CHAPTER THREE

THE HUMAN WORLD

Those who love not their fellow beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.

(Sheelely, Preface to Alastor)

It is a psychological truth that association multiplies the normal man's power of perception, deepens his emotions and dynamises his will to a degree unknown to him in the privacy of his individuality.

(Iqbal, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam)
Man, from the Romantic point of view, is an autonomous entity, and as such his position is central in the scheme of things in the world. He is the measure of all things and the criterion to judge between right and wrong and fair and unfair. Nature has made him a mysterious reservoir of immense potentialities of development. Besides this every individual is unique and different from all other members of the human community. This view of man posits a particular type of relationship between man and society. Social life is the inevitable medium for man to realize the possibilities of self whose life-spring dries up if society is by-passed. A Romantic artist, therefore, in spite of his individualistic leanings, views man in the complex web of social relationships. His subject is ego as well as the non-ego, self as well as the other than self. The English Romantic poets, and in their tradition, Iqbal, were concerned with self and the problem of the realization of self in a world which is not always conducive to self-development. Their views of self and the nature of its relationship with the non-self, in spite of significant differences on points of detail, are fundamentally alike and sustain the Romantic individualistic view that the human self is God-like in being unique, original, creative and even primal.
One of the questions that man has always found most baffling is that concerned with the definition of his own self. It is very difficult to formulate a precise definition which can satisfy us as a scientific formula does, leaving no place for doubt or ambiguity. The question is so complicated that every answer leads to further questions of the same degree of complexity. Perhaps the most agreeable and comprehensive definition of self would be to view it as a system of psychic experiences with an in-built organic unity. If we examine the psychic experiences at a given moment we find that they do not just float or exist in a vacuum but are parts of an organic unity. What is the basis of this unity? Is it there because there exists in us a soul-substance to which the psychic experiences are related, or does it have no existence apart from these experiences which are its constituent elements? Opinion on this issue has always remained divided. In ancient times and the Middle Ages the popular idea was the belief in the existence of soul as an independent entity. Plato and Aristotle believed that our soul-substance has an independent identity like a material object and the psychic experiences are related to it in the same way in
which the properties of a material object, like weight, volume and colour, are related to it. This soul-substance remains unchanged amidst the flux of experiences to give us a sense of personal identity. It is therefore incorruptible and immortal and survives the death of material body.

This view of the soul was also held by Descartes and Berkeley. The Muslim theologians and mystics held an identical view. Al-Ghazali and Ibn-i-Maskawayh believed in the existence of soul apart from body. Building on a brief hint in the Quran that the soul proceeds from the command of God, the Muslim mystics

1 The Quran (sura Bani Israel, v. 85) says:

"Say that the spirit cometh by the command of my Lord":

My own view, supported by many commentators of the Quran, is different. The Ruh, in this particular context is not used in the sense of soul, but in the sense of the spirit of purity i.e., Gabriel who conveyed God's revelation to Prophet Muhammad. It can be construed as 'soul' only if the verse is torn out of context.
classify all creation into two worlds, the world of creation (alam-i-khalq) and the world of command (alam-i-amr) and assign the soul to the latter.

Hume was the first modern thinker to question this view on psychological grounds. In his Treatise of Human Nature he asserted that what we call 'self' is a conglomeration of our perceptions and this self is utterly annihilated with death. In modern times William James has advanced a somewhat similar theory. Consciousness, he says, is like a stream consisting of nothing but changes. We feel a continuity in this flux because the principle of gregariousness is at work in mental life. Ideas have hooks by which they hold on to each other. The trick of thought to appropriate another thought is what we call 'self'. Even Kant who accepted the fact of unity in our psychic experiences remarked that the existence of self cannot be proved through logic. Kant, however, believed that there is a part of our self, the part that he calls the Transcendental or Productive Imagination, which is not determined by impressions received from outside but is determinative and determines sense, a priori, in respect of its form. Kant believes that this schematization of our understanding is an art concealed in the very
depths of our soul whose real modes of activity nature can hardly allow us to discover.

Among the modern writers E.M. Bradley and McTaggart both believe, though in different ways, in the existence of self. In his *Appearance and Reality* Bradley, in spite of his general scepticism, admits that the existence of 'self' is somehow an indubitable fact and McTaggart says that 'self' is a differentiation of the Absolute and is changeless and immortal like the Absolute.

What is the relation of the self to the external world? The answer to this question requires the definition of the reality of the physical object that exists or seems to exist apart from self. Attempts at such definition have again given rise to controversial points of view which can broadly be divided into two rival schools of thought viz; realism and idealism. While realism believes that the external world exists as independent of the knower and its being perceived does not affect its reality, idealism considers it an experience of the knower or the perceiving self. This is of course a broad simplification of an otherwise very complex subject because on points of detail there are differences among the realists themselves as well as the idealists. The most complicated question for
the realist is that what he calls 'the object there' is reported to him by his perceiving self whose role in perceiving the object cannot be ignored. The idealist, on the other hand, fails to explain why the object there often leads to similar kinds of response from the various knowers. An important issue related to this is how the selves affect each other through interaction in a human society. Is social organization a help or a hindrance for the realization of self?

The English Romantic poets reject all materialistic and mechanistic explanations of man and the universe.

To them human soul has primary importance and body is a mere vehicle to realize the innate potentialities of the spirit. The self is creative and not merely imitative; it is vital and active and not a mere passive recipient of external impressions. The Romantics questioned the very basis of the empirical and mechanical philosophy of Locke which denied the importance of self. Locke conceived the mind as a tabula rasa on which sensations write or paint themselves. In The Essay Concerning Human Understanding he wrote:
Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, a white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas.  

Now this kind of mechanical and empirical explanation of the human self was not acceptable to the Romantics. In their view the external reality is modified in some significant sense by the perceiving self. Some of them, like Blake, hold the extreme view that external reality receives meaning and existence from the perceiving self which alone is real. A verse affixed by Blake to one of his paintings reads:

What is man?
The sun's light when he unfolds it Depends on the organ that beholds it.

And in A Vision of the Last Judgement he writes:

Mental Things are alone Real, what is called Corporeal Nobody knows of its Dwelling place; it is in Fallacy and its Existence an Imposture. Where is the Existence out of Mind or Thought? Where is it but in the Mind of a Food? ... I assert for my self that I do not behold the

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3 Complete Writings, p. 617.
outward creation and to me it is hindrance
and not Action; it is as the dirt upon my
foot. No part of Me. 4

Such a view is very close to what Iqbal says in Curshan-
I-Raz-I-Jadid (The New Garden of Mystery):

Everything that exists is indebted to a beholder's
eye. And in Zubur-I-A'im:

What is this world but a temple filled with idols
of my Imagination's making;
My seeing eye creates its scenes and sights;

4 Complete Writings, p. 760.
5 Kulliyat, p. 164.
6 Ibid., p. 121.
If I see it is, if I do not see it is not.
Time and Space are also products of my thought.

Blake believed that God operates in the human soul and appears in the form of imagination. Coleridge uses a different phraseology to express nearly the same opinion when he writes:

The primary Imagination I hold to be the living Power and Prime Agent of all Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am.  

It is this 'I' which Coleridge sees unfolded in the external phenomena where he seems to be "seeking, as it were asking, a symbolic language for something within me that already and forever exists, than observing anything new." Coleridge believed that mechanism strikes
death and ought to be replaced by life and intelligence.

His final answer to the question of the relationship of the self with the external reality is that the two finally coalesce so that the difference between the subject and the object and the knower and the known ceases to exist. Wordsworth found a perfect and flawless co-ordination between the inner self, the immortal soul, and the data that it perceives in the external world.

His faith in the divine origin and awe-inspiring mysteriousness of human soul remained intact through the complex evolution of his ideology. In the Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey he sees his self as a part of the great world-soul and in the Immortality Ode, human soul is called 'our life's star' that 'comes from afar, trailing clouds of glory.' It is related to eternity and is immortal like the source from which it emanates. Human understanding fails to comprehend its infinitude, the 'prowess' and 'beatitude', which hide it -

... like the mighty flood of Nile/ SOURCED FROM his fount of Abyssinian clouds/TO fertilize the whole Egyptian plain. 9

Now whether it is Blake's extreme view of human self as primal and the phenomenal world as having no outline and being entirely dependent on human imagination for its meaning, or whether it is Coleridge's doctrine of the coalescence of subject and the object, or Wordsworth's doctrine of reciprocity — the Romantics believe that human self is active, vital and dynamic and that it is a reservoir of infinite potentialities. It therefore follows that it should be preserved and strengthened by realizing the potential latent in it.

**Iqbal's Concept of the Self**

One of the greatest prophets of the projective view of human self, Iqbal is in the tradition of the English Romantic poets. He presents this view as a cogent and systematic philosophy of life, making it the pivot of his whole thought and the standpoint from which he surveys and measures all social and ethical systems. Rightly, the most favourite pseudonym that Iqbalists use for him is 'the Prophet of Selfhood.' The word that Iqbal has used for 'self' in Persian and Urdu is Khudi, and it is significant that the first of his works that was published was the *mathnavi Asrar-i-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self). This
book alone would show Iqbal as one of the greatest humanists whose gospel is the gospel of man. Dr. Javid Iqbal, in his father's biography, *Zinda Bud*, reports him as saying:

My ancestors were brahmins who spent their lives in thinking of what God is and I am spending mine in thinking of what man is.10

Iqbal's humanism is however to be distinguished from the atheistic humanism of the post-Renaissance Europe. Humanism in the west was based on an extraordinary interest in human life regardless of any supernatural considerations. Descartes' assertion that after learning from books he went for instruction to the knowledge of himself and of the great book of the world was a manifestation of this spirit. The post-Renaissance thinkers discovered that a full and happy life could be lived without the aid of faith and supernatural sanctions as the ancient Greeks and Romans had lived. This life—human self-realization here and now—and not the life after-death should be the object of man's endeavour.

The humanistic streak of thought runs through all the secular philosophies of the modern West where man replaces God, and the betterment of life on this earth becomes the ultimate aim of the individual and species. Utilitarianism, existentialism and the various brands of socialism share this characteristic in common. Nietzsche's dethronement of God is a positive assertion of the ideal of atheistic humanism. In the positivist philosophy of August Comte, humanism took on the form of a systematic religion. This philosophy dismissed all supernatural authority as antiquated and out of date. Human mind was seen to have grown in three distinct stages—the theological, the metaphysical and the positivist. In the first stage all phenomena were explained with reference to a deity or deities. In the second stage problems were solved by metaphysical abstraction and in the third stage positive scientific point of view replaced the supernatural authority and metaphysical speculation. At this stage precise observation and empirical study were employed as tools of understanding the phenomena. Comte founded a religious system based on his positivist philosophy. In this system scientists and philosophers took the place of saints and the worship of God was replaced by devotion to the cause of humanity.
Iqbal's humanism is fundamentally different from this atheistic and purely secular humanism. His idea of self-development comprehends self in all its dimensions—secular as well as religious, physical as well as spiritual. As Annemarie Schimmel writes:

Unquestionably the accentuation of Khudi, of self, is very significant of Iqbal's work. Yet I wonder if he himself would have agreed if he be called a humanist as some writers had done. His revolution of man is not of man qua man, but of man in relation to God, and Iqbal's anthropology, the whole concept of Khudi, of development of self is understandable only in the larger context of his theology. What he aims at is not man as the measure of all things but as a being that grows the more perfect the closer his connection with God is; it is man neither as an atheistic superman who replaces a God "who has died" nor as the Perfect Man in the sense that he is but a visible aspect of God with whom he is essentially one— but man as realizing the wonderful paradox of freedom in servanthip. 11

The basic premise upon which Iqbal builds his philosophy of the human ego is his belief that 'individuality' is the greatest truth of the universe. "All life is individual; there is no such thing as a universal life. God himself is an individual. He is the most unique individual."\[12\] Man is the trustee of a free personality, a unique ego, whose cultivation should be the ultimate end of all human endeavour and anything that hampers it should be rejected as anti-life.

What is the human ego and how can it be preserved and cultivated? According to Iqbal the ego reveals itself as a unity of what we call mental states. These mental states do not exist in mutual isolation but mean and involve one another. They exist as phases of a complex whole called mind. A close observation of the life and functioning of the mind reveals that it is neither space-bound nor time-bound but transcends these limitations. Yet another feature of the unity of the ego is its essential privacy and uniqueness. My beliefs and

\[12\] Introduction to the Secrets of the Self, p. 15.
convictions, desires and pains and memories and recollections are mine and nobody else's. "It is this unique inter-relation of our mental states that we express by the word I." 13

What is the nature of this 'I'? In the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam Iqbal refers to Ghazali, one of the chief exponents of Muslim theological thought, according to whom "the ego is a simple, indivisible and immutable soul-substance, entirely different from the group of our mental states and unaffected by the passage of time." 14

Iqbal does not fully accept this view because the interest of thinkers like Ghazali was primarily metaphysical and not psychological whereas he would like to see the problem from both points of view. He therefore chose the word 'shudi', which has no ethical or metaphysical overtones attached to it. He uses this word in the sense of that indescribable feeling of 'I' which forms the basis of uniqueness of each individual. Iqbal also rejects this view of the soul-substance because it is static whereas for him the ego is

13 Reconstruction, p. 100.

14 Ibid., p. 100.
a mode of energy. For him it is difficult to regard the elements of our conscious experience as qualities of a soul-substance in the same sense in which, for instance, the weight of a physical body is the quality of that body. Conscious experience is, of course, a part of the soul-life but soul-life cannot be equated with it. In Iqbal's words: "Thus we see that our conscious experience can give us no clue to the ego regarded as a soul-substance; for by hypothesis the soul-substance does not reveal itself in experience ... yet the interpretation of our conscious experience is the only road by which we can reach the ego if at all." The ego is an inseparable part of the experience in which it is present as a directive energy. "Inner experience is the ego at work. We appreciate the ego itself in the act of perceiving, judging and willing."
Iqbal rejects William James's view of consciousness as a 'stream of thought' as vague and incapable of explaining the fact of unity of our mental states. Arguing from the Quranic verse,

اًبِلْوٌاَلَّذِيْنَ مِنْ آَنَامِيْنَ قَبِيلٍ

"say that the spirit proceedeth from the command of My Lord,"

Iqbal says that the essential nature of the soul is directive as it proceeds from the directive energy of God: "The personal pronoun used in the expression Rabbi (My Lord) throws further light on the nature and behaviour of the ego. It is meant to suggest that the soul must be taken as something individual and specific, with all the variations in the range, balance and effectiveness of its unity." 18

Iqbal regards human ego as spontaneous, independent and self-determining and rejects the mechanistic view that its functioning is merely a reflection of the stimuli that it receives from without. Modern psychology, particularly

18 Reconstruction, p. 103.
behaviourism, in its imitation of the physical sciences has taken a mechanistic view of human consciousness but Iqbal believes that the human ego is free and chooses from and changes and modifies the external data in accordance with the purpose that it has set itself. According to him the modern German psychology known as the Configuration Psychology was moving in this direction.

In Iqbal's view the ego is not a fiction or an illusion but a reality in the truest sense of that word. He attacks all those systems of thought which regard it as an illusion or consider it an evil and seek to destroy it! This brings him into conflict with all those who have advocated self-negation in one form or the other. Plato, Ibn-ul-Arabi, Shakaracharya and Hafiz are, in particular, severely criticized. Iqbal's attack on Plato is directed at that part of his philosophy which entered Eastern mysticism through Plotinus and other thinkers of the neo-platonic school. Plotinus built his mystic system on the premise of Plato's famous distinction between the sensuous and super-sensuous worlds. The former, the world of the objects of sense was a world of shadows whereas the latter, the world of 'Ideas' or 'Forms' was the world of reality. On the basis of this distinction Plotinus built up his doctrine of *katharsis* i.e., the liberation.
of the soul from the entanglements of the body. Plotinus's book Enneads was translated into Arabic under the title of Aristotle's Theology and became the main source of Muslim mystic thought. Thus, though indirectly, Plato became, in Nicholson's words, the 'presiding genius if not the real father of Muslim mysticism.'\textsuperscript{19} It is this Plato which Iqbal attacks as 'one of the ancient flock of sheep' whose teachings militate against Iqbal's belief that the human ego must partake of life in its fullness.

Ibn-ul-Arabi's philosophy of \textit{Jahdat-ul-Wujud} (pantheism) declared God to be the only absolute being besides Whom nothing else exists. He distorted Islam's fundamental declaration of faith, 'there is no God but God' to say that 'Nothing exists except God.' Everything else, including the human ego, is illusory and unreal. A similar doctrine was preached by the famous Indian thinker Shankaracharya. In his view Brahman was the only reality and the rest was mere \textit{maya}. The ultimate goal of the human soul was to merge with Brahman and lose its identity. In

his Urdu introduction to the first edition of the *Asrar-i-Khudi*. Iqbal criticized both of these pantheistic thinkers for their nullification of the independence of the human ego. This edition of the *Asrar* also contained a scathing attack against Nafiz whose poetry preaches self-negation and escapism.

How can the ego be preserved against possible dangers and cultivated and developed? In keeping with his belief that the ego is not a static thing, Iqbal holds that it is strengthened and even immortalised by action whereas inaction leads to its decay and death. "Personality", says Iqbal "is a state tension" and can be maintained only if the ego is kept perpetually in that state and guarded against relaxation. Iqbal suggests three important measures to achieve this goal: (i) *Forming of ideals and their preservation*, (ii) *cultivation of love* (*Ishq*) and (iii) *avoidance of asking*.

In Iqbal's view the desire for formation and realization of ideals is the *raison d'être* of the world of movement and change. "The desire for seeing is the origin of our wakeful eye as the partridge's fleet foot owes its origin to its..."
desire for walking and the nightingale's beak to its aspiration for singing. Love is a great cosmic force of assimilation and absorption. "It kindles the fire of the ego and reveals its latent possibilities." Its ultimate goal is to approach God, the most unique individual and this in turn individualises the ego itself. "The effort to realize the most unique individuality individualises the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker." As love strengthens the ego, asking (sual) weakens it. In Iqbal's view, all that is achieved without personal effort comes under sual. The son of a rich man who inherits his father's wealth is an asker (beggar); so is everyone who thinks the thoughts of others."21

In the process of its movement towards uniqueness, the ego passes through three successive stages of development: obedience to law, self-control and divine vice-regency. Obedience to the law of Shariah is a kind of self-imposition which invests man with boundless spiritual power and thus

21 Introduction to Secrets of the Self, pp. 21-22.
becomes the source of true freedom:

Freedom emerges from compulsion.

Self-control consists in fighting all kinds of fear and releasing oneself from the love of material bonds. In Iqbal's view self-control is achieved by acting up to the obligatory commandments of religion. The third stage naturally follows the first two. One who has trained his ego through obedience and self-control attains to the Divine Vicegerency. The Divine Vicegerent, in Iqbal's words, is "the completest individual, the goal of humanity, the name of life."23 His advent is the birth of the new man, the usurer of the golden age of peace, liberty, equality and human dignity.

22 Agtar-i-Khudi in Kuliyaat, p. 29.
23 Introduction to Secrets of the Self, p. 22.
Man in Society

An instance on the autonomy and uniqueness of the individual raises the crucial question of adjustment between the individual and society. Do the two contradict each other? Does social organization militate against the credo of individualism embedded in the romantic assertion 'I am different.' This question has always remained controversial among social thinkers. Some of them like Herbert Spencer believe that there is an inherent contradiction between individual and society because the main aim of society is the perpetuation of race through the institution of family whereas 'individuation' or the growth of individuality is the chief end of an individual and the two instincts of 'perpetuation' and 'individuation' are inimical to each other. According to Posanquet society is something above and beyond the totality of the individuals that compose it with the result that its aims are different from those of the individual. On the basis of this conception philosophers like Comte and Fichte preached the doctrine of self-denial on the part of the individual for the larger interests of society. This kind of thinking underlies all those modern systems which believe in social regimentation like Fascism and Marxism. This view regards the individual merely as a means to an
end and not an end in himself, the end being the welfare of society. On the other extreme we have thinkers like Nietzsche who hold society to be a cunning device of the weak to bind the strong. He, therefore, urges upon the individuals to throw off the yoke of society considered as a hypothetical super-entity.

Romantic individualism steers clear of both these extremes. It does not consider the individual and the society either as antagonistic to each other or as mutually exclusive. Far from that it regards them as correlative. Society is an indispensable medium for the individual to realize his potentialities. It enhances an individual's powers in a sure though mysterious way. This is so because every individual is born with two different tendencies of individualism and collectivism. The two are not mutually exclusive but work together in a synthesis. The egotistical impulses develop alongside the gregarious ones. In fact the gratification of the latter leads to the fuller development of an individual so that the two complement each other. Psychologically speaking they are also closely bound up with each other. Bashfulness, shame and jealousy are, for instance, individualistic instincts rooted in the organic structure of a child but alongside these and equally inherent to the child are the collective instincts of play.
and imitation. Some of the most fruitful social relationships are established through play, and through imitation a man assimilates his tradition, learns the language of his community and acquires the ability to express himself. Besides these instincts nature has made the human body the most helpless in the whole animal world at the time of its birth, which makes it dependent upon others and leads to social ties.

Being conscious of this, the English Romantic poets do not exhibit any anti-social tendency. In spite of the unmistakable escapist note and the post-ward yearning of the Romantic movement, it never cut itself off from social obligations and tried to come to terms with society. We observe that Blake is always thinking in terms of an 'Eden', a 'Jerusalem', necessary for an individual's happiness. Wordsworth and Coleridge took a lively interest in all social affairs even during their most non-conformist days. Even Byron and Shelley, who are the most rebellious of the Romantics, do not question the basis of the society. When Byron was questioning various conventions of society and wandering like an outcast, it actually seemed to him that he was doing something for his society and playing a vital social role. He did not believe in individual self-sufficiency nor did he indulge in any kind of narcissistic self-gratification.
In his early life, when he was under the influence of Godwin's anarchism, Shelley did launch a crusade against organized society in collaboration with Hogg, but his mature views on the relationship between the individual and society reveal that it was a transitory aberration. In Alastor self-centred seclusion is ultimately rejected as fatal to an individual's full development, and love and fellow-feeling are presented as essential conditions for a meaningful life. In his Essay on Christianity which reflects his mature views of Shelley, he lays down in a single sentence a comprehensive moral and political doctrine, that he believed he held in common with Jesus: "The only perfect and genuine republic is that which comprehends every living thing." This is very close to the view held by Iqbal, who writes:

إلى الأعلى في السماوات هو وعاء الإنسان

Higher than the high heavens is the station of man

The basis of all civilization is reverence for man.


25 Javid Nana in Kuliwut, p. 308.
What the Romantics leave no doubt about is that they consider society, as a means, perhaps inevitable for an individual's self-fulfilment but not an end in itself. Society, they believe, should be so organized as to be in tune with an individual's aspirations and the worth of a society should be judged by the opportunities that it affords for the growth of an individual. In Blake's view, free creative life of an individual is the measure of an ideal society. In his America a democratic system is preferred to a feudal one because Blake believes that the former is more conducive to the free development of an individual. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge lent their support to the democratic movements of their day, like the French Revolution. Wordsworth's Prelude records his bitter experiences with the Lowther family which convinced him of the insensibility of the upper class people to the poor and strengthened his faith in the common man. He was outraged by the Smugness of Bishop Llandaff who, like Burke, spoke up for the things as they were in Britain. He was shocked when Britain went to war with the Revolutionary France. He was shocked when Bishop Llandaff defended the British action and wrote a harsh letter to him attacking the unrepresentative parliament and cruel monarchy, demanding equal rights for all men and signing himself
"A Republican." It was about this time that he was attracted to William Godwin and thought seriously of taking up journalism as a profession. Although both Wordsworth and Coleridge were ultimately converted to Burke's creed of tradition and development they never lost their faith in individual liberty.

Shelley's advocacy of individual freedom as well as his fervent support for the cause of Irish Republicanism is well known. His Declaration of Rights, which he published from Dublin, is a manifesto of liberalism. It lays down among other things that "government has no rights; it is a delegation from several individuals to secure their own." 27

Byron was a forceful champion of individual liberty and opposed to all kinds of constraint whether exercised by the individuals or societies. In his view free fulfilment of self was possible only when the obstacles of thrones and courts were removed from the way. The passion for liberty


27 See Donald H. Reiman, Percy Bysshe Shelley, p. 23.
rings through his life and poetry alike. He led a hectic revolutionary's life ending in his death for the cause of Greek independence, and his poetry — Don Juan, Childe Harold, the dramatic poems and the satires — is full of the praise of liberty.

It is, however, to be borne in mind that Romantic individualism is not satisfied merely with the political liberty of man which consists in his conversion from subject to citizen, because such a change substitutes uniformity for servility which is not a radical change. In elections, for instance, everyone who votes counts for one and quality is ignored for quantity. This kind of arithmetical summation does not take account of the individual differences; it is a counting of bodies and not of personalities. For the Romantics man was less important as a citizen than as a being possessing a soul.

Iqbal was inspired by this ideal. As a literary figure, he is perhaps socially more conscious than the Romantics partly because willy-nilly he had to play an important social role in Muslim politics at the beginning of this century, as the mantle of a Messiah of the Muslims descended on him on his return from Europe in 1908. The problem of adjustment between the individual and society always occupied his mind, although the ultimate aim of
all social organization was, in his words, "the rearing of self concentrated individuals," yet the development of such individuals was possible only in an organized society:

An individual depends on the society, when alone he is nothing;
A wave is a wave in the river, outside of it, it ceases to exist.

It was quite in keeping with this keen social awareness that Iqbal followed up his *Azar-i-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self) with another poem, *Rumuz-i-Dakhili* (Mysteries of Selflessness) and the two poems were subsequently published as a single work entitled Malhnawai *Azar-y-Rumuz*. The main theme of the *Rumuz-i-Dakhili* is how an individual's powers are enhanced several-fold if he properly adjusts himself to

28 Reconstruction, p. 151.
29 *Kuliyat*, p. 190.
society. Iqbal quotes the Prophet's saying that the society is safer from the onslaughts of the Devil than an individual. As the individual enters into a harmonious relationship with society, which is the embodiment of a continuing tradition, he combines in himself the past, the present and the future and achieves a kind of immortality:

Social relationship is a blessing for an individual; it enables him to realize his latent potential. The individual and the society are like mirrors to each other, or else like the pearls and thread, or the stars and the Milky Way. An individual gets power and prestige in society, and the society gets its strength from the individuals. When an individual joins himself to the society, a drop, thirsting for vastness, becomes an Ocean.
According to Iqbal, selflessness or surrender of a part of one's sovereignty in favour of society is required precisely because it is a pre-condition of self-affirmation. This is the point of Rumi's verse which Iqbal puts in the beginning of the *Rumuz*:

Struggle through selflessness for the discovery of self, Hasten and God knows what is right!

Iqbal was fiercely opposed to all kinds of regimentation and rejected a social organization whose ultimate aim is not the growth and development of the individual. In the *reconstruction* he writes:

In an over-organized society the individual is altogether crushed out of existence. He gains the whole wealth of social thought around him and loses his own soul. 31

One of the grounds on which Iqbal attacked socialism was that it tended to be totalitarian in character and deprived
man of opportunities of self-expression. Under this system individuals are reduced to the status of hired workmen and a false uniformity is sought to be imposed upon them from without. Besides this, it is mechanistic and materialistic in nature and completely ignores the spiritual urges of man.

Iqbal looked askance at Western democracy, in spite of being a great advocate of democratic principle, because he felt that it was not conducive to the burgeoning of the peculiar genius of an individual. It looked at men as voters to be counted and not as individuals to be respected. Under this system A, B and C were easily exchangeable with X, Y and Z. This is unacceptable to Iqbal in whose scheme uniqueness of the individual self and not generalization is the key to humanity. He quotes Stendhal to say:

Democracy is a form of government in which servants are counted and not weighed.

32 Kuliyaat (Urdu), p. 511.
Such a system often leads to mob-tyranny, thus replacing one kind of tyranny by the other:

The giant of tyranny is afoot under the mantle of democracy
And thou art led to believe that it is Moolam, the fairy of freedom.

It is as a way out of this mob-rule that Iqbal sometimes seems to recommend the renunciation of the democratic system:

Verse like these have sometimes been misconstrued

34 Kuliyat (Persian), p. 229.
as indicative of Fascist leanings in Iqbal. But Iqbal never lost faith in the essential principles of democracy. He makes it unambiguously clear that he believes in a representative government answerable to all men in the society, even to the lowliest of the low. What he was opposed to was the tendency of the Western democracy to crush the peculiar characteristics of an individual's genius. He also held it suspect for the support which some Western democracies lent to imperialism, ignoring the glaring contradiction between democracy and imperialism. Like the English Romantic poet, Iqbal stood for a social order which was democratic in character but which, at the same time, could safeguard the personality of every individual with all its unique traits. This was basic to his vision of the kingdom of God on the earth. As he wrote to Nicholson:

The kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals.35

35 Introduction to Secrets of the Self, p. 23.