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Negation of the Self; a Curse to Humanity (An analytical view on a work of Sir Mohammad Iqbal)

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Abstract:

In the present context, an episode analyzed and explored from the poem of Sir Mohammad Iqbal 'Asrar – e – Khudi' translation 'Secrets of the Self'. The concept of Iqbal khudi, the Self or Ego is characterized as the fragrance that is present in every seed and to emit this potential fragrance the seed has to blossom. Correspondingly, the Self is the divine spark present in all human beings. A great journey of transformation is imperative to detain this celestial spark.

In the sixth episode of the poem, Iqbal told a tale of Sheep and the Tigers. In which a wise and cunning Sheep hoodwink the Tigers to refute their innate feed habit. This consequently causes disgrace, defamation and misfortune for the Tigers and it results in their self-annihilation. Iqbal condemn that the rebuttal of the self-create apocalypse. Iqbal forewarns to beware of all those thinkers and cults, who preach philosophy of repudiation. To them, universe is an illusion; their motto is Self-denial precedes Self Enlighten and Secrets of all the living activities are in their demise. Iqbal believes inception of all human activities is in bringing desires to birth. The aim of the life is to assimilate, preserve and expand the Self. This is incessant struggle to be Self-assertive, Self- affirmative and Self-enlighten.

Keywords: Soul, khudi, Curse, Apocalypse, Iqbal Philosophy, Negation of the Self, Annihilation

Introduction

Asrar-e-Khudi¹ or The Secrets of the Self² was published in 1915, the first philosophical poetry of Sir Mohammad Iqbal³. Iqbal describes his philosophy of "Self" or "Ego"⁴ as "Khudi"⁵ which is the divine spark present in every human beings. A great journey of transformation is vital to apprehend this celestial spark.

A similitude of this journey is the relationship of fragrance and seed. Every seed has potential for the fragrance in it. However, to reach the fragrance, the seed go through all the different changes and phases. First stage is to break out of the shell, and then break the ground to come into the light and develop roots at the same time. Further stage is the fight against elements of the nature, to develop the leaves and flowers. Finally, reach its pinnacle, and attain the fragrance, hidden within it. In the same analogue, to transcend self or ego, individual has to grow through multiple phases of life

to reach higher stage of existence and Iqbal had also achieved this apex. Not all the seed can accomplish fragrance and many dies along the way incomplete. Correspondingly only few people can ascend this Mount Everest of the Self and numerous are consume in the way.

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Negation of the Self

In the sixth episode of this poem, Iqbal told a tale of Sheep and the Tigers, in a certain pasture graze many Sheep, they were content with their lives. There comes a herd of the Tigers and make Sheep their prey. Sheep were no match to the power of the Tigers. Therefore, an old and the wise Sheep dupe the Tigers to relinquish their innate feed tendency. The wise Sheep claimed to be an apostle from God for the Tigers. Moreover, preach them that their deliverance and spiritual enlightenment lay in the feeding of fodder. Moreover, the Tigers were exhausted with the perpetual struggle for hunting their prey. They want an escape from this drudgery, the wise Sheep exploited above alleged weakness in the character of the Tigers to tempt them with effortless and easily available fodder in the pasture. Unmindful of their psyche, the Tigers were trap in charm of the wise Sheep without knowing its consequences.

This self-abnegation to their innate feed routine, spell doom on the Tigers, their anatomy and physiology did not suit to this new feed inclination. They became ill and weak hence lose their fortune, courage and domination of the pasture. Their bodies become their living graves. Ferociousness, Fame and Prestige abandon them. This origin their downfall and cause their annihilation.

The following are morals of this tale:

- i) Iqbal emphasizes to faith and comprehends in own self and accentuate the individuals to be self-assertive, self-affirmative, self-enlighten and self-aware.
- ii) Iqbal sermonize that progress of the life depends on persistent effort to strengthen the Self.
- iii) Iqbal explains that source of all development and progress of the individuals to

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1. ¹ Iqbal wrote this in Persian because he felt the language was well suited for the expression of these ideas. This book deals mainly with the individual; it is concerned with the philosophy of evolution of life and self.
 2. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson in 1920 translated the 'Asrar-e-Khudi' as 'The Secrets of the Self'.
 3. Iqbal (1877-1938) is the great Iqbal-philosopher of India. During his stay in the West, he studied modern philosophy; in this subject, he holds degrees from the Universities of Cambridge and Munich. He wrote thesis on the development of the metaphysics in Persia, it appeared as a book in 1908. He developed a philosophy of his own, Iqbal deeply drunk of European literature, his philosophy owes much to Nietzsche and Bergson, and his poetry often reminds us of P. B. Shelley.
 4. Philosophical means One's own worth and importance, a sense of Personal identity.
 5. In Iqbal Philosophy, *Khudi* (selfhood, individuality, personality) is real and not merely, an illusion of the mind.

- have principles in life and to live these principles.
- iv) Iqbal forewarns that the refutation of the Self is a path to degradation and disgrace.
 - v) Iqbal asserts subjugated races or nations can weaken strong and the powerful regimes abate their dominance and accomplish sovereignty.

Philosophy of Iqbal; Life, Salvation and the Self

- I. In Iqbal philosophy, the final aim and salvation of the man is both affirmation and realization of the self, and he attained to this ideal by becoming more individual and more unique. However, he is not yet a complete individual. He becomes complete as an individual, only when he absorbed the world of matter, mastered it and assimilated the divine attributes, into his Ego.
- II. The system of the universe originates in the self and continuation of the life of all individuals depends on strengthening the self.
- III. Life is a forward assimilative movement. It removes all obstructions in its march by assimilating them. Its essence is the continual creations of desires and ideals, for the purpose of its preservation and expansion, life re-invent its own means for their realization.
- IV. The life of the self comes from forming ideals and bringing them to birth.

Philosophy of the Renunciation

Iqbal caution about burgeoning of the various Cults⁶ and school of thoughts, they postulate and propagates philosophy based on neo-Platonist⁷ ideologue. They preach doctrine of the repudiation and advocate banishment of all aspiration in the man. They believe that secret to salvation of the life is in death. The principle tenet of their thoughts; the Universe (alive and ever expanding) is an illusion and the World of phenomena is a myth. Moreover, self-abnegation of the living world is a path to achieve divine enlightenment. Whereas, Iqbal describes the ultimate end of all human activity is Life; glorious, powerful and exuberant. In Iqbal perception, always keep aspirations alive in thy heart, they generate motivation for triumph and their repudiation herald doom to the humanity.

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- 6. ² Cult means Religion sect and sub sect preaching their own doctrine and run by the Master, Sufi, Saint, or their successors.
 - 7. Neo-Platonism is a modern term use to designate a tradition of the philosophy around (300 - 500 A.D.), Neo-Platonists philosophers were heavily influenced by Plato and the Platonic traditions that thrived during six centuries, From Plato to Neo-Platonists.
 - 8. Plato was a classical Greek philosopher born (428 - 348 B.C.). The trio of the Plato, Socrates (his teacher) and Aristotle (his student) they pioneered fundamentals of the Western philosophy.

*“Plato⁸, the prime ascetic and sage,
To die” said he, “is the secret of life:
The candle is glorified by being put out,
His cup sends us to sleep and takes the sensible world away from us,
And called the world of phenomena a myth”,
 (“Secrets of the Self”)*

Evolution of an Ideal Society

In Iqbal credence, the man is supreme and integral part of the creation. Moreover, from that time man has gradually traveled from chaos to the cosmos, to develop an ideal society. We all are helpers in this Endeavour. Generation to generation, the humanity are co-operating in this great task. The universe is not complete act; it is still in the course of formation. Here can be no complete truth about the universe, for the universe has not yet become ‘whole.’ The process of the creation is still going on; men too are involved and help to bring order into at least a portion of the chaos. This Hypothesis of the universe and man are in contradiction to the philosophies of English Neo-Hegelians thinkers, who are inspired by the thoughts of Neo – Platonists. The major wants in man is to conquer and dominate the nature and also to master his inner self, this require one’s to be always assertive, aware and alert. It is burning enthusiasm in the man, which bring him to present frontier of the knowledge and state of the development. The threshold is still very far away, However if man banishes himself from his legitimate carvings, all aspirations and actions in his life will vanished. One does be in relaxed state and all the progress of evolution of life will stagnate, and led to chaos in the society. The genesis of all the great feats of humankind, in the last thousands years, lays in the accomplishment of little desires and aspirations.

*“Keep desire alive in thy heart, lest thy little dust become a tomb”.
 (“Secrets of the Self”)*

In Iqbal dogma, the moral and sacred ideal of a man is affirmation of the self instead of Negation of the self.

Conclusion

In Iqbal theory of analytical philosophy, expansion of the self is a definite means for each individual to reach a higher stage of the existence that transcend and contains both aesthetic and ethical value of the life. Origins of all advancement in life are quest for the self within us.

*“Negation of desire is death to the living, Even as absence of heat extinguishes the flame,”
 (“Secrets of the Self”)*

The greatest obstacle in the progress of life is the Negation of thy Self. Life is a continuous Endeavour for freedom from the darkness to self- Enlightenment. It needs

incessant struggle to be complete individual. The deeds and actions of an individual are manifestation of one's Self.

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