CHAPTER VII

The Role of Intellect and Intuition

In the preceding chapter, Iqbal’s conception of the growth of individuality and seen how he insists on the importance of creative activity in the life of man and holds that intellect has been evolved in, and for, the service of action. He has emphatically expressed the belief that knowledge, divorced from activity, is apt to become dead and superficial.

This presents one phase of his revolt against the “over-intellectualism” of modern thought. Iqbal’s another special phase of his thought relating to the relation between intellect and intuition or what, in the language of poetry, he calls Ishq (Love), using the word in a special sense.

Ethics and philosophy have been concerned with the problem of how man’s growing activity is to be controlled and guided. This search for an ethical principle for the guidance of conduct has led various schools of thought to different conclusions.

Modern thought, deeply influenced by the development of the physical biological science, which represents a magnificent triumph of the human mind over matter, has come to regard the intellect as providing a wholly adequate instrument for the guidance of life’s activities.
While discussing the implications of "experimetalism", as a philosophical attitude, children, an American representative of this school of thought, has stated: "Experimentally controlled experience is an adequate means for guiding and regulating human affairs, provided men develop the attitudes and the dispositions which the critical, constructive use of this method demands."

Not only pragmatist like Dewey and Kilpatrick but also Russell and many other scientific thinkers hold that almost all the complicated problems of the modern world, social, political, ethical and psychological can be solved by releasing human intelligence from its bondage to superstition and obscurantism and giving it supreme command over our lives.

Iqbal Part Company here with these thinkers and like Bergson, impeaches contemporary thought and civilization for overemphasizing Intellect at the expense of intuition or love. He reverts to this theme the relationship of Intellect or khabar to Intuition, which, in his poetry as well as his Lectures, he has variously called Ishq or Nazar.

He begins with pointing out that there are two different ways of apprehending Reality and each has its special function and purpose in the direction and enrichment of our activity. Through reflective observation and the control of the symbols of Reality as revealed to our sense perception, we grasp reality piecemeal, fixing our graze on its temporal aspect.
This is the function of the analytic intellect. Through Intuition or Love or direct perception by the 'heart' we apprehend and associate directly with Reality in its wholeness, as it reveals itself to us in an intuitive flash. We arrive at metaphysical truth, "not by exercising the intellect but by paying heed to the deliverances of a faculty called intuition."

"The heart", says Iqbal, is a kind of inner intuition or insight which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense perception. It is a mode of dealing with Reality in which sensation does not play a part but the experience thus revealed to us is as real and concrete as any other experience.

Thus it will be seen that the two are not essentially opposed to each other, for the one is the present enjoyment of the whole reality; the other aims at traversing the whole by slowly specifying and closing up the various regions of the whole for exclusive observation.

In fact, intuition, as Bergson rightly says, is only a higher kind of Intellect, through which we enter into and grasp the nature and meaning of Reality as an indivisible whole, even as we appreciate the meaning of a picture or a symphony."

Iqbal is constantly exhorting his readers to return from the cold regions of an arid Intellectualism to the warmth of love and intuition.
Do not seek guidance from the intellect
Come to love which excels
By the singleness of its purpose.\textsuperscript{53}

Wilt thou tread the path of love
By the light of the intellect?
Wilt thou set out on the quest for the sun
In the light of a flickering candle?\textsuperscript{54}

He makes use of a beautiful and striking simile to drive home his point:

Intellect lights up the wayfarer’s eyes,
What is intellect? A lantern by the roadside!
The storms and stresses that rage inside the house
What does the roadside lamp know about them?55

A careful study of Iqbal’s proves that he is not an obscurantist. His apparent belittling of the intellect is really a protest against the tendency to over exaggerate its role in life. Viewed in the proper perspective, Intellect and the reverent pursuit of knowledge, gained experimentally, command his high respect.

In his lectures he points out that “the intellectual effort to overcome the obstruction offered by it the universal, besides enriching and amplifying our life, sharpens our insight and thus prepares us for a more masterful insertion into the subtler aspects of human experience.”

55 Bal-I-Jibril, Op.cit, p. 120.
He even goes further and argues that the conquest of Nature through knowledge has a deeper significance still, for in reality all search for knowledge is essentially an act of prayer. The scientific observer of Nature is “a kind of mystic seeker in the act of prayer.

Iqbal’s approach to guanine Sufism is closely related to his philosophy of self and philosophy of action so much so that the study of the one automatically leads to the study of the other.

In so far as Iqbal’s combination of resignation to the will of god and desire for bold action is concerned, he does not discriminate between a Muslim and Non-Muslim, and significantly enough between a Muslim and a Hindu.

Iqbal describes the teaching of of Lord Krishna as extremely close to the Islamic way of life. In the preface to Asrar-I-khudi he writes: “In the intellectual history of mankind Lord Krishna would always be remembred with esteem and regard as this great personality has examined in a very attractive manner the philosophic traditions of his country and nation, and brought out the reality that passivity does not mean renunciation of action, as action is inherent in human nature and forms the basis of life.

Renunciation according to the Lord Krishna, means that one should remain inconcerned with the results of action. After Lord Krishna, Ramanuj followed the same path but unfortunately shankaracharya’s charming logic undid what lord Krishna and
Ramanuj wanted to establish. Lord Krshna’s nation was, thus deprived of the fruits of this exposition of ancient philosophy.

Both socio-political tendencies have been overwhelmed by the triumphant materialism of the age and by the achievements of modern science, as to ignore, if not totally reject, the values, which are associated with intuition, with love and with religious experience.

It is to establish a balance between these two complementary and significant aspects of human experience, which has been upset by modern western civilization, that Iqbal so strongly emphasizes the role of the “heart” in the understanding and direction of life.

Intellect is but a chain shackling the feet of this age;
Where is the restlessness of spirit that is mine? \(^{56}\)
If you wish to discover its secrets;
Viewed with the eyes of the intellect
It is nothing but an illusion and mirage\(^{57}\)

\(^{56}\) Javid Nama, Op.cit. p.3
As a philosopher interested in achieving view of Reality, he cannot remain content with the partial, one sided, intellectualistic approach which only gives static snapshots of reality and misses its flow and continuity. He is anxious to supplement that view through the intuitive approach, through the "perception of the heart."

As a thinker concerned with the problems of the contemporary world, he is keenly alive to the dangers of accentuating a mental attitude, which has been responsible, particularly in the west, for unprecedented destruction and for the unashamed exploitation of man by man on an unparalleled scale.

Intellect, uninspired by love, and science, uncontrolled by faith in ethical principles which intellect alone cannot provide, have given Europe and America a ruthless economic system, an unjust social order, a bitter conflict amongst groups and classes, a craze for armaments and a perpetual threat of impending wars.

All these things have made modern life full of hurry, strain, frustration and an incapacity, or distaste, for the quite enjoyment of the genuine fruits of culture.

The tendency to over activity and over organization in the interest of purely material and competitive pursuits has so strong that Bertrand Russell has named one of his collection of Essays, In Praise of Idleness!

Iqbal’s object is to bring about a rapprochement between power, born of knowledge, and vision, which is the gift of love or
intuition. "Vision without power," he observes, "brings moral elevation but cannot give permanent culture. Power without vision tends to become destructive and inhuman. Both must continue for the spiritual expansion of humanity."

He wanted to bring home home to his generation, drunk with godless power, the urgent need of subordinating Intellect to love in order to ensure that the tremendous power, which science has released and placed at the disposal of man, will be used for humane and constructive purposes.

Like Goethe, he looks upon Satan as the embodiment of pure Intellect, which, in itself, is of great value but without the guiding hand of love, may become an instrument of terrible destruction. For this Satan he has a soft corner in his heart, but he realizes that unless the powers of Satan are wedded to those Adam, humanity cannot achieve its full development.

His poems Taskhir-i-fitrat (conquest of nature) in Payam-i-Mashriq and Mukalma-i-Jibril-o-Iblis (Conversation between Gabriel and Satan) in Bal-I-Jibril, bring out this idea very vividly.

In his lectures, he has elucidated it in the following words:

"The modern man with his philosophies of criticism and scientific specialism finds himself in a strange predicament. His naturalism has given him an unprecedented control over the forces of Nature but has robbed him of faith in his own future. Wholly over-
shadowed by the result of his intellectual activity, he has ceased to live soulfully, i.e., from within.

In the domain of thought, he is living in open conflict with himself, and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others. He finds himself unable to control his ruthless energy and infinite gold hunger which is gradually killing all higher striving in him and bringing him nothing but life-weariness."

He sums up the modern man, equipped with power but lacking in vision, in these striking and beautiful verses:

"قد يهدي قلبنا فرحنا نظركرس
لو هوى ناهي دم جارو قمرربغا
استناكرک دنایا سنفررس
آیما همسقت گن ایم نی دامآیا
اجنک نیکساد دم ونربرکسا
جسے نبودی کا نشانوں کوراکیا
یک سب قربان کا بارک

Love is denied to man and intellect bites him like a viper.
He has failed to subordinate intellect to love!
He has succeeded in tracing the stars in their course.
But lost his way in the Labyrinth of his own ideas!
He is so entangled in the maze of his knowledge
That he cannot judge between profit and loss;
He has ensured the rays of the sun
But failed to light the dark night of his life!" 57

This ironical position makes him deeply concerned about the future of mankind and, in the preface to his last masnavi (what should the nations of the East do?)

I am raising a new army from the kingdom of love
Because the Haram is threatened by the revolt of the intellect!
I have achieved such eminence
That intellect is honored by a pilgrimage to this shrine!
Do not imagine that intellect has no reckoning;
The eye of faith sits in relentless judgment on it.\textsuperscript{58}

In response to my request to elucidate the relationship of knowledge, gained through intellect, and that gained through love or Intuition, Iqbal wrote to me as follows:

\textsuperscript{58} Muhammed Iqbal, Pas Cheh Bayad Kard Aye Aqwam-I-Sharq, Lahore, 1936, p. 4.
"I have generally used the word ‘knowledge’ in the sense of knowledge based on the sense. It gives manpower, which should be subordinated to religion. If it is not subordinated to religion, it is a satanic force. This knowledge is the first step to true knowledge, as I have pointed out in Javid Nama.

"The knowledge of truth is gained first through the senses and then through direct realization. Its ultimate stages cannot be encompassed within consciousness.'
"Knowledge, which cannot be circumscribed within consciousness and which is the final stage of Truth, is also called love or Intuition.

Intellect, divorced from love, is a rebel (like Satan) while Intellect, wedded to love, has divine attributes.'

"A Muslim should try to convert such knowledge, which is based on senses and is the source of limitless power, to Islam, i.e., transform this (unbeliever), but Lahab, into (the perfect Momin), Ali. In words, if the power of knowledge is inspired by religion, it is the greatest blessing for mankind."

It is this live, this intuitive perception by the heart, which gives meaning to life and makes the Intellect a source of blessing for mankind:

إي شم رانيزغ زپندل امست
لین تهر ماحلد کرمیان نام کرد
فزورد هکرئ زنون خاندل است

The flame of the poetry is kindled by the music of the heart,
The beauty of this candle is highlighted by its mothlike homage!
This dark house of clay, which men call the world,
Is but a worn-out form from the temple of the heart!59

59 Payam-I-Mashriq, op.cit, p. 25.
The Intellect, whose impetuous flame burns up the Universe,
Learns from Love the art of illumination!\(^{60}\)

Pass beyond Intellect and grapple with the waves in Love’s ocean,
For, in Intellect’s shallow rivulet there are no pearls.\(^{61}\)

Till Intellect is blest by Love,
It is naught but a kaleidoscope of ideas!\(^{62}\)

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\(^{60}\) Ibid, p. 156.
\(^{61}\) Ibid., p. 203.
Love is the preceptor of the Intellect, the heart and the vision
If there is no love, religion and its precepts
Are nothing but an idol-house of vain imaginings.\textsuperscript{63}

By failing to bring about a union of the essentially complementry values of IIm and Ishq, the East and the West have both suffered in different ways. The west has battered away its soul in the process of conquering the world of matter; the East has developed a pseudomystical way of thinking which has bred a false kind of renunciation in its peoples and reconciled them to ignorance, weakness and intellectual and political slavery.

The hidden source of active, spiritual energy have thus become walled up and life has been greatly impoverished in both:

\textsuperscript{63} Bal-I-Jibril, p.4.
The East perceived God and failed to perceive the world
The west lost itself in the world and fled from God!
To open the eyes on God is worship!
To see oneself unveiled is life!\textsuperscript{64}

Iqbal's contention is that whether we concentrate on
"Haq" (God) and ignore "Alam" (world) or concentrate on the
conquest of "Alam" and ignore "Haq" the result is equally disastrous.
The two cannot be separated without doing damage to the fullness of
life and the only way to gain both is through a fusion of Love and
Intellect.

When the cold analytic Intellect is suffered by the
warm, life-giving glow of love, it becomes the greatest power for
good, both in the life of the individual and of the community.

\textsuperscript{64} Javid Nama, p. 35.
When self is fortified by Love
It becomes the law giver to the world.\(^{65}\)

In Bal-I-Jibril the same idea is expressed thus:

When the self is fortified by Intellect,
It is the envy of Gabriel;
If if the fortified by Love
It becomes the trumpet call of Israfil.\(^{66}\)

Again:

\(^{66}\) Ibid. p. 92.
If vision is the goal of the Intellect,  
It becomes both the path and the guide!  
Intellect elucidates this world of smell and colour,  
It nurturers the eye and the emotions!  
It brings you to the stage of absorption and ecstasy  
And then, like Gabriel, leaves you alone!  
Love never guides any one to solitude,  
Its very perception of self acts as a screen!  
In the early stages it yearns for fellow travelers,  
Ultimately, it means traveling all alone.  

In the strengthening of individuality, which is the goal of life, as also of education, love plays a powerful role:

—SHIPAAN A.G.  

67 Javid Nama, p. 122.
The luminous point whose name is the self,
Is the life-spark beneath our dust!
By love it is made more lasting,
More living, more burning, more glowing!
Transmute thy handful of dust into gold,
Kiss the threshold of the perfect man!
Be constant in devotion to thy beloved,
That thou may cast thy noose and capture God!\(^{68}\)

Love brings about a concentration of powers and a
hightening of their intensity and, in the case of great individuals, it
may lead to a complete identification of the self with God's purpose.
That is why great prophets and martyrs in the cause of truth were
able to transcend the limitations of ordinary mortals and achieve
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\[^{68}\text{Asrar-I-khudi, Op.cit, pp, 18-19, 23.}\]
Love knows not the months and the years,
Nor the slow or quick, nor the nearness or the distance of the path!
Intellect bores a hole through the mountain,
Or goes around it by circumlocution!
Love makes the mountain light as a blade of grass,
And the heart quick moving like the moon!
What is love? An attack on the Infinite!
Leaving the world without a glimpse of the grave!
Love, fed on barely, threw open Khaibar's heavy gate
And split the heart of the moon!
When it solicits selfhood from God,
it becomes the rider and the world its steed. 69

In the interpreting the inner significance of the martyrdom of karbala,
Iqbal points out how Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet, inspired
by the highest form of love, love for God showed superhuman
vigor and endurance and was able to over come the insuperable
forces of evil and untruth:

Momin and love are mutually interdependent
What is impossible to us is possible for love!
The capital of the intellect is apprehension and doubt,
Of love, faith and resolution!
Intellect builds that it may destroy
Love destroys that it may rehabilitate!
Intellect says 'live happy and content',
Love says 'Learn submission and achieve freedom'.

In its highest manifestations, then, love brings about an almost incredible concentration and intensification of human powers and enables mortals even to overcome death, i.e., disintegration of self, and achieves immortality.

This conquest of death by love is, for Iqbal, no mere metaphor but a profoundly important fact which education dare not ignore. His view, in this regard, is refreshingly original, differing fundamentally from the skeptical materialist, who scoffs at the very idea of immortality, and the believer who passively takes it for granted.

In a letter to me he expressed this view emphatically in these memorable words: "If immorality is a fact, no educational system need bother about it. If it is an achievement open to the ego, no educational system, if it does not aim at training pure intellect only can afford to ignore it."

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He points out in his lectures that, according to the Quran, it is open to man "to belong to the meaning of the Universe and become immortal." It is highly improbable, he argues, that a being whose evolution has taken millions of years should, after a brief span of time, be thrown away on the scarp heap as a thing of no use, but and this is a thought provoking remark. It is only an ever-growing Ego that he can belong to the meaning of the Universe.

Personal immortality, then, is not one's by right; it is to be achieved by personal effort. Man is only a candidate for it. The Ego must continue to struggle until he is able to gather himself up and win his resurrection.

Thus it is the quality of our deeds, which determines, from day to day whether our Ego will become weaker and weaker and be ultimately disintegrated or become more and more strengthened and disciplined for a noble career.

"The unceasing reward of man," to which the Quran refers, consists in his "gradual growth in self expression, in uniqueness and intensity of his activity as an ego." That is what gives to each action of ours an infinite significance, i.e., it is not an ephemeral thing but matters profoundly to others how we react to, and perform, our daily work. This is a view, which implies an essentially religious approach to life.

In his Javid Nama he paints a vivid and stirring picture of the 'man of God' who achieves immortality by his forceful,
courageous and self-affirming ego activity on behalf of some great purpose:

Life is strengthened by submission and willing obedience (to God),
Death is naught but an illusion and a mirage!
The man of god is a tiger and death is its prey,
Death is only a stage in its limitless carrer!
The 'perfect man' sweeps down on death
As the eagle sweeps down on the dove!
The slave dies many times from the fear of death,
Which makes life impossibnle for him!
The free man has a totally different outlook
Death only invests him with new life!
He is regardful of self, not apprehensive of death,
The death of the free is but for an instant!
Pass beyond the death that is reconciled to the grave,
For such death is the death of animals and beasts!\(^1\)

The momin prays to God for the death
That is followed by resurrection!
That other death, the goal of the eager quest,
The last affirmation of God's greatness on the battlefield!
The wars of the kings are but loot and destruction
The war of the Momin is the tradition of the prophet!
What is the momin's war? A migration towards the Beloved!
A withdrawal from the world to seek refuge with the beloved!
Though all deaths are sweet for the Momin

\(^{1}\text{Javid Nama, Op.cit, p. 217.}\)
The death of alī’s son is unique, indeed!
He, who spoke the word of love to the nations,
Described war as the “asceticism of Islam”!
None but the martyr knows this truth,
Who buys this knowledge with his own blood? 72

Thus, in the vision of life which Iqbal’s poetry opens out before us, Intellect, action and love are fused in an integral and dynamic unity which can even defeat the machinations of Death by making man’s individuality indestructible. What a miserable contrast does our ordinary education provide to the education, which this great vision postulates!

72 Ibid, p. 218.