not space or time that gives sustenance to the objects, but that space and time themselves are sustained an account of the objects. He also says that if we take out all the objects from space and time, space will shrink to a point and time to a moment.

Here Iqbal says that Kant was the first thinker to realize the defect of objective conception of space and time. Kant therefore came to conceive them not as objective entities but as subjective forms of perception. But at the same time, Iqbal feels that Kant made the mistake of emphasizing the subjective nature of space and time instead of emphasizing its character of relativity. Kant according to Iqbal is not been able to realize that being relative is by far more comprehensive than being subjective.

In Iqbal’s view, space and time are relative. For admitting this, he takes the eg:- The view of space has to be relative to the sense – experience through which space is apprehended. If the world is apprehended by one sense only, it will give a different impression of space than what can be hard if the world is apprehended by more than one sense.
Then Iqbal says that space and time is relative not only to the different grades of being but also to the different levels of experience of the same being. That is, the impression of space and time that we have will be different from the impressions of space and time that other animals may have.

Iqbal also says that, even in our case, our expressions of space and time may vary in accordance with the different levels of experience with which we may look at them. Time for eg; will appear to be just a succession of moments if it is viewed from the ordinary level, but if we view at it from the level of reflection, its impression will be different.

Again, as Bergson, thinks at the intuitive level, we do not have the impression of time as succession. At that level we take time to be one duration incorporating in its bosom and advancing along with all the moments which appear to ordinary intellect as merely succeeding each other. So Iqbal says that space and time are relative even to the levels of experience.

Iqbal as a creative artist and thinker was fully aware of the fact of the all round phenomena of change. He being a devoted scholar of Philosophy and scientific enquiry gives him attention to the theoretical
implications and practical consequences of the modern emphasis on the reality of change which generates a radical new approach regarding the problem and importance of time and space. Everywhere in his poetry, one finds ample evidence of his keen awareness of the problem of space and time. So in the 6th lecture of his reconstruction, "The principle of movement in the structure of Islam", Iqbal points out, "as a cultural movement, Islam rejects the old static view of the universe and reaches a dynamic view". Thus Iqbal, in this respect is a great Muslim intellectual who takes the problem of time and space very seriously. He is well aware of the meaning of historical forces and the bonds which go to link the past and present. He knows that life is in a constant flux. The world is dynamic and not static. His notion of space and time are the composite fruit of eastern and western thinkers. He has reconciled the Islamic view point about the problem of space and time with modern philosophical and scientific interpretations of the problem.

Broadly speaking, Iqbal has in general agreement with the theory of relativity about the nature of space and time. According to this view, both space and time are real and relative, but time is more fundamental of the two. Though space - time is the matrix of all things, still the relation

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8 ibid., p. 132.
between space and time is akin to the relation between the body and mind - that time is the mind of space. That is, he admits that, all that is interwoven into the fabric of space and time and their relationship is like that of body and mind, yet thinks that a purely philosophical approach can only partially reveal the nature of time.

The right course according to time is a careful psychological analysis of conscious human experience which alone reveals the true nature of time. It is because of this fact that Iqbal divides the inner life into an ‘efficient ego’ and an ‘appreciative ego’. In this way the time of the efficient ego is ‘serial’ just a diversion of the space-time continuum. On the contrary, the time of the appreciative ego is non-serial. Lastly, Iqbal in his ‘Asrar-i-khudi’, ‘Secrets of the Self’, asserts,

“One time which has
Neither beginning nor end,
Blossoms from the flowerbed of our mind.
To know its roots quickness and living with new life:
Its beginning is more splendid than the dawn
Life is of time, and time is of life

‘Do not abuse time’! was the command of the prophet”.

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Again, he speaks of matter and spirit, which in his words, matter is spirit realizing itself in space and time. Here it is important to explain matter and spirit.

### 3.1.3 Matter and spirit

He argues that a Musalman is not required to renounce the temporal world in the interest of a world of spirit. In the presidential address of the All India Muslim League, launched at Allahabad, in the year 1930, Iqbal says, “man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interests of a world of spirit situated elsewhere. To Islam, matter is spirit realizing itself in space and time”.\footnote{Iqbal, presidential Address of the All India Muslim League, Allahabad, 1936.} Here Iqbal accepts the world of matter along with its limitations and establishes a relation between the world of matter and spirit. So he in his religious reconstruction, adds, “it is the mysterious touch of the ideal that animates and sustain the real, and through it alone we can discover and affirm the ideal”.\footnote{Iqbal, \textit{Religious Reconstruction}, op.cit., p.121} With Islam, the ideal and real are not two opposing forces, which cannot be reconciled. “The life of the ideal consists not in a total breach with the real which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life into painful oppositions, but in the perpetual endeavor of the ideal to appropriate the real, with a view...
eventually to absorb it, to, convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole being”. Islam thus rejects the old static view of the universe and reaches a dynamic view.

Iqbal says that it is not possible to have an idea of the material world through ordinary sense expression or intellectual apprehension. Both these faculties work on one basic presupposition that the world before our eye is there – rigid fixed and static. When senses or intellectual deliberations apprehend the object, they work under the belief that the object continues to be in the same state in which it had been when contacted initially. Thus they view at the object in the traditional mould of space and time. Without realizing that every object is essentially dynamic process of growth and development.

Hence Iqbal asserts that it is intuition that can reveal the true nature of the physical world. Here Iqbal seems to be influenced by Bergson, who says that intuition reveals reality as a continuously changing, developing and growing process and as constituting duration. Here Iqbal is not completely at one with Bergson because Bergson does not give to the ego its proper place in his philosophy of duration. Here Iqbal feels that an intuition in to the nature of time and life process reveals the centrality of the ego.
Again, Iqbal says that we have a direct intuition of the self and that a further intuition tells us that the world can be conceived in the analogy of what we have known about the self through intuition.

The self is revealed to us as a continuous and changing flow of feelings, volitions, and cognitions. These states are so continuous that one cannot determine where the one ends and the other begins. Iqbal seems to have utilized Bergson’s notion of duration with great advantage. Even Bergson says that one can have an idea of duration in his awareness of intense feeling. In that state all aspects of experience inter-mingle with each other in an indistinguishable manner: and what is known is a 'whole' expressing the force of life – the ‘élan – vital’. Here Iqbal goes a little further and says that such is the nature of all ego – activities. An intuition in to the nature of the activities of the ego reveals pure duration in which past, present and future run into each other and appear almost simultaneously. The ego is revealed as life, as activity and as continuous growth.

Hence, the physical world is understood in the analogy of the self. Therefore the physical world is conceived as continuous movement. Here he utilize ideas taken from Bergson, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer and synthesizes them with the Islamic ideas. Like Bergson, he says that the
material world is life, change and movement. He further emphasizes the 
primacy of will or violation even in the realm of the physical. This is same 
as Schopenhauer. In explaining the violational nature of the world, 
Schopenhauer speaks about the importance of ‘impulses’ and says that even 
the physical world can be reduced to certain expressions of impulses.

Then discussing these ideas in a general way, Iqbal tries to present 
a picture of the world. Iqbal finds that the Universe also exhibits a 
tendency to ego hood. The universe manifests a clear tendency to grow as 
an individual. An individual is an organization of all its parts. The parts 
cannot subsist apart from the whole. That is, the whole is in every part of 
the individual. An individual is an individual. The universe exhibits a 
tendency to that sort.

Another distinction that Iqbal is able to make is that an individual, 
in a sense, is a unity of individuals. If we survey the functioning of any 
aspect of an individual, we shall find that it itself functions as an 
individual. Here he also says that the entire physical world may be viewed 
as an individual, along with it, even the different aspects of the world, 
may be viewed as separate individuals. So Iqbal says that every detail of 
the world, is an ego, and that the totality is the ego of the egos.
The world is the nature of an ego, it is life and activity. It is essentially creative in nature. So it is constantly growing. It has a reason and a purpose and also a plan. Iqbal, lastly says that we cannot think of the end of the world process. It is infinite, there are infinite possibilities that it can realize and it will go on realizing higher ends.

Hence, one can find that, the world in Iqbal’s view is absolutistic. So our duty is carefully to watch the progress of human thought, and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it.

Iqbal also laid great emphasis on the unity of humanity and the oneness of the nations of the world. In his poem, “Mecca or Geneva”, he expresses the lack of unity of mankind and the oneness of the nations of the world.

3.2 Concept of Man in Iqbal

Human existence has been the concern of philosophers, poets, religious thinkers and mystics from the dawn of civilization. The study of man in the west and in the east reflects apparently the opposite polarities.
The 20th century, an age of humanism, consciously or unconsciously with a relative difference in the east and the west, made a radical shift of reference from the Divine or Ultimate authority to man. Today largely for all practical purposes, man is the measure of all things. In the modern age, the sense of human autonomy is very deep, without de-linking the relevance of God. In the east, the destination of man largely remains spiritual.

The concept of man cannot be confused with the metaphysical world. The role of trustee is assigned to man on the earth, assigning him a free personality. The concept of accountability gives him a free choice of perceiving his own way in shaping his destiny, he does not disappear completely in the ever moving wheel of creativity. The basic concern of Quran is man. God created Adam, making him the vicegerent on this earth. There was eternal loneliness, before the creation of Adam; man was not thrown in to the void or in the vast desert of loneliness. Things had been created for him. The world is the stage for his performance.

In the light of man’s place in the Divine scheme, there have been evaluations of man by Islamic thinkers, philosophers, Sufis, theologians and writers. Rumi in his book ‘Masnawi’ asserts, “there are in man the
qualities of highness".\textsuperscript{12} Radhakrishnan also placed man with God and says that "man is made in the image of God and so has to participate in creation and man is the architect of his own future".\textsuperscript{13} Ibn-Arabi also acknowledges the very important position of man and tries to bridge the gap between the creator and creation. Similarly man is at the core of Iqbal's writings.

Iqbal's view of man was one who was truthful; compassionate fearless and one who could face death with equanimity. So Iqbal in his religious reconstruction adds,

"You ask me of the marks of a man of faith? When death comes to him, he has a smile on his lips".\textsuperscript{14}

He presents a very comprehensive conception of man, who is ultimately characterizes by limitless divine potentialities and qualities. Man is un-analysable, unpredictable, and free and is always an open possibility. So he says that unlike all other objects in the phenomenal world, man alone enjoys the distinction of being alert, wakeful, creative and moving. Iqbal's man is finite and yet he is also boundless. To prove this, he says,

\textsuperscript{13} Radhakrishnan, \textit{An idealist view of life}, p.201.  
\textsuperscript{14} Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, op.cit, p.8.
"A man is an ocean that is vast and free
Its every drop is like the boundless sea".  

Discussing the story of Adam, Iqbal refers to the Quranic verse that declares "everything in this world is reconciled to its fate, Man’s energies alone are insistently demanding the earth to be the dwelling place and a source of profit becomes the profit which he ought to be grateful to God.” In his Religious construction, he adds, “according to Quran man is not a stranger on earth. Quran also says, ‘And we have caused you to grow from the earth’”.  

Here the word, ‘grow’ has deep meaning and refers to the extraordinary and unique gift of creativity bestowed by God on man- God has created everything- lofty mountains, vast plains, roaring streams, thick forests etc. on the earth and the sun, the moon, clouds and starry heavens- for the service of man, and he has bestowed the capability to conquer all that is in heaven and earth. Man has only to bring in to play his hidden potentialities for vigorous action and all the earth and the heavens will move at his order.

15 ibid., p. 121.
16 ibid., p.28.
Man’s greatness has also been expressed in terms of the belief that
man is the architect of his own destiny. His fate is not subject to the
movement of stars, or for that matter, to the operation of any external
factors. To pointing this, he says in his poetry ‘Dialogue between God and
man,’ that,

“How long will my dust remain subordinate to the stars?
Either I am not there or the revolving of the heavenly stars”.\(^{17}\)

Iqbal says that the concept of human greatness can hardly be
expressed with greater consciousness and force or in a more superb or
sublime manner. The man who emerges is not a mere figment of
imagination. He possesses all the reality of a historical creature. He is a
man, a visionary, a self maker, a self breaker and a self critical creature.
Undoubtedly he was born in a pre determined world, but he remained no
longer in a pre- determined world.

Then in spite of insisting on the infinite potentialities of man Iqbal
has admitted that man is not absolutely free, he has his limitations. But
Iqbal again says that the limitation of human freedom and determination are

\(^{17}\) Iqbal, *Dialogue between Man and God*, trans., Sher Ali Khan, (Allahabad : Sterling
not fixed and final. That is, man is capable of enlarging the area of his freedom and narrowing his limitations. Through ceaseless effort and creative actions he can transform his powerlessness into powerfulness, dependence into independence and pre determinism into freedom. And he can attain mastery over himself as well as the world around him. He can conquer nature which has always posed a challenge to him.

Next man’s rule over the elements of nature leads Iqbal to a revival of belief in theory that man occupies the central place in the scheme of things. In Iqbal’s view, man is not only the centre and the ruler of the world, but he is also God’s assistant in the creation, refinement and perfection of the universe which is still imperfect. So by giving great importance to man Iqbal shows the relation between man and God. For that he quotes ‘the dialogue between man and God’. That is, here God says,

“I created the universe from one and the same water and clay you created the Iran and Australia, I created pure steel out of the earth you made a sword, an arrow and a gun, you made a prison for the singing birds”.

The man says,

“I am one who made

Glass out of the stone
I am one who prepared an antidote from poison
You created the wilderness and mountain.
I created the flower and garden orchard and you created the night,
I created the lamp you created the clay, I created the goblet”.

Here Iqbal clearly shows that in the first part of the above poem, God suggest that creative achievements are destructive. But in the later part, man has insisted on the fact that his creative achievements are not only constructive but superior in some aspects. So far as the human greatness is concerned, Iqbal does not insist on the fact that man is God’s assistant in the creative process of the world.

In Iqbal’s view, the relation between man and God is that of creator and the created, the ruler and the ruled, the worshipper and the worshipped. God is the Supreme Creator but the perfection of His creation has very often depended on the creative talent of man. That is man’s creation is supplementary to those of God.

Here one can say that speaking about the relation between God and man, Iqbal seems intent upon justifying the way of God to man to bring all

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\(^{18}\) ibid.
his creative powers to compel man to free the path of Godliness. To understand this, Ghalib says,

"Capacities inherent in human nature, which keep man from treading the path of godliness despite all its benefits?".

Then he says that apart from being an assistant to God, man is also God's best critic. Man is the greatest critic of the supreme artist, God. In the book, Dialogue between God and Man, man says,

"By creating me thou (God)
Has created thy critic,
I am a painting which harbors Complaints against it painter."

Then God says;

"It is so and speaks not anything else about it."

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There upon commented Man:

“It is like this but it ought to be like that.”

Then also God said,

“Set a new pattern since I am a lover of novelty,

What sort of world thou have made?

A wonder house today and tomorrow!”

It clear that Iqbal’s man is placed in the tension between determinism and free will. He is alive in the conflict of evil and virtue. In his thought and deed he becomes the spokesman of the divine reality. In his book ‘religious reconstruction’, he discusses the relationship between man, universe and God.

Iqbal argues with the basic principle of mysticism that it is an attempt to reach the ultimate reality through inner experience and that it discards intellect or reason as insufficient and relies on love or intuition. That is he believes in the intuitive approach to reality. That is, the concept of man in him relies on intuition. So in his lectures he adds, “nor is there any reason to suppose that thought and intuition are essentially opposed to each other. They spring up from the same root and compliment each other. The

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20 Iqbal. Dialogue between Man and God, op.cit., p.28.
one grasps the reality piecemeal, the other grasp it in its wholeness. Infact, intuition, as Bergson rightly says is only a higher kind of intellect”.21

Here it is clear that Iqbal gives reason and intuition in their proper places and regards intuition as the higher form of intellect through which man can be properly gained metaphysical knowledge. In a word, Iqbal says that man, first of all, has to cross intellectual or rational cognition and then enter into the realm of intuitive cognition in order to have a glimpse of metaphysical reality. Ghazali also holds the same position, as he gives superiority to intuition over reason in apprehending the ultimate reality or attaining the divine gnosis.

Iqbal defines intuition as a unique experience of its own laid, essentially different from every other mode of cognition. It is not perception or thought because it transcends the limitations of both, it makes metaphysics possible.

In Iqbal’s view, the ultimate truths which religion and metaphysics seeks to emphasize do not know us in the ordinary way. The ordinary way is the way of experience. Iqbal does not mean to suggest that the

21 Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, op. cit., p.29.
empirical way is a false way or empirical experience does not give any knowledge. But here he adds that experience and thought represents only a particular level of knowledge, a normal level. In this level whatever is known is known under space-time dimension and is useful from the empirical and pragmatic point of view. But the reality in itself cannot be directly known in this way. But Iqbal is not in favour of denying the importance of sense experience or of thought. He feels that they approach in a very indirect manner, through the symbols of reality. But it is possible to approach reality directly and to have a direct consciousness of reality. He says that the Quran has spoken about such a process. Here Iqbal gathers the Quranic idea and develop it in the light of his own study and insight.

Quran describes this source of knowledge, the knowledge that can know reality directly as ‘Qalb’ which has been translated as the ‘heart’. Iqbal, in his book, religious reconstruction, describes, “heart as a kind of inner intuition or insight, which in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of sun and brings us in to contact with aspect of reality other than those open to sense perception. It is according to the Quran, something which ‘sees’ and its reports, if properly interpreted are never false. We must not, however, regard it as a mysterious special faculty; it is rather a mode of dealing with reality in which sensation, in the psychological
sense of the world, does not play any part. Yet the vista of experience thus opened to us is as real and concrete as any other experience. Here we can say that this self explanatory description of the heart in Iqbal’s own words clearly slows that heart is the faculty of intuition.

Iqbal feels that intuition is not a mysterious faculty. It has played dominant roles in the history of mankind. It has influenced the life and behavior of societies of all times and places and they have left enduring expressions on the mind of man. It is better to enumerate the characteristics of intuition as they have been explained by Iqbal:

Firstly, a very prominent character of intuition is immediacy. Intuition is immediate knowledge of reality or God because intuition knows the knowledge of reality without the help of any medium. That is, intuition has the directness of sense experience. Intuition grasps its object directly as senses do. In this respect, intuition is completely different from thought as conceptual knowledge that knows only through concept or thought as deferential process. Secondly, intuitive experience always apprehends its object as a whole. It is an un-analysable unity. Its unity can never be broken. That is intuition is knowledge by being, because in intuitive awareness, the distinction between the subject and object

\[2\] ibid., p. 103.
vanishes altogether. In intuition, the knower becomes one with the known and thereby realizes it. To the question, How do we come to know that the known being is Divine Self? Iqbal says, "this process is not different from the process by which we become aware of the presence of other minds. We do not become aware of their presence with the help of any special faculty. That is, the only ground of my knowledge of other minds is the awareness of the physical movements similar to my own, from which I infer the presence of other minds. The other minds are believed to be there on account of my awareness of some kind of response in between me and the other. Similarly, in a similar realization - in an awareness of some kind of ‘response’ - in between me and the Supreme, I become conscious of the Supreme self".  

Thirdly, in Iqbal's view, intuition is the propriety of the heart, not of the mind or intellect. Intellect knows its object after creating a distinction between the knower and the known, but the heart, establishes an affinity with its objects; in fact, in a sense, it becomes the object. That is why it is said that intuition is knowledge by the heart.

Lastly an intuitive experience enables an individual to realize eternity in a moment. This intuitive experience enables the individual to

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23 ibid., p.23
forget the worries and anxieties of mundane existence and lifts him up in an entirely different world altogether. Here Iqbal says that here this experience gives to the individual a sense of the unreality of serial time. The mystic experience fades away very soon and the individual returns to serial time, but the moment in which he gets the experience continues to inspire him. It also makes him to realize that serial time can be transcended and the eternity can be realized in a moment.

Here Iqbal gives importance to intuition for ultimate reality. That is, intuitive experience is the only possible source through which reality can be known:

Iqbal also agrees with Bergson and Jalaludin Rumi that the higher form of reason or intellect is intuition or love. In his poetic language he refers to love as ‘Ishq’. For Iqbal the notions of intuition and love are so related as to be near-identical.

Rumi also regards love as the mode of knowledge of reality. It is also a metaphysical principle identical with the formidable surge of life and the creative urge unfolding itself in the objective world. He contrasts intuition or love with reason or intellect. In his view, intellect cannot bring to open the real bounds which connect the individuals. Again, he
says that because of the fact that reason only analyses and divides, it is quite incapable of perceiving the bonds of organic union and process of growth.

So here one can say that Iqbal has made a whole attempt to present a clear-cut contrast between reason and love or intuition and emphasizes their role in physical phenomena and metaphysics. We can say that everywhere in his writings especially in his poetry, one finds him using the word intellect, heart, ego, self, life and love in their broad senses. Prof. Nicholson elucidates Iqbal’s notion of ‘Ishq’ in the introduction to the ‘Secrets of the Self’ in the following words, “the ego is fortified by love. The word is used in a very wide sense and means the desire to assimilate, to absorb, its highest form is the creation of values and ideals, and the endeavor to realize them. Love individualizes the lover as well as the beloved. The effort to realize the most unique individuality, individualizes the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker”.24

In Iqbal’s view, it is this faculty, love (Ishq) that distinguishes man from other beings. Ishq, he thinks as a source of knowledge and a creative force and it is only ‘Ishq’, which is capable of knowing real time and

24 Iqbal, Asrar-i-Khudi, op.cit., pp. xxv.
participating in its creative activity. He maintains that the ego is the seat of Ishq and is prior to space and time. Here he describes the connection between love and the ego in his Asra-i-khudi (Secrets of the Self) as,

"The luminous point whose name is the self
Is the life spirit beneath our dust?
By love it is made more lasting,"  

On the one hand Iqbal does not deny the importance in intellect because, he says that through intellect, man solves worldly problems and brings forth his creative skill and other latent capabilities in this physical word as a co-worker with God. While on the other hand, mystical or intuition is a direct association with the ultimate reality. In his view, "intuition is an immediate, un analyzable, whole, a moment of intimate association with a unique other self, and incommunicable. The Mystic does not lose his individual identity in the Absolute like a drop of water which ships in to the ocean".  

Here an analysis of Iqbal’s notion of God is essential.

3.3 Concept of God in Iqbal

Like any other Prophetic religion, Islam also believes in monotheism. That is, Islam conceives God as one, Omnipotent, all -

25 ibid., p.28.
26 ibid.
knowing and Supremely good creator of the universe. It believes in Personal God. The distinction between God and the Absolute appears to be irrelevant to Islam. Iqbal tries to develop such a notion of God and shows that it satisfies not only the religious urge of man but also his metaphysical curiosity. The nature and attributes of God have been interpreted from that point of view.

Hence, Iqbal, being a true Muslim philosopher, believes that there is one God and Mohammad is His prophet. In his view, “God is the Ultimate ground of all experience, a rationally directed creative will which we have found reasons to describe as an Ego”.\(^{27}\) In order to emphasize the individuality of the Ultimate Ego, the Holy Quran gives Him the proper name of Allah, and further defines Him in the following words,

“Say: God is one:
All things depend on Him;
He begetteth not, and He is not begotten;
And there is none like unto Him”.\(^{28}\)

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\(^{27}\) Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, op.cit., p.61.
This definition of God leads one to conclude that God is infinite and the most unique individual. But here the question that immediately strikes one’s mind is as to ‘how can the notion of a personal God be understood’? Here Iqbal argues that God being super physical and super empirical, cannot be conceived within any given psychophysical parameters. He can only be conceived as superior to physical entities which tend to produce some specified effect. To describe this clearly, Iqbal in his lectures adds, “the perfect individual closed off as an ego, peerless and unique cannot be conceived as harboring its own enemy at home. It must be conceived as superior to the antagonistic tendency of reproduction”.  

This unique characteristic of the Perfect Ego is one of the most salient features of the Quranic Conception of God.

Here it is important to explain individual and perfect individual. As Bergson, has taught us in his book, ‘Creative Evolution’, “individuality is a matter of degrees and is not fully realized even in the case of the apparently closed off unity of human being. In particular, it may be said of individuality, that while the tendency to individuate is everywhere present in the organized world, it is everywhere opposed by the tendency towards reproduction. For the individuality to be perfect, it would be necessary that no detached part of the organism could live separately. But

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29 Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, op.cit., p.62.
then reproduction would be impossible. For what is reproduction but the building up of a new organism with a detached fragment of the old? Individuality therefore harbors its own enemy at home".\(^\text{30}\)

Hence one can say that Iqbal does not wholly accept the pantheistic conception of God, but he although acknowledges that the history of religion is replete with pantheistic interpretations.

He rather points to the Quranic conception of God and in this context he rejects Farnell's view, which projects Quranic God in pantheistic terms and compares with 'Light'.

The relevant text of the Quranic verse, is as under,

"God is the light of the Heavens and of the Earth
His light is like a niche in which is a lamp-
The lamp encased in a glass –
The glass, as it were, as a star".\(^\text{31}\)

Then interpreting the above-mentioned verse of the Quran, Iqbal points out that it is true that the opening line of the verse seems to be a


rejection of the individualistic conception of God. But on proceeding further, one can easily recognize that the conception of God as a formless cosmic element is negated by centralizing the flame 'by its encasement in a glass likened unto a well-defined stat'. Here in Iqbal's view, so far as the comparison of 'God with 'Light', in the revealed literature of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, is concerned, it must be interpreted differently in the present times.

A discovery of the modern physics is that the velocity of light cannot be exceeded, and is the same for all observers, whatever their system of movement may be. Thus to describe God's Absoluteness in this changing world, 'Light', in the nearest approach. Here one can say that the view point of Iqbal in this respect is that the description of God as light in view of the modern knowledge of the world is meant to suggest God's Absoluteness. It is also evident that temporal and spatial infinities are not absolute.

Here it is necessary to point out that Iqbal is not opposed to the doctrine of pantheism as such. What he seems openly opposed to are certain implications of pantheism that is self negation and escapism, through which the Muslim community leads a life of inaction and detachment from the world and lost its political, educational and
economic power. In fact, Iqbal's pantheism accommodates both the individuality of God and the individuality of man.

Now the question is: how can God's existence be demonstrated? Here Iqbal says that there are certain arguments for the existence of God. They are Cosmological, Ontological and Teleological arguments. Iqbal seems to be in agreement with Kant that none of these is conclusive. They are merely attempts on the part of the limited human intellect to comprehend the nature of God.

But at the same time, Iqbal also in agreement with Farabi and other Muslim thinkers who maintain that God Himself is the proof of all beings, and therefore, needs no proof for His existence. All the possible beings depend for their existence on Him. He is the proof of all possible beings. He is independent and beyond all proofs, because all proofs limit his existence. Here Iqbal's view is that God's existence as a necessary being is revealed to man in his existential experience.

Iqbal explains certain attributes of God. These attributes are generally theistic and are also taken from Islam, but the interpretations of Iqbal carry the mark of his academic philosophical training.
3.3.1 God as Omniscient, Omnipotent and Eternal

God is Omniscient. In Him the knower and the known do not remain separate. God is all-inclusive and immanent. God’s knowledge is Omniscient because there is nothing outside of His existence which he does not know. Again, His Omniscience is dynamic and creative. The future exists in God’s creative life as possibilities.

At the same time, God has no passive Omniscience. His knowledge is not like a mirror-reflection of events passing in sequence. This would make God passive and immobile existence. God’s Omniscience is of the nature of self-consciousness, which is creative and free.

Again, God is the Omnipotent creative force. But he does not exercise His power indiscreetly. He is selective in will and action. Had God been indeterminate and Omnipotent, He would have been reduced to an infinite, blind and capricious power. God’s power is limited to His wisdom and goodness. His creative power is limited to His self-will and constructive creation. All activities of God move towards the good. Therefore, Iqbal conceives that the Omnipotence of God means the limitation of His powers by His self-will, and oriented towards the
creation of the good. That is, God has absolute power and infinite capacity for creation but it is limited to His wisdom and goodness.

God is eternal. He is Pure Duration and He exists prior to space and time. Here the question emerges, 'what is Pure Duration'? 'Pure Duration', is indeed, not the atomic time. It is time taken as a whole in an organic unity. 'Pure Duration', is an organic whole of sequences, events, past, present and future successions, and in it the atomic time lose their serial character.

Iqbal identifies God with 'Duration'. His all-inclusive existence holds all realities, movements, creations and possibilities in His Supreme beings. So here, M.M. Sharif Observes, "Iqbal, getting his clue from a saying of the prophet of Islam in which time is identified with God, accepts Bergson's theory of pure-durations with some modifications and thereby not only succeeds in explaining Divine eternity but also in laying greater emphasis on the dynamic aspect of reality". 32

3.3.2 God as immanent and Transcendent

God has essentially an immanent existence, for He encompasses all the realities and cosmos in His own existence. No reality is outside of Him.

Then God also transcends all finite experiences of ours. He is both immanent and transcendent. God transcends the finite selves and the world, and yet encircles and encompasses, creates and manifests the latter. For Iqbal, transcendence does not imply that God is outside the universe, and that He is separated to the finite selves by a space lying between Him and them. The transcendence in God only means that His inclusive existence transcends the finite selves and the cosmos.

3.3.3 God as a dynamic reality

God is dynamic. He creates new principles and cosmos. God is not a block and static reality for He is creating out of His own existence endlessly: Therefore, He should be conceived of as eternal Beauty. His being is not beautiful like a picture or statue. Beauty may be an attribute of God but not His existence. God is the unity of being. That is, God is
the essential unity of all existence. He is the all inclusive dynamic unity of spirit, life and matter.

3.3.4 God, a Perfect Reality

God is ever a perfect Reality. God’s perfection consists in His capacity for creation incessantly without any end. Perfection in God is not a state of completion and stagnant existence. That is, God’s perfection also implies ‘the infinite scope of His creative vision’. He has infinite creative possibilities.

Again, God as a perfect Reality has no progeny. That is, God cannot create another God. There can be no duplication, or re-production of God. There can be no detachment of any part of God from His existence and, therefore, there can be no progeny of God. God is absolutely unique and does not procreate His own equals.

3.3.5 God – The Ultimate Ego

God is the Ultimate Ego. He has ego and like a human self, He has an organizing principle of unity, a synthesis which holds together and focalizes the dispensing dispositions of His living organism. As an Ego,
God holds together and organizes the universe, and as a living organism, He utilizes them for the constructive and creative purposes of His own. He creates new realities and new worlds according to His will. As a dispenser of justice He responds to the calls and aspirations of human beings. He is the Absolute Ego, all-inclusive. There is no ego or reality outside His existence.

The ultimate Ego holds the finite selves as a garland holds the pearl beads. Without obliterating the individuality of the finite selves, God holds them in His own being. Where as the finite selves are related to one another, God as an organic unity holds them in his existence.

Then in Iqbal’s view, God, The Ultimate Ego is Absolute. Iqbal describes certain causes for His Absoluteness. God is Absolute because He is all-inclusive and there is nothing outside Him. He is not a static spirit but a dynamic and creative one. He is a living energy and since there is nothing beside Him to put a limit on Him, He is an absolutely free creative spirit. He is also infinite. But He is not infinite in the spatial sense. For spatial infinity is not possible. So Iqbal in his lectures adds, “God’s infinity is intensive, not extensive, and consists in the infinite
inner possibilities of His creative activity. Thus God’s being a free living energy with infinite creative possibilities”.

After explaining, God as the ‘Ultimate Ego’, Iqbal tries to show “how this ‘ultimate Ego’, or God can be realized”. For him God is the Supreme Ego and the individual ego is one’s inner self. And this ego can attain perfection and become Absolute.

Iqbal uses the word ‘ego’ for the self. The ego is the finite centre of experience. It is a unity of mental states. The mental states do not exist in mutual isolation, they involve one another. The ego is not a static and immobile entity. It is the dynamic organization of our desires, pleasures, pains, ideas and experiences. It is the centre of experience and is a unity of the states of consciousness. One idea is not isolated from another idea. They are united and related in an organic unity in the ego. But the organic unity of the finite ego differs from one another and each one is therefore unique.

The ego is the individuality of a man. Man is a self contained exclusive centre physically as well as spiritually, but he is not yet a complete and perfect individual. In Iqbal’s view, the greater his distance

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33 Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam, op.cit.
from God, the lesser is his individuality. But he who comes nearest to God is the completest person and can attain the perfection of the Ultimate Ego. That is, to realize the Ultimate Ego is to realize the perfection of the self. The highest realization is the state of perfect development of the selfhood. It is the development of one’s self. The objective of life for man should be to find out his perfect self. Man will be able to reach ultimate destination and be able to acquire an ever lasting life. That is, in his view, life is a failure, if it is not able to teach a man how precious is his Absolute self.

Absolute selfhood can be attained by through persistent and continuous action. Through good action, one is near to God and becomes a perfect individual. He who comes nearest to God is the completest person. The distance from the Ultimate Reality (God) weakens the self or man’s individuality.

The man who attains perfection and considers himself the master of life can rightly call himself a ‘Real-Man’. Possessing tremendous powers of the ‘self’, man is not merely a creature but attains to the status of a creator. It is not Nietzsche’s ‘Superman’ or Sartre’s ‘Man’ who is condemned to be free’ – who has no conception of God. It’s Iqbal’s Perfect Man or ‘Momin’, who after accepting God’s existence, dares to
assert his own ego in the presence of God and partakes of the gift of creativity, and with tremendous self-confidence.

Here Iqbal describes certain stages for the development of the ego. The first stage is the obedience to the Quran and Muhammad. In order to strengthen one’s ego, one has to follow the foot-steps of Muhammad. His life is an ideal to mankind and ego was the most unique. He had the most powerful ego. In the second stage the ego has self-control. The ego control is the passions and senses and further fortifies itself. The control is necessary for the development of the human ego.