

**IQBAL AND SARTRE ON FREEDOM AND CREATIVITY**

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ON  
FREEDOM AND CREATIVITY**

**Syed Latif Hussain Kazmi**

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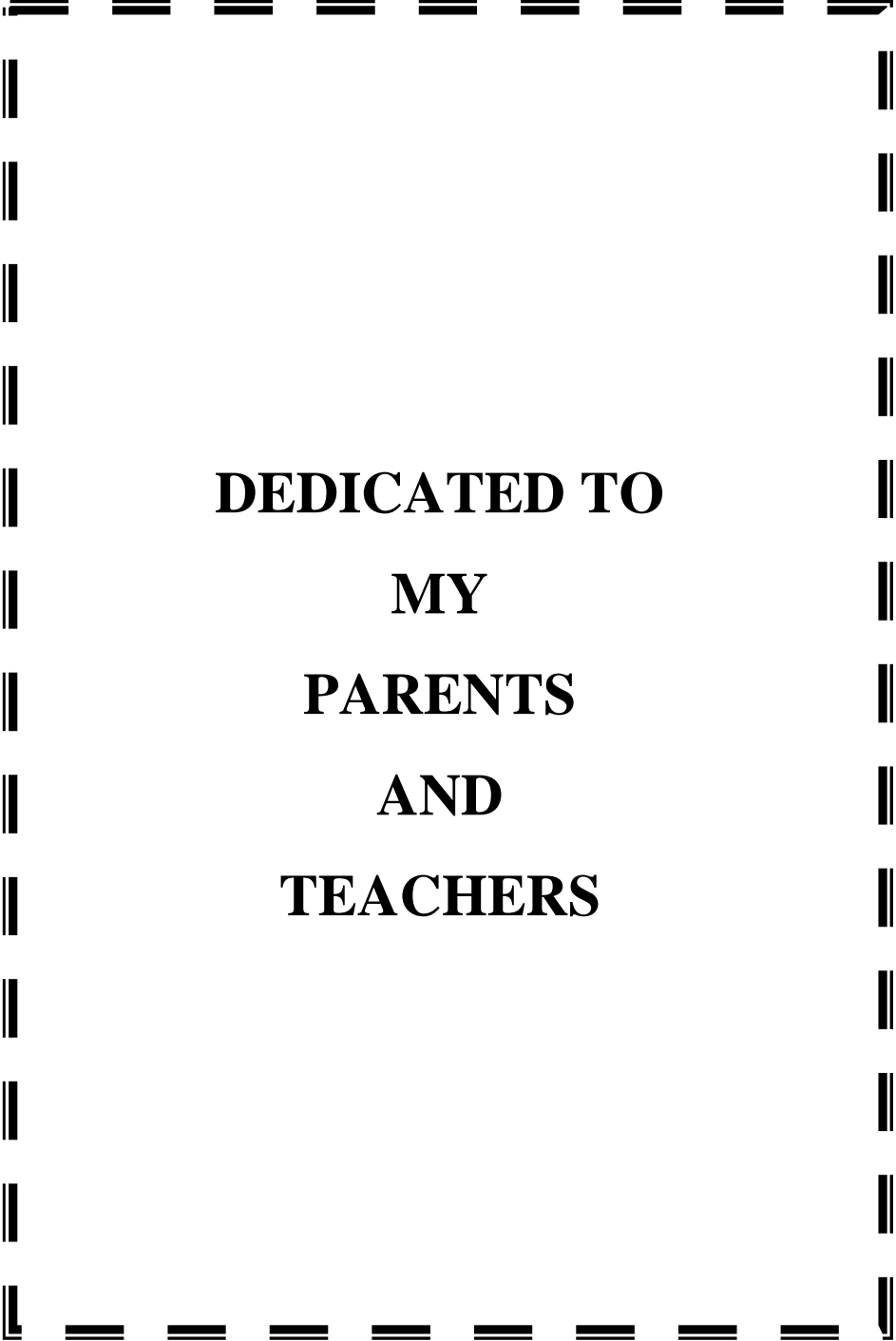
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**DEDICATED TO  
MY  
PARENTS  
AND  
TEACHERS**

## FOREWORD

So far several studies of Iqbal have been done from various angles, mainly concentrating on his socio-religious ideas on the basis of his poetry and prose writings. Some attempts have also been made to place Iqbal in modern perspective with reference to Western philosophy. One of the earliest and the most scholarly works in this regard is B.A.Dar's *Iqbal and Post-Kantian Voluntarism*. Other important studies in this field include S.A.Wahid's English work, *Iqbal: His Art and Thought*, and the Urdu works of Yusuf Husain Khan, Khalifa Abdul Hakim and Jagan Nath Azad. All these studies are of a general nature. Few attempts have yet been made to focus on a single theme. One such work that is both scholarly and original is Alam Khundmiri's doctoral thesis on *Iqbal's Conception of Time*, which unfortunately still remains unpublished. The present study by Syed Latif Hussain Kazmi is another work of this kind that is focused on Iqbal's conception of freedom and creativity, a very significant theme in the present historical context.

The author worked for his M.Phil. Degree on the *Existentialist Elements in Iqbal's Philosophy* (culminating into the already published work entitled *Philosophy of Iqbal (Iqbal and Existentialism)*), a theme, which was taken up seriously for the first time by the writer of this foreword. I advised Dr. Kazmi to make an elaborate study of this theme, which he accomplished successfully and was awarded M.Phil. Degree by Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh for this study in 1985. The element that is strikingly common to Iqbal's thought and existentialist philosophy is the emphasis on freedom. The existentialist who made freedom the central issue of his ontology as well as socio-political thought was Jean-Paul Sartre. Dr. Latif most appropriately selected Sartre for comparing and contrasting Iqbal's idea with the existentialist notion of freedom. For this study Ph.D. degree was conferred on the author by the Aligarh Muslim University in 1988.

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The present book, based on the author's doctoral dissertation, is an important work in comparative philosophy, particularly in the context of Iqbalian studies, in which a theist Muslim thinker is compared with an atheist western philosopher. Both the thinkers are stalwarts of literature and they have creatively synthesized conceptual tools of logic with extra-rational intuitive consciousness. Just as Iqbal's ideas cannot be properly studied and interpreted without referring to his poetical works, similarly no study of Sartre's philosophy is complete without taking into consideration his novels, plays and short stories. Both Iqbal's and Sartre's creative writings are complementary to their philosophical ideas. Dr. Latif's present work is comprehensive enough because of his frequent references to both the thinkers' literary works as well.

The thesis consists of *seven chapters*. In the *first* chapter, freedom is discussed from general, legal, political, social and religious points of view. A pertinent point made out in this chapter is the distinction between liberty and freedom highlighting the fact that while the former has no ontological import, the latter is ontologically loaded. The *second* chapter deals with the existential conception of freedom in the light of the basic notions of existential philosophy with special reference to Sartre. The *third* chapter is an exposition of the relevance of existentialist approach to contemporary socio-political conditions and the impact of an all-embracing physicalism as a result of technological advancement in which human individual has lost his identity and is alienated from his self. The *fourth* chapter deals with the Islamic view of freedom from the perspectives of theology, *Kalam* and *Hikmah* with special reference to the Mu'tazilite, Ash'arite and Shi'ite positions regarding this issue that has both doctrinal as well as philosophical significance. This chapter provides a background for understanding Iqbal's views on freedom and creativity. The *fifth* chapter is a detailed analysis of Iqbal's positions regarding this problem. Iqbal's views are discussed on the basis of an extensive study of Iqbal's prose

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writings and poetical works in English, Persian and Urdu. While the *third* chapter discusses Sartre's philosophy extensively, this chapter is fully devoted to Iqbal's philosophical position. The *sixth* chapter forms the main part of the thesis, comparing and contrasting the views of Iqbal and Sartre's on freedom highlighting the basic differences between theistic and atheistic world-outlooks.

The *seventh* chapter summaries the main conclusions drawn by the author in his painstaking research on the subject. Though some readers may find this chapter lacking in critical analysis of the theme of study, however, it brings to light a vast panorama of Western and Muslim approaches to the problem that is very crucial and relevant to our age.

In the end, it may be mentioned that the author's unfamiliarity with French, the language of Sartre's original works, did not hinder him from fully understanding Sartre's position. His unfamiliarity with French is duly compensated by his good knowledge of Persian and Urdu and his ability to express his ideas clearly and unambiguously. Dr. Latif's work deserves full attention of the experts of Iqbalian philosophy and, I am sure, will open new avenues to a better understanding of Iqbal's contemporary relevance and also pave the way for many such comparative studies.

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Department of Philosophy  
Aligarh Muslim University  
Aligarh (India)

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have great pleasure in expressing my profound sense of gratitude to late Dr. Syed Waheed Akhtar, former Professor and Chairman, Department of philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, to whose constant guidance and unfailing sympathy this work owes more than I can express in words. I have greatly benefited from his erudition, constructive suggestions and inspiring guidance. His vast knowledge of Islamic literature as well as his knowledge of Persian, Urdu and Arabic languages has proved to be of great value to my research. I must also record my special thanks to him for writing a '**Foreword**' (in 1995 when he was alive) for the present work.

I am also thankful to the faculty members, especially Dr. Sanaullah Mir and Dr. S. A. Sayeed, in the Department of philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, for their fruitful suggestions and co-operation.

I may be failing in my duty if I do not express my deepest gratitude to my presents for their blessings and prayers. I am especially thankful to my younger brothers Kazim, 'Ashiq and Shakir and sister Kulsum for their love co-operation and encouragement in the course of preparation of the present work.

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August 23, 2009.

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**SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION  
OF ARABIC CHARACTERS**

**CONSONANTS:**

ء	,	س	s	ل	l
ب	b	ش	sh	م	m
ت	t	ص	s	ن	n
ث	th	ض	z	ه	h
ج	j	ط	t	و	w
ح	h	ظ	z	ی	y
ك	kh	ع	ʿ	Persian Letters	
د	d	غ	gh	پ	p
ذ	dh	ف	f	چ	ch
ر	r	ق	q	ژ	zh
ز	z	ک	k	گ	g

**VOWELS:**

Long:	ا	ā	Short:	َ	a	Doubled	یِ	iyy (final from i)	
	و	ū		ُ	u		وِ	uww (final from u)	
	ی	ī		ِ	i		Diphthongs:	اِ	au or aw
								یِ	ay or ai

## **CHAPTER I**

### **FREEDOM: A GENERAL DISCUSSION**

<b>(a) What is Freedom?</b>	<b>12</b>
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CHAPTER I

**FREEDOM: A GENERAL DISCUSSION**

*(a) What is Freedom?*

The problem of 'freedom' has been very crucial in human history and culture. Like other philosophical problems, the problem of freedom has always been vigorously deliberated upon inspiring perennial controversies and abiding debates. The term "freedom" is very ambiguous, for it is employed from various points of view. In the history of philosophical and social thought the term "freedom" has a specific use as a moral and a social concept. It refers either to circumstances, which arise in the relation of man to man or to specific conditions of social life. Even when so restricted, important differences of usage are possible, and most of the political, religious and philosophical arguments about the meaning or the nature of freedom are concerned with the legitimacy or convenience of a particular application of the term.<sup>1</sup> Let us try to define the term "freedom" with a view to understanding its application in different contents.

The term "freedom" is ambiguous like the term "happiness" and the term "rationality".<sup>2</sup> It does not, have a single generic meaning from which the others have been derived, even though the several specific meanings of the term are loosely associated. The term "freedom" is defined in three distinct ways: (a) as the absence of external restraint; (b) as the capacity to do what one wishes; and lastly, (c) as the capacity to do what one ought to. Literally, freedom means 'not in bondage'.<sup>3</sup> It is also important to note that the term 'liberty' and 'freedom' are frequently used interchangeably. However, *freedom* has a more philosophic connotation, and *liberty* is most often associated with the first of the three above-mentioned definitions. In a specific sense, it can be said that, *liberty* is freedom applied to political or legal matters, while *freedom* can be applied to social, personal or moral matters as well.

Freedom in its first two senses – as the absence of external restraint and as the capacity to do what one wishes – could never

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be absolute. Total absence of external restraints is unimaginable. If a man were free to follow his own desires completely, there would be continual conflict with others resulting in violence. In this condition what one person wants to do is often unfair or even harmful to some-one else. From the earliest times, people have found it both unavoidable and desirable to live in groups. To do this, they restrained some of their natural desires and permitted themselves to be controlled by rules or laws.<sup>4</sup> Thus, according to changing conditions of society the word “freedom” was interpreted differently in each period of human development.

In its simplest sense, ‘freedom’ refers mainly to the absence of compulsion or restraint by any external power. Freedom, as the absence of constraint or what is called ‘coercion’ has a special application and, therefore, needs to be elaborated at some length.

A man is said to be free to the extent that he can choose his own goals or course of conduct and also has the capacity to choose between different alternatives available to him. Moreover, he is not compelled to act as he would not himself choose to act or is not prevented from acting as he would otherwise choose to act by the will of another man, or external agency. Freedom in this sense is sometimes called negative freedom (or “freedom from”). It refers to an area of conduct within which each man chooses his own course and is protected from compulsions or restraints. J.S. Mill’s essay “On Liberty” is perhaps the best-known expression in English of this individualistic and liberal conception of freedom:

The object of this essay is to assert one very simple principle, an entitled to govern absolutely the dealings of society with the individual in the way of compulsion and control, whether the means used be physical force in the form of legal penalties, or the moral coercion of public opinion. That principle is, that the sole end for which mankind is warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his

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will is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinions of others, to do so would be wise, or even right. These are good reasons for remonstrating with him, or reasoning with him, or persuading him, or entreating him, but not for compelling him, or visiting him with any evil in case he do otherwise. To justify that, the conduct from which it is desired to deter him must be calculated to produce evil to someone else. The only part of the conduct of anyone, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part, which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.<sup>5</sup>

If we confine ourselves to saying that a man is free in so far as his action is not coerced by another or external force, it is evident that the conception of coercion itself requires some consideration. Here an important point may be made by examining Bertrand Russell's oft-quoted sentence: "Freedom in general may be defined as the absence of obstacles to the realization of desires."<sup>6</sup> This definition of freedom hardly goes far enough. Because, it is assumed here that entertaining a certain desire is necessarily an exercise of freedom. But authoritarian governments' often subtly and skillfully mould the minds and dispositions of the citizens such that they desire what their rulers desire them to desire, without its ever occurring to them that there are alternatives to what they are accustomed to, or that their freedom to choose has been in any way circumscribed. In this way, they are not conscious of any obstructions to the satisfaction of their desires, and indeed no obstructions may exist to the satisfaction of any desire they experience. But we would scarcely concede that the members of such a society enjoyed any or much freedom. In a word, whatever the society may be, coercion, in one form or the other,

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would be there and complete freedom in all respects seems impossible. As J.S. Mill puts it:

Acts, of whatever kind, which without justifiable cause do harm to other, may be, and in the more important cases absolutely require to be, controlled by the unfavourable sentiments, and, when needful, by the active interference of mankind. The liberty of the individual must be thus far limited; he must not make himself a nuisance to other people.<sup>7</sup>

From the above discussion we can infer two important points. *First*, if the absence of coercion or restraint is a necessary condition of being free, coercion must be understood as including not only the direct forms such as commands or prohibitions backed by some authority or a supernatural power, but also many indirect forms of moulding human views and manipulating them or, more generally, forms of control which are indirect because they involve control by certain persons of the conditions that determine or affect the alternatives available to others. This is, in fact, an important extension of 'coercion'. *Secondly*, if liberty means the right of individual choice between the given alternatives, then this right in turn implies that the alternatives can be known by those who are to choose; that individual persons have the opportunity to understand the character of available alternatives and can make deliberate or informed choice. The freedom that members of a society enjoy will be related, therefore, to the extent to which competing opinions, objectives, modes of behaviour, ways of living and so on are, so to speak, on display, and with how freely they can be recommended, criticized and examined, and thus the ease with which men can make a deliberate choice between them.

Certainly knowledge or awareness enlarges the capacity or faculty of choice and decision. Freedom in its positive aspect is the activity and the process for choosing oneself and acting on one's own initiative, and choice can be manipulated as readily as it can be coerced. In the strict sense, freedom is not the choice of available alternatives only. In certain circumstances the extent of the range of available alternatives may be relevant to a judgment

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of the extent of freedom, but in general one can talk profitably about both the existence and the extent of freedom in a particular society only by taking into account the individual and social interests, the capacities, the modes of behaviour and the ways of living on behalf of which freedom is claimed. One has to live in a society, so the exercise of one's freedom solely depends upon the situations around him.<sup>8</sup> In this connection, A.V. Spakovsky has rightly remarked:

“...It is also quite natural that the co-existence of man with man necessitates certain limitations in regard to the social freedom of everybody. This coexistence transforms the absolute freedom of man as a separate individual, as a separate “I”, into the coordinated freedom of man as a part of human society, as an element of a collective “We”.<sup>9</sup>

He further introduced a formula to pinpoint the crux of the problem by saying: “*My freedom begins where the freedom of another man ends, and my freedom ends where the freedom of another man begins.*”<sup>10</sup>

### ***(b) Freedom of the Will and Determinism:***

As stated before, the word “freedom” refers to the absence of coercion or restraint, constraint or compulsion by any external power. Ordinarily the word “freedom” indicates that a man is free to the extent he can achieve chosen goals with a minimum effort. Conversely, to the extent he discovers obstacles in his way he is not free. However, the problem is that freedom has its specific application in different fields too. So the connotation of *freedom* in fields like religion, politics, psychology, morality, philosophy, law etc. differs accordingly. Hence, the most common meanings of the term, in traditional (and even in modern) philosophizing, according to R.G. Olson, are known technically as ‘freedom of self realization’ and ‘freedom of indeterminism’ or ‘freedom of the will’<sup>11</sup>

It would be appropriate to give a brief account of the views of the philosophers, moralists, theologians, politicians, jurists, psychologists, epistemologists and scientists on the problem.



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Philosophers have long been engaged in debating the issue of 'free will' versus 'determinism'. Some argue that the will is free, while others argue differently. Anthony Kenny, regarding this, quotes Tolstoy's statement:

The problem of free will", said Tolstoy, "from the earliest times has occupied the best intellects of mankind and has from the earliest times appeared in all its colossal significance. The problem lies in the fact that if we regard man as a subject for observation from whatever points of view — theological, historical, ethical or philosophical — we find the universal law of necessity to which he (like everything else that exists) is subject. But looking upon man from within ourselves, man as an object of our own inner consciousness of self — we feel ourselves to be free."<sup>12</sup>

The existence of freedom holds Kenny, according to Tolstoy, was incompatible with the existence of scientific laws. According to this view the consciousness of freedom must at best be the expression of the ignorance of laws: "It is necessary to renounce a freedom that does not exist and to recognize a dependence of which we are not personally conscious."<sup>13</sup>

Generally, the problem of 'free will' or the 'freedom of the will' is complicated for various reasons. In the first place, the traditional formulation of the issue, its very name is misleading. To ask whether the 'will' is free assumes that there is such a *thing* as "will" which may or may not be free in its activities. 'Will' is really a general term describing certain sorts of events (volition) and not the name of an agent, which performs them. As John Locke remarks:

For, if it be reasonable to suppose and talk of faculties as distinct beings that can act, (as we do, when we say the will orders, and the will is free), it is fit that we should make a speaking faculty, and a walking faculty, and a dancing faculty, by which these actions are produced, which are but several modes of motion; as well as we make the will and understanding to these

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faculties, by which the action of choosing and perceiving are produced, which are but several modes of thinking. And we may as properly say that it is the singing faculty sings and the dancing faculty dances, as that the will chooses...<sup>14</sup>

In the light of John Locke's definition, it would be much better to speak of the 'freedom of the self', that is of the person – an existing conscious being, than of an abstract will. However, the term "Free Will" is too well established to be dislodged. Moreover, the very expression 'freedom of the self' (or say personal freedom) might suggest the problem of political liberty rather than the philosophical and psychological problems traditionally associated with the term free will.<sup>15</sup>

Philosophers of various persuasions have long debated the issue of freedom and determinism. Some stress that the 'will' is *free* — that a person can act freely, independent of the influence of outside forces or of his past actions and experiences. Others argue that there is no freedom of the will — that decisions and choices are always controlled or determined by past conditions or external causes. Therefore, the problem of 'freedom of the will versus determinism' is complicated because of various points of view that interpret it differently.

Many thinkers agree with thoroughgoing determinism as a scientific doctrine. Baron Von Holbech, a French philosopher, holds that "Our volitions and our desires are never in our power."<sup>16</sup> In the same context the German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer thought that the course of man's life was "as necessarily predetermined as the course of a clock" and that "a man can surely do what he wills to do, but he cannot determine *what he wills*."<sup>17</sup> He and his followers hold that '*Will is a blind, irrational and aimless world primordial principle, similar to Kant's 'thing-in-itself*.' "<sup>18</sup>

Again, we also find an example of a thoroughgoing determinism in the writings of Benedict Spinoza, who says that the "will" is a mode or modification of thought and there can be no separation between 'thought' and 'will'. He further adds that

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volition can exist unless it is determined by another cause, this by another and so on. An action is free only insofar as the cause of the action is wholly contained in the nature and past history of the agent. "... All this plainly shows that the decree of the mind, the appetite, and determination of the body are coincident in nature, or rather they are one and the same thing ..."<sup>19</sup>

The moral philosopher is primarily interested in 'free will' as a postulate of the moral life. For, according to him, if a man is compelled by past circumstances to do what he does not wish to do and no alternative action is open to him, how can we say that he ought to have done otherwise or blame him for what he did? As we know, the 'will' is the ability men have of choosing one course of action rather than another and that to be free is to be able to do as one wills. As Henry Sidgwick asserts:

If a man's actions are mere links in a chain of causation which...ultimately carries us to events anterior to his personal existence, he cannot, it is said, really have either merit or demerit; and if he has not merit or demerit, it is repugnant to the common moral sense of mankind to reward or punish — even to praise or blame — him. ...Free Will in relation to moral action generally (has)... its importance in relation to punishing and rewarding ...<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, freedom is the source of rights and duties for a free man. It brings not only rights but also certain responsibilities or duties. A man released from prison gains freedom, but at the same time must face the responsibility of supporting himself.<sup>21</sup> because he is responsible *for* himself and *to* himself.

Henry Sidgwick as shown above accurately formulates the central problems regarding freedom of the human will and determinism. He, in his book, *The Methods of Ethics*, further expresses his views in the following words:

And the question which I understand to be at issue in the Free Will controversy may be stated thus: Is the self to which I refer my deliberate volitions a self of strictly determinate moral qualities, a definite character

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partly inherited, partly formed by my past actions and feelings, and by any physical influences that it may have unconsciously received; so that my voluntary action, for good or for evil, is at any moment completely caused by the determinate qualities of the character, together with my circumstances, or the external influences acting on me at the moment — including under this latter term my present bodily conditions? — or is there always a possibility of my choosing to act in the manner that I know judge to be reasonable and right, whatever previous actions and experiences may have been?<sup>22</sup>

The theologian has a keen interest in the problem since ‘free will’ seems to involve the denial of God’s Omniscience and Omnipotence or of His Justice. For, according to the Theologian, if men are truly free to choose, then God cannot foreknow their actions or control their choice; but if men are not free then God cannot be justified in punishing or rewarding their deeds. It means man is sometimes, in some matters to some extent, free and sometimes in others, determined. This seems to be a rational outlook that can be defended in the light of studies on the issue in various disciplines. On the contrary, there are theologians who also consider *predestination* as a doctrine according to which God has decreed every event that was to take place, or at least that each man’s destiny was fixed by Divine decree. Thus, according to this view God determines events in nature as well as human ‘will’ both. As H.H. Titus writes:

If God is Omnipotent and Omniscient — that is, all-powerful and all knowing — then things must be determined by Him. This means that events in nature and human conduct, including man’s will, are determined by the sovereign will of God. The view is thus theological and supernatural in its outlook and emphasis.<sup>23</sup>

So far as the validity of the theological outlook is concerned, one finds this view quite appropriate that according to theologians, man is partly free and partly determined.<sup>24</sup>

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The politician is also interested in 'freedom' and considers it as '*an ability to achieve chosen goal*'.<sup>25</sup> In the political discussion this sense of the term 'freedom' is the one which most often comes to the fore. According to a politician, if a man has freedom of speech or freedom of assembly, this means that if he chooses to speak or to assemble with others for political purposes he will encounter no legal obstacles. Thus, because of given freedom of speech or assembly, he will not be clubbed by the police or thrown in jail.<sup>26</sup> Again, it is said that there can be no freedom unless the scope or power of government is limited. Plainly it means that if the government can interfere in every matter and if there is no limit to its power, then little room is left for private life and for personal initiative and choice. Of course, this is true and it suggests one way of interpreting the idea of political freedom, in which a politician is interested. This is as a special case of negative freedom or say negative political freedom in which it is "as freedom from constraint by government",<sup>27</sup> for using constraints is essential for a government. However, when a person wants to participate in or support any political party, he is, as stated before, free at his will to assemble or to express his feelings. Milne underlines the issue:

There must be freedom to participate actively in politics to issue the challenge and put pressure on the government to answer it. This is the freedom, which the members of the citizen body have under a representative form of government.<sup>28</sup>

The jurist is also concerned with the relation between 'free will' and 'responsibility'. His question is: Can punishment be justified if the criminal had no choice but to commit the crime? According to the jurist, it is only human existence, which can be free in any serious sense of the word. Man alone knows and exercises his freedom in the world. It is only the human person who has the sense of responsibility and can live and die for ideals and values pursued in freedom. Broadly speaking, to the Jurist, responsible choice is the essence of freedom. Freedom and responsibility can fully be appreciated only as two mutually

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interpenetrating, interdependent and complementary requisites of the development of personality.<sup>29</sup>

Freedom divorced from deep-rooted sense of responsibility deteriorates into licentiousness, and responsibility without freedom becomes a burden. To put it succinctly, freedom implies that, a man is responsible for the decisions he takes, the choices he makes and the personality he shapes for himself. In the words of W. Temple:

It is the responsible exercise of deliberate choice which most fully expresses personality and best deserves the great name of freedom.<sup>30</sup>

The term “will” is invariably used by psychologists for the decision-making process of human mind. Until 20<sup>th</sup> century, most psychologists believed that the ‘will’ was one of the three faculties or powers of mind, the other two being emotion (feeling) and intellect (thought). They were of the view that the intellect guided the will in the making of decisions and choices. Most psychologists now believe that the mind acts as a whole, although there are different *aspects* of the mind such as knowledge, attitudes and emotions, which interact in various mental operation or processes. Thus, ‘will’ is any such interaction that results in a decision. Psychologists say that the *will* is not a separate function of the mind.

Thus, determinism as a scientific doctrine is the view that the entire realm of nature, including human beings, works within unbroken chain of causes and effects. In this way, all events in the world are fully explained by preceding events. According to the exponents of this view, wherever nature has been studied, men have found orderly sequences that are ruled by the universally operating law of causation. As H.H. Titus describes:

From such sciences as physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, and sociology, we discover that man too is ruled by cause and effect. His glands, complexes, unconscious drives, conditioning, folkways, and conventions all influence his life; the whole range of

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hereditary and environmental pressure are ever present and are powerful determining factors.<sup>31</sup>

Though many advocates of freedom of choice accept the principle of scientific determinism with regard to nature only, yet there are some scientists and philosophers who carry the notion of determinism with regard to human will also to the extent where freedom is completely denied. One of the most powerful examples of this view, viz; denial of freedom is vividly found in the writings of the world-famous psychologist, B.F. Skinner. He says:

The use of such concepts as individual freedom, initiative, and responsibility has, therefore, been well reinforced. When we turn to what science has to offer, however, we do not find very confronting support for the traditional Western point of view. The hypothesis that man is not free is essential to the application of scientific method to the study of human behaviour. The free inner man who is held responsible for the behaviour of the external biological organism is only a prescientific substitute for the kinds of causes which are discovered in the course of a scientific analysis. All these alternatives lie *outside* the individual. The biological substratum itself is determined by prior events in a genetic process.<sup>32</sup>

The psychologists and the epistemologists are mainly interested in the apparent conflict between freedom of choice and the usual scientific assumption that all things, including mental events, are subject to the laws of causation. Thus, a group of scientists, epistemologists and psychologists are of the opinion that man is determined by the orderly causal sequences; the laws of nature determine his freedom of choice, and all his mental events are subject to a law and necessity. However, there are others who despite scientifically compelling evidence and in the face of all odds, marshal very powerful considerations in support and defense of freedom of human will.

After taking into consideration various meanings of freedom, we, in the following pages, propose to examine the

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problem of free will in three important fields viz., Law, Politics and Religion.

### *(c) Freedom in Law:*

Various legal thinkers have defined law from various angles. Accordingly, no unanimity has been hammered out or arrived at as to the real nature of law till date. However, possibly the most plausible definition of law has been advanced by Paton. According to him the term 'law' may be defined from various points of view such as from the view-point of the theologian, historian, sociologist, philosopher, political scientist or lawyer. Sometimes the word 'law' is also used in a metaphorical sense. Law may be defined, *firstly*, in terms of its roots in nature, reason, religion or ethics. *Secondly*, it may be defined in terms of its origin in custom, precedent or legislation. In the *third* place, it may be defined by its effect on the life of society. *Fourthly*, it may be described by the method of its formal expression or authoritative application. In the *fifth* place, it may be defined by the ends that it seeks to achieve. Paton himself defines law in these words:

Law may be described in terms of a legal order tacitly or formally, accepted by a community that considers it essential to its welfare, and which it is willing to enforce by the creation of the specific mechanism for securing compliance, a mature system of law normally sets up that type of legal order that is known as the state, but we cannot say *a priori* that without the state no law can exist.<sup>33</sup>

A famous psychologist, B.F. Skinner is of the view that the study of Law or Jurisprudence is usually concerned with the codes and practices of specific governments, past or present. It is also concerned with certain questions upon which a functional analysis of behaviour has some bearing. He further says that a law usually has two important features:

In the *first* place, it specifies behaviour. The behavior is usually not described topographically but rather in terms of its effect upon others — the effect which is the object



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of government control. In the *second* place, a law specifies or implies a consequence, usually punishment. Thus, a law is a statement of a contingency of reinforcement maintained by a governmental agency.<sup>34</sup>

He further describes that a law is a *rule* of conduct in the sense that it specifies the consequences of certain actions which in turn 'rule' behaviour.<sup>35</sup>

In the light of the above, we can say that law is a set of rules, body of principles or a system of rights and obligations, which in its specific sense is enforced by the public or the society with regard to the distribution and exercise of power by the state or a political authority or the law makers.

In law "freedom" is the state of being free. It is self-determination, absence of restraint and the opposite of slavery.<sup>36</sup> According to the advocates of the freedom of 'will', will is the power of acting in the character of a moral personality without a check, pressure or force, hindrance or prohibition other than such as may be imposed by just and necessary laws and the duties of social life.

In every discipline of life, freedom has its specific sense. In law freedom means 'exemption from extraneous control' — freedom from all restraint except such as are justly imposed by law. Hence, it is freedom from restraint, under conditions essential to the equal enjoyment of the same right by the others. Freedom is regulated by law. It is "the absence of arbitrary restraint, not immunity from reasonable regulations and prohibitions imposed in the interest of the community."<sup>37</sup>

The term "will" in law is a written document in which a person — who is called 'testator' — registers what he wants to do with his property after his death. A 'will' may also cover guardianship of minor children and the administration of an estate. It must meet certain legal requirements and should be phrased in such a way that the person or testator's intentions are clear. In law it is specifically visualized that the person who makes a 'valid will' must be mentally competent at the time it is

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drawn up, and must fully and consciously understand the effect of what he does. It is still generally accepted that the right to make a 'will' is really a privilege granted by a statute, not an inherent constitutional or fundamental right. Consequently, specific laws, which generally vary from state to state and country to country, govern the making of wills.<sup>38</sup>

This is what the term 'will' means in law. Though the legal sense of 'will' is not relevant to our present study, it, however, underlines the testator's mental competence and liberty, which are essential for the exercise of human 'will' in moral sphere too.

Generally, instead of 'freedom' the word 'liberty' is used in its specific connotation in law:

The word 'liberty' includes and comprehends all personal rights and enjoyment. ...It embraces freedom from duress, freedom from governmental interference in exercise of intellect, in formation of opinions, in the expression of them, and in action or inaction dictated by judgment.<sup>39</sup>

Liberty has two sides — positive and negative. On its positive side, liberty denotes the fullness of individual existence or his obligation to do something, while on its negative side it denotes his right to do nothing or be left alone, or the necessary restraint on all, which is essentially required to promote the greatest possible amount of liberty for each.

The word "liberty" as used in the constitutions means, in the negative sense, freedom from restraint; but in the positive sense, it involves the idea of freedom secured by the imposition of restraint. It is in this positive sense that the state, in the exercise of its police powers, promotes the freedom of all by the imposition upon particular persons of restraints, which are deemed necessary for the general welfare of humanity.

Moreover, the term 'liberty' when used in constitutional sense, denotes different aspects prescribed within that very constitution and the citizens have the right to exercise their freedom in the light of that framework:

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(Liberty) means more than freedom of action, freedom to own, control and use property, freedom to pursue any lawful trade, business or calling, and freedom to make all people contracts in relation thereto.<sup>40</sup>

The term (liberty) is used in the sense of expression, rights, liberties and franchises and also as a word of the same general class and meaning with those words and privileges. This use of the term is said to have been strictly conformable to its sense as used in Magna Carta and in the English declarations of rights, statutes, and grants and so on.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, in a derivative sense, the people, the place, district or boundaries within which a specific franchise is enjoyed, immunity claimed, or a jurisdiction exercised. Hence, in this sense, the term 'liberty' is commonly used in the plural as the "liberties of the city."<sup>42</sup>

### ***(d) Freedom in Politics:***

Politics is an activity that takes place at different levels involving relations between citizens and the state at both the individual and collective planes. It also studies relations between various classes in the state, as well as relations between one state to the other, that is international political relations.

One may usefully identify the political interactions in a security as its political system, rather than as government, or the state: power or a set of decision-making processes. How is one to distinguish this system from other systems of behaviour, such as the religious, economic, psychological and cultural? In answering this question, we shall simultaneously obtain an initial, gross conceptualization of political science, one that can serve as a point of departure for distinguishing political science as a theoretically separate and autonomous discipline. Hence one may describe the political system as the "behaviour or set of interaction through which authoritative allocations (or binding decisions) are made and implemented for a society."<sup>43</sup>

In politics the word "freedom" with its synonym "liberty," has a strong laudatory connotation. It has, therefore, been applied

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to whatever actions, policies, or institutions one may deem valuable; from obeying the law to attaining economic affluence. Political writings seldom provide explicit definitions of “freedom” in descriptive terms, but it is often possible to infer descriptive definitions from the context. If this is done, it will be seen that the concept of freedom refers most frequently to *social freedom*, which must be distinguished from other descriptive and evaluative usages.

A.J.M. Milne, in his *Freedom and Rights*, regarding the relationship of individual’s freedom and the governmental power strongly underlines:

It is often said that there can be no freedom unless the scope of government is limited. What is normally meant is that if the government can interfere in everything, if there is no limit to its meddling, little room is left for private life and for personal initiative and choice. This is of course, true and it suggests one way of interpreting the idea of political freedom. This is a special case of negative freedom. It should be thought of as negative political freedom: that is, as freedom from constraint by government. No government can govern without using constraint, which means that negative political freedom is always partial, never complete. But this is not denied by the doctrine of limited government. Its point is that just because government involves the use of constraint, its scope should be limited.<sup>44</sup>

Again, elaborating the reasons of limited governmental authority, he comprehensively maintains:

According to the idea of the public interest, the scope of government is always limited. The task of the government is to promote the public interest, which means establishing and maintaining certain conditions in a society’s way of life. It must do what is necessary to perform this task but has no business concerning itself with anything else. The public sphere, which is

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the proper concern of government, is always finite in extent. The private sphere, which falls outside its scope, is 'open-ended' and extends indefinitely. In other words, the idea of negative political freedom is built into the idea of the public interest. But the public interest is often a problem not a datum. Some of the steps taken by the government to promote it may well be controversial. While the scope of government must in principle be limited, just what the limits should in fact be is by no means always clear. The public sphere is always finite, but just where the line should be drawn between it and the private sphere depends upon the circumstances prevailing at a given time and place. There is a sense in which negative political freedom is essentially residual in character. It can be encroached upon if the public interest makes this necessary. At the same time these encroachments do not have to be accepted uncritically. The government is a fallible human agency. It has no monopoly of wisdom or virtue. To challenge the government to show why the public interest requires a particular measure is in principle always justified.<sup>45</sup>

The form of government that ensures greatest scope of freedom is democracy. Milne, dealing with the issue of freedom in a democratic state, further stresses upon the right of self-determination of an individual:

There must be freedom to participate actively in politics, to issue the challenge and put pressure on the government to answer it. This is the freedom, which the members of the citizen body have under a representative form of government. Now being a member of a citizen body means being, or at least having the opportunity to be, self-determining as a citizen. To be a self-determining or free citizen is not to be like Sir Joseph Porter in H.M.S. *Pinafore* who:

‘always voted at his party’s call and never thought of thinking for himself at all.’

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It is to make up one's own mind about political issues and acting in the light of the conclusions one reaches. This political self-determination of the free citizen involves something more than merely the absence of constraint by the government, although that is a necessary condition and may appropriately be styled positive political freedom. Citizenship falls within the scope of rational activity at the level of social morality, which means that there is a close connection between moral freedom and positive political freedom. If you are denied membership of the citizen body, your sphere of moral self-determination is correspondingly reduced. Being a member enlarges your opportunities as a free moral agent to act responsibly and justly as a member of your society.<sup>46</sup>

Again, in political discussion 'freedom' is also meant an ability to achieve chosen goals".<sup>47</sup> In this way, If a man has freedom of speech or freedom of assembly, this means that if he chooses to speak or assembly with others for political purposes he will encounter no legal obstacles. Therefore, he will not be clubbed by the police or thrown in jail, or awarded any sort of punishment accordingly.<sup>48</sup> This is because in a democratic state a citizen has a right of freedom. He also has the opportunity of self-determination as a citizen.

Generally the concept of political freedom refers most frequently to *social freedom*, which must be distinguished from other descriptive and valuational usages of the term. It mainly refers to interpersonal or inter-communal relationships. One person has to respect the freedom of others, and one group or class or community has to leave others free to act in their own desired ways. In the context of international relations, the concept of social freedom is extended to the relationship of one nation with other nations, states and peoples. As an individual in a particular society is not free to violate the freedom of other citizens, similarly in international relations freedom of various states is curtailed in order to safeguard the freedom of all the states and nations.

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Coming back to social freedom in the context of interpersonal relations, an individual is unfree to deviate from generally accepted norms of the locality, group, community etc. This curtailment of individual freedom is essential for the general welfare as well as general freedom of an entire body of people, whether it may be society or community or an institution. This principle is applicable to relationships between various groups and their interactions also.

Again, there is no such thing as freedom in general. As we know, every organized society consists of an intricate network of specific relations of both freedom and unfreedom as indicated before. Citizens in a democratic state have the *political freedom* to participate in governmental process through “free” elections. In democracy, as we see, the voters, parties and pressure groups are thereby empowered to *limit* the freedom of their elected officials. Democracy also requires that “Civil Liberties” be protected by legal rights and duties, and these duties again imply limitations of freedom. Conversely, in a perfect dictatorship, the ruler has unlimited freedom with respect to his people, whereas they are totally unfree with respect to him. In a despotic form of government, which is not subject to the rule of law, people have no freedom to exercise their will:

A despotic government is not subject to the rule of law. ... The despotic government can intervene in their lives when and where it likes and can arbitrarily subject to constraint.<sup>49</sup>

In a democracy, both liberties and restrictions of freedom are distributed more evenly, for example, among the various branches of government, between government and governed, majority and minority. In such a state, *equal* freedom, not greater freedom, is the essence of democracy. Strictly speaking, it is not meaningful to say that there is “more” freedom in one society or another; but it is possible to define degrees of social freedom in the sense that one *actor* has greater freedom in certain respect than another:

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A society in which liberties are evenly distributed may be called a free society. However, here we came close to using freedom in valuational sense: a society is free in which those and only those freedom relations hold that are *desirable*.<sup>50</sup>

One of the most peculiar characteristics of freedom is the protection of basic rights. In this respect classical liberalism from Locke to Spencer and his followers advocated that government should restrict a person's freedom where and when necessary to protect another person's basic rights. In strict sense, liberty is not a personal affair but is grounded in social contract. An individual has to observe it as whatever affects himself would also affect others. Being a social and ethical agent he has to consider and respect the freedom of others, for they have the same right to exercise their free will. The liberty of the individual and the society is, therefore, interrelated and complementary to each other, J.S. Mill, in his Essay "On Liberty" presents *three* main principles as being the basis of the appropriate region of human liberty:

“...*First* the inward domain of consciousness; demanding liberty of conscience in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral, or theological. The liberty of expressing and publishing opinions may seem to fall under a different principle, since it belongs to that part of the conduct of an individual which concerns other people; but, being almost of as much importance as the liberty of thought itself, and resting in great part of the same reasons, is practically inseparable from it. *Secondly*, the principle requires liberty of tastes and pursuits; of framing the plan of our life to suit our character; of doing as we like, subject to such consequences as may follow; without our impediment from our fellow-creatures, so long as what we do, does not harm them, even though they should think our conduct foolish, perverse, or wrong. *Thirdly*, from this liberty of each individual, follows the liberty, within the same limits, of



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combination among individuals; freedom to unite, for any purpose not involving harm to others: the persons combining being supposed to be of full age, and not forced or deceived.

No society in which these liberties are not, on the whole, respected, is free, whatever may be its form of government...<sup>51</sup>

A society *is free*, provided it is based on these laissez-faire principles. In this way, a person who enjoys these legal rights and is subject to the corresponding legal duties is free, however unfree he may be in other regards and with respect to actors other than the government, (e.g. because of economic exploitation or social pressure).

It is certainly better to think of political freedom in terms of free citizenship than merely as the absence of constraint by government. But both the spheres — negative and positive political freedom — are complementary to each other. “Without positive political freedom, negative political freedom is insecure.”<sup>52</sup> Moreover, they are essential to each other because “there cannot be positive political freedom without the negative form.”<sup>53</sup> But one important point in this regard should be kept in mind: there can be negative political freedom without the positive variety. The negative concept, therefore, needs to be distinguished from the positive one. One can think of political freedom simply in negative terms without thinking of free citizenship and what it involves at all.

The government based on despotism or dictatorship is most dangerous for human creativeness based on this freedom, namely: the scarcity of geniuses of high intellectual and especially of high moral qualities. Man, in such a state, leads a life of alienation potentialities. Rightly speaking, in a despotic system man becomes despondent:

Dictatorship is harmful for the freedom of man and his spiritual and cultural realization not in itself but because of a scarcity of genius dictators with highly developed intellectual and moral qualities. In this field

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as in general in all fields of our existence the average type of man predominates, and even the number of intellectually and morally defective men considerably exceeds the number of geniuses. It is rather stupidity and cruelty which rule in our human world than wisdom and goodness which are very rare flowers in the garden of our earthly life.<sup>54</sup>

But, in the similar way, if we carefully examine the democratic system of government, we also find the limitation by the social majority upon the social freedom of man. We name the rule of the social majority by a general term “democracy”. With regard to this view of social majority or democracy we do find limitations. A.V. Spakovsky declares:

The degree of this limitation depends upon the same factors, upon which it depends in dictatorship and oligarchy, i.e. upon the moral and intellectual quality of the social majority ... (similarly ‘are’) the dangers of democracy for a free cultural and spiritual creativity and for its bearers: the social minority of the talented persons and those of genius....

In a word, the more the summit of the intellectual and moral (spiritual – cultural) creative activity moves away from the intellectual and moral level and form of the social majority, the more the bearers of this creative activity begin to feel the pressure from the social majority. This intellectual and moral pressure creates in the social creative minority the feeling of an unfreedom as a direct result of the limitation of the free development of their creative activity.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, absolute freedom in any form is neither possible nor desirable. It is an abstract idea. An absolute political or social freedom certainly destroys human dignity. Therefore, freedom, in all its forms is always relative. Spakovsky, in this regard, rightly remarks:

An absolute social freedom will destroy human society, because it leads to an impetuous and

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unrestrained collision of individual purely egocentric interests, so that every kind of anarchism is unrealizable in human society as such, being its very negation. Social freedom must be therefore relative, and the egocentric willfulness of man must be limited by certain considerations of a general welfare of society, according to the already mentioned rule: my freedom begins where the freedom of my fellowman ends, and my freedom ends where the freedom of my fellow-man begins, and the vice-versa, i.e. the ideal of social freedom is to be *solidaristic*.<sup>56</sup>

The co-existence of man with man necessitates certain limitations with regard to the social freedom. However, it is certainly true that a free society must be a politically independent society. It must be in the words of Kant "A Kingdom of ends", i.e. a state in which every citizen is free to pursue his end and no one is used as a means to attain the ends of others.

It may be concluded that political freedom is a necessary condition for social freedom, but it is certainly not a sufficient condition for it. The creation of conditions conducive to social freedom is different from attaining political independence. Many countries of the third world, despite attaining political freedom are under despotic rule, that is monarchs, *shaikhs* or dictators rule them. If they are to enjoy positive political freedom, they must have a democratic government also, It cannot be exported to them or made part of a foreign aid programme. But the fact that a society is not capable of democracy or even constitutionalism is not a good reason for withholding the individual's freedom.

Similarly, the claim of the developed countries that their presence of intervention in the affairs of underdeveloped countries is for the sake of securing freedom of their citizens is a self-contradictory claim. What is imposed from outside is not, in the strict sense of the term, freedom. As an individual's freedom arises from within himself, in the same a nation or state's freedom also ought to be realized from within.

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At the end it is appropriate to point out that freedom, whether it may be social or political, of an individual or a group can never be absolute. Absolute freedom is a notion isolated from natural, social and political realities: it is an abstract idea that cannot be applied to any concrete situation. Freedom, in all its forms, is always relative. One can talk of absolute freedom with regard to Almighty God Only, for absolute freedom implies absolute power also.

### *(e) Freedom in Religion:*

Before proceeding ahead it seems appropriate to try to define religion. If one makes explicit the basic feature of the concept of religion, it would be much easier to examine 'freedom' in its' religions context.

We shall start with the definition of James Martineau, according to which "Religion is the belief in an ever living God, that is, in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the universe and holding moral relations with mankind." Spencer, like Martineau, represents religion as some sort of belief or cognitive state. To Frazer it is a ritual that is conceived in a utilitarian fashion, while Bradley and Arnold hold religion to be a kind of moral attitude and activity. According to McTaggart and Tiele it is a certain kind of feeling.<sup>57</sup> One might think of these definitions as one-sided, but the crux of the religion is, in a broader sense, a composite view of all these definitions.

With reference to Islam it may be said that the very name of this religion provides the most proper definition of religion. '*Islam*' literally means "submission", that is submission to Divine Will. Nevertheless it does not mean negation of human freedom. Submission to the Divine Will enables a man to participate in the acts of Divine Will.

No doubt every person is born in a particular society that has its specific religious or non-religious atmosphere. One is, in one way, free to accept or reject any particular religion. But, in another way, one's religious faith is determined by one's society. In a free society religious diversity would be an open possibility. Mosques, Temples, Churches or other religious institutions are

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allowed to co-exist in a pluralistic society. One may or may not join these institutions. In religious matters people are free to work out their religious positions and standpoints. The religious policy of a free society can display a better and more mature understanding of religion and other dimensions of human experience. 'Religious freedom' is a way to express the attitude of a free society towards religion.

We have discussed negative and positive sides of political freedom in the preceding part of this chapter. Religious freedom also has both negative and positive forms. Negative religious freedom is simply the freedom from constraint in all religious matters. One should have the freedom not to join any Church or religious institution if one does not want to. On the other hand, positive religious freedom means 'self-determination in the sphere of religion'. A man achieves it to the extent that he works out his attitude towards religion for himself and bases his practice upon the convictions he has reached rather than allowing his religious position to be settled for him by social custom or convention. In brief, in the words of Milne: "negative religious freedom is part of negative freedom: positive religious freedom is part of personal freedom."<sup>58</sup> What follows from this statement is that negative religious freedom is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for positive religious freedom. One must be free from constraint in matters of religion if one is to be self-determining. But the fact that one is free from constraint does not mean that one will in fact be self-determining. One may simply ignore religion or follow fashion without thinking. Thus in a free society, there must be complete negative religious freedom and adequate opportunities for all to achieve positive religious freedom.

A more pertinent case is that of suicide. Suicide is a sin in every religion. Even though it would seem as if the right to take one's own life should rest with the individual himself, yet religion imposes restraint on it to the extent of declaring it a sinful act. The justification here would be that the sacredness of human life ought to be treated, as the most fundamental of all values and it is the duty of any genuinely religious person to prevent people from committing suicide: "Preventing them means preserving their

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opportunities for personal, moral and rational freedom, albeit against their will.”<sup>59</sup> In Islam cow-slaughter is permitted, for example, but is in no way a ‘must’ without which the basic condition of religiosity remains unfulfilled. Moreover, Islam as a religion, in theory and practice, has been tolerant and respectful to other faiths. There are various instances in history when Muslim rulers prohibited cow-slaughter to show respect to the feelings of Hindus and to win their good will. In short, such ritualistic aspects usually are not essential to the teaching of any religion. Therefore, their disconfirmation at the instance of state does not actually curtail one’s religious freedom. Of course, if Muslims are restrained from offering regular prayers and the prayer call (*azan*), or disallowed to go to *Hajj*, or to observe *Muharram* ceremonies, it would, undoubtedly be an encroachment upon their religious freedom. These examples are cited to show the nature and extent of religious freedom that must be ensured in all democratic and free societies.

Religious freedom, in its true sense, is a doctrine of special status. Man acts freely. In a real sense, he is more social than individual because he cannot survive and live alone. Ethics being a matter of interpersonal relations is meaningful only in a social context. Hence in personal or individual and social aspects of freedom, man is partially free and partially determined. In this connection Anatol Von Spakovsky has rightly remarked:

Social freedom consists in a possibility that everybody can express freely his thought, feeling and will without being persecuted for this expression by the social environment. But it is also quite natural that the coexistence of man with man necessitates certain limitations in regard to the social freedom of everybody. This coexistence transforms the absolute freedom of man as a separate individual, as a separate “I”, into the coordinated freedom of man as a part of human society, as an element of a collective “We”.<sup>60</sup>

Further, in this regard, he formulates a formula that indicates this coordinated social freedom of man as: “*My freedom begins where the freedom of other man ends, and my*

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*freedom ends where the freedom of other begins.*”<sup>61</sup> One has both the ways open either to act within the framework of a particular religion and its tenets or to do otherwise. One can exhibit and exercise one’s religious freedom in a social perspective. True religious freedom is that which establishes morality of a free society on a humanistic basis, and not on the basis of caste, colour, creed, sex, group or geographical conditions etc. Such ‘human morality’, ‘human-welfare’ should be the aim and objective of a religious or social freedom.

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**CHAPTER II**

**EXISTENTIAL CONCEPTION  
OF  
FREEDOM AND CREATIVITY**

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CHAPTER II

**EXISTENTIAL CONCEPTION OF FREEDOM  
AND CREATIVITY**

Before proceeding to discuss the existential conception of freedom and creativity it seems appropriate to present a brief account of 'existentialism'.

*(a) Existentialism: A Brief Introduction*

There can be no single definition that can comprehensively embrace the complexities of the existential philosophy. It is not a wholly new philosophy, for its roots go as far back as Socrates. Even Kierkegaard, the father of modern existentialism, acknowledged that his was a Socratic task — “know thyself”.

The term “existentialism” is thoroughly discussed and elaborately by various scholars and commentators. Broadly speaking, it may be described as a revolt against traditional Western philosophy. It speaks out against various forms of ‘dehumanization’ that, it believes, result from industrial society, technocracy, militant nationalism, militarism and the so-called scientific objectivism and physicalism. It is a natural outcome or reaction of the modern society, which according to the existentialists, causes alienation at the social and individual planes and results into self-deception and denial of individuality. Existentialists proclaim that modern man’s penchant for systematization — in science, in philosophy, in social theory— leads to the loss of subjectivity. Existentialism is a radical revolt against objectification and the concept of the ‘typed’ man. The two world wars have left man numb, cold and helpless. His dreams are shattered, his ideals are frustrated and his personality is injured, broken into many dissociated parts. He has lost a sense of the totality of being. He has been left alone and homeless in the midst of the brute objectivity of the world. Besides, in the modern imperial order of ‘reason’, human subjectivity has been increasingly deemed to be a vicious intrusion into the blissful

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paradise of scientific and technological objectivism. Under such circumstances existentialism offer's a philosophical alternative that is strictly *personal* and '*humanistic*'.

Existentialism emphasizes the uniqueness and primacy of existence — the inner, immediate experience of man's self-awareness. "Emphasis on human existence is the beginning of the definition of existentialism."<sup>1</sup> The fundamental drive or urge is to exist and to be recognized as an individual. If man is so recognized, existentialists assert, he may gain a sense of meaning and significance in life. According to existentialism, the most meaningful point of reference of any person is his immediate consciousness, which cannot be contained in a 'system' of abstractions. The advocates of existentialism hold that abstract thinking tends to be impersonal leading us away from the concrete human situation. Robert N. Beck brings out the core of an existentialistic outlook upon man:

Man must be understood, existentialists insist, in terms of possibilities, anxieties, and decisions; in terms of the tragic and absurd situations in which he finds himself. Man is not an image or reflection of an antecedently existing essence that determines his actions and his values; he is a free being. *What* man is, can only be inferred from *how* he is, that is, man's essence is to be found only in his concrete existence. The desire to know the meaning of the individual man in a more radical way than have other philosophers leads existentialists to hold that the starting point of philosophy is the concrete situation of man in the world.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the same, according to existentialist thinkers, reality or being is "existence" that is found in the "I" rather than the "it". Thus the centre of thought and meaning is the existing individual thinker.<sup>3</sup>

Existentialism is a protest in the name of 'human individuality' against the concepts of "reason" and 'nature" that were so strongly emphasized during the 18<sup>th</sup> century "Enlightenment": "The first and most obvious one is that this

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style of philosophizing begins from man rather than from nature”.<sup>4</sup> A traditional philosopher studies man in terms of some ‘concept’ or ‘essence’ derived from reason. On the contrary, ‘the existentialist attitude’ indicates that reflection on human experience can lead to an important philosophical turnaround. This very attitude is directed towards ‘human existence’. In the domain of the existential philosophy ‘existence’ means the state of being actual, or occurring within space and time, or it refers to ‘something given here and now’.

Existentialists reject the Platonic view of man and assert that there is something which cannot be conceptualized and whose existence comes before its essence, that is the personal act of existing, or “that being is man or, as Heidegger has it, the human reality”.<sup>5</sup> There is no knowledge, the existentialists say, apart from a knowing subject. The argument of classical thinkers that man can be understood in terms of some ‘concept’ or ‘essence’ derived from reason is wrong:

Existentialists oppose such traditional conceptualism and its abstract, general concepts of existence and individuality. Neither systems of thought nor rational definition can capture individual human existence.<sup>6</sup>

Man’s inner life must be understood, existentialists insist, “with its moods, anxieties and decisions.”<sup>7</sup> Their prime concern is rooted in the being of man as well as its various concrete situations and dimensions.

Existentialism also opposes all forms of objectivity and objective functionalization of man. Objectivity, existentialists assert, has tended to make the person of secondary importance in relation with things. Sartre, in this connection, says: “Man is, indeed, a project which possesses a subjective life, instead of being a King of moss, or a fungus or a cauliflower.”<sup>8</sup> Existentialism, thus, places a new emphasis on man’s inner life and experience. It stresses on man’s immediate and subjective awareness. Stressing upon man’s inner life, existentialism raises the problem of man’s individuality and personality. It represents man’s rebellion against all attempts to ignore or suppress the

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uniqueness of his subjective experience. John Macquerrie expresses the existentialist position in the following words:

(Thus) one must further qualify the existentialist position by saying that for existentialist the subject is the existent in the whole range of his existing. He is not only a thinking subject but an initiator of action and a centre of feeling. It is this whole spectrum of existence, known directly and completely in the very act of existing, that existentialism tries to express.<sup>9</sup>

Kierkegaard, the father of modern existentialism, has rightly remarked that individual is real and 'subjectivity is truth'. To him "individuals alone were real", and the genuine and the critical dilemmas of the individual's life "are not solved by intellectual exploration of the facts nor of the laws of thinking about them."<sup>10</sup> The resolution emerges through conflicts and tumults in the soul; anxieties, agonies, perilous adventures of faith into unknown territories. Sartre, with reference to Kierkegaard, further asserts:

The reality of everyone's existence proceeds thus from the "inwardness" of man, not from anything that the mind can codify, for objectified knowledge is always at one or more removed from the truth. "Truth", said Kierkegaard, "is subjectivity".<sup>11</sup>

The emphasis on personal existence and subjectivity has led in turn to a new emphasis on man's freedom and personal responsibility. According to the existentialists the faculty that makes a radical distinction between human and non-human being is freedom. Themes, such as freedom, choice and responsibility are prominent in the writings of all the existentialist philosophers. John Macquerrie, with the reference to John Macmurray, asserts:

These matters constitute the core of personal being. It is the exercise of freedom and the ability to shape the future that distinguishes man from all the other beings that we know on earth. It is through free and responsible decisions that man becomes authentically



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himself. In John Macmurray's language, the 'self as agent' provides the central themes for existentialism, whereas traditional Western Philosophy, specially since the time of Descartes, has concentrated attention on the 'self as subject' — and by 'subject is understood 'thinking subject'.<sup>12</sup>

Freedom is the core theme of the existential philosophy. The human individual can create his world through his acts of free will. According to the existentialist thinkers, man is what he wills; and he is responsible for everything he does. Therefore, he is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. And this doctrine — willing and making oneself — is the first principle of existentialism.<sup>13</sup>

While stressing the importance of man, the existentialists also realistically face the facts of human weakness, insecurity and limitations. In elaborating the existential world outlook, they have brought to limelight the specifically existentialist themes such as finitude, guilt, alienation, despair, anguish, death etc. Anxiety, the existentialists assert, arises as man undergoes the experience of the meaninglessness of his life. Anguish and melancholy lead to existential despair and this very "crisis", they hold, prepares man for the "leap" into an authentic existence. This may come through "faith" and dependence on God, according to the theologians, or through "resolve", an act of will, according to some others, for the advocates of existentialism are both theists and atheists. Hence existentialism is an assertion of the significance of the self in the face of frustration and the impersonality of modern civilization in an artificial, man-made world.<sup>14</sup> Sartre and Heidegger give three names — "fallenness, being-in-the-midst-of-the-world and inauthentic"<sup>15</sup> — to the one and the same state of human weakness and insecurity that alienates him from his authentic and true being. In short, for the existentialists: "man is never just part of the cosmos but always stands to it in a relationship of tension with possibilities for tragic conflict."<sup>16</sup>

Hence, existentialism is a movement having philosophical, theological, literary and psychological dimensions, all revealing

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the common belief of its exponents, that is “existence comes before essence”<sup>17</sup> The existentialists maintain that every person’s existence, as he himself experiences his situations in the world, is the only fruitful point of view for expressing and solving human problems. Theories and abstractions, existentialists believe, cannot cope with this basic fact. Man through free will and responsibility, moulds himself according to his aims and objectives. God or society does not determine his fate and character in advance. Though his inescapable lot is anxiety, he has a moral obligation to participate actively in his individual and social life.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, it can be said that ‘existentialism’ is a movement of protest, a diagnosis of man’s predicament, a belief in the primacy of existence, an emphasis on man’s subjective experience or personal involvement, a radical recognition of freedom and responsibility, and a projection of human sense of insecurity in the world. Having gone through this general survey of existentialist philosophy, we can proceed to explain the existentialist concepts of freedom and creativity in their proper perspective.

### ***(b) Existential Conception of Freedom and Creativity:***

Existentialism underlines “freedom and responsibility”. Its philosophical endeavour is anti-deterministic. The emphasis of the existentialists on personal existence and subjectivity has led to a new emphasis on man’s freedom and responsibility. Describing the purpose of the movement as primarily concerned with man’s existence, his freedom and responsibility, Blackham, in his *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, eloquently asserts:

The goal of movement for an existing individual is ‘to arrive at a decision, and to renew it’. The (existentialist) thinker gives himself stable ethical reality by forming and renewing himself in critical decisions which are a total inward commitment. ... ‘Through having willed in this manner, through having ventured to take a decisive step in the utmost intensity of subjective passion and with full consciousness of one’s eternal responsibility.

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... one learns something else about life, and learns that it is quite a different thing from being engaged, year in and year out, in piecing together something for a system.<sup>19</sup>

According to the exponents of existentialism, determinism, whether hereditary, biological or environmental, does not offer an adequate explanation of man's inner potentialities and capabilities. In the existentialist philosophy, the main interest is directed not so much to mankind in general, to social institutions and their collective achievements, or to the impersonal world of nature, but to the 'existence' of human individual and his *choices* and decisions. Man translates his unique inner potentialities into action and creative skill only because of his *freedom*. The existentialist viewpoint is that man, first of all, exists in the world, where through his freedom he makes and moulds himself and through his actions creates his values. Man is a project, which possesses subjective life. For man, apart from this projection of self all that exists is a means to the realization of his being. He fulfils his project only through his freedom and creativity. He is responsible for whatever he does and, in this way, the whole responsibility of his actions or other various creative skills falls solely upon his shoulders.

Again, existentialism is an assertion of the significance of personal existence and decisions. For the existentialists freedom is not something to be proved or argued about. It is a reality to be experienced. Man has considerable freedom within his reach provided he wills to exercise it and create his world according to his desires or aspirations.

One can find the conception of freedom in all existentialist thinkers, viz. Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Marcel, Jaspers and others. But Jean-Paul Sartre alone among all the existentialists has elaborated a systematic and detailed theory of freedom.

Traditional philosophers use the term "freedom" mainly in two contexts, which are technically known as freedom of self-realization and 'freedom of indeterminism' or 'freedom of the will'. But the existentialists do not accept the classical theories regarding freedom of the will. As Olson puts it:

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The best introduction to the existentialist theory will, therefore, be a consideration of the reasons which induced the existentialists to reject, non-existentialist concepts of freedom.<sup>20</sup>

Like the other existentialists, Sartre, too, rejects the traditional philosophical concepts of 'freedom'. The chief difference between Sartre and the exponents of classical theories is as he asserts: "Man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free: he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all."<sup>21</sup>

According to the classical theories human behaviour is often determined by an objective situation and for a subjective motive. Moreover, according to the classical thinkers also it is only reason, which indicates that if behaviour is so determined it is morally wrong or injurious to one's best long-range interests that free choice comes into play. Sartre, on the other hand, completely denies that either objective situations or subjective motives ever really move man to act. Human beings are not playthings of their passions, but, they choose their actions themselves. They are free at their will to decide and act. Therefore, their entire creative ability depends upon freedom.

Freedom is the highest value in existential philosophy. It is the value *par excellence*. Flight from freedom, existentialists believe, leads to 'fallenness' and inauthenticity.

There is no realm of value or means of justification or excuse other than freedom, which is the sole criterion of human existence. Sartre asserts that in this world human beings are left alone without any excuse and they are condemned to freedom:

We are left alone without excuse. That is what I mean when I say that man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment that he is thrown into this world he is responsible for everything he does.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, Sartre does not believe in the power of passion. He considers a grand passion "as the destructive torrent upon

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which a man is swept into certain actions as by fate, and which, therefore, is an excuse for them.”<sup>23</sup> He thinks that man is responsible for his passion also.

Every action implies freedom. Without it man can create nothing. Of all the existential themes, the most central and prominent is ‘freedom’. As stated earlier, this theme is present in the writings of all existentialists. First of all, it became prominent in the writings of Kierkegaard, according to whom; to exist and to be free were almost synonymous expressions. The interest in freedom, or rather the passion for freedom, is not confined to any particular variety of the existentialists. Sartre, too, is just as insistent as Kierkegaard that freedom and existence are indistinguishable. According to him, one does not first exist and then become free; to be human is already to be free. Freedom is the core of human existence, which is grounded in it.

According to the advocates of existentialism freedom, besides being identical with human existence, is also creativity. It is the highest accomplishment of humanity as well as the core of human existence. John Macquerrie has remarked with reference to Nikolai Berdyaev:

If freedom is almost identical with existence itself, there is no humanity without freedom. Freedom may be dangerous, but there is no human dignity without freedom, and the risk of increasing freedom must constantly be taken. Berdyaev rightly links freedom with creativity. The highest reach of humanity is creativity, a sharing in the power of God-the Creator. ‘Creativity is the mystery of freedom. Man can indeed create the monstrous as well as the good, the beautiful, and the useful’.<sup>24</sup>

As mentioned before, for the existentialists, particularly for Sartre, there are no values external to man. Values are created by man and have no objective or permanent basis. Man only has freedom to create himself and his values as he wills and acts. Sartre declares that ‘everything is permissible’, and, man is really “beyond good and evil” as Nietzsche thinks. Dostoyevsky

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writes: "If God did not exist, everything would be permitted."<sup>25</sup> This very dictum has become the starting point of existentialism, particularly for Sartre and Heidegger.

According to Sartre, freedom and human reality are synonymous:

Freedom is the nature of man; in anxiety man becomes aware of his freedom, knows himself responsible for his own being by commitment, seeks the impossible reunion with being-in-itself....<sup>26</sup>

For Sartre man is free to choose his actions. He has the will to do whatever he likes. The ultimate principle of being, says Heidegger, is 'will'. Sartre concurs by saying that only in action is there any reality. Man is only the sum total of his actions and purposes.<sup>27</sup> Again according to him, man creates his own world with his deeds. Freedom is the basis for all human activity. To act is to modify the shape of the world.

Sartre, like Kierkegaard, insists that there are no external signs to guide man. Man must make his own rules and make them alone. He writes in *The Age of Reason*:

There was in his world no evil or good save that he set up as such. All round things had formed a circle and waited without making a sign: he stood alone in the midst of a monstrous silence, *alone* and *free*, without condemned to be free.<sup>28</sup>

It is rightly observed that all the existentialists have taken the problem of freedom very seriously. Kierkegaard points out that freedom is man's greatness and grandeur. His charge against Hegel is that he has left no room in his philosophical system for human feeling or freedom. Heidegger holds that "truth's essence is freedom."<sup>29</sup> True freedom according to Marcel, is achieved when the self is conscious of the many rich possibilities of insight and development that are open to it. Man, Marcel holds, is truly free only when he opens himself to hope, fidelity, and love and especially when he understands that freedom points beyond itself and to a transcendental reality or ego. Marcel very

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emphatically says that ‘man’ or an individual existential being ‘I’ is defined only by its ‘liberty’. Moreover, this liberty is the primary source of subject-object relationship. As Blackham underlines:

The I is, so to speak, defined by its liberty, the possibility in the face of life to accept or to refuse it. This is the primary subject-object relation.<sup>30</sup>

Marcel holds further that love and intelligence are related to freedom and they are the most concrete as well as the most creative things in the world.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, the idea of freedom is also found at the centre of Jaspers’ philosophical system. Replying to the questions — how is it that we are free, and how is it that existence is essentially freedom?, Jaspers says that this is because transcendence is concealed from human beings. He points out that if transcendence is revealed to them directly; they would not be free, because transcendence would dominate them. In this state the domain of existence is the domain of freedom, and that of possibility, project and choice.

All the existentialist thinkers use the term “freedom” to refer to something, which they consider to be a genuinely existing and valuable feature of the human condition. The existentialists do not deny that man has the power to achieve chosen goals by his own efforts, as the traditional philosophers understand by the term ‘freedom’. What leads the existentialists to reject or ignore the commonsense conception of freedom is their belief that the power to achieve particular goals is not itself of a great value. This theory rests upon three other notions:<sup>32</sup>

*First*, man is a being who exists only by projecting himself beyond the present into the future. To exist is to posit goals and to pursue them. There is no escape from our condition except flight or pursuit towards projected values. This means that if one empirical desire is fulfilled, we will and must replace that with another. In this way, state of complete desire fulfillment would be equivalent to ‘death’. A part of the tragedy of human condition is that man is a desiring being and that desire, according to the existentialists, is a state of ‘lack’ or

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incompletion. In this regard Sartre says: “The existence of desire as a human fact is sufficient to prove that human reality is a lack.”<sup>33</sup> He further adds that desire is a lack of being.<sup>34</sup> Thus, a state of lack is certainly incompatible with a state of perfection. Against this backdrop, according to the existentialist thinkers, the common man has defined freedom on the basis of a mistaken notion that there is a state of happiness, satisfied desire or absence of frustration that can be achieved by fulfilling empirical desires. Existentialists hold that desiring is an existential imperative of man and in this inescapable act of desiring he too constitutes himself as incomplete and unfulfilled. This incompleteness or unfulfillment is necessary if man is to be ‘free; even in the sense of being able to overcome obstacles. Nietzsche makes this point more clearly asserting that the resistance that has to be overcome can measure freedom and by the efforts it takes to maintain oneself on top. Sartre expresses the same point in his own language. Freedom, he says, “Itself creates the obstacles from which we suffer.”<sup>35</sup> But the obstacles which stand in one’s way would not exist as obstacles were it not for his free choice of values. In a word, to do or not to do, is freedom itself.

*Secondly*, the existentialists say that even if man could succeed in fulfilling all his particular empirical desires, he would still not achieve happiness; for the desire of particular, empirical objects in the world is always suspended from and merely a specification of an overarching desire for the impossible. In this respect, the existentialist argument is that ‘a satisfied desire in the sense of an achieved desire does not bring satisfaction in the sense of pleasure or happiness.’<sup>36</sup>

*Third*, the last objection of the existential philosophers against the common notion of freedom is that even if man could escape from desires and find pleasure or happiness in a state of total desire-fulfillment, this could only be at the cost of intensity and the existential values. And of course the existentialists hold that the intense life with the existential values would certainly be superior to a state of contentment or happiness.<sup>37</sup>

These are the *three* arguments on the basis of which the existentialists reject the commonsense conception of freedom



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indicating that the power to achieve particular goals is not itself a great value.

The existentialist argument against freedom through self-realization, as the classical thinkers define it, rests primarily upon the belief that man has no readymade human nature, no divine essence that is to be automatically realized. Nietzsche and Sartre agree that there is no God, and man is not divinely ordained with a fixed essence and nature. For Nietzsche “God is dead” and for Sartre “there is no God”. Sartre emphasizes:

“ ...There is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man simply is. Not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, and as he conceives himself after already existing — as he wills to be after that leap towards existence.”<sup>38</sup>

Further, Sartre himself defined existentialism as the view, which holds that “existence precedes essence.”<sup>39</sup> In this connection he also referred to the Leibnitzian view that man’s existence comes before his essence and he is defined by the choice of his ends. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre says:

Adam’s essence is for Adam himself a *given*: Adam has not chosen it; he could not choose to be Adam. Consequently he does not support the responsibility for his being....For us, on the contrary, Adam is not defined by an essence since for human reality essence comes after existence.<sup>40</sup>

In other words, according to the existentialist thinkers, man makes his own history by his own choices and actions, and his true life history or individual essence could not conceivably be known or defined until after his death. William Barrett, with reference to Heidegger, points out that man makes history by his actions:

We are not born at some moment in general, but at *that* particular moment in that particular milieu and in entering the world we also enter, however humbly, into

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its historical destiny. The more concretely and humbly we grasp the temporal roots of human existence, the more clearly we see that this existence is in and of itself, through and through, historical. As temporality is to time, so is historicity to history; as we make clocks to measure time because our being is essentially temporal, so man writes histories or makes history by his actions because his very being is historical.<sup>41</sup>

The existentialists are deeply interested in the dignity of the individual person; and according to them a being who does not personally support the responsibility for his individual history and who does not choose himself or make himself, is, in reality, a person without dignity.

It is also very essential to keep in mind that for the existentialists man is free by ontological necessity and that any attempt to escape from 'freedom' is necessarily self-defeating. In one particular sense, then, freedom is a universal human phenomenon which does not permit of degrees. At the same time, however, the existentialists have an axiological doctrine of freedom according to which one is aware of freedom as an ontological necessity and so ceases to try to escape from freedom. An individual exposed to a situation that obliges him to become conscious of his freedom is thus freer than the individual not so obliged.

As stated earlier the view of existentialists on freedom in general rejects the traditional arguments in favour of the freedom of the will. Such an existentialist view against the classical conception of 'freedom' is expressed in the writings of Nikolai Berdyaev. He voices the opinion of existentialists, when he emphasizes that the question is not at all that of 'freedom of the will', as stated in naturalistic, psychological or pedagogical-moralistic usage.<sup>42</sup> The difficulty in these traditional arguments, Berdyaev points out, was that they attempted to 'objectify' freedom; to treat it as an *object* that could somehow be perceived, investigated, and either proved or disproved from outside. But for the existentialists (as for Kant), he argues, freedom is not to be proved, but is rather a postulate of action.<sup>43</sup>

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In the strict sense, “Freedom is not something to be proved or argued about; it is a reality to be experienced.”<sup>44</sup> Freedom is already there as a condition of our existing (including our thinking). Berdyaev holds: “To understand an act of freedom rationally is to make it resemble the phenomena of nature;”<sup>45</sup> and this very phenomenon belongs to a ‘secondary’ world. Freedom, according to him, must be already there before one can even think of such a world. While speaking of this type of freedom that is prior to the phenomenal world, Berdyaev’s language assumes a metaphysical or rather a mystical over-tone. To stress the priority of freedom he often, like Sartre, says that freedom has the primacy over being:

But freedom cannot be derived from being; it is rooted in nothingness, in non-being, if we are to use ontological terminology. Freedom is baseless neither determined by nor born of being.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, Sartre, in his *Being and Nothingness* declares:

Freedom is not a being; it is the being of man — i.e., his nothingness of being...Man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free: he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all.<sup>47</sup>

In brief, the existentialist philosophers do not use the term “freedom” in the classical or traditional sense or as common men use it. The ordinary man believes that he is most free when he is not obliged to choose or when circumstances clearly dictate which one choice is the best. The existentialist thinker, on the contrary, believes that man is most free when he recognizes that he is obliged to choose. The ordinary man says that freedom is valuable because it leads to happiness, security and contentment. The existentialist says that freedom is valuable because through it man may realize his own dignity, potentiality, capability, and triumph over the unhappiness to which he is irrevocably condemned. Again, the ordinary man tries to ignore the unpleasant facts of life, and if he is exposed to an “impossible situation” where no choice could conceivably be a choice of happiness, he is without recourse. Conversely, the existentialist

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philosopher refuses to ignore the unpleasant facts of life and spends most of his time trying to find some suitable techniques by which to triumph over them. For an existentialist thinker freedom reveals itself in dread. In the state of dread or anguish an individual, in real sense, becomes aware of his freedom:

It is in anguish that man becomes the consciousness of his freedom, or if you prefer, anguish is the mode of being of freedom as consciousness of being; it is in anguish that freedom is, in its being, in question for itself.<sup>48</sup>

To summarize the existentialist view regarding freedom, it seems appropriate to refer to Berdyaev's notion of freedom indicating its mystical roots:

Freedom is indeed 'meontic', a nothing rather than a something, a possibility rather than an actuality. It cannot be grasped by thought but only known through the exercise of freedom; and perhaps even then it is only in those rare moments of the experience of anxiety in the face of freedom that we perceive something of that abyssal and primordial character of freedom.<sup>49</sup>

It may be concluded that all the existential thinkers have a conspicuously anti-deterministic outlook and their chief concern rests with human despair, struggle, suffering, authenticity and freedom. Their common source is an acute awareness of the tragedy inherent in the human condition. In fact, their common programme or line of action is mainly to liberate human beings from the fear and frustrations of everyday life or the tedium of philosophical daydreaming or system building. Broadly speaking, it can be said that the common interest, which unites existential philosophers, is their interest in human freedom.<sup>50</sup>

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**CHAPTER III**

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CHAPTER III

**SARTRE'S NOTION OF FREEDOM AND ITS  
IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL AND  
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Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), a French Philosopher and writer, is the leading proponent of French atheistic existentialism whose impact on modern thought is unprecedented. The writings of Sartre have probably been more influential in the West than those of any other thinker and literary figure since the World Wars. In his theoretical writings, Sartre has laid the foundations for an original doctrine of human predicament in the modern age. His concern, however, has been to relate his theory to human response and the practical demands of living. To achieve this end, he has carried his philosophical concepts into his novels, short stories, plays, film scripts, and literary and political essays; and subjected them to the test of imaginative experience. His uniqueness lies in the success with which he demonstrates the validity of the existentialist doctrine in his literary works.

We have already given a brief account of the existential concept of freedom in the preceding Chapter in which Sartre's concept of freedom has also been discussed. Here we shall be discussing the same conception in detail along with its implications for individual and society.

The cornerstone of existentialism may be said to be Sartre's dictum, viz., "existence precedes essence"<sup>1</sup> i.e. man's existence comes before its essence. In other words, man is a being that exists before it can be defined or theorized about. Sartre explains this dictum saying that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world and defines himself afterwards. He points out that if man, in the view of an existentialist thinker, is indefinable, "it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself."<sup>2</sup> Man's 'making of himself' is the first principle of his philosophical thought.

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### **(a) Freedom for Individual:**

Sartre has systematically developed a theory of freedom. His conception of freedom is elaborated in all his writings, especially in *Being and nothingness (L'etre et le meant)* and *Existentialism and Humanism (L'Existentialism est un humanism)*.

Sartre's philosophical *magnum opus*, *Being and Nothingness*, is divided into six sections. It opens with an introduction in which the author introduces most of his key terms and discusses his method of philosophizing. Then follow four parts: the *first* about "Nothingness", nihilation, negation and bad faith; the *second* about consciousness and its *being-for-itself*. The *third* takes up *being-for-others*, or 'myself' looked at by others. This part deals with community, love and hate and many other social aspects of life. It is in this context that man realizes his responsibility. Part *four* of the book consists of a detailed interpretation of consciousness resulting in the development of his theory of *freedom*. It may be said with justification that the crux of his writings is embodied in this part of *Being and Nothingness*. The conclusion, the *sixth* section of the book, includes a short discussion of the possibility of an ethics based on the preceding account. However, it is beyond the scope of the present undertaking to go in for a detailed discussion of all the sections of *Being and Nothingness*; what is relevant to our theme is the part *four*. In support to our interpretation of Sartre's theory of freedom and creativity, his other writings would also partly be referred to. While dealing with the implications of his theory of freedom and its practical consequences for individual and society, one should examine the third part of his *Being and Nothingness* also.

*Being and Nothingness*, sub-titled as "*An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*", states clearly the central intention of Sartre. The theme of the 'Essay' fairly indicates that being is never exhausted by any of its phenomenal aspects; no particular perspective reveals the entire character of being. There are two modes of *being* — being-in-itself and being-for-itself. According to Sartre, *being-in-itself (en-soi)* is fixed, complete, wholly given, absolutely contingent, with no reason for its being. It is roughly equivalent to the inert world of objects and things:

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*Being-in-itself* (Sartre's *en-soi*) is the self-contained being of a thing. A stone is a stone; it is what it is; and in being just what it is, no more and no less, the being of the thing always coincides with itself.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, *being-for-itself* (*pour-soi*) is incomplete, fluid, indeterminate and it corresponds to the being of human consciousness:

*Being-for-itself* (*pour-soi*) is co-extensive with the realm of consciousness, and the nature of consciousness is that it is perpetually beyond itself. Our thought goes beyond itself, toward tomorrow or yesterday, and toward the outer edges of the world.<sup>4</sup>

Sartre, further, points out that *being-in-itself* is prior to *being-for-itself* and the latter is dependent upon the former for its origin. *Being-for-itself* is derived from *being-in-itself* by an act of nihilation (nothingness), for *being-for-itself* is a nothingness in the heart of being. Lastly, the author concludes his phenomenological essay elucidating the nature and quality of freedom and delineating his programme of existential psycho-analysis. Freedom is discussed in relation to the will, in relation to facticity and finally in relation to responsibility.

Sartre points out that freedom characterizes man and in anxiety man becomes aware of his freedom, knows himself responsible for his own being by commitment. He seeks the impossible reunion with *being-in-itself*, and in despair knows himself for ever at odds with the "others" who by their glances can turn him into a mere object or an ordinary thing.

According to Sartre the *will* can never be the condition of freedom; it is simply a psychological manifestation of it. The will presupposes the foundation of an original freedom in order to be able to constitute itself as will. He says the 'will' is derived or posited by reflective decision. It is a psychological manifestation that emerges within the complex of motives and ends already posited by the *for-itself* (mode of being). Generally speaking, according to Sartre, it is not the "Will" that is free but

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“Man is free, man is freedom”<sup>5</sup>. The will, he assumes, is simply a manifestation of man’s primordial freedom.

Freedom in relation to *facticity* gives rise to the existential situation. One should be very clear about the term “facticity”. Existentialists use the word “facility” to designate the limiting factor in existence. “*Facticity* (the word has been coined to translate the German ‘*Faktizität*’ and French ‘*facticité*’) does not mean the same as ‘*factuality*’”<sup>6</sup>. When one says that something is ‘factual one’ is pointing to an objective state of affairs observable in the world. To the existentialists, ‘facticity’, on the other hand, might be called the inner side of ‘facticity’. In the words of John Macquerrie:

It is not an observed state of affairs but the inward, existential awareness of one’s own being as a fact that is to be accepted. No one has chosen to be. He simply finds himself in existence. We discover ourselves, so to speak, as free existents in the midst of a world of things. We did not put ourselves in the world. ... The factual is the given, and above all, the givenness of our existence. That *we are here* is, if you like, an inexplicable brute fact.<sup>7</sup>

Or more precisely, in the words of Sartre, ‘facticity’ is:

The For-itself’s necessary connection with the In-itself, hence with the world and its own past. It is what allows us to say that the For-itself *is* or *exists*. The facticity of freedom is the fact that freedom is not able not to be free.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, freedom in relation to facticity certainly gives rise to the existential situation. The situation is that ambiguous phenomenon in which it is impossible clearly to distinguish the contribution of freedom and the determinants of brute circumstances. These account for the ‘paradox of freedom’.<sup>9</sup> In speaking about the “paradox of freedom” Sartre holds that human-reality everywhere encounters resistances and obstacles which it has not created, but these resistances and obstacles have meaning only in and through the free choice which human reality

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is.<sup>10</sup> A man is condemned to be free, because to Sartre, he did not create himself. In a particular concrete situation through anxiety man, Sartre asserts, becomes aware of his freedom and knows himself responsible for his own being by commitment to the world in which he is thrown. Sartre, in this regard, writes in his *Being and Nothingness*:

“...Man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being. ... Furthermore, this absolute responsibility is not resignation; it is simply the logical requirement of the consequences of our freedom. ...Every thing which happens to me is *mine*....Thus there are no *accidents* in a life; a community event which suddenly bursts forth and involves me in it does not come from the outside. If I am mobilized in a war, this war is *my* war; it is in my image and I deserve it. I deserve it first because I could always get out of it by suicide or by desertion; these ultimate possibles are those which must always be present for us when there is a question of envisaging a situation. For lack of getting out of it, I have *chosen* it.”<sup>11</sup>

With a view to resolve the ‘paradox of freedom’, Sartre points out that there is freedom only in situation, and there is a situation only through freedom.<sup>12</sup> He delineates *five* structures of the situation in which freedom and facticity interpenetrate each others: (i) my place, (ii) my past, (iii) my environment, (iv) my fellow men, and (v) my death.<sup>13</sup> Insofar as freedom always interpenetrates facticity, man becomes wholly responsible for himself. He is responsible for everything except for the fact of his responsibility. He is free, but is not free to obliterate fully his freedom. He is condemned to be free:

Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty and from the moment that he is thrown into this world, he is responsible for every thing he does.<sup>14</sup>

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This abandonment to freedom is an expression of his 'facticity'. Yet he must assume responsibility for the fact that his facticity is incomprehensible and contingent. The result is that the facticity of his final abandonment consists simply in the fact that he is condemned to be wholly responsible for himself. Although freedom and facticity interpenetrate, it remains incontestable that freedom is accorded a central place in the Sartrean conception of man.

As mentioned above, Sartre is a radical representative of existentialism. He is very emphatic in asserting himself to be a representative of atheistic existentialism. He, in this connection, avers:

Atheistic existentialism, of which I am a representative, declares with great consistency that...God does not exist.... Of course, there is no God. In other words — and this is, I believe, the purport of all that we French call radicalism — nothing will be changed if God does not exist; we shall re-discover the same norms of honesty, progress and humanity, and we shall have disposed of God as an out-of-date hypothesis which will die away quietly of itself.<sup>15</sup>

Sartre draws important conclusions from atheism. He constructs his philosophical thought and especially his theory of freedom on the basis of his atheistic outlook.

Sartre asserts that there is no God and hence "everything is permitted". Had there been God human freedom would have been curtailed. In case God does not exist, Sartre points out, there is only one being whose existence comes before its essence and that being is 'man'. Man is indefinable because, to begin with he is nothing:

Freedom is precisely the nothingness which *is made-to-be* at the heart of man and which of *to be ...* for human reality, to be is *to choose oneself*; nothing comes to it either from outside or from within which it can *receive* or *accept*. ... Thus, freedom is

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not a being: it is *the being* of man — i.e., his nothingness of being.<sup>16</sup>

A human individual will not be anything unless and until he will be what he makes of himself. Hence, according to Sartre, there is no human nature because there is no God to have such a conception of it. Hence man is completely free. As he says:

For if indeed existence precedes essence, one will never be able to explain one's action by reference to a given and specific human nature; in other words, there is no determinism — man is free, man is freedom.<sup>17</sup>

Man is not what he conceives himself to be, but he *is* what he *wills*, what he creates, what he chooses and “what he makes of himself”<sup>18</sup> through freedom and “that is the first principle of existentialism.”<sup>19</sup> Moreover, freedom, according to Sartre, is the sole foundation of all values.

In his *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre has devoted nearly 184 pages exclusively to *freedom*, particularly in the fourth part titled “Having, Doing and Being” of the work. Freedom, according to Sartre, is precisely nothingness: Freedom in its foundation coincides with the nothingness which is at the heart of man. Human reality is free because it *is not enough*.<sup>20</sup>

He holds that the essential freedom, the ultimate and final freedom that can be taken from a man is to say ‘No.’<sup>21</sup> Nikolai Berdyaev has made similar remarks saying: “...Freedom cannot be derived from a being; it is rooted in nothingness, in non-being, if we are to use ontological terminology. Freedom is baseless, neither determined by nor born of being.”<sup>22</sup> For Sartre, freedom in its very essence is *negative*, though this negativity is also *creativity*. By this “No” Sartre means that, “Man is the being by whom nothing comes into being.”<sup>23</sup>

In other words, it can be said that although all the existentialists are interested in the problem of freedom, it is Sartre alone among them who has presented a rigorously constructed theory of freedom, and he uses the terms ‘freedom’ and ‘human reality’ synonymously. According to him, “the free

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project is fundamental for it is my being”<sup>24</sup>, and consequently “to be human is to be free.”

Sartre firmly believes in the ethical relativism. According to him there is no universally obligatory moral law and no set of absolute fixed values, for there is no God. Quoting in his lecture on “Humanism” the sayings of Dostoyevsky, Sartre asserts that if God does not exist everything would be permitted. This conclusion is the starting point for existentialism according to Sartre. He holds that man is the sole source of values, and therefore, it *rests with* the individual man to create or choose his own scale of values, and his own ideal. But this leads to the inevitability of freedom:

The fact is that man cannot help being free, and he cannot help acting in the world. Even if he chooses to commit suicide, he chooses and so acts. And these acts are performed with motives.<sup>25</sup>

Again, according to Sartre, it is man himself who makes the motive ‘a motive’, and who gives it value and meaning. And, in this respect, the choice of particular values depends on an initial project, an initial choice of an ideal. He says:

The individual, simply because he is a free, self-transcending subject, cannot help projecting an initial, freely-chosen ideal, in the light of which he determines particular values.<sup>26</sup>

Man, for Sartre, is the sole source of all values, his commitments and his freedom being their foundation. Regarding this theme, he, in his *Existentialism and Humanism*, says:

We cannot decide *á priori* what it is that should be done. ... Man makes himself; he is not found ready-made; he makes himself by the choice of his mortality, and he cannot but choose a morality, such is the pressure of circumstances upon him. We define man only in relation to his commitments; it is therefore absurd to reproach us for irresponsibility in our choice.<sup>27</sup>



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Thus, according to Sartre man's freedom is unrestricted, and there is no given universally obligatory moral law on account of which he ought to act. There are no absolute 'given' values. Man himself is the source of all values. In the absence of given values or universally-obligatory moral law, man's freedom, in fact, according to Sartre, is restricted. He points out that man's freedom is restricted because of his own peculiar character, by his physico-psychological make-up and finally by the historical situation in which he finds himself 'there' in the world. In view of the same, Sartre tries to make the individual responsible for his physico-psychological make-up and for the historical situation in which he finds himself and in which he has to act.<sup>28</sup> He is responsible for every thing, because he is an existing being that too alone possesses freedom. He is condemned to freedom. Hence he says:

My historical situation is what it is *for me*; and what it is for me depends on the end which I have set before myself. And since I choose my ideal or end freely, it also depends on me what my historical situation is. My liberty is thus unrestricted.<sup>29</sup>

According to Sartre, a human individual is never determined. He explicitly says that man cannot be sometimes free and sometimes determined: he is either entirely and always free or he is never free at all.<sup>30</sup> The real motive of human behaviour, Sartre holds, is an original project of being freely chosen at the moment one wrenches oneself away from the *in-itself* to create one's own world. And it is in terms of this original project of being that human behaviour receives its ultimate explanation. No type of science can explain human behaviour. Sartre, in his *Being and Nothingness*, very emphatically says that though heredity, education, environment, physiological constitution are the great explanatory factors of our epoch, yet they explain nothing.<sup>31</sup> The one and only genuine cause of human behavior is the individual's fundamental project of being. And that very project, says Sartre, is a "Choice, not a state"<sup>32</sup> and it is not buried in "the darkness of unconscious". It is rather a "free and conscious determination"<sup>33</sup> of oneself.

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Another crucial concept involved in Sartre's doctrine of freedom is '*anguish*'. For the existentialists, especially for Sartre, the term "anguish" has a specific meaning. Anguish is explained as:

The reflective apprehension of the self as freedom, the realization that a nothingness slips in between myself and my past and future so that nothing relieves me from the necessity of continually choosing myself and nothing guarantees the validity of the values which I choose. Fear is of something in the world, anguish is anguish before myself.<sup>34</sup>

In this way, Sartre's ultimate proof of the fact that an individual's behaviour is fully determined by a free, prereflective choice of himself, is of course, the experience of anguish in which the individual finds himself compelled to reconstitute his being in utter isolation and without external help.<sup>35</sup> Further, when in self-reflection, man apprehends his own freedom, when he realizes that consciousness is not determined by the past because the past is constantly "nihilated", and in this way, grasps his total separation from the world and with it the impossibility of excusing one's choices, in such a state, there occurs *anguish*, Sartre, in this connection, says:

In each instance of reflection anguish is born as a structure of the reflective consciousness in so far as the latter considers consciousness as an object of reflection;...<sup>36</sup>

Theoretically speaking, in the face of anguish one should be able to adopt various attitudes, but the immediate and the most natural behaviour when confronted with anguish is *flight*. In this state man flies from the responsibility of choice and escapes it by depicting himself as a *thing*, determined by his past. This results in inauthenticity of existence:

Psychological determinism, before being a theoretical conception, is first an attitude of excuse, or if you prefer, the basis of all attitudes of excuse.<sup>37</sup>

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In short, what is called the anguish of freedom could more accurately be called “anguish before the necessity of choosing.” The anguish of freedom, Sartre holds, is really anguish over the fact that one must choose: “For human reality”, Sartre asserts, “to be is to *choose oneself*; nothing comes to it either from the outside or from within which it can receive or accept.”<sup>38</sup> He further adds that in every situation one has to choose, and even not to choose is also a choice: “I can always choose, but I must know that if I do not choose, that is still a choice.”<sup>39</sup> The anguish of freedom arises only with the realization that one must always decide for oneself, and that efforts to shift the burden or responsibility upon others are necessarily self-defeating. Not to choose, as mentioned above, is also to choose, for even if we deliver our power of decision to others, we are still responsible for having done so. It is always the individual who decides that others will choose for him. At times he may dull the awareness of his original and inalienable responsibility, but he can never wholly suppress that awareness. It will always be there even on the surface of consciousness as a vague sense of guilt or uneasy feeling or personal inadequacy. In this regard Sartre says:

I am condemned to be free. This means that no limits to my freedom can be found except freedom itself or, if you prefer, that are not free to cease being free. To the extent that the for-itself wishes to hide its own nothingness from itself and to incorporate the in-itself as its true mode of being, it is trying also to hide its freedom from itself.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, of all the existentialists, Sartre has stressed most on the anguish of freedom. The manner in which he has developed the set of ideas connected with this form of anguish is, therefore, of special interest. Pointing out the importance of ‘choice’ Sartre says that the universe would be vain and meaningless if man does not endow it with meaning by an unceasing act of choice. Freedom is the *Summum Bonum* of Sartre’s ethical system as well as his socio-political thought. The very being of the *For-itself* (existing human individual) which is “condemned to be free”, insists Sartre, “must choose itself — i.e., make itself. However, to be free does not mean “to obtain what one has

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wished' but rather "by oneself to determine oneself to wish" (in the broad sense of choosing). In other words, according to Sartre, "Success is not important to freedom."<sup>41</sup>

So far we have given the salient features of Sartre's notion of freedom in the individual context. Now we propose to assess briefly the implications of his doctrine of freedom for society and politics.

Here again, we shall rely upon Sartre's major philosophical work *Being and Nothingness* for elaborating the issue. The part four, "Having, Doing and Being" in general and its third sub-part "Freedom and Responsibility", in particular will be discussed to expound the crux of the problem. Sartre has also dealt with this problem in his *Existentialism and Humanism*, and *The Problem of Method* as well as his later work *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*.

Man being "condemned to be free" carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders. He is responsible for the world and for himself by his very way of being. Besides his own being, he has to realize the existence, freedom and responsibility for *others*. According to Sartre, the word "responsibility" means in its ordinary sense: "consciousness (of) being the incontestable author of an event or an object."<sup>42</sup> In this sense the responsibility of the *for-itself* of an existing individual is overwhelming since he is the one by whom it happens that *there is* a world and since he is also the one who radically makes himself to be, whatever may be situation in which he finds himself. The *for-itself* must wholly assume this situation with its peculiar co-efficient of adversity, even though it be insupportable. Sartre points out in this connection:

"(Man) must assume the situation with the proud consciousness of being the author of it, for the very worst disadvantages or the worst threats which can endanger my person have meaning only in and through my project; and it is on the ground of the engagement which I am that they appear."<sup>43</sup>

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In this connection, Sartre says further: “It is, therefore, senseless to think of complaining since nothing foreign has decided what we feel, what we live, or what we are.”<sup>44</sup>

Again, Sartre holds that one must not consider this absolute responsibility in terms of resignation but in reality, “It is simply the logical requirement of the consequences of our freedom.”<sup>45</sup> For everything, every happening, an existing human being is responsible. Everything occurs in a human situation and not in a non-human situation. That is why Sartre says:

What happens to me happens through me, and I can neither affect myself with it nor revolt against it nor resign myself to it...Everything which happens to me is *mine*. By this we must understand first of all that I am always equal to what happens to me *qua man*, for what happens to a man through other men and through himself can be only human. The most terrible situation of wars, the worst tortures do not create a non-human state of things; there is no non-human situation. It is only through fear, flight, and recourse to magical types of conduct that I shall decide on the non-human, but this decision is human, and I shall carry the entire responsibility for it.<sup>46</sup>

Sartre asserts that there are no *accidents* in a life and a community event that suddenly bursts forth and involves one to it does not come from the outside. For every decision a human individual is responsible. To start a war or to stop a war, man is free to decide what course of action is to be chosen. It is so, because of the fact that “the peculiar character of human reality” says Sartre, “is that it is without excuse.”<sup>47</sup>

Sartre uses the term “responsibility” in his own particular context. In general its usage is mainly individualistic. As indicated earlier, by “responsibility” Sartre means the sense of being “the incontestable author” of one’s being.<sup>48</sup> The feeling of anguish (or “human freedom”<sup>49</sup> as some existentialists call it) is an awareness either “muted or in full-strength”, that “an abrupt metamorphosis of my initial project — i.e., by another choice of

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myself and my ends ...this modification is always possible.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, for the person who has known the full-strength experience of anguish there can be no doubt, according to Sartre, that one is the free author of one’s actual behaviour or that one could subsequently make a free choice to change totally one’s initial project. It is evident that Sartre comes close to defining the experience of anguish as one that brings a realization of these facts to the very surface of consciousness. Even when it does not, according to Sartre:

The prereflective or nonreflective awareness of anguish and responsibility is manifested on the surface of consciousness in the sense of pride or shame...<sup>51</sup>

And Sartre holds that it is perfectly clear even to the reflective consciousness that one is often proud or ashamed of features of one’s behaviour (being) which one has not chosen at the level of one’s consciousness.<sup>52</sup> Further, according to him man is aware of himself on the level of reflective consciousness. To the reflective consciousness man’s behaviour appears to be determined chiefly by passion and environmental circumstances. Sartre is completely aware of such possible way of attack. He writes in this regard:

We are fully conscious of the choice we are. And if someone objects that...it would be necessary to be conscious not of *our-being-chosen* but of *choosing* ourselves we shall reply that this consciousness is expressed by the twofold “feeling” of anguish and responsibility. Anguish, abandonment, responsibility, whether muted or full strength, constitute the *quality* of our consciousness in so far as this is pure and simple freedom.<sup>53</sup>

Anguish, as we know, according to Sartre, is the reflective apprehension of the self as freedom. It is the realization that a nothingness slips in between oneself and one’s past and future so that nothing relieves one from the necessity of continually choosing oneself. In any case one has to choose and there is no guarantee as to the validity of one’s particular choice. Anguish is

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anguish before those who have borne responsibilities. It is also a condition of one's action. In *Existentialism and Humanism*, Sartre explains the theme of 'anguish' and 'responsibility' by giving an example of a military leader:

Everything happens to every man as though the whole human race had its eyes fixed upon what he is doing and regulated its conduct accordingly. So every man ought to say, "Am I really a man who has the right to act in such a manner that humanity regulate itself by what I do." If a man does not say that, he is dissembling his anguish. Clearly, the anguish with which we are concerned here is not one that could lead to quietism or inaction. It is anguish pure and simple, of the kind well known to all those who have borne responsibilities. When, for instance, a military leader takes upon himself the responsibility for an attack and sends a number of men to their death, he chooses. No doubt he acts under a higher command, but its orders, which are more general, require interpretation by him and upon that interpretation depends the life of ten, fourteen or twenty men. In making the decision, he cannot but feel a certain anguish. All leaders know that anguish. It does not prevent their acting, on the contrary it is the very condition of their action, for the action presupposes that there is a plurality of possibilities, and in choosing one of these, they realize that it has value only because it is chosen. Now it is anguish of that kind which existentialism describes, and moreover,... makes explicit through direct responsibility towards other men who are concerned. Far from being a screen which could separate us from action, it is a condition of action itself.<sup>54</sup>

Many critics of existentialism raised the objection that "Existentialism" being a philosophical interpretation of "human individual" has nothing to do with interpersonal relationships or the life of "others" or the community. But this charge, against the existentialists seems unjustified. The fact, as Olson says is that:

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The existentialists have stressed the fundamental significance of interpersonal relationships for the individual more than the members of any other philosophical movement with the single exception of humanism.<sup>55</sup>

Again, Sartre's critics ask: why should a movement, which is radically *individualistic*, devote so much space to the analysis of human relationship? Furthermore, — is there not an inconsistency in maintaining the importance of *other persons* in our lives while at the same time vigorously asserting that in the last analysis each of us stands alone and must himself as an individual bear full responsibility for his being?

Regarding all the above charges against existentialism, it can be said that there is no inconsistency in the position of Sartre and the other existentialists in this matter. There are *three* factors here examined by Olson in this context:<sup>56</sup>

In the *first* place, in general, individuality does not usually consist in living alone or isolating oneself from others. The individualist has to be defined by the manner in which he relates to others. In this respect, Socrates and Kierkegaard were both intense individualists. They were 'individualists' because of their personal or say existential approach:

Kierkegaard despised the plebs; and Socrates was executed because of his open contempt for "the opinion of the many", which he believed a true philosopher or lover of wisdom ought totally to ignore. Their dress and behaviour was non-conformist to the point of eccentricity; and even their physical appearance set them apart from others.<sup>57</sup>

But even then, in their social contacts and intensity of their personal relationships few men are able to match them. For Kierkegaard it was merely the "subjective sphere" or the "inwardness" of man through which he became aware of the relationship of others' subjectivity and of God.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Socrates was a street philosopher, who made it his business to



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talk with anybody, who would spare the time. The same can be said of Sartre's much-talked-about cafe life.<sup>59</sup>

*Secondly*, even the man living in seclusion, as Nietzsche did a good part of his life, is not thereby out off from others spiritually. For, according to him, physical isolation does not mean indifference to others:

Physical isolation is simply one way in which men relate to others and thereby define their own being. If there were but one man in the world it would be impossible for him to withdraw or retreat from other human beings.<sup>60</sup>

In other words, the life of the individual would be incomplete without the relationship of other individuals. Even the concept of a recluse may be defined as a social concept. In this regard, Olson again refers to Sartre and Camus that even after the quarrel their relationship was deep and each influenced the life of the other:

The very concept of a recluse is a social concept; one could not be or be defined as such except in a social world. After the death of Camus, Sartre wrote a tribute to him. In it he mentioned that they had quarreled and ceased to see much of one another. But, Sartre adds, this was of no importance. They were still close in the sense that they read what each other wrote and reacted strongly to it. Even after the quarrel each figured prominently in the life of the other.<sup>61</sup>

In simple words, man in his loneliness tries to relate himself with others in different types of thinking, feeling, writing, creating or doing etc. It is undoubtedly a permanent feature of his existential life.

In the *third* place, the possibility of retaining one's aloneness in the sense of not allowing others to dictate one's choices is not consistent with maintaining valuable physical or spiritual contact with others. Those critics who feel that there is some sort of logical inconsistency in stressing at one and the

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same time the uniqueness of the individual and besides this, his dependence upon others are merely betraying the fact that they themselves do not share the existentialist's beliefs about the nature and value of personal relationships. Definitely they fail to understand the following:

(a) Kierkegaard's conception of "subjectivity" or the "individuals" who according to him "alone are real"<sup>62</sup> and the analysis of the relationship between God and man; (b) Heidegger's analysis of "being" (in German, "*das Seiende*" and "*das Sein*"); (c) Jasper's conception of "communication" or "I — thou" relationship and the idea of God and Transcendence; (d) Marcel's study of 'Being', man in different situations, the inner spiritual and worldly life of the individual; (e) Sartre's analysis of "Being" especially being for others.

According to the existentialist thinkers there are mainly *three* significant values that make human relationships possible, to begin with. These are: (i) intensity (ii) dignity and (iii) personal love.<sup>63</sup>

The *first* value is *intensity*. Since human relationships involve reciprocity between free human agents, there is an uneliminable element of threat and danger. In this way, the awareness of danger or dread is the source of all intense states of consciousness.

The *second* value involved in human relationship is '*dignity*'. Since there is a necessary reciprocity in human relationships, one's freedom can always be pitted against the freedom of the other. The existentialists hold that no matter how adverse the circumstances there is always possibility of the triumph, so long as one maintains the consciousness of one's own freedom. It is but natural that on the one hand, man wishes to be recognized within the group of human persons, while, on the other hand, he always desires to maintain the consciousness of his own personal freedom and identity. Sartre delineates the substance of this value in the following words:

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The man who discovers himself directly in the *cogito* also discovers all the others, and discovers them as the condition of his own existence. He recognizes that he cannot be anything (in the sense in which one says one is spiritual or that one is wicked or jealous) unless others recognize him as such.<sup>64</sup>

Again in the same context he explains that one is unable to know the reality of one's own self, unless one has the ability to appreciate the existence of another. As Sartre says:

I cannot obtain any truth whatsoever about myself, except through the mediation of another. The other is indispensable to my existence, and equally so any knowledge I can have to myself. Under these conditions, the intimate discovery of myself is at the same time the revelation of the other as a freedom which confronts mine, and which cannot think or will without doing so either for or against me. Thus, at once, we find ourselves in a world which is, let us say, that of "inter-subjectivity". It is in this world that man has to decide what he is and what others are.<sup>65</sup>

In the sphere of dignity, man, on the one hand, cultivates relationships with others; and realizes his personal freedom, on the other.

Finally, according to some existentialists (especially Marcel) the human condition permits *personal love* as the source of human relationships. Love is an intense relationship between two persons, or two free human agents. Love, a substitute term for the existential experience, works as the unitive creative factor. It is not only a necessary condition for the mutual recognition of one's own and the others' freedom but also a sufficient condition for it. Two persons who mutually recognize the irreducible human reality of each other cannot but love each other. They may remain engrossed in their own egocentricity and be involved in their own personal projects. Yet it can be said that each will necessarily remain for the other a live presence and a being of inestimable worth. In this regard Olson remarks:

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Mutual recognition of the other's freedom separates two persons and guarantees their uniqueness, but at the same time it reveals them to one another as individuals and guarantees the possibility of genuine communication or exchange.<sup>66</sup>

But for Sartre, love in its sexual as well as its emotive forms, far from being a cohesive force is a source of conflict. Love is "the desire to assimilate the other to myself."<sup>67</sup> But on account of the fact that the *for-itself* can never be reduced to an *in-itself*, the attempt to assimilate the subjectivity of the other or be assimilated by the other is bound to result in frustration and ambiguity. Further "even the desire to become merely flesh in its character as *en-soi*. In any case, whatever partial satisfaction may be obtained in the sexual act is dispersed by its consummation."<sup>68</sup> Sartre says that while man attempts to free himself from the hold of the other, the 'other' also is trying to free himself from him. In this way both the parties seek to enslave each other. Sartre gives the name "conflict" to this reciprocal or object-in-itself and moving relation. He says: "These projects put me in direct connection with the other's freedom. It is in this sense that love is a conflict."<sup>69</sup>

In the light of these facts, Sartre observes that, the other's freedom is the foundation of man's being. But if he exists by means of other's freedom, he feels insecure in this type of freedom. Man has to exist, in any case, as a free being. Sartre says: "My project of recovering my being can be realized only if I get hold of this freedom and reduce it to being a freedom subject to my freedom."<sup>70</sup>

Sartre introduces a concept of 'alienation' closely akin to that of Marx, but with features that preserve coherence with the philosophical outlook presented in *Being and Nothingness*. He is of the view that man's own action is alienated if its effect is as though it were the act of "the others". In the case of such an action, Sartre claims, one becomes as though one were the others, and not himself. Through subjugation to public opinion a man behaves otherwise than would be natural for him; he acts *as the others*, and each one of the others does the same. Thus, he

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does not remain himself but becomes a “prey for others”. It is in such a situation that *alienation* takes place.<sup>71</sup>

Sartre conspicuously stresses upon man’s freedom and facticity. No doubt man is condemned to be free and has his unique subjective being. It is a fact that he is far more radically alienated from his being-for-others than from his facticity. But this state, together with the fact that his being-for-others must be lived on the prereflective level in pride or shame, makes of his being-for-others a far more fearful structure of being than facticity. In other words, according to Sartre, the presence or “the existence of Others” makes man feel a sense of guilt, shame, fall and alienation. He says:

If there is an Other, whatever or whoever he may be, whatever may be his relations with me, and without his acting upon me in any way except by the pure upsurge of his being — then I have an outside, I have a *nature*. My original fall is the existence of the other. Shame — like pride — is the apprehension of myself as a nature although that very nature escapes me and is unknowable as such.<sup>72</sup>

He further underlines the above theme in the third Chapter: “Concrete Relations With Others” in part III: (Being-For-Others) of his *Being and Nothingness*:

It is before the other that *I am guilty*. I am guilty first when beneath the Other’s look I experience my alienation and my nakedness as a fall from grace which I must assume. This is the meaning of the famous line from Scripture: “They knew that they were naked.” Again I am guilty when in turn I look at the Other, because by very fact of my own self-assertion I constitute him as an object and as an instrument, and I cause him to experience that same alienation which he must know assume. Thus original sin is my upsurge in a world where there are others; and whatever may be my further relations with others, these relations will be only variations on the original theme of my guilt.<sup>73</sup>

**(b) *Freedom for Society (Freedom and Moral Responsibility):***

As mentioned previously, in Sartre's existential philosophical outlook the individual man plays the central and pivotal role. Placing human existence the center of his philosophical system, Sartre develops his views on different social, political, moral and religious issues.

Yet, in his *Existentialism and Humanism*, Sartre very clearly indicates that man's responsibility is not merely for his own existence, (though in *Being and Nothingness*, as discussed earlier, he stresses it mainly for human existence and his dignity) but he is responsible for the whole world as well:

When we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but he is responsible for all men.<sup>74</sup>

By defining the term "subjectivism", Sartre makes a radical attempt to analyse the concept of freedom and its implications for individual and society. He explains:

"Subjectivism" means, on the one hand, the freedom of individual subject and, on the other, that man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity. It is the latter which is the deeper meaning of existentialism.<sup>75</sup>

This latter aspect — man cannot move out (or go beyond) his 'subjectivity' — has its very relation, Sartre insists, for 'others' also. In other words, it is here that one finds the implications of Sartre's notion of freedom for society. He remarks:

When we say that man chooses himself, we do mean that every one of us must choose himself; but by that we also mean that in choosing for himself he chooses for all men.<sup>76</sup>

Sartre argues that all the actions of man are directed to create himself and his environment. Human freedom bestows upon man the responsibility of creating social conditions that are necessary for living as free beings. To choose between this or that is at the same time to know and affirm the value of that which is chosen; because men are unable to choose the worse.

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Sartre asserts that one will not choose worse because it is not good for *him* and at the same time for *others* like him. He says, “What we choose is always the better; and nothing can be better for us unless it is better for all.”<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, when one wills to exist he fashions his image accordingly, and this very image is valid for all men and the entire epoch in which we find ourselves. In this regard, Sartre observes that man’s responsibility is greater than it was conceived to be any time earlier in the history of human thought. He emphatically says: “Our responsibility is thus much greater than we had supposed, for it concerns mankind as a whole.”<sup>78</sup>

In his work, *The Problem of Method*, Sartre has also made an attempt to examine the social and political life of an individual. This work is the first part of his *new* theory of man as a social and political being. It is a theory avowedly Marxist in a very original sense. For, Sartre aims at reinvigorating Marxism by the introduction of a new method—the Existentialist Method. He writes:

I have shown in *The Problem of Method* that this is necessary if a living Marxism is to incorporate into itself the disciplines which have hitherto remained external to it.<sup>79</sup>

Existentialism, says Sartre in the Preface of his new work: *The Problem of Method (Critique de la raison dialectique)*, must find its place within the framework of Marxist philosophy:

...I consider Marxism to be the unsurpassable (*indépassable*) philosophy of our time, and because I look upon the ideology of existence (a new name for his earlier “existentialism”) and its ‘comprehensive’ method as an enclave within Marxism itself which at the same time embraces and rejects it.<sup>80</sup>

Sartre strongly criticizes contemporary Marxists in the communist parties and socialist countries for having lost sight of Marx’s recognition of the peculiarity of ‘human existence’. Moreover, they look upon Marxism as though it was already a

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science, and not, simply a set of statements about which way man has to go. Sartre says:

“... We reproach contemporary Marxism for arbitrarily casting aside all the concrete conditions of human life and for preserving nothing from the totality of history but the abstract skeleton of universality. The result is its total loss of the sense of what man is: it has nothing with which to cover up this lack but the absurd psychology of Pavlov.”<sup>81</sup>

Therefore, what one should do, Sartre emphasizes, is not to reject Marxism, but “recapture man in the heart of Marxism.”<sup>82</sup> In brief, in *The Problem of Method*, Sartre represents his new theory of man as a *social agent*. He aims at reinvigorating Marxism by existentialist concepts of human freedom and individuality, and the existential method of explaining human experience in terms of human choices unfolding his potentialities in the form of creativity. When Marxism has thus been fully modernized and humanized, Sartre argues, existentialism, as a separate philosophy will cease to exist.

In order to understand Sartrean conception of a free society, Marxism may provide an approach or framework. In his attempt to incorporate his existentialism into a new Marxist synthesis Sartre has laid emphasis on man as a member of a society, an agent of a class, a (free) representative of an epoch, that is, his existence as a free and creative constituent of collective human existence. Having gone through the entire works of Sartre, one finds clearly that his philosophy is very ambiguous with regard to social and political issues, especially in the matter of the relationship of an individual and his society. His doctrine of freedom seems much *individualistic* rather than *socialistic*. However, his philosophical writings contain long phenomenological analyses. Sartre’s fame as a novelist and dramatist should certainly not lead one to underestimate him as a philosopher or to think that he is a mere dilettante.

However, Sartre’s creative writings present his ideas of human existence and its historicity, freedom and socio-political responsibility in a concrete form through men and women acting



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and creating themselves with others and the world as well. His trilogy, *Roads to Freedom*, a set of three novels — *The Age of Reason*, *The Reprieve*, and *Iron in the Soul*, — deal with the human predicament in a Europe shattered by the Second World War. These novels present different characters choosing to be what they should be. At the same time there are certain other characters that flee from choosing freely and loose themselves amidst the faceless crowd of the war-victims and emigrants. Sartre himself chose to join and lead the ‘Resistance Movement’ during the occupation of France by the Nazi Germany. Sartre depicts both ‘silence’ and ‘action’ as two ways of choosing *freedom*. If one chooses to keep silent, it means he refuses to have any communication with the Nazi rule. In *Republic of Silence* Sartre describes the situation of the French Resistance from 1940 to 1945 in the following words:

We were never more free than during the German occupation. We had lost all our rights, beginning with the right to talk. Every day we were insulted to our faces and had to take it in silence. Under one pretext or another, as workers, Jews, or political prisoners, we were deported *en masse*. Everywhere, on billboards, in the newspapers, on the screen, we encountered the revolting and insipid picture of ourselves that our suppressors wanted us to accept. And because of all this we were free. Because the Nazi venom steeped into our thoughts, every accurate thought was a conquest. Because an all-powerful police tried to force us to hold our tongues, every word took on the value of a declaration of principles. Because we were hunted down, every one of our gestures had the weight of a solemn commitment...

Exile, captivity, and especially death (which we usually shrink from facing at all in happier days) became for us the habitual objects of our concern. We learned that they were neither inevitable accidents, nor even constant and inevitable dangers, but they must be considered as our lot itself, our destiny, the profound source of our reality as men. At every instant we lived

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up to the full sense of this commonplace little phrase: “Man is mortal !” And the choice that each of us made of his life was an authentic choice because it was made face to face with death, because it could always have been expressed in these terms: “Rather death than. ...” And here I am not speaking of the elite among us who were real Resistants, but of all Frenchmen who, at every hour of the night and day throughout four years, answered *No*.<sup>83</sup>

Again, after 1947, Sartre reasserted in his work: *What is Literature?*:

We have been taught to take it [Evil] seriously. It is neither our fault nor our merit if we lived in a time when torture was a daily fact. Chateaubriand, Oradour, the Rue des Saussaies, Tulle Dachau, and Auschwitz have all demonstrated to us that Evil is not an appearance, that knowing its cause does not dispel it, that it is not opposed to Good as a confused idea is to a clear one, that it is not the effect of passions which might be cured, of a fear which might be overcome, of a passing aberration which might be excused, of an ignorance which might be enlightened, that it can in no way be diverted, brought back, reduced, and incorporated into idealistic humanism, like that shade of which Leibnitz has written that it is necessary for the glare of daylight...

Perhaps a day will come when a happy age, looking back at the past, will see in this suffering and shame one of the paths which led to peace. But we are not on the side of history already made. We were, as I have said, *situated* in such a way that every lived minute seemed to us like something irreducible. Therefore, in spite of ourselves, we came to this conclusion, which will seem shocking to lofty souls: Evil cannot be redeemed.<sup>84</sup>

It is not possible here to quote extensively from the literary works of Jean Paul Sartre. However, it would not be out of place

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to present here certain basic themes of his different works (specially the novels and plays)<sup>85</sup> dealing with substantialization of his views pertaining to freedom and creativity.

Sartre's first novel, *Nausea* (1938), may well be his best work for the very reason that in it the intellectual and the creative artist come closest to being joined. Much as ideas and the elaboration of ideas figure in the work, the author has not shirked the novelist's tasks, and the remarkable thing is the life with which the ideas are invested, which forms the intimate texture of the hero's experience and sensibility. The mood of this life is disgust, which can (as well as any other mood) become the occasion of discovery, a radical plunge into one's own existence. It is authentically human, this disgust, and turns out to be novelistically exciting, though it has nothing like the grand scope and implications of Celine's disgust. Sartre's treatment is more self-conscious and subtler, philosophically, but also more static; his disgust is not embodied, as Celine's is, in the desperate picaresque of common life and the anonymous depths of street characters.

However, *Nausea* is not so much a full novel as an extraordinary fragment of one. In his later fiction Sartre has turned away from the narrow and intense form of the early work to a broader panorama, and not always with entirely happy results.

Sartre's later novels—originally a trilogy, *Less Chemins de la Liberte* (*The Roads to Liberty*) and now a tetralogy—may go on being issued as endlessly as the *roman fleuve* of Jules Romains, if his volcanic activity as a writer continues. One does wish that Sartre would pause for a while and regroup his forces. The man really writes too much. Perhaps if literature becomes a mode of action one gets so caught up in it that one cannot stop the action. These later novels of his contain remarkable things — great scenes and passages — and their theme is the central Sartrian one of the search for liberty, or rather for the realization in life of that liberty that we always and essentially are, sometimes even in spite of ourselves. Yet they are so uneven in achievement, one regrets to see Sartre's great talents wandering and thinning out like split milk.

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Regarding his plays, too, it may be said that his two earlier and shorter ones — *Les Mouches* (1943) (*The Flies*) and *Huis Clos* (1947) (*No Exit*) (1947) — are his best. They are at any rate the things to recommend to the reader who wishes to get the concrete drift of Sartre's philosophy but has no stomach for the elaborate dialectic of *Being and Nothingness* (1943).

*The Flies*, was first produced while the Resistance Movement was still going on. Though it deals with the myth of Orestes and the Furies; yet it is charged throughout with a passion and eloquence born of Sartre's own personal convictions. Orestes is the spokesman for the Sartrean view of liberty. The solution of the play is not at all like that in Aeschylus, for here there are no supernatural agencies that can deliver Orestes from his guilt. He has to take that guilt upon himself, and he does so at the end of the play in a superbly defiant speech before the cosmic Gestapo chief Jupiter; he accepts his guilt, he exclaims, knowing that to do so is absurd because he is a man and therefore, solely free. In discharging his freedom man also wills to accept the responsibility of it, and thus becoming heavy with his own guilt. Conscience, Heidegger has said, is the will to be guilty — that is, to accept the guilt that we know will be ours whatever course of action we take.

*No Exit*, the most sensational of Sartre's dramatic successes, displays perhaps to their best advantage his real talents as a writer: the intense driving energy of the play, the passion of the ideas expressed, we can recognize as authentically his. The three characters of *No Exit* are planted in Hell; they are being punished, rather in the manner of Dante, by being given exactly the fruit of their evil itself. Having practiced "bad faith" in life — which, in Sartre's terms, is the surrendering of one's human liberty in order to possess, or try to possess, one's being as a *thing* — the three characters now have what they had sought to surrender themselves to. Having died, they cannot change anything in their past lives, which are exactly what they are, no more and no less, just like the static being of things. These three persons have no being other than that each has in the eyes of others; they exist in each other's gaze, in fact. But this is exactly what they longed for in life — to lose their own subjective being

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by identifying themselves with what they were in the eyes of other people. It is a torment that people do it in fact choose on earth; Sartre says, have chosen as themselves their public stance or role, and thus really exist not as free beings for themselves but as beings in the eyes of others.<sup>85</sup>

Thus, we have seen that mostly in all the important philosophico-literary works of Sartre, the most dominant force has been man's freedom and creativity.

The absurdity of historic situation that has striped off human existence of its *freedom* and *authenticity* is depicted in the following passages quoted from different dialogues of the different characters in Sartre's play *Altona*: Regarding making a decision Werner complains to his father:

“To decide ! To decide! To be responsible for everything. Alone. On behalf of a hundred thousand men. And you have managed to live!”<sup>86</sup>

Johanna, the wife of Werner, proclaims that Werner has a right to make a choice without her own or his father's help, which actually implies her assertion that every individual has to choose for himself:

“...We love each other more than that, father. We have always decided everything that concerned us, together. ...If he swears under constraint, if he shuts himself up in this house in order to remain faithful to his vow, he will decide without me and against me. You will separate us forever.”<sup>87</sup>

Again Johanna says that her very existence is because of freedom and that she loves her husband Werner because of his love for independence. As he has lost his freedom, he is merely an object to be handled by others. She says:

“.... I loved Werner for his independence, and you know very well that he has lost it.”<sup>88</sup>

She does not want to be the slave of any one including Franz (her brother-in-law). She very angrily asserts:

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“I have nothing more to say. Who Franz was, what he did, what has become of him, I do not know? The only thing I am certain of is that if we remain, it would be to become slaves to him.”<sup>89</sup>

Again, regarding the freedom of choice Johanna opines:

“Werner, the game’s up. It’s up to us to choose. We shall either be servants of the madman whom they prefer to you, or we shall stand in the dock. What is your choice? Mine is made. This Assize Court. I’d rather a term in prison than penal servitude for life.”<sup>90</sup>

Werner also wants to be free:

“On the contrary I am freeing myself. What do you want me to do? Turn them down flat...”<sup>91</sup>

“Father, I support you unreservedly. All lives are valuable. But, if one must choose, I think the life of a son must come first.”<sup>92</sup>

Johanna encourages Werner to make a decision and choose his way in freedom:

“...So that’s a family conference! ...Werner, I am leaving. With or without you. Choose.”<sup>93</sup>

Johanna seems bold in making decisions, though she knows that she is powerless and alone. She tells her Father:

“...The interrogation has begun. I am turning on the spotlight. ... Where should I stand? Here? Good. Now, under the cold light of whole truths and perfect lies, I declare that I will not make any confession for the simple reason that I have none to make. I am alone, without strength and completely aware of my powerlessness. I am going to leave. I shall wait for Werner in Hamburg. If he doesn’t come back...”<sup>94</sup>

Regarding history, Franz says to Leni:

“Everything is in place. History is sacred. If you change a single comma, nothing will be left.”<sup>95</sup>

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It is man that makes history with his actions, which are closely, observe and judged all the time. Regarding this, says Franz to his sister, Leni:

“...You, me all the dead, mankind.... Be on your guard. They are watching you. ...No one is alone. ... Laugh while you can, my poor Leni, the thirtieth will arrive like a thief in the night; turn of a handle, the Vibrating Night. You’ll land in the middle of them.”<sup>96</sup>

Franz replies to Leni:

“In the thirtieth century. Are you sure this comedy is being played for the first time? Are we living, or reincarnated? ... Be on your guard ! If the decapods are watching us, you may be sure they find us very ugly.”<sup>97</sup>

According to Leni, her brother Franz is a coward and victim of his own shame. He has no courage to face the reality, therefore, he just speaks incessantly without performing any courageous deed. She makes him realize his own predicament:

“I forbid you! I shall die; I am already dead, and I forbid you to plead my cause. I have only one judge—myself—and I acquit myself. Oh, witness for the defense, testify before yourself. You will be invulnerable if you dare to state: ‘I have done what I wanted, I want what I have done.’ ”<sup>98</sup>

In Franz speech, we find helplessness also that restraints him from making a choice. When Johanna asked for his help he replies:

“No! ...I don’t belong to this century. I will save the world as a whole, but I will not help any one in particular. ... I forbid you to draw me into your affairs. I am ill, do you understand? They take advantage of it to force me to live in the most abject dependence and you ought to be ashamed, you who are young and healthy, to ask someone who is weak and oppressed to help. ... I am delicate, Madam, and my peace of mind comes before everything. Doctor’s orders. You could

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be strangled before my very eyes and I would not lift a finger. ... Do I disgust you.”<sup>99</sup>

Franz complains that he had not been given full freedom and every time he was kept under constraint. When he is reminded by Johanna that what had happened and is happening, it was and is because of his own choosing. He says:

“Mine? But I never choose, my dear girl! I am chosen. Nine months before my birth, they had chosen my name, my career, my character and my fate. I tell you that this prison routine has been forced upon me, and you should understand that I would not submit myself to it unless it were vitally necessary.”<sup>100</sup>

Johanna confesses her ignorance of her own choice:

“Of what I am going to tell you.... I would rather not know what I know.”<sup>101</sup>

In Sartre’s eye Franz, a character in *Altona*, is dumb and paralyzed in the face of dread:

“Ah! (The smile remains a moment, then his features become tense. He is afraid). *De profundis clamavi* ! (He is overwhelmed by suffering). Grind! Grind! Grind away! (He begins to tremble).”<sup>102</sup>

‘Silence’ is also a means of communication. It is the strongest weapon against the oppressor, the interrogator and the inquisitor. Such a silence issues from one’s refusal to co-operate with injustice. Hence it is more communicative than speech. Sometimes words cannot express truth, and they become a veil to hide a lie. In Johanna’s words:

“Well, so I lie. To Werner in silence, to Franz in words.”<sup>103</sup>

Similarly, at another place Franz says:

“...A pyramid of silence over my head. A silent millennium. That’s killing me. And what if they don’t even know I exist? What if they have forgotten me? What is to become of me without a trial? What contempt!”<sup>104</sup>



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When one is forced by a situation, one usually deceives oneself knowingly and pretends accordingly. In Johanna's confession this state of bad faith finds full expression:

"I'm my own worst enemy. My voice lies, and my body contradicts it. I talk about the famine, and I say that we are dying of starvation. Look at me now ! Do I look starved? If Franz saw me..."<sup>105</sup>

"Nothing except that he is trying to run away, and that we are helping him in it by our lies. Come on! You want to have it both ways. I tell you that one word is enough to kill him, and don't even flinch."<sup>106</sup>

The condition of the father is very critical. He is much worried about his son. He trembles in dread and says:

"Twelve years ago I became aware of my son's fears through certain remarks which he let fall. He believed that they wanted to wipe out Germany, and he shuts himself upon in order not to witness our extermination. If it had been possible at that time to reveal the future to him, he would have been cured at once. Today it will be more difficult to save him. He has acquired certain habits. Leni spills him, and a cloistered life has certain advantages. But never fear, the only cure for his illness is the truth. He'll take it badly at first, for it will remove all his pretexts for sulking, but within a week he will be the first to thank you."<sup>107</sup>

Franz's father does not allow his son and daughter-in-law to exercise their freedom as they intend to go out to another place to live. However, he offers them a conditional freedom. He commandingly says to Johanna to ask her brother-in-law to accept some proposals if he wants freedom:

"....Wait! I will make you a proposition. ...Say nothing to your husband. Go and see Franz one last time and tell him that I request an interview. If he accepts, I will release Werner his oath, and you both go whenever you wish. ... Johanna, I am offering you freedom."<sup>108</sup>

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These words are meant to emphasize that freedom is not gained or bought on conditions. Franz, a prisoner of his own *bad faith* and inaction, realizes in him self-imposed isolation, the absurdity and helplessness of life:

“Take it easy.... Don’t hurry me. All roads are closed, there is not even the choice of a lesser evil. But there is one road that’s never closed, since it leads now where — the worst one. Shall we take it.”?<sup>109</sup>

The act of depriving others of their freedom and imposing upon them one’s choice makes man a machine, the Robot of the age of science and technology:

“Yes. A machine to give orders. ... Another summer, and the machine is still turning. Empty as usual. ...I’ll tell you my life, but don’t expect any great villainies. Oh no, not even that. Do you know why I reproach myself I have done nothing. ...Nothing! Nothing! Never!”<sup>110</sup>

On the similar theme Ghalib, one of the greatest Urdu and Persian poets, said:

نا کردہ گناہوں کی بھی حسرت کی ملے داد یارب اگر ان کردہ گناہوں کی سزا ہے  
(غالب)

(“If, O God, Thou punisheth me for the sins I have committed, Also commend me for the sins I longed for and yet did not commit”).

Sartre, in a different way, makes man responsible for his undone good or evil deeds too:

“...You are guilty, God won’t judge you by your deeds, but by what you haven’t dared to do, by the crimes which should have been committed, and which you didn’t commit...”<sup>111</sup>

How silence can express man’s freedom of choice is fully substantiated in the dialogue of the volunteers of the Resistance Movement captured by the Nazi occupation Forces. Sartre and Heidegger consider silence or to say

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“No” as one of the fundamental conditions of communication, that is the free choice of human existence. Some passages (in addition to *Altona* as we have already quoted in this regard) from Sartre’s other two plays especially *Men Without Shadows* and *The Flies* exemplify the assertion of such a freedom of choice.

In *Men Without Shadows*, Lucie very emphatically asserts her right to remain silent:

“What about me? Must stuff my ears too? I don’t want to listen to you because I don’t want to listen to you because I don’t want despise you. Do you need words to give you courage? I’ve seen animals die, and I want to die like them — in silence.”<sup>112</sup>

A state of distress and anguish within one’s ownself is depicted in the following words of Sorbier:

“I want to know myself. I knew they’d end by catching me, and one day I’d be up against a wall, face to face with myself, absolutely helpless. I used to say, will you be able to stand it? It is my body that worries me, you see. I’ve a miserable body, badly made, with nerves like a woman. Well, the moment has come. They’re going to use their instruments on me. But I have been cheated. I’m going to suffer for nothing, and I shall die without what I’m worth.”<sup>113</sup>

Furthermore, a state of anger and aloofness finds expression in his following statement:

“I said: bastard. You and I, we’re both bastards.” ...  
“Leave me alone! Leave me alone! I’ll talk. I’ll tell you everything you want to know.” ... “Let me go, I can’t bear his chair any more! I can’t bear it! I can’t bear it.”<sup>114</sup>

A sense of *guilt* of being alive seems evident in the speech of Henri:

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“...If only I could say that to myself, I did what I could. But it is probably too much to ask. We’ve done something. I feel guilty. For thirty years, I’ve felt guilty of something. Guilty of being alive. Just now, houses are burning because of me, innocent people are dead, and I am going guilty to my grave. My whole life has been one long mistake.”<sup>115</sup>

Another example of guilt mixed with the feeling of cowardliness is also found in the words of Sorbier when he says:

“...Lots of people die in their beds, with a clear conscience. Good sons, good husbands, good citizens, good fathers. ... Ha! They are cowards like me and they’ll never know it. They’re just lucky.... Make me shut up ! Why don’t you make me shut up?”<sup>116</sup>

In Sartre’s ‘*Men Without Shadows*’ we find further that Clochet’s speech to Henery depicts an experience of *dread*:

“... Wait, He’s beginning to feel it. Well? Of Course, I understand. Pain means nothing to a man of your intelligence. Or does it? I think it does. ...You’re sweating. I can feel of you. ... Turn, He’ll scream. He won’t scream? You’re moving. You can stop yourself screaming, but you can’t help moving your head. How it hurts.... Your jaws are like iron; you must be in such agony. Are you afraid? What are you thinking? ‘If I can only hold out for one moment, one little moment....’ But after that moment, another will come, and another and another, until the pain is too much and you won’t be able to think of anything. We shall never let you go.... Already, your eyes are beginning to fail. You can’t see clearly any more. What do you see? Handsome boy. Turn....You’re going to scream, Henri, you’re going to scream. I can see the cry swelling in your throat; it’s reached your lips. One little effort. Turn... How ashamed you must be. Turn. Don’t stop...”<sup>117</sup>

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Everyone is bound in this world. His freedom is curtailed through different constraints, and, in such circumstances one feels disappointment and agony in life and prefers to die or alienate oneself from the whole society and the whole world as well. Luci expresses this feeling in the following words:

“...There’s nothing to regret, you know; life has no real importance any more. Good-bye, my darling brother, you did what you could...”<sup>118</sup>

“I’ve become another person. I don’t know myself. Something has got blocked in my head....”...

“...Now I have no future, I expect nothing but my death, and I shall die alone, .... Leave me alone, we have nothing to say to each other....”<sup>119</sup> ...

“Decide what? What does my consent matter? It’s your lives you savings not mine. I have decided to die.”<sup>120</sup>

In the same state of hopelessness, shame, anguish, and agony she further asserts:

“...I must die and all my shame with me. ...I cannot bear myself, and after my death I pray that everything on earth may be as though I had never lived.”...

“My hate and my shame and my remorse—does none of that matter?”<sup>121</sup> ...

“I am dried up, I feel so alone. I don’t want to think of anyone but myself.”...

“...Everything has been poisoned.”<sup>122</sup>

Sartre represents different modes of human existence such as anguish, dread, shame, guilt, silence, bad faith and *freedom* through the acts and words of the character in his plays. His exposition of human feeling and chaos in different situations in the imaginative works is far more vivid and subtle than in his treatment of the same themes in philosophical jargon.

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In his remarkable play, *The Flies*, Sartre tries to bring into limelight all above-mentioned modes and moods of human being through different characters of the play.

The experience of dread and guilty conscience is reflected in the words of Zeus, the God of gods in the Greek mythology, who is presented as the god of *flies* and death, when he depicts the picture of the people of Argos to Orestes, a brave person struggling for his *freedom*. In this passage Sartre presents God as a force restraining man from acting freely:

“... These people are great sinners but, as you see, they’re working out their atonement. Let them be, young fellow, let them be; respect their sorrowful endeavour, and be gone on tiptoe. You cannot share in their repentance. Since you did not share their crime your brazen innocence makes a gulf between you and them. So if you have any care of them, be off! Be Off, or you will work their doom. If you hinder them on their way, if even for a moment you turn their thoughts from their remorse, all their sins will harden on them—like cold fat. They have guilty consciences, they’re afraid—and fear and guilty consciences have a good savour in the nostrils of the gods. Yes, the gods take pleasure in such poor souls. Would you oust them from the favour of the gods? What, moreover, could you give them in exchange? Good digestions, the grey monotony of provincial life, and the boredom—ah, the soul-destroying boredom—of long days of mild content...”<sup>123</sup>

Oreste’s commitment to freedom enables him to act independently. He is free from all types of superstition and religious or family ties. His Tutor addresses him thus:

“...Your mind is free from prejudice and superstition, you have no family ties, no religion and no calling; you are free to turn your head to anything. But you know better than to commit yourself—and their lies your strength...”<sup>124</sup>

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Orestes asserts his freedom to act. In order to obtain his and his fellow men's freedom he is ready to sacrifice everything even his own self and his dearest mother. He says:

"...Whereas I! I'm free as air, thank God. My mind's my own, gloriously aloof ...."<sup>125</sup>

"But, mind you, if there were something I could do, something to give me the freedom of the city; if, even by a crime, I could acquire their memories, their hopes and fears, and full with these the void within me, yes, even if I had to kill my own mother...."<sup>126</sup>

"It is not night: a new day is dawning. We are free, Electra. I feel as if I'd brought you into life, and I, too, had just been born...."<sup>127</sup>

"I am free, Electra. Freedom has crashed down on me like a thunder bolt...."<sup>128</sup>

"And the anguish that consumes you—do you think it will ever cease ravaging my heart? But what matter? I am free. Beyond anguish, beyond remorse. Free. And at one with myself. No, you must not loathe yourself Electra. Give me your hand. I shall never forsake you...."<sup>129</sup>

"She (Electra) is dearer to me than life. But her suffering comes from within, and only she can rid herself of it. For she is free...."<sup>130</sup>

"Neither slave nor master. I *am* my freedom. No sooner had you created me than I ceased to be yours."<sup>131</sup>

Another dialogue reiterates similar feelings and ideas:

"...That was the last time, the last, I saw my youth. Suddenly, out of the blue, freedom crashed down on me, and swept me off my feet. Nature sprang back, my youth went with the wind, and I knew myself alone, utterly alone in the midst of this well—meaning little universe of yours. I was like a man who's lost his

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shadow. And there was nothing left in heaven, no Right or Wrong, nor anyone to give me orders...”<sup>132</sup>

“...I am doomed to have no other law but mine. ...For I, Zeus, am a man, and every man must find out his own way. Nature abhors man and you too, god of gods, abhor mankind.”...

“...I am free; each of us is alone, and our anguish is akin.”<sup>133</sup>

In the last speech of Orestes too, one finds an expression of dread, shame, commitment or determination and boldness, all ushering from his love for *freedom*. Orestes addresses the people of Argos in these words:

“...As for your sins and your remorse, your night-fears and the crime Aegistheus committed—all are mine, I take them all upon me. Fear your Dead no longer; they are *my* Dead. And, see, your faithful files, have left you, and come to me. But have no fear, people of Argos. I shall not sit on my victims’ throne or take the sceptre in my bloodstained hands. A god offered it to a kingdom, without subjects.

Farewell, my people. Try to reshape your lives. All here is new, all must begin anew. And for me, too, a new life is beginning. A strange life...”<sup>134</sup>

This is, in fact Sartre’s approach to freedom. His notion of freedom and creativity reflects various dimensions of human existence and involvements. He has dealt with the problem of freedom in all his literary and philosophical works and tried to highlight its salient features equipped with the individualistic and social aspects based on human psychology.



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**CHAPTER IV**

**CONCEPTION OF  
FREEDOM AND CREATIVITY  
IN  
MUSLIM THOUGHT**

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CHAPTER – IV

CONCEPTION OF FREEDOM AND CREATIVITY  
IN MUSLIM THOUGHT

In order to appreciate the significance of Iqbal's views and position regarding freedom and creativity, it is necessary to provide a background of the Islamic perspective on free-will and creativity because Iqbal's task was basically to reconstruct Islamic thought according to ongoing and contemporary challenges and imperatives.

*(a) Socio-political Conditions in Early Islamic Society:*

It is a fact that the problem of freedom of the human will has been a crucial and vexing question right from the dawn of human civilization to the present day. It has agitated human mind in all ages and in all countries and, despite various solutions advanced from time to time, it has remained a complex question. As in other communities of the world, the problem of freedom of will was also raised in the early Islamic society with significant socio-political and ethico-religious implications:

Like other nations of antiquity, the pre-Islamic 'Arabs were stern fatalists. The remains of their ancient poetry, sole record of old 'Arab thought and manners, show that before the promulgation of Islam the people of the Peninsula had absolutely abandoned themselves to the idea of an irresistible and blind fatality. Man was but a sport in the hands of Fate. This idea bred a reckless contempt of death, and an utter disregard for human life.<sup>1</sup>

With the advent of Islam a new vision of life came into being. The teachings of Islam created a revolution in the Arab mind. With the recognition of a Supreme Intelligence governing the whole universe, such values as self-dependence, self-awareness and personal responsibility as well as the consciousness of moral obligation founded on the Islamic teaching of freedom (*qadar*) or human volition were inculcated in them. The Holy



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Qur'an is very eloquent on the issue of human freedom and responsibility:

One of the remarkable characteristics of the Qur'an is the curious, and, at first sight, inconsistent, manner in which it combines the existence of a Divine Will, which not only orders all things, but which acts directly upon men and addresses itself to the springs of thought in them, with the assertion of a free agency in man and of the liberty of intellect.<sup>2</sup>

Though this peculiar feature of human freedom and responsibility is also to be found in some other Holy Books like Biblical records, Bhagvad Gita etc., but the Mother of Books (*Umm al-Kitab*: أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ), the Holy Qur'an, has its own uniqueness in this regard. In the Qur'an, the conception of human responsibility is so strongly developed and emphasized that the question naturally occurs to the mind as to how these two ideas – Destiny and responsibility or say Divine Will and human will can be reconciled with each other.

If one simply goes through the verses of the Qur'an one will find both types of verses; *one* group of verses is stressing upon human freedom and the *other* emphasizing the Omnipotence of God. There seems to be a contradiction between the two types of verses. On the one hand, regarding the Omnipotence of *Allah* (God), The Qur'an brings out the following categorical verses:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (البقرة: ٢٠)

“Lo! *Allah* is able to do all things”<sup>3</sup>

وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (الروم: ٥٠)

“And He is able to do all things.”<sup>4</sup>

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لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ط  
وَ اِنْ تُبَدُّوْا مَا فِيْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوْ تَخْفَوْهُ يَحٰسِبِكُمْ بِهٖ اللّٰهُ ط  
فَيَغْفِرْ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ  
وَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ (البقرة: ٢٨٤)

“Unto *Allah* (belongeth) whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth: and whether ye make known what is in your minds or hide it, *Allah* will bring you to account for it. He will forgive whom He will and He will punish whom He will. *Allah* is able to do all things.”<sup>5</sup>

وَ اللّٰهُ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ (البقرة: ٢٢٨، ٢٢٠)

“*Allah* is Mighty Wise”<sup>6</sup>

مَا يَوْدُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ  
اَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ط وَ اللّٰهُ يَخْتَصُّ  
بِرَحْمَتِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ط وَ اللّٰهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيْمِ (البقرة: ١٠٥)

“Neither those who disbelieve among the people of the Scripture nor the idolaters love that there should be sent down unto you any good thing from your Lord. But *Allah* chooseth for His mercy whom He will, and *Allah* is of infinite bounty.”<sup>7</sup>

يَخْلُقُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ ط اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ (النور: ٣٥)

“*Allah* createth what He will. Lo! *Allah* is able to do all things.”<sup>8</sup>

وَ كَانَ رَبُّكَ قَدِيْرًا (الفرقان: ٥٣)

“For thy Lord is ever Powerful.”<sup>9</sup>

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قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ  
مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُدَلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ  
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (آل عمران: ٢٦)

“Say ! O Allah ! Owner of Sovereignty ! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom Thou wilt, and Thou withdrawest sovereignty from whom Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt. In Thy hand is the good. Lo! Thou art Able to do all things.”<sup>10</sup>

يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ (المائدة: ١٨)

“He forgiveth whom He will, and chastiseth whom He will, Allah’s is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and unto Him is the journeying.”<sup>11</sup>

However, on the other hand, one also clearly finds in the Qur’ān that Allah (God) has given man *freedom* and *power*. The Holy Book incorporates the following verses with regard to freedom of human will:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بَقِيَ حَتَّىٰ يَغْيُرُوا مَا بَانَفْسِهِمْ ط (الرعد: ١١)

“Lo ! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts...”<sup>12</sup>

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ (النجم: ٣٩)

“And that man hath only that for which he maketh effort.”<sup>13</sup>

وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُهُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ ط (النساء: ١١١)

“Who committeth sin committeth it only against himself.”<sup>14</sup>

وَذَرَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْهُمْ لِعِبَادٍ لَهُمْ أَوَّاعًا مَّغْرُوبِينَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا  
وَذَكَرْبِهِ أَنْ تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ (الانعام: ٤٠)

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“And forsake those who take their religion for a pastime and a jest, and whom the life of the world beguileth. Remind (mankind) hereby lest a soul be destroyed by what it earneth.”<sup>15</sup>

فَمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ  
عَلَيْهَا ۚ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ (يونس: ١٠٨)

“So whoever is guided, is guided only for (the good of) his soul, and whosoever erreth, erreth only against it. And I am not warder over you.”<sup>16</sup>

فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ (التوبة: ١٠٠)

“So *Allah* surely wronged them not, but they did wrong themselves.”<sup>17</sup>

هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُوا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا سَلَفَتْ ۚ وَرُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقِّ  
وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوا يُفْتَرُونَ (يونس: ٣٠)

“There doth every soul experience that which it did aforetime, and they are returned unto *Allah*, their rightful Lord, and which they used to invent hath failed them.”<sup>18</sup>

There are numerous verses on human freedom in the Qur’ān. We have quoted above a few by way of illustration.

It seems inconsistent at first sight that man should be judged by his works, a doctrine that forms the foundation of Islamic morality, though an All-powerful Will rules all his actions.

Prophet Muhammad (s) set up an example by his conduct that may be of great value in resolving this riddle. The *Imāms* of the Prophet’s family (*the Ahl al-Bāyt* (‘a) suggested a via media between fatalism and absolute freedom of man:

The earnest faith of Muhammad in an active ever living Principle, joined to his trust in the progress of man, supplies a key to this mystery.<sup>19</sup>

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He [the Prophet(s)] struck a balance between the two extreme positions. In the light of vast *Hadith* literature one is easily led to the conclusion that the question of human freedom is not a simple one. The Prophet (s) is reported to have forbidden the Muslims to indulge in this controversy. However, when the problem was raised by certain groups of Muslims during the caliphate of Imam ‘Ali, he delivered elaborate lectures on the issue as can be found in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. A few examples of ‘Ali’s treatment of the issue of freedom may be quoted as here under:

“...They had been allowed time to seek deliverance, had been shown the right path and had been allowed to live and seek favours, the darkness of doubts had been removed, and they had been let free in this period of life...”<sup>20</sup>

“...O’ people who possess eyes and ears and health and wealth...The present is an opportune moment for acting. O’ creatures of Allah since the neck is free from the loop, and spirit is also unfettered... You have opportunity of acting by will....”<sup>21</sup>

The notion of freedom of human will is repeatedly emphasized and radically elaborated in many Sermons (*Khutbāt*), Letters and Sayings of Imām ‘Ali. According to him God has bestowed upon man wisdom, knowledge and power to act freely. He will be rewarded for his good deeds and punished for evil ones. Whatever he does, he is responsible, for God has given him freedom. To substantiate the above-mentioned points, a few more relevant passages from the *Nahj al-Balāghah* may be given as under:

“... You will be dealt with as you deal with others, you will reap what you sow, and what you send today will meet you tomorrow....”<sup>22</sup>

“...Allah has clarified to you the way of truthfulness and lighted its paths. So (you may choose) either ever-present misfortune or eternal happiness.... Know, O’ creatures of Allah, that your own self is a guard over you....”<sup>23</sup>

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“Allah has sent down a guiding Book wherein He has explained virtue and vice...”<sup>24</sup>

“No doubt *Allah* sent down the Prophet as a guide with eloquent Book and standing command. No one would be ruined by it except one who ruins himself...”<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, in a Saying of Imām ‘Ali (A), one finds an eloquent affirmation of the freedom of human will. When a man enquired from *Amir al-Mu’minin*, Imam ‘Ali: “Was our going to fight against the Syrians destined by *Allah*?” Imām ‘Ali (‘a) gave a detailed reply. A selection from which is given as under:

Woe to you, you take it as a final and unavoidable destiny (according to which we are bound to act). If it were so, there would have been no question of reward or punishment and there would have been no sense of *Allah’s* promises or warnings. (On the one hand) *Allah*, the glorified, has ordered His people to act by free will and has cautioned them and refrained them (from evil). He has placed easy obligations on them and has not put heavy obligations. He gives them much (reward) in return for little (action). He is disobeyed, not because He is overpowered. He is obeyed but not under force. He did not send Prophets just for fun. He did not send down the Book for the people without purpose. He did not create the skies, the earth and all that is in between them for nothing. And He created not the heavens and the earth in vain. “That is the imagination of those who disbelieve: then woe to those who disbelieve — because of fire (of Hell)! (*Al-Qur’ān*, 38:27).<sup>26</sup>

In the light of this quotation, it may be held that the two different types of the Qur’anic verses are not, in reality contradictory to each other. When one goes through the definition and explanation of the Qur’anic verses emphasizing the *Absolute Power* of *Allah*, one will see that “the decree of God” clearly means ‘the *Law* of nature.’ The stars and the planets, for instance, have each their appointed course’ so has every other object in creation. The movement of heavenly

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bodies, the phenomena of nature, life and death are all governed by a 'law'. The second type of the Qur'anic verses unquestionably indicates the idea of the Divine agency endowing man with *freedom* to act. But these verses are again explained by other verses, in which it is stressed that God Almighty conditions 'human will'. This is also very important to note that it is to the seeker for the Divine help that God renders His help. It is on the searcher of his own heart, who purifies his soul from impure longings, that God bestows grace (*lūtf*: لُطْف). God has given *consciousness* and *will* to man so that he may be able to differentiate between right and wrong, good and evil etc., and act accordingly. In this way, God has set down certain rules for the welfare of human beings for He is the Merciful Creator of all the creatures. He is Omniscient and Omnipotent as well. Ameer 'Ali describes:

“...There is nothing more assuring, nothing that more satisfies the intense longing for a better and purer world, than the consciousness of a Power above humanity to redress wrongs, to fulfil hopes, to help the forlorn. Our belief in God springs from the very essence of Divine ordinances. They are as much laws, in the strict sense of the word, as the law which regulate the movements of the celestial bodies. But the will of God s not an arbitrary will It is an educating will, to be obeyed by the scholar in his walks of learning as by the devote in his cell.”<sup>27</sup>

The above quoted passage from Ameer 'Ali's *The Spirit of Islam* brings into limelight the spirit of Islām regarding the freedom of the human will as against the stern fatalism of pre-Islamic 'Arabs. In this regard he further says:

The teachings of Islām created a revolution in the 'Arab mind; with the recognition of a supreme Intelligence governing the universe, they received the conception of self-dependence and of moral responsibility founded on the liberty of human volition. One of the remarkable characteristics of the Koran is curious, and, at first sight, inconsistent, manner in

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which it combines the existence of a Divine Will, which not only orders all things, but which acts directly upon men and addresses itself to the springs of thought in them, with the assertion of a free agency in man and of the liberty of intellect.<sup>28</sup>

With the advent of Islām as a perfect and dynamic system for human life, the whole phenomenon of the ‘Arab mind underwent a radical change and it started to ponder over the various issues related to human life, more specially the freedom of human will. As Ameer ‘Ali says:

Arabian philosophy, nurtured afterwards in other cradles, drew its first breath in the school of Medina. The freedom of human will, based on the doctrine that man would be judged by the use he had made of his reason, was inculcated in the teachings of the Master, along with an earnest belief in a Supreme Power ruling the universe. The idea assumed a more definite shape in the words of the Disciple, and grew into a philosophy. From Medina it was carried to Damascus, Kūfa, Basrā, and Baghdād, where it gave birth to the eclectic schools, which shed such luster on the reigns of the early Abbasides.<sup>29</sup>

Iqbal, like Ameer ‘Ali, has cogently pointed out that the most degrading type of fatalism has prevailed in the world of Islām for many centuries:

This is true, and has a history behind it which requires separate treatment. It is sufficient here to indicate that the kind of fatalism which the European critics of Islam sum up in the word ‘*qismat*’ was due partly to philosophical thought, partly to political expediency, and partly to the gradually diminishing force of the life-impulse, which Islām originally imparted to its followers.<sup>30</sup>

However, Ameer ‘Ali and Iqbal are not fully justified in saying that the world of Islām had been under the influence of fatalism. In the early history of Islām we find the true believers



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agitating and revolting against the tyrannical rule of Umayyads, who took recourse to the Qur'anic verses emphasizing the Absolute Will of *Allah* in order to justify their evil deeds. They not only did misinterpret the Qur'ān, but also shifted all responsibility of their crimes to God. This view was vehemently opposed by the Imām 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, Sayyid-i-Sajjād('a) in his rejoinder to Ibn-i-Ziyād, the governor of Kūfah who was responsible for Martyring Imam Husayn('a) and his companions; and Yazid, the Umayyād King and the successor of Mu'āwiyah, in their courts.

Ghilān al-Dimashqī, a slave of the Third Caliph, 'Uthman, asked Hasan al-Basri, the well known mystic of the first era of Islām, as to whether the Umayyād rulers' defence of their ghastly crimes against the pious Muslims like Imām al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ('a) was justified. Hasan al-Basri answered that the Banū Umayyāh were the enemies of *Allah*. They were liars and consequently misinterpreted the Islamic teachings to suit their evil practices. After this Ghilān arose in revolt and was martyred. A similar case is recorded about another true believer, Ma'bad al-Juhānī, who was also killed by the tyrant Banū Umayyāh.<sup>31</sup>

These political activities may be considered as the forerunners of the Qadarite School that culminated in the Mu'tazilah.<sup>32</sup>

This issue of the free will and determinism at the level of philosophical thought was an outcome of the socio-political situation in the early Islamic society. During that time vested interest in the Muslim world pretended to believe that God was the real author of all that happened in the universe, Omnipotent and Omniscient. It was by using the justification that the rulers of the early Islamic times, i.e. the Umayyads, did many sinful things and attributed their acts to the *Rīdā* (Will) or the decree of God. Highlighting this point Iqbal has said:

“....The practical materialism of the opportunist Omayyad rulers of Damascus need a peg on which to hang their misdeeds at *Kerbala*, and to secure the fruits of Amir Muawiya's revolt against the possibilities of a popular rebellion, Mabad is reported to have said to

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Hasan of Basra that the Omayyads killed Muslims, then attributed their acts to the decrees of God. ‘These enemies of God’ replied Hasan, ‘are liars’”.<sup>33</sup>

Muslim thinkers had been pondering over the problem of freedom of human will and other related issues during the lifetime of the Prophet (s) of Islām. Among other issues, the issue debated more seriously after the death of the Prophet (s), was that of the freedom of human choice. In Muslim World the problem of freedom emerged in response to socio-political conditions of the time:

After the Prophet(s) the Muslims differed among themselves on some other issues too. Some of such issues assumed immense importance during the tyrannical rule of the Umayyad rulers. Of such issues the most crucial was related to the problem of freedom of human will and action, on which opinion was sharply divided, giving emergence to the groups of the Qadrites and Jabrites. As early as the year 80 AH al-Hasan al-Basri is reported to have refuted the position of the Jabrites by dubbing them as the enemies of Islām. The doctrine of predestination was propagated by the rulers and their agents in order to justify their injustices; they shifted the responsibility of their own acts to Divine Will, saying that man was helpless and whatever happened was willed by God. Thus this controversy, perhaps the first of its nature in the Islamic World, had its roots in the socio-political conditions of the time.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, it was at this time that the problem of ‘*Jabr*’ (جَبْر) and ‘*Qadar*’ (قَدْر) or ‘*Ikhtiyār*’ (اِخْتِيَار) was openly discussed and came into prominence as a controversial issue in the history of philosophical thought of Islām. As explained earlier, Banū Umayyāh themselves were doing wrong and to support their vested interested used to preach fatalism, and attribute their evil acts to the decree of *Allah*. In the words of Iqbal:

Thus arose, in spite of open protest by Muslim divines, a morally degrading fatalism, and the constitutional

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theory known as the ‘accomplished fact’ in order to support vested interest.<sup>35</sup>

The Muslims having fatalistic ideology or otherwise have always sought justification from the Qur’ān, and even though at the expense of its plain meaning, its fatalistic interpretation has had very far-reaching effects on Muslim masses. The whole history of Islām is replete with several instances of obvious misinterpretation of the Qur’anic verses regarding freedom and determinism. Actually it was and is, still due to this radical fact of misunderstanding of the doctrine of ‘*Jabr*’ (جَبْر) and ‘*Qadar*’ (قَدْر) that Muslims at that time and even today failed to understand the true spirit of Islām. The doctrine of ‘*Jabr*’ (جَبْر) (predestinarianism), which had been and is a crucial issue in the Muslim political and moral thought, was resolved by Imām Ja‘far al-Sādiq(s), the Sixth Imām of the *Ahl al-Bāyt* (أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ) (The Prophet’s Family), who has very lucidly expressed his view on the issue in the following words:

Those who uphold *Jabr* make out God to be a participator in every sin they commit, and a tyrant for punishing those sins which they are impelled to commit by the compulsion of their beings: this is infidelity.<sup>36</sup>

In the same context, the Imam gives the analogy of a servant sent by his master to the market to purchase something. The master knows well that he cannot purchase anything. He has no wherewithal to buy it. Nevertheless, if the master punishes him for failing to buy the required thing, he must be a tyrant. In view of the same, the Imām very emphatically declared that “the doctrine of *Jabr* converts God into an unjust Master.”<sup>37</sup>

Imām Ja‘far al-Sādiq(s) has been quoted in *Usūl al-Kāfī* by Muhammad Ya‘qūb al-Kulāynī as saying:

لَا جَبْرَ وَلَا قَدْرَ بَلْ أَمْرٌ بَيْنَهُ  
لَا جَبْرَ وَلَا تَفْوِضَ بَلْ أَمْرٌ بَيْنَهُ

‘There is neither determinism nor freedom (or delegated freedom) but the matter is between the two’.

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A similar saying is also ascribed to the eighth Imām of the *Ahl al-Bāyt*, (أهل البيت): ‘Ali Ibn Musa al-Rīdā.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, with regard to the doctrine of *Qadar* (قَدْر) (*Tafwīd*: delegation of authority) – meaning not the freedom of the human will, but unqualified discretion in the choice of right and wrong, the Imām Ja‘far al-Sādiq(‘a) declared further that to affirm such a principle would destroy all the foundation of morality, and give all human beings absolute license in the indulgence of their animalistic desires; for each individual is vested with a discretion to choose what is right or wrong; otherwise no sanction and no law can have any force.<sup>39</sup>

From the above discussion it is clear that *Ikhtiyār* (اِخْتِيَار) is radically different from the doctrine of *Tafwīd* (تَفْوِيض). Ameer Ali, with reference to the eighth Imām, ‘Ali ibn Mūsa al-Rīdā, writes:

God has endowed each human being with the capacity to understand His commands and to obey them. They who exert themselves to live purely and truly, them He helps: they are those who please Him; whilst they who disobey Him are sinners.” These views are repeated with greater emphasis by the eighth Imām, ‘Ali ar-Rīdā, who denounced *Jabr* (pre-destinarianism) and *Tashbih* (anthropomorphism) as absolute infidelity, and declared the upholders of those doctrines to be “the enemies of the Faith.” He openly charged the advocates of *Jabr* and *Tashbih* with the fabrication of traditions. At the same time he warned his followers against the doctrine of *discretion* or *Tafwid*. He laid down in broad terms, “God has pointed out to you the two paths, one of which leads you to Him, the other takes you far away from His perfection; you are at liberty to take the one or the other; pain or joy, reward or punishment, depend upon your own conduct. But man has not the capacity of turning evil into good, or sin into virtue.”<sup>40</sup>

The Banū Umayyah, many of them after embracing Islām, were like their forefathers, fatalists. They were committing crimes by killing innocents and attributing all this to God. Under

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them arose a school which purported to derive its doctrines from the “ancients”, (the *salaf*: سَلَفُ), a body of Pre-Islamic ‘Arabs. They bribed some persons to narrate the traditions in favour of them and their views and also to fabricate traditions and pass them as handed down by one or other of the Companions of the Prophet(s). Hence a school was founded on this line called the Jabrites. Jahm bin Safwān was the founder of this school, which was called Jabāra.<sup>41</sup> ‘Jabrites’ were the staunch opponents of the proponents of ‘free-will’ of man. They maintained:

That man is not responsible for any of his actions which proceed entirely from God; that he has not determining power to do any act, nor does he possess the capacity of free volition; that he is the subject of absolute Divine sovereignty in his actions, without ability on his part, or will or power of choice; and that God absolutely creates actions within him just as He produces activity in all inanimate things;...and that reward and punishment are subject to absolute Divine sovereignty in human actions.<sup>42</sup>

In fact, what happened was that all the *Jabria* doctrines found favour with the Ommeyyade rulers, and consequently soon spread among the people.<sup>43</sup>

A group of people in Damascus rose to oppose fatalism and they started to advocate the doctrine of human free will. They were against the Jabrite tradition of the denial of free will of man, and thus called themselves “*Qadarīyyah*”. The uncompromising fatalism of the Jabrites occasioned among the intellectuals a revolt which was headed by Ma‘bbad al-Juhanī, Yūnus al-Aswari, and Ghāīlān Dīmashqī, who had evidently derived many of their ideas from the ‘Alawīds’. They boldly asserted in the capital of the Umayyads, in the very stronghold of predestinarianism, the free agency of man.<sup>44</sup> Qadariyyah, as mentioned earlier, is a name commonly used by Muslim thinkers for representing a group of theologians who reiterated “in one form or another the principle of *Liberum arbitrium* (free will) in the early period of Islām, from about 70/ 690 to the definitive consolidation of the Mu‘tazilah at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>

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century.<sup>45</sup> It is generally accepted that the biographical lists of the Qadariyyah were apparently compiled in Basrah,<sup>46</sup> where Hasan al-Basri and his pupils began to quarrel over the correct interpretation of the doctrine of *qadr*. In Syria the Qadarites stood against the tyranny of the Umayyah rulers and started a revolutionary movement.

It is further stated that the advocates of human free will vehemently came forward as the vanguard of socio-political movement in Syria during the Umayyah period: “According to the nature of information, the *Qadariyyah* is seen in Syriā primarily as a political movement; in Basra on the other hand it is viewed as a school of theology.”<sup>47</sup> The political argument developed from the principle was that a ruler (like any other human being) was answerable for his actions and in case of unrighteousness should therefore be deposed or should abdicate on his own. The theological stance arose from the idea that one must not “ascribe evil to God”, because He is good and does not like evil. Man is bestowed with wisdom and free will to act freely and choose good and avoid evil. God creates only good; evil stems from man or from *Satan* (Devil). Man chooses freely from the two.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the Qadarites were strongly opposed to the Jabrite doctrine of predestinarianism and vehemently advocated the free agency of man. But in the assertion of human liberty they sometimes verged on the doctrine of *Tafwid* (تَفْوِيض) – meaning not the freedom of human will, but unqualified discretion in the choice of right and wrong. *Qadar* (قَدْر) or *Ikhtiyar* (اِخْتِيَار) are, therefore, different from *Tafwid*, because God endowed each human being with the capacity to understand His commands and to obey them. God helps them, who exert themselves to live purely and truly. They are those who please Him; whilst they who disobey Him are sinners.<sup>49</sup>

However, the advocates of the freedom of human will, the Qadariyyah spread throughout the Muslim World. From Damascus the dispute was carried to Basrah and there the differences of the two parties assumed the form of two sections. The fatalists or *Jabrites* merged into a new sect, called the *Sifātīyyah*, literally meaning the “Attributists”, who with predestinarianism, combined the affirmation of certain attributes

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in God as distinct from His Essence, which the *Jabrites* radically denied.<sup>50</sup>

The Attributists or *Sifātīyyahs* claimed to be the direct representatives of the *Salaf* (ancients). According to ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahristānī these followers of the *Salaf* maintained that certain eternal Attributes characterize God, namely; knowledge power, life, will, hearing, sight, speech, majesty, magnanimity, bounty, beneficence, glory and greatness, - making no distinction between Attributes of Essence and Attributes of action.. They also asserted certain descriptive Attributes(*Sifāt i-khabriyyah*) for example, hands and face, taking the Qur’ānic words literally and accordingly, they gave them the name of descriptive Attributes.<sup>51</sup> Like the Jabrites the Attributists adhered to the doctrine of predestination in all its gloominess and intensity. Consequently a new group of the *Sifātīyyah* sprang out under the name of *Mushabbīhah*. According to Shahristānī this new group linked the Divine Attributes to the Attributes of created things and they turned God into a similitude of their own selves.<sup>52</sup> Thus, every where at that time, in the early Islamic society, the problem of freedom and determinism (*Jabr* and *Qadar*) was being discussed and scholars started to interpret the Qur’anic verses and *Ahadīth* (أَحَادِيثُ traditions) in support of their arguments for or against the freedom of human-will. At that time one of the most renowned scholars and teachers, Hasan al-Basrī, belonging to the anti-predestinarian party, who had imbibed the liberal and rationalistic ideas of the Imāms (‘a) of the family of Muhammad(s), on setting at Basrah from Madīnah had started a lecture class which was soon thronged by the students of Irāq. Here he discoursed on the metaphysical questions prevalent in those days in the spirit of his masters. One of his most prominent pupil, Wasil ibn ‘Atā’, differed from him and founded a liberal and rational school named “*Mu‘tazilah*” following in the footsteps of the Imāms of the *Ahl al Bayt*. Thus, in Muslim philosophical thought the problem of the freedom of the human will emerged as a problem with significant socio-political implications. On the one hand, the Umayyads’ tyrannical attitude was interpreting the Qur’anic verses in favour of predestination; and liberal and rational minds following the Imāmiyyah

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philosophers were asserting man's responsibility and free will, on the other.

### **(b) Emergence of 'Ilm al-Kalām: (Dialectical Theology):**

Islām is a religion of peace and goodwill. It has promulgated liberal and affirmatory values for the progress and welfare of humankind. It is imbued with relational and the philosophical spirit. It continued to adapt itself to the changing environment by assimilating the growth of learning. It was but natural that Muslim thought should undergo various stages of development. In its primary stage it was synonymous with simple and pure reasoning, intelligible even to the people of common understanding. Slowly and gradually, with the passage of time, it evolved rationalistic, scholastic, mystical and other forms in response to the ongoing and emerging needs of the changing times.

To meet the challenge of Greek and other Western philosophers, Muslim scholars, during the course of evolution of Islamic ideals, brought into being a science of reasoning under the name of '*Kalām*'.

'*Ilm al-Kalām*' is translated as 'dialectical philosophy', because both the words '*kalām*' and 'dialectic' mean 'dialogue'. This branch of Islamic philosophy can be defined as 'the discursive approach to Islamic beliefs.' That is why Muslim scholars usually combine *kalām* with '*aqā'id*', and this branch is called *al-kalām wa al-'aqā'id*. Usually attempts are made to trace back the origin of '*ilm al-kalām*' in non-Islāmic philosophies. But it actually originated in the intellectual climate created by Islam, which encouraged free enquiry and rational approach to the tenets of faith<sup>53</sup>. Therefore, '*ilm al-kalam*' is as old as Islam itself.

*Hikmat* and *Kalām* are the two aspects of reasoning or exoteric epistemology. '*Hikmat*', which may be defined as "free thinking" is philosophy proper in the Western sense of the term. It aims at attaining truths regarding the fundamental problems of the universe, soul and God by rational argument acceptable to the general humanity, irrespective of their conformity or non-conformity to the religious dogmas of Islām. But, according to



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Muzaffar-al-Din Nadvi, *Hukamā'* (Islamic philosophers) maintain: "The truths and findings of reason invariably conform to the religious injunctions."<sup>54</sup>

Soon after the death of the Prophet (s) of Islām the Muslims were divided into two major groups: the supporters of Abu Bakr and the supporters of 'Ali. After the assassination of 'Uthman, the third Caliph, the division assumed special significance. Muslims were divided into two distinct groups: the *Shi'ah* of 'Uthmān and the *Shi'ah* of 'Alī. But it would be incorrect to believe that those who were called *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'at* or the *Sunnis* were as a single body in the camp of the Shi'ah of 'Uthmān. The fact is that the majority of Muslims accepted 'Ali as their fourth rightly guided Caliph (*Khalīfah al-Rāshid*). It was only a minority that joined hands with Mu'āwīyah, the then Governor of Syria, whom 'Ali had dismissed from his office and who, subsequently, started a campaign against the universally accepted Caliph, 'Ali, in the Muslim world raising the slogan: "We want the assassins of 'Uthmān." Mu'āwīyah and his supporters knew well that 'Ali had no hand in this assassination, and that he had tried his best to save the life of the third Caliph. However, political exigency forced some vested interests to uphold the demand of Mu'āwīyah. Unfortunately, *Umm al-Mu'minīn*, 'A'ishah, the youngest wife of the Prophet (s), and two of companions of the Prophet (s), revolted against 'Ali. They were defeated at the Battle of *Jamal*. 'Ali almost defeated Mu'āwīyah at *Siffīn*, when the Qur'an was raised by the defeated army as the arbitrator (*Hakam*). This issue gave rise to a number of puzzling questions, and consequently a new sect, known as the *Khawārij*, emerged among Muslims. The early Mu'tazilites are supposed by some historians to be on the side of the *Khawārij*, but actually Wāsil ibn 'Atā' was totally opposed to the Banu Umayyah, the successors of Mu'āwīyah. The *Khawārij* regarded both 'Ali and Mu'āwīyah as infidels, while Wāsil ibn 'Atā' took a stand that was expressed in his doctrine of "intermediate position" (*'amr bayn al-'amryn*: أَمْرٌ بَيْنَ الْأَمْرَيْنِ). Nevertheless, his sympathies were with 'Ali and his family.<sup>55</sup>

In fact the birth of the Mu'tazilites, as commonly believed, owes its origin to a theological controversy between Wāsil ibn-

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‘Atā’ and his teacher, Hasan al-Basrī on the issue of the status of a *fāsiq* (sinner). We shall discuss these issues in the following pages.

The real problem was political and it perturbed the minds of the right thinking and pious Muslims after the martyrdom of ‘Ali and the surrender of the Caliphate by his son, Imām al-Hasan, in favour of Mu‘āwīyah on certain conditions that were never fulfilled by the latter, for the Umayyad rule had been violating all the fundamentals of Islām and trampling its principles of social and political justice.

This issue of predestination or *jabr* had its origin in the attempted defence of Yazīd and his officials, who, after the martyrdom of al-Husayn at Karbalā claimed that al-Husayn and his companions were killed by God, for it is He who is All-powerful and man is only an instrument in the hands of Divine predestination (*Jabr* or *Taqdīr*). Imam Husayn’s eldest son ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn(‘a), popularly known as Imām Zayn al-‘Abidīn, quoted from the Qur’ān the verses that said that man was responsible for his acts, because he was given by God the freedom of choice and action. This debate gave rise to the two different views among the Muslims. The supporters of the Banu Umayyah took recourse to the Qur’anic verses stressing the all-powerfulness of God. They were called the *Jabrīyyah* (جَبْرِيَّة) (the advocate of predestination). The other group that based Islamic ethics on the freedom of human will was called the *Qadarīyyah*. The Mu‘tazilah were the successors of the Qadarīyyah.

Hannā al-Fākhūrī and Khalīl al-Jarr, in *Ta’rīkh Falsifah dar Jahān-i Islāmī*, (تاریخ فلسفه در جهان اسلامی), say that it is wrong to suppose that Wasil and ‘Amr were the *Khawārij*, but they were in close contact with the ‘Alivīds, particularly the Zaydīyyah, the followers of Zayd ibn ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn who revolted against the Banū Umayyah and was martyred. Later the Mu‘tazilites were divided into *two* groups subsequent to the coming to power of the ‘Abbasides:(a) ‘Amr ibn-‘Ubayd, a Mu‘tazilī, joined hands with the ‘Abbāsides in supporting their claim to be the Caliphate. He founded the Mu‘tazilī school of Basrāh that severed its relations with the Shī‘ah. (b) The other group of the Mu‘tazilah at Baghdād remained loyal to the *Shi‘ah*, particularly the

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Zaydīyyah. They differed among themselves on the issue of the Imāma. The former supported the claim of the Abbāsides, while the latter were the champions of the *Imāma* of ‘Ali’s family.<sup>56</sup>

The above-mentioned facts indicate that the emergence of ‘*Ilm al-Kalām*’ was instrumental in enlightening Muslims inclined to philosophization to ponder over the problems related to religio-ethical and socio-political values within the Islamic *Weltanschauung*.

‘*Ilm al-Kalām*’ (dialectical theology), as mentioned earlier, aims at arriving at truth logically within the framework of the teachings of Islām. *Hukamā* and *Mutakallimūn* both believe in conformity of reason to revelation, with only this difference that the former do not take into account the question of conformity at the time of attaining truths, while the latter start with it. *Kalām* is divided into various sects, of which *three* main groups are (a) the *Mu‘tazilah*, (b) the *Ashā‘irah*, and (c) the *Shī‘ah*. The first two groups are known as Rationalistic and Scholastic schools of Muslim thought. The third one occupies a unique place because of its balanced approach in which reason and Divine guidance are reconciled. Anyhow, the *Shī‘ah* stress on the role of reason more than the *Sunnīs*, the majority sect of Muslims. Here we shall give a brief account of these three important schools of Muslim Philosophy which discussed the issue of freedom.

### (c) *Mu‘tazilite Position with Regard to Freedom:*

As indicated earlier, the *Mu‘tazilah* were the successors of the *Qadarīyyah*. The *Qadarīyyah* were the advocates of the freedom of the human will. The *Qadarite-Mu‘tazilite* thinkers maintained that reason should be the touch-stone for knowing reality and man is responsible for what he does because he decides upon and creates his acts with his free choice. As W. Montgomery Watt puts it:

The *Mu‘tazilites* stood for freedom of the will and human responsibility; in other respects they adopted sensible almost nineteenth-century-liberal attitude.<sup>57</sup>

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Abu Hudhayfah Wasil ibn ‘Atā’ al-Ghazzāl, one of the most prominent pupils of Hasan al-Basrī, is considered the founder of the Mu‘tazilah School of Muslim philosophy. Wasil was a man of deep thinking and analytical mind, thoroughly versed in the religious sciences and traditions. He differed from his teacher, Imām Hasan al-Basrī on a question of religious dogma – whether a believer who is the perpetrator of a grave sin would be considered to be an unbeliever and outside Islām (as the *ahl al-wa‘ūd* sect maintains) or would he be called a Muslim (believer) (as the group Murji’ites holds).<sup>58</sup> Wasil placed a sinner in an intermediate state (*manzilah bāyn al-manzilātāyn*) and withdrew himself from the lecture-room as well as from the school of Hasan al-Basrī. He thereupon founded this school (Mu‘tazilah) of his own and made great efforts to spread his views. His followers have, from this fact, been called Mu‘tazilah, or *Ahl al-I‘tīzāl*, i.e., the Dissenters.<sup>59</sup>

Montgomery Watt, in his *Islamic Philosophy and Theology: (Islamic Surveys-I)*, narrates the same story in a somewhat different way. He is of the view that it was not only Wāsil ibn-‘Ata’ who may be considered as the founder of the Mu‘tazilism, but it was ‘Amr ibn-Ubāyd who is often referred to as the founder of the Mu‘tazilah school:

Once when al-Hasan was asked his view on the dispute between the Murji’ites, who said the grave sinner was a believer, and most of the Khārijites, who said the grave sinner was an unbeliever, a man interrupted before al-Hasan could reply and asserted that the grave sinner was in an “intermediate position.” This man, WASIL IBN-‘ATA’, then withdrew from the circle, and al-Hasan remarked, “He has withdrawn (*i‘tazala*) from us”; from this remark he and his party were called the *Mu‘tazila* (the corresponding participial form). Unfortunately this is not the only account of the origin of the *Mu‘tazila*. A similar story is told of al-Hasan’s pupil Qatāda and another man ‘AMR IBN-‘UBAYD; and this latter man is often referred to as the founder of the Mu‘tazila.<sup>60</sup>

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Generally, Wasil's school of Mu'tazilism is also called the school of Divine *Unity* and Divine *Justice*, (*al-Tawhīd and al-adl*), The Mu'tazilah hold five basic principles upon which they built their theological system, but two of them are so significant that they are known as *ahl al-Tawhid wa al-'Adl* (أهل التوحيد والعدل) (the people of Divine Unity and Justice).<sup>61</sup>

By Divine Unity, the Mu'tazilites mean that God is one, without qualification. No shadow of dualism can be attached to Him. He has no Attributes apart from His Essence:

By Unity they imply the denial of the divine Attributes. Undoubtedly they admit that God is knowing, powerful, and seeing, but their intellect does not allow them to admit that these divine attributes are separate and different from the divine essence.<sup>62</sup>

Their reason for this view is that if the Attributes of God are considered to be identical with the Essence of God, "Plurality of eternals" would necessarily result and the belief in unity would have to be given up. This is, according to their opinion, clear unbelief (*Kufr*). Again they maintain that the Holy Qur'ān is not the "word" of God, but the "work" of God, and hence His creation.<sup>63</sup>

By Divine Justice, they meant that God is ever just and can never be cruel: "By Justice they imply that it is incumbent on God to requite the obedient for their good deeds and punish the sinners for their misdeeds."<sup>64</sup> Here the Mu'tazilites vehemently advocated *freedom of the human will*:

"...(Mu'tazilah) maintained that God has endowed man with some freedom of volition and liberty of actions. Man can make or mar his fortune according as he exercises that power in a right or wrong direction".<sup>65</sup>

Man, according to them, is responsible for all his actions, and gets reward for his virtuous acts and punishment for his malicious deeds.

The Divine Unity and Divine Justice are the basic principles of the beliefs of the Mu'tazilites and this is the reason why they

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call themselves “the people of Unity and Justice” (*Ahl al-Tawhīd wa al-‘Adl*).

Now keeping in view the basic beliefs of Divine Unity and Justice, we may discuss other important beliefs that necessarily follow from these first two principles in order to understand the Mu‘tazilite position with regard to freedom:

(1) The first question, then, is concerned with man’s conduct and destiny. Mu‘tazilites hold that God’s justice necessitates that man should be the author of his own acts. In such a condition alone can he be said to be free and responsible for his deeds. The same view was held by the Qadarites. T.J. De Boer, in this connection, writes:

“The forerunners of the Mu‘tazilites, who were called Qadarites, taught the freedom of the human will; and the Mu‘tazilites, even in later times, when their speculations were directed more to theologico-metaphysical problems, were first and foremost pointed to as the supporters of the doctrine of Divine Righteousness...”<sup>66</sup>

Thus the Mu‘tazilites accepted totally the theory of indeterminism and became true successors of the Qadārites. According to them if men were not the authors of their own acts and if these acts were the creation of God, how could they be held responsible for their deeds and deserve punishment for their sins? In such a condition would it not be injustice on the part of God that, after creating a creature, like man, who is helpless, He should call him to account for his sins and send him to hell? It seemed illogical to the Mu‘tazilites. Despite the disagreements among the different shades of the Mu‘tazilah, all of them agree in the matter of man’s being the creator of his acts. He is, they maintain, free to do whatever he likes. For whatever he does, they assert, man is responsible and not God. God will reward or punish him on the basis of his good or bad deeds: “Since man is the author of his own acts, it is necessary for God to reward him for his good deeds”<sup>67</sup> and punish him for his evil acts. As Al-Shahristānī puts it:

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The, Mu‘tazilites unanimously maintain, that man decides upon and creates his acts, both good and evil; that he deserves reward or punishment in the next world for what he does. In this way, the Lord is safeguarded from association with any evil or wrong or any act of unbelief or transgression. For if He created the wrong, He would be wrong, and if he created justice, He would be just.<sup>68</sup>

(2) Furthermore, Mu‘tazilites assert that the justice of the Almighty God makes it incumbent upon Him not to do anything contrary to justice and equity. Since God is just and loves His creatures, He always does good and wishes best for His crown of all the creatures – man. Mir Valiuddin maintains:

It is the unanimous verdict of the Mu‘tazilites that the wise can only do what is salutary (*al-salāh*) and good, and that God’s wisdom always keeps in view what is salutary for His servants; therefore, He cannot be cruel to them. He cannot bring into effect evil deeds. He cannot renounce that which is salutary.<sup>69</sup>

In this way, the Mu‘tazilites point out that God cannot ask His creatures to do that which is impossible. Consequently reason also suggests that God does not place a burden on any creature greater than it can bear because He is a Just, Merciful and the Highest Good.

The Mu‘tazilites also maintain that reason is the true criterion of good and evil. Things are not good or evil in themselves, because God arbitrarily declares them to be so. In reality, they say, good and evil are inherent in the essence of the things themselves. God only distinguishes between them. This very goodness or evil of things is the cause of the commands and prohibitions of the Law. The human intellect is capable of perceiving the goodness and evil of a few things and in this connection no laws are required to express their goodness and evil, for instance, to declare that it is commendable to speak the truth and despicable to lie. The Mu‘tazilites hold that all this shows the evil or goodness of things are obvious and require no

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proof from the Law (*Sharī'ah*).<sup>70</sup> God does not like evil and shameful acts:

Shameful and unjust deeds are evil-in-themselves; therefore, God has banned indulgence in them. It does not imply that His putting a ban on them made them shameful and unjust deeds.<sup>71</sup>

Al-Shahristānī has very lucidly expressed this theme of thoroughgoing rationalism of the Mu'tazilites in these words:

The adherents of justice say: All objects of knowledge fall under the supervision of reason and receive their obligatory power from rational insight. Consequently, obligatory gratitude for divine bounty precedes the orders given by (divine) law; and beauty and ugliness are qualities belonging intrinsically to what is beautiful and ugly.<sup>72</sup>

According to the Mu'tazilites God is just and has bestowed upon man the faculty of free will. Man is the free agent of his actions, good and bad, and gets reward and punishment in the future world on that basis, and that no moral evil, or inequity of action, or unbelief, or disobedience, can be ascribed to God, because, if He has caused unrighteousness to be, He would be himself unrighteous.<sup>73</sup> They also unanimously maintain that the All-Wise-God does only that which is beneficial and good for human beings because a regard in the light of wisdom (مِنْ حَيْثُ الْحِكْمَةِ) for the good of humanity (مَصَالِحِ الْعِبَادِ) is incumbent upon Him, though they differ as to His being obliged to secure the highest good and to bestow grace (وَأَمَّا لِأَصْلَحِ وَاللُّطْفِ وَفِي وَجُوبِهِ جَلَابِ عِنْدَهُمْ).<sup>74</sup> Fazlur Rehman, in his book *The Philosophy of Mullā Sadrā*, made some similar remarks:

The Mu'tazilah, ... nevertheless affirms that God acted for the benefit and "in the best interests (*al-aslāh*)" of His creation and, further that God allowed man a totally free will so that man might be entirely responsible for his own actions and God might be free from the blame of determining men's behaviour and then rewarding or punishing him.<sup>75</sup>



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On the basis of the above mentioned views the Mu‘tazilah call their doctrine of ‘*adl*, or justice as an essential element in religion.<sup>76</sup>

Now from the second main principle of the Mu‘tazilites, i.e. *al-Tawhid*: the Unity God, the following beliefs necessarily result as corollaries:

(a) The Mu‘tazilah deny the possibility beatific vision (رویت باری). They hold that vision is not possible without proper place and direction. As God is beyond place and direction, therefore, a vision of Him is possible neither in this world nor in the next world.

(b) They believe that Qur’ān is a created speech of *Allah* and when it is created, it is expressed in letters and sounds.<sup>77</sup> The Mu‘tazilites also believe that the Qur’ān is an originated work of God and it came into existence together with the prophethood of the Prophet of Islām.

(c) God is Eternal. Eternity is the peculiar property of His Essence, and hence it is the distinguishing attribute of the Divine Being. No mutability is attributed to Him. In this respect according to the Mu‘tazilites, God’s pleasure and anger are not attributes ( *sifāt* : صفات), but states (’*ahwāl*: أحوال). They declare:

God’s pleasure and anger should not be regarded as His attributes, because anger and pleasure are states and states are mutable, whereas the essence of God is immutable. They should be taken as heaven and hell.<sup>78</sup>

The Mu‘tazilites consistent in their rationalism also rejected the view that *revelation* could be contrary to the dictates of *reason*. Mir Valiuddin writes:

They hardly realized the fact that reason like any other faculty with which man is gifted, has its limitations and cannot be expected to comprehend reality in all its details.<sup>79</sup>

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Ameer ‘Ali has eloquently praised the services of the Mu‘tazilites to the cause of the development of Muslim philosophy. He says:

Mu‘tazilism has been, with considerable plausibility, compared to the scholastic philosophy of the Middle Ages in Europe. Scholasticism is said to have been the “movement of the intellect to justify by reason several of the dogmas of the faith.” Mu‘tazilism also directed its endeavours to establish a concordance between Reason and positive revelation. But there the parallel ends. In the Christian Church, the dogmas requiring explanation and justification were many. The doctrine of the trinity in unity, of the three “Natures” in one, of original sin, of transubstantiation, all gave rise to a certain intellectual tension. The dogmas of the Church accordingly required some such “solvent” as scholasticism before science and free thought could find their way into Christendom. In Islām the case was otherwise; with the exception of the unity of God – the doctrine of *Tawhīd*, which was the foundation of Mohammad’s Church – there was no *dogma* upon which insistence was placed in any such form as to compel reason to hold back its acceptance. The doctrine of “origin and return”—*mabdā* and ma‘ād coming (from God) and returning (to Him)” – and of the moral responsibility of man, was founded on the conception of a Primal Cause – the Originator of all things.<sup>80</sup>

However, they attempted in one way or the other, to prove their beliefs and tried to rationalize the Islamic thought system in the light of the Holy Qur’ān and *Hadīth* of the Prophet of Islam. The chief exponents of the Mu‘tazilah school are: Wāsil ibn ‘Ata’, Abu al-Hudhayl al-‘Allāf, Al-Nazzām, Bishr ibn al-Mu‘tamir, Mu‘ammar, Thamāmah ibn Ashras al-Numayrī, ‘Amr ibn Bahr Al-Jāhiz, Abu ‘Ali al-Jūbbāi and Abu Hāshim and others.

### ***(d) The Ash‘arite Position with Regard to Freedom:***

Ash‘arism has rightly been characterized as a reactionary movement against Mu‘tazilism. It is the name of a philosophico-

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theological school of thought in Islām that developed during the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>81</sup> This movement was “an attempt not only to purge Islām of all non-Islamic elements which had quietly crept into it but also to harmonize the religious consciousness with the religious thought of Islām”<sup>82</sup> Its founder was Abu al-Hasan al-Ashārī (260-1/873-4).<sup>83</sup> Sometimes it is also called the Ashā‘rah.<sup>84</sup> Ash‘arism laid the foundation of an orthodox Islamic theology or orthodox ‘*Kalām*’, as radically opposed to the rationalist ‘*Kalam*’ of the Mu‘tazilah school. In contrast to the extreme orthodox sects of Muslims, it made use of the dialectical method for the defense of the authority of Divine revelation as vitally relevant to the theological subjects. The Ash‘arites fought against ‘reason’ with their usual repertory of traditions.<sup>85</sup>

Ash‘arism disfavoured Mu‘tazilism because of the latter’s limited and merely rational approach. The Ash‘arite contended that the Mu‘tazilite doctrines were too abstract for the general Muslim Community. They very quickly apprehended that the masses might be led into the conclusion that religion was no longer binding and that they might rid themselves of its control as they liked.<sup>86</sup> They, therefore, sought a movement suited to the laity as against one which suited only the abstract-minded few.<sup>87</sup>

The general condition of the Muslim society at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century was such that the development of such a movement as orthodox ‘*Ilm al-Kalām*’ was inevitable. The Mu‘tazilite movement developed at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century of the *Hijrah* was, in its original stage, simply an attempt to put Islām and its basic principles on a rational foundation by giving a consistent rational interpretation to the different dogmas and doctrines of Islām. But when the Mu‘tazilite rationalists began to study the ‘Arab translations of the works of the Greek physicists and philosophers made available to them by the early ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs, particularly by al-Mansūr and al-Ma‘mūn, they began to apply the Greek philosophical methods and ideas to the interpretation of the basic principles of Islām as well. In this context Muzafferaruddin Nadvi writes:

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A group of scholars with Catholic attitude came forward with a mission of compromise. To put a stop to the dissensions in the Muslim ranks, they started a society of brotherhood with the object of harmonizing various schools of Islam.<sup>88</sup>

But the main point to emphasize is that Ma'mūn and his immediate successors did not allow their co-religionists belonging to other schools to exercise their freedom of thought to which they were entitled. As M.D. Nadvi puts it:

Mā'mūn may have been inspired by good motives, but as a free-thinker himself he ought to have allowed others to think freely. The result of all this coercion and repression was what might have been expected in the circumstances.<sup>89</sup>

It was necessary, the Ash'arite held, to stop the false interpretations of Islām and present the true Islamic spirit in order to restore its uniqueness and significant identity. Thus, some *mutakallimūn* (orthodox Theologians) came forward and started a new movement. It was at first a subterranean movement. It could not come into the open for fear of public criticism. Al-Junayd, for instance, had to discuss the Unity of God behind closed doors. Al-Shāfi'ī held that some trained people could defend and purify the faith but that this should not be done in public. Al-Harith bin Asad al-Muhāsibī and other contemporaries of Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal incurred his displeasure for defending the faith with argument of reason.<sup>90</sup>

But slowly and gradually the movement gathered momentum and began to be openly preached almost at different places of the Muslim World especially in Mesopotamia by Abu-al Hasan 'Ali bin Ismā'il al-Ash'arī (d.330 or 334/941 or 945), in Egypt by al-Tahawi (d.331/942), and in Samarqand by Abu Mansūr al-Māturīdī (d.333/944). But of all these, al-Ash'arī became the most popular hero, before whom the Mu'tazilite system (the rationalist *kalam*) went down: "Al-Ash'arī seems to have been the first to do this in a way acceptable to a large body of orthodox opinion. He had the advantage, too, of having an intimate and detailed knowledge of the views of the Mu'tazila",

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<sup>91</sup> because he was closely affiliated with the rationalistic school up to the age of forty.<sup>92</sup> Henceforth, he came to be known as the founder of the orthodox philosophical theology, and the school founded by him was named after him as *Ash‘arism*.<sup>93</sup>

The main points<sup>94</sup> of the Ash‘arite Movement are mentioned as under:

- (1) God is one, unique and eternal. He is not a substance, not a body or an accident, not limited to any direction and not situated in any space. He has eternal Attributes such as knowledge, sight, speech, and that it is by these that He knows, sees, speaks (whereas the Mu‘tazilites said that God has no Attributes distinct from His Essence).
- (2) The Mu‘tazilah said that the Qur’anic expressions, such as God’s hand and face must be interpreted to mean “Grace”, “Essence” and so on. The Ashā‘irah, whilst agreeing that nothing corporal was meant by these expressions, held that they were the real Attributes whose precise nature was unknown. Al-’Ash‘arī, “took God’s sitting on the throne in a similar (literal sense) way.”<sup>95</sup> Further, the Ash‘arite, as against the Mu‘tazilites held that “God has attributes which inhere eternally in Him and are in addition to His Essence.”<sup>96</sup> According to them these Attributes were eternal but they were neither identical with His Essence, nor were they quite different from or other than His Essence. On the contrary, the Mu‘tazilites held that God is one, eternal, unique and absolute being, having no touch of dualism in Him. They further maintained:

(God’s) Essence is self-contained. He does not possess any attributes apart from His Essence. His Essence is, for instance, knowing, powerful, seeing, willing etc. They denied the attributes of God as anything other than and in addition to His Essence.<sup>97</sup>
- (3) As against the view of the Mu‘tazilah that the Qur’ān was created, the Ashā‘irah maintained that it was God’s speech, an eternal Attribute, and therefore, uncreated. As regards the eternity of the Qur’ān, the Ash‘arites adopted again an

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intermediary position between the extreme views of the Zāhirites and the Mu‘tazilites:

The Hanbalite and other Zāhirite (extreme orthodox schools) held that the speech of God. i.e. the Qur’an, is composed of letters, words, and sounds which inhere in the Essence of God and, is, therefore, eternal.<sup>98</sup>

The Mu‘tazilites and a section of the Rafidite, on the contrary, went to the other extreme and maintained that the Holy Book was created.<sup>99</sup>

Here it may be pointed out that this interpretation is untenable, for it was the Shī‘ah Imāms who said that the Qur’an was neither creator nor was created. The Ash‘arite view holds that the Qur’an is co-eternal with God, while the Shi‘ah say that the spirit of meaning of the Qur’ān is eternal and the words through which the Qur’ān was revealed were created.

- (4) In opposition to the stand-point of the Mu‘tazilah that God could not literally be seen, since that would imply that He is corporeal and limited, the Ashā‘irah held that the vision of God in the world to come was possible, though men cannot understand the manner of it. The Mu‘tazilites and the “philosophers” denied the possibility of seeing God with eyes, as that would imply his bodily existence, which is absurd. The Ash‘arite, as against the Mu‘tazilites and the “philosophers” and in agreement with the orthodox class i.e. the Zāhirite and the *Mushabbīhah*, held that it is possible to see God; but they could not agree with the latter’s view that God is extended and can be shown by pointing out.<sup>100</sup>
- (5) The very crucial question at issue between the two schools was that of the freedom of the human will. On this problem of free-will the Ash‘arite took up again an intermediary position between the liberatarians (*Qadarīyyah*) and the fatalists (the *Jabarīyyah*). The orthodox people and the Jabarite maintained a purely fatalistic view. They held that human actions are predetermined and predetested by the Almighty God, who has absolute power over every thing (as the Qur’an declares)<sup>101</sup> including human will and actions.

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The Qadarites and their successors, the Mu‘tazilites, on the other hand, held that man has full power to produce an action and has complete freedom (*Qadar*) in his choice though the power was created in him by God. They further said that it is only on the basis of human free will that man could be rewarded or punished by God for his good or bad actions.

The Ash‘arites struck a middle path. They made a distinction between ‘creation’ (*Khalq*: خَلَقَ) and ‘acquisition’ (*Kasb*: كَسَبَ) of an action. God, according to them, is the Creator (خَالِقٌ) of human actions and man is the acquirer (*Muktasib*: مُكْتَسِبٌ). In this regard, Al-Ash‘arī, in his ‘*al-Maqālāt*’ says: “Actions of human beings are created (*makhlūq*) by God, the creatures are not capable of creating any action.”<sup>102</sup>

Again, in a similar way in his other famous treatise, ‘*Kitāb al-Ibānah ‘an Usūl al-Dīyānah*’, he declares: “There is no creator except God and the actions of man, are therefore, His creations.”<sup>103</sup>

In short, the Mu‘tazilite emphasis was on the reality of the choice in human activity, while the Ash‘arite, on the contrary, insisted upon God’s Omnipotence, and therefore, maintained that everything, whether good or evil, is *willed* by God and He creates the acts of men by creating in men the power to do each act.<sup>104</sup>

- (6) While the Mu‘tazilah – with their doctrine of *al-manzil bāyn al-manzilatayn* (الْمَنْزِلُ بَيْنَ الْمَنْزِلَتَيْنِ) held that any Muslim found guilty of a serious sin was neither a believer nor an unbeliever; the Ash‘arite, insisted that he remained a believer, but was liable to punishment in hell-fire.
- (7) The Ash‘arite believed in the reality of various eschatological features such as the Basin, the Bridge, the Balance and Intersession by Muhammad (s) – which were conspicuously denied or rationally interpreted by the Mu‘tazilites.<sup>105</sup>

Regarding human freedom the Ash‘arite position is restricted. Their system is mainly based on the idea of necessity

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in which man is completely bound and cannot exercise his choice. Osman Amin, writes:

The system of the Ash‘arites (the dogmatic theologians of Islām) was based on the idea of necessity. Following their idea of metaphysics, if one should admit this necessity, then no morality would be possible. As Kant has said, there is no morality without freedom.<sup>106</sup>

Generally, it is affirmed that the basic difference between Mu‘tazilism and Ash‘arism is that the former gives prominence to “*reason*” and is therefore, called the ‘Rationalistic’ school of Muslim Thought, while, the latter gives preference to “*revelation*” and is termed as the ‘Scholastic’ School of Muslim Thought. The Mu‘tazilites held that ‘reason’ is the real criterion of truth and ‘revelation’ only confirms the dictates of reason. They further asserted that the object of revelation is to remove doubts and misgivings from the wavering minds by inviting them to adhere to reason. Conversely, the Ash‘arites maintained that ‘revelation’ is the real criterion of truth and the business of ‘reason’ is, thus, to substantiate the religious tenets and injunctions by its arguments.<sup>107</sup>

### ***(e). The Shi‘ite Position regarding Freedom:***

The Shi‘ite faith is based upon the *five* principles:

- (1) Unity of God (*al-tawhīd* التَّوْحِيدُ)
- (2) Divine Justice (*‘adl-i-Ilahī* العَدْلُ الإلهي)
- (3) Prophet-hood (*al-Nubūwwat* النَّبَوِّاتُ)
- (4) Spiritual Leadership (*Imāmat* إِمَامَتُ)
- (5) Day of Resurrection (*al-Ma‘ād* الْمَعَادُ)

Of these only three are believed to be the principles of faith by the *Sunnīs*: 1. Unity of God, 2. Prophethood, and 3. *Ma‘ad*.

The Mu‘tazilah, along with the Shī‘ah accept Divine Justice (*العَدْلُ الإلهي*) as one of the basic principles. Accepting Divine Justice as a principle of faith makes much difference with regard to men’s own freedom of will and action and their reward or



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punishment. The Ashā'irah and other sects of the Sunnis that do not believe in Divine Justice as a principle of faith hold that God is not bound by any law to reward virtuous deeds and punish evil ones. They say that God is Almighty and to believe that he is governed by the law of justice amounts to curtailing His Omnipotence. Good and evil as well as their reward or punishment depends on the Will of God and not on Justice. The Shi'ah and the Mu'tazilah, on the contrary, hold that, Justice is an attribute of God, identical with His Essence. It is God who is the Maker of the Law of Justice. In this case if God follows His own law, it does not in any sense mean curtailment of His power. On the basis of this principle of faith they say that it is according to Divine Justice that man should be free and capable of acting according to his will, otherwise man may not be rewarded or punished. They further say that if God does not reward the virtuous and does not punish the vicious He would be unjust, which is impossible.

The whole system of ethics is based upon the postulate of the freedom of human will. In the Shi'ie faith, human freedom is a logical corollary of Divine Justice. The Shi'ah, like some of the Ashā'irah and all Mu'tazilah, hold that man's action are of two types: (i) reflexive that is involuntary; and (ii) willed or chosen. There is no dispute with regard to the reflexive acts, for they are instinctive and man has no control over them but the acts which are chosen by man are voluntary acts. In these cases man can choose between right and wrong, good and evil. We have seen that Mu'tazilah believe in total freedom of man with regard to voluntary acts. This freedom is called '*qadar*' or '*tafwīd*', the term '*tafwīd*', meaning authorization. According to some Mu'tazilah, God has delegated the power to man for performing good or evil acts. This means that the choice lies always with man. On the other hand, Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'arī's disciple, Abu Bakr al-Bāqallānī, a later Mu'tazilah, believed that power being a Divine attribute solely belongs to God, and He is the Creator of all kinds of acts. It is only God who bestows upon man the limited power to choose between good and evil or right and wrong acts. This doctrine is called the doctrine of 'acquisition' or *Kasb*. In this way, the Mu'tazilah and the Ashā'irah take two

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extreme positions, while the Shī‘ah, according to the teachings of the Imāms of the Prophet’s family (*Ahl-al-Bayt*), take an intermediate position. The saying of the Imām Ja‘far al-Sādiq is:

لَا جَبْرَ وَلَا قَدْرَ بَلْ أَمْرِيئَهُ  
يَا  
لَا جَبْرَ وَلَا تَفْوِيضَ بَلْ أَمْرِيئَهُ

‘Neither determinism nor freedom or delegated power, but an intermediate position’.<sup>108</sup>

In *Usul al-Kāfī*, (in *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*), there is a chapter titled: ‘الجبر والقدر والأمر بين الأمرين’ (*al-jabr wa al-qadar wa al-‘amr bayn al-‘amrāyn*). The Persian translator and commentator, Sayyid Jawād Mustafawī, defined *qadar* (قَدْر) as synonymous with another ‘Arabic word *Tafwīd* (تَفْوِيض). After explaining the doctrine of determinism and human free will, he writes:

The doctrine of freedom or ‘*amr bayn al-‘amrayn* (an intermediate position) forms the content of all the Traditions narrated in this chapter, and all the Traditions reaching us through the Imāms of the Prophet’s family (*ahl-al-Bayt*). In all these traditions *Jabr* and *Tafwīd* (or *qadar*) have been rejected, and by refuting them an intermediate position (‘*amr bāyn al-‘amaryn*) is posited; that is neither man is as helpless in his acts as the tools in the hands of a worker, not having any powder not to do anything or defend himself, nor is man independent, as if God has no power over his acts. In reality all his acts are related, on the one hand to God, and on the other, to his own self.<sup>109</sup>

The commentator regards this issue as a very critical one that has embarrassed and worried many scholars. He quotes the author of *Kifāyat al-Usūl* as saying:

The late ‘*Allāmah Majlisī* (Muhammad Bāqir) referred to the eight different views of eminent scholars and raised objections against them; he forwarded his own

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ninth view considering it based on the Traditions. Most of the scholars regard pure consciousness of man as the ground of freedom. According to this view, man can claim: 'I wish to do this and not to do that'. This is considered to be the clinching argument in favour of the claim that man has freedom of action.<sup>110</sup>

Javed Mustafawī regards the 12<sup>th</sup> *Hadīth* (Tradition) of this chapter conclusive in this matter. The same one *Hadīth* is as follows:

....Ahmad ibn Muhammad says: "I asked Imām Ridā: "Some of our scholars say that we the Shi'ah believe in *jabr*, while some others believe in man's capacity to do acts (*istitā'ah*)". The Imām said: "Write: In the name of God, the Merciful and the Compassionate. 'Ali ibn al-Hussayn said that *Allah* has proclaimed: "O the son of Ādam, thou performeth the obligatory acts with My Will and My (delegated) power, and ist capable of disobeying Me with all the bounties that I bestowed upon thee. I made thee listening and seeing. Whatever good reacheth thee ist by God, and whatever evil reacheth thee ist by thine own wish, for I am more praiseworthy for thine virtues than thyself and thou ist more to be blamed for thine own vices than Me, because what I do will not be judged by anybody and what thou doeth will be judged." Afterwards the Imām said (or narrated what God has said) that what a man wished was actualized for him.<sup>111</sup>

It would not be out of place to quote here some rather lengthy passages from an article by an Irānian Shī'ī jurist, Dr. Abul Qasim Gorji to present the clear position of the Shi'ah regarding free will:

About the Divine Will (*irādah*), the Ash'arites hold that the Divine Will and Omniscience (*'Ilm*) are two separate Attributes. But the Shi'ites and a group of Mu'tazilites maintain that God's Will is the same as His Knowledge, and they call it *Dā'ī*, meaning "Divine Intention"...

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There are some differences of opinion as to whether actions can be regarded as “good” or “bad” in independence of the decree of the Divine Lawgiver (*al-Shārī‘*).

The Ash‘arites believe that a “good” action is that which the *Sharī‘ah* has ordered the people to do, and a “bad” action is that which it has prohibited people from doing. But the Shi‘ites and the Mu‘tazilites hold that “goodness” or “badness” of actions can be recognized by human reason; that is, regardless of the decree of the *Sharī‘ah*, some actions are good and some bad. The Lawgiver orders people to do what is “good” and prohibits them from doing “bad” deeds.

Is man really free to perform actions which are apparently done out of his own free will, or is he compelled to perform such actions? A group of the Ash‘arites are of the opinion that man’s will and power have no effect in bringing about these actions, and it is only God’s will and Power that is effectual in their taking place. This belief is called “*Jabr*”.

The Mu‘tazilites hold that the only factor causing these actions to take place is man’s will and power. God has only created man and given him power, will and intelligence. As long as God has not taken these forces and potentialities away from him, he can independently do whatever he wants; there is no need for him to be instantaneously and constantly given power, will and other potentialities by God. This belief is called “*al-tafwīd*”.

However, the Shi‘te believe that man’s actions depend on his own will, but not in the sense that he is totally independent in doing them. Rather just as God is the initiating cause (*al-‘illah al-muhdithah*) of man’s life, power and will – that is, God has originally given man these qualities and abilities – so God is as well the maintaining cause (*al-illah al-mubqiyah*) of these

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potentialities and qualities. That is to say, God grants these powers and abilities constantly and perpetually, otherwise man cannot perform any action. Thus, such actions can be attributed both to God and man. This belief is neither determinism nor free will, but something between the two (*'amr bāyn al-'amrayn*).

About Divine Destiny and Providence (*qadā wa qadar*), there are also differences of opinion among Islamic thinkers. If by “Destiny” (*qadā*) it is meant that all things – even man’s actions – are brought into existence by God, and if by “Providence” (*qadar*) it is meant that the qualities and particulars of all things – even of those things originated by man’s will – have taken place and shape *solely* as a result God’s Will, then *qadā* and *qadar*, in this sense, are accepted by the Ash‘arites and rejected by the Shi‘ites and the Mu‘tazilites. And if by “*qadā*” and “*qadar*” other sense are meant such as ‘The existence or happening of everything, even man’s free actions and their particulars, depends on God’s Will, but not directly, and rather through the special means of that thing, including man’s will and power’, or if “*qadā*” and “*qadar*” are taken to mean declaration and determination of some another by God’, then in both of these senses, *qadā*, and *qadar* are admitted by the Imāmiyyah Shi‘ites. Moreover, there are certain verses in the Qur’ān and *ahādīth* of the Holy Prophet and Imāms affirming this belief.

The Shi‘ites and the Mu‘tazilites consider it reprobate and wrong to attribute certain qualities or actions to God such as oppression, tyranny, giving of a duty to anybody beyond his strength, and so on, and believe it necessary and right to attribute certain qualities and actions to Him such as mercy, compassion, assigning of prophets and so on.

The Ash‘arites, due to their negation of rational foundation of goodness and badness of actions (*al-husn*

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*wa al-qubh al-aqliyyān*) and also owing to their maintaining that nobody can possibly assign duties and obligations to God, reject both of the above viewpoints.

But it is obvious that both of their own viewpoints rest on shaky grounds. Because, as to the first position, it has been established that the goodness and badness of actions are rational, as to their second position, it may be said that denial of certain qualities and actions to be attributed to God, what is meant is that such things as tyranny and oppression are inappropriate for the sublime station of God, and if some acts – assignment of prophets – are considered to be incumbent upon God, it is meant that refraining from such acts is not becoming to God, the Almighty, which is affirmed by reason. And this notion of denial or incumbency, in this sense, by no means entails any imposition on God by somebody else.

Like the Mu‘talizites the Shi‘ites believe that since God is Wise (*Hakim*), He never does any useless or frivolous action, any action, which is in vain and devoid of benefit and expedience, because God is absolute and total perfection; the benefits of His actions accrue to His creatures, not to Himself. But the Ash‘arites believe that since God has absolute perfection, His actions are not out of motives and purposes.<sup>112</sup>

Sadr al-Din al-Shīrāzī (popularly known as Mullā Sadrā) too with the reference of Al-Tūsī, maintains that man is neither absolutely predetermined nor totally free but shares a part of both.<sup>113</sup>

In short, the Shi‘ite position with regard to freedom of the human will is mediatory, while the Mu‘tazilah and Ashā‘irah hold opposite extremes preaching libertarianism and predestinarianism respectively.

**(f) Concluding Remarks:**

The thrust of the two major schools of *Kalām* (the Mu‘tazilah and the Ashā‘irah) is rooted in the following issues:<sup>114</sup>

- (1) Priority of reason over revelation or vice versa;
- (2) Status of the Attributes with relation to the Divine Essence;
- (3) Freedom of human will or predestination;
- (4) Whether the *Qur’an* is created or eternal;
- (5) Divine Justice, its import and implications; and
- (6) The criterion of good and evil.

But when one goes through the Shi‘ite Imāmiyyah doctrines, one will find, somewhat different position:

- (1) There is no question of priority between reason or revelation, for both are complementary to each other and they do not contradict each other, as is wrongly held by the Ashā‘irah in some matters.
- (2) The Divine Attributes are essentially included in the Divine Essence, as the Mu‘tazilah hold.
- (3) There is neither absolute freedom nor *Tafwīd* (تَفْوِيضٌ) nor absolute determination. (The Shi‘ite position is a via media between the two extreme positions taken by the Mu‘tazilah and Ashā‘irah in this matter).
- (4) The words of the Qur’ān are created, and cannot be held as eternal.
- (5) Divine Justice implies that man is not asked to do what is beyond his capacity (*istitā‘ah*: اِسْتِطَاعَةٌ).
- (6) The criteria of good and evil are provided by revelation, but they are in conformity with the dictates of reason.

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36. *Ehtijaj al-Tabrasī*, p.236, (Cf. *The Spirit of Islam* by Ameer Ali, *op.cit.*, p.411.
37. *Ibid.*, p.411.

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38. Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kulāni (d.328 or 329H), *Usūl al Kāfi* (Persian Trans., Tehran (Iran): Intishārāt-i-Islāmiyyah) Vol.1, pp.222 and 224 (In *Kitāb al-Tawhid*: Chapter “*Al-Jabr wa al-Qadar wa al-‘amr bayn al-‘amrayn*”:
39. Ameer ‘Ali, *op.cit.*, p.411.
40. *Ibid.*, p.411-12.
41. *Ibid.*, p.412.
42. *Ibid.*, p.412.
43. *Ibid.*, p.413.
44. *Ibid.*, p.413.
45. *Encyclopaedia of Islam, op.cit.*, Vol. IV, p.368.
46. *Ibid.*, p.369.
47. *Ibid.*, p.369.
48. *Ibid.*, p.369.
49. Ameer Ali, *op.cit.*, p.411.
50. *Ibid.*, p.413.
51. Cf. *The Spirit of Islam*, by Ameer ‘Ali, *op.cit.*, p.413.
52. Ameer Ali, *op.cit.*, p.414.
53. Waheed Akhtar, *op.cit.*, p.102.
54. Nadvi, M.D., *Muslim Thought and Its Source*, [Delhi: Idara-i-Adabiyat-i-Delhi, 1983 (Reprint)], p.105.
55. (a) ‘Abd al-Karim al-Shahristāni, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, eng. tr. *Muslim Sects and Divisions: The Section on Muslim Sects* by A.K. Kazi & J.G.Flynn, (Kegan Paul International, London etc., 1984), pp.41-71.  
(b) Nawābakhtī, *al-Firaq al-Shī‘ah*, [Persian trans. Muhammad Jawād Mashkūr, (Tehran, Markaz-i-Intishārāt-i-‘ilmī wa Farhangī, 1361 Shamsi)], pp.22-3.

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- (c) Abu al-Hasan al-'Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn fī Ikhtilāf al-Musalliyīn*, [Persian tr. Muhsin Mu'ayyadī, (Tehran, Intishārat-i-Amir Kabir, 1362 Shamsī)], pp. 81-108.
- (d) Hanna al-Fakhuri and Khalīl al-Jarr, *op.cit.* pp.114-126.
56. Hanna al-Fakhuri and Khalīl al-Jarr, *op.cit.* pp.125-26.
57. Watt, W.M., *Islamic Philosophy and Theology (Islamic Survey I)*, (The Edinburgh University Press, 1962), p.58.
58. Mir Valiuddin, "Mu'tazilism", in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, *op.cit.*, p.199.
59. Ameer Ali, *op.cit.*, p.414.
60. Watt, W.M., *op.cit.*, p.60.
61. The five basic Principles of the Mu'tazilah School are as follows:  
(a) *Tawhīd* (Unity of God);  
(b) 'Adl: الْعَدْل (Justice);  
(c) *Wa'd wa Wa'id*: وعد ووعد (Promise and Threat)  
(d) *Al-manzil bāyn al-manzilatayn* (الْمَنْزِلُ بَيْنَ الْمَنْزِلَتَيْنِ): The Intermediate Position)  
(e) *Amr bi-al-ma'ruf wa Nahy 'an al-Munkar*  
أَمْرٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهْيٌ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ  
(The Principle enjoying good and prohibited evil)
62. Mir Valiuddin, "Mu'tazilism", *op.cit.*, p.200.
63. Nadvi, M.D., *op.cit.*, p.25.
64. Mir Valiuddin, *op.cit.*, p.200.
65. Nadvi, M.D., *op.cit.*, p.25.
66. De Boer, T.J., *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, (Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1983), pp.44-5.
67. Cf. Mir Valiuddin, *op. cit.*, p.201.
68. Al-Shahrastānī, A.K., *Kitāb al-Milal wa-al-Nihal*, quoted by Mir Valiuddin in his Article on "Mu'tazilism" *op. cit.*, p.201.

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69. Mir Valiuddin, *op. cit.*, p.201.
70. *Ibid.*, p.201.
71. *Ibid.*, pp.201-02.
72. See Mir Valiuddin, *op.cit.* p.202; and also cf. al-Shahristānī, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, pp.62-3.
73. Ameer Ali, *op.cit.*, p.418.
74. *Ibid.*, p.418.
75. Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Sadrā: (Sadar al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī)*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), pp.174-5.
76. Ameer ‘Ali, *op.cit.*, p.418.
77. *Ibid.*, p.417.
78. Mir Valiuddin, *op.cit.* p.202.
79. *Ibid.*, p.204.
80. Ameer ‘Ali, *op. cit.*, pp.422-23.
81. M. ‘Abdul Hye, “Ash‘arism” in M.M. Sharif’s (ed.) *A History of Muslim Philosophy, op. cit.*, p.220.
82. *Ibid.*, p.220.
83. *Encyclopaedia of Islām op. cit.*, Vol.I, p.694.
84. *Ibid.*, p.694.
85. Ameer ‘Ali, *op.cit.*, p.441.
86. Nadvi, M.D., *Muslim Thought and Its Source, op.cit.*, p.52.
87. *Ibid.*, p.52.
88. *Ibid.*, p.53.
89. *Ibid.*, p.53.
90. *Encyclopaedia of Islam, op.cit.*, p.694 (Vol. I).
91. *Ibid.*, p.694.

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92. *Ibid.*, p.694.
93. M. Abdul Hye, “Ash‘arism”, *op.cit.*,p.222.
94. *Encyclopaedia of Islam, op.cit.*, p.694.
95. *Ibid.*, p.694.
96. M. Abdul Hye, *op.cit.*, p.227.
97. *Ibid.*, pp.226-27.
98. *Ibid.*, p.233.
99. *Ibid.*, p.233.
100. *Ibid.*, p.234.
101. *Al-Qur’an*, II:284.
102. Al-‘Ash‘arī, *al-Maqālāt*, p.291, (quoted by M.‘Abdul Hye in his article on “Ash‘arism”, *op.cit.*, p.229).
103. Al-‘Ash‘arī, *Kitāb al-Ibanah ‘an Usūl al-Dīyanah*, p.9 (cf M. ‘Abdul Hye, *op.cit.*, p.229).
104. *Encyclopaedia of Islam, op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.694.
105. *Ibid.*, p.694.
106. Osman Amin, “Renaissance in Egypt: Muhammad ‘Abdul and His School”, in M.M. Sharif, (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy, op.cit.*, (Vol. II), p.1497.
107. Nadvi, M.D.; *Muslim Thought and its Source, op.cit.*p.6.
108. Abu Ja‘far Muhammad Ibn Ya‘qub ibn Ishāq al-Kulyanī (d.328or 329H.), *Usūl al-Kāfi*, (*Tehran (Iran): Instishārāt-e-Islāliyyah*), Vol.I, pp.222-24, (in *Kitābal-Tawhīd: Ch: Al-Jabr wa-qadar wa al-‘amr ‘bayn ‘al-amryan*, (Tradition Nos.11 and 13).
109. *Ibid.*, pp.215-16.
110. *Ibid.*, pp.215-16.
111. *Ibid.*, pp.222-23.

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112. Abulqasim Gorji, “Shi‘ism in Relation to Various Islamic Sects,” in *Al-Tawhid* [Tehran, (Iran) 1984], Vol. I, No.2, pp.44-6.
113. Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Sadrā*, *op.cit.*, p.170.
114. Waheed Akhtar, “Introduction to Imāmiyyah Scholars: Al-Shaykh al-Sadūq and his Works”, in *Al-Tawhīd*, *op.cit.*, Vol. III, No.1, pp.106-07.



**CHAPTER V**

**IQBAL'S CONCEPTION  
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CHAPTER V

**IQBAL'S CONCEPT OF FREEDOM AND  
CREATIVITY**

Muhammad Iqbāl occupies a unique position in the history of Muslim thought. He may be considered the best advocate of Muslim awakening in modern era. His outlook was progressive in the broad sense of the term. He introduced certain radical ideas with a zeal for reforming the Muslim society. He imbibed higher values and ideals from the East and the West, and interpreted them in the framework of Islamic *Weltanschauung* according to the demands of contemporary philosophical and scientific outlook. Khalifah Abdul Hakīm writes in this regard:

Iqbāl was an heir to a very rich literary and philosophical scholarship. He imbibed and assimilated all that was best in the Islamic and oriental thought to which he added his extensive knowledge of Western literature, philosophy, and culture both of the past and the present. His range of the interest covered religion, philosophy, art, politics, economics, nationalism, the revival of Muslim life and the universal brotherhood of man.<sup>1</sup>

**(a) Freedom and Individuality (Khudi):**

Man occupies the central position in Iqbal's philosophy. The core of his works and world-view is the doctrine of *Khudī* (human ego), the reality of its very existence and the necessity to do every thing to strengthen it:

The moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation but self-affirmation, and he attains this ideal by becoming more and more individual, more and more unique.<sup>2</sup>

This conception is the Central theme of his thought. In fact, the doctrine of human personality is the starting and determining point in Iqbal's solutions to all other complex onto-cosmological problems.



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Iqbal considers the entire universe and the entire material world as a composite of individual egos. All life is individual; there is no such thing as universal life. God Himself is a unique and absolutely Perfect Individual Being: "He is the most unique individual. The universe, as McTaggart says, is an association of individuals."<sup>3</sup>

Iqbal attaches much importance to the independence and self-determining nature of the human ego. According to him these are the fundamental characteristics of individuality:

The nature of the ego is such that, in spite of its capacity to respond to other egos, it is self-centered and possesses a private circuit of individuality excluding all egos other than itself. In this alone consists its reality as an ego.<sup>4</sup>

Further, in its higher manifestations – in man and in God – individually becomes a self-contained exclusive centre.<sup>5</sup>

Iqbal rejects all philosophical systems that degrade and weaken man's *Khudī*: خودی (egohood). He criticizes and attacks vehemently those schools of thought and thinkers who negate human individual or ego, such as *Advaita Vedanta* of Shankra and the ascetic and pantheistic tendencies in Sufism. He is equally opposed to the European varieties of Idealism that designate secondary status to human ego, but accepts the voluntaristic traditions in the West. Human will, the active, creative force of human ego, is in his view, eternally restless and never stops in its quest for perfection.

The Hindu view of the world as 'maya' and the Islamic doctrine of annihilation (*fanā*: فنا of self, according to Iqbal, have been responsible for the decline of the East. He sees the universe as a kingdom of creative and free egos that form the core of reality. His philosophy may be described as the Islamic version of pan-egoism. In the scheme of creation man occupies the highest place. He is the only being, (besides *Allah*) who is self-determining and self-creating:

Man becomes unique by becoming more and more like the most unique Individual. What then is life? It is

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individual: its highest form, so far, is the Ego (*Khudī*) in which the individual becomes a self-contained exclusive centre. Physically as well as spiritually man is a self-contained centre.<sup>6</sup>

### (b) *Freedom and Creativity:*

The human ego reveals its existence in its constant struggle, never-ending creation and fulfillment of desires, passions and ideals. Iqbal, in this regard declares in his *Asrar- i- Khudī*:

زندگی در جستجو پوشیده است      اصل اودر آرزو پوشیده است  
ماز تخلیق مقاصد زنده ایم      از شعاع آرزو تابنده ایم

‘Life is latent in seeking; its origin is hidden in desire  
We live by forming ideals; we glow with the sunbeams  
of desire.’<sup>7</sup>

However, Iqbal does not believe that the existence of the *Khudī* is confirmed only to the production of ideals and desires. The latter presented only the initial stage of life, which at higher stages seeks its fulfillment in creative activity to subordinate and reshape the external world according to the needs of human beings so that the individual persons may live freely and realize their ideals creatively:

The final act is not an intellectual act, but a vital act which deepens the whole being of the ego, and sharpens his will with the creative assurance that the world is not something to be merely seen or known through concepts, but something to be made and re-made by continuous action.<sup>8</sup>

According to Iqbal genuine ‘egohood’ or authentic individual duality is inseparable from unceasing activity of a creative life. In one of his poems in *Sāqi Nāmāh*, Iqbal very lucidly symbolizes this idea with the image of a wave, which says of itself:

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ہستم اگر می روم، گرنہ روم نیستم

‘When I am rolling, I exist, When I rest, I am no more.’<sup>9</sup>

According to Iqbal, creativity, tireless activity and the constant struggle against difficulties are the vital modes of human life. They are, in other words, life itself, which finds freedom in these manifestations of ego.

For Iqbal freedom is the *Summum Bonum* of human existence. A deep analysis of his conception of freedom, as elaborated in his poetry and philosophical writings, may justifiably lead us to the conclusion that in his thought freedom is the source of all values. He maintains that the life of ego is possible in freedom only. In short, “life is an endeavour for freedom.”<sup>10</sup> In his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal holds that “there are only ego-sustaining and ego-dissolving acts,”<sup>11</sup> and freedom, in its strict sense, sustains the ego. No Muslim Philosopher, before Iqbal, had given the highest position to freedom in the hierarchy of values. For him freedom is not only a value or mode of human existence, but is, as stated earlier, the very life of the ego.

In the philosophy of Iqbal, man’s *Khudī*, with its basic and significant qualities – freedom and creativity – is the force that creates itself as well as the world. Freedom and creativity are the outstanding qualities which human ego unfolds to shape and mould its particular historic situation according to its aspirations. Creativity and freedom are interconnected, since the act of creation requires freedom. Freedom is the source of all values and in the real sense of the word; it is the life of ego.

Regarding freedom and creativity Iqbal has alluded to various Qur’anic verses in his Urdū and Persian poetry. In the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* too, he specifically dealt with this issue. In his fourth Lecture: “The Human Ego – His Freedom and Immortality”, Iqbal presents *three* significant themes from the Qur’ān reaffirming the Islamic view of man’s being a Vicegerent (*Khalifah*) of God, a chosen entity and the trustee of a free personality which he accepted at his peril.<sup>12</sup> Iqbal argues that man’s freedom and creativity, at the

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early stage of life, must be under the control and guidance of the Law that may teach him to abide by certain moral principles:

The greatest obstacle in the way of life is matter, Nature; yet Nature is not evil, since it enables the inner powers of life to unfold themselves. 'The Ego attains to freedom by the removal of all abstractions in its way. It is partly free, partly determined, and the reaches fuller freedom by approaching the Individual who is most free – God.'<sup>13</sup>

God has created everything that is in Heaves and earth for His Vicegerent – man. Human being is free to make use of all that has been bestowed on him by his Supreme Creator (*Allah*). But this worldly material life is not his ultimate destiny. It only paves the way that leads towards the higher life. Man's aim, according to Iqbal, must be nearness to God, Who alone is the source of his freedom. By exercising his freedom and creativity he can conquer the material world and reach fuller freedom through approaching God, Who is also Absolute Freedom. In brief, man's highest achievement or distinction, according to Iqbal, does not lie in seeking self-negation or detachment from the material world and in the annihilation of his egohood in the Ultimate Reality (*fanā fi Allah*: فَنَانِي اللهُ). God is over and above the world and all attempts to merge one's self into Divine Being are futile. *Allah* Himself emphasizes the human identity of the Prophet (s):

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

'We bear witness that Muhammad (s) is the slave and messenger of *Allah*.'

At one place the Qur'ān asks Muhammad (s) to say to the people that he is a man like other human being.<sup>14</sup>

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ (الكهف: ١١٠)

'Say: I am but a man like yourselves'.

The Qur'ān underlines and highlights man's separate identity, that is, it teaches how to affirm one's selfhood (*Khudi*).

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But selfhood finds the means of perfection in the corporeal world that provides him an area of action. According to Iqbal human ego is essentially rooted in self-affirmation and the conquest of the Universe:<sup>15</sup>

کمال ترک نہیں آب و گل سے مجھوری      کمال ترک ہے تسخیر خاکی و نوری

‘The height of renunciation is not renunciation of the world of phenomena,  
The height of renunciation is in conquest of the corporal and the celestial.’

All this could be done only when the individual person is free and creative and realizes his potentialities and capabilities.

‘Action’ is also an important aspect of Iqbal’s thought. “Activity”, according to him, is the fundamental aspect of reality. Introspectively, it is ‘ego’; outwardly, it is ‘movement’. Worldly life consists in man’s coming out of inactivity, passive and servile obedience, and a completely static state. In its true sense, according to Iqbal, worldly life directs the individual to lead a life of desire, activity, effort and tension. Moreover, he maintains that this life is an intensive urge to live as a *free* individual and to *create* values and worlds. It is due to this ‘free creative urge’ that man exiled himself from the Heaven. In the Preface to his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal writes that the Qur’ān “emphasizes ‘deed’ rather than ‘idea’.”<sup>16</sup> Iqbal’s conception of ‘man’s expulsion from Heaven’ is basically different from that of the Christian dogma of Ādam’s fall and expulsion. He differs from the dogma of the Christian existentialist thinkers also who place ‘fall’ and ‘Divine Grace’ at the centre of their philosophy and regard man as alienated from the source of his being, from world and from God because of his “*fallen state of being*.” Iqbal is of the opinion that the ‘fall’ does not mean any moral depravity but “it is man’s transition from simple consciousness to the first flash of self-consciousness, a kind of waking from the dream of nature with a throb of personal causality in one’s being”.<sup>17</sup> This phenomenal world is not in vain (or لُغَب) or a “torture-hall when an elementally wicked humanity is imprisoned for an original act of sin.”<sup>18</sup> It is, according to the Qur’ān, “‘*the dwelling place*’ of

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man and a 'source of profit' to him for the possession of which he ought to be grateful to God."<sup>19</sup> In this regard God says in the Qur'an:

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ ط قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ!

'And we have given you (mankind) power in the earth, and appointed for you therein a livelihood. How little do ye give thanks'?<sup>20</sup>

Thus the man should treat his dwelling place as a source of profit and not as a punishment.

Moreover, the Universe, according to the Qur'an, is also liable to develop further:

It is a growing universe and not an already complete product which left the hand of its Maker ages ago, and is now being stretched in space as a dead mass of matter to which time does nothing, and consequently is nothing.<sup>21</sup>

Iqbal puts it more unambiguously in the following verse saying:

یہ کائنات ابھی ناتمام ہے شاید کہ آ رہی ہے دما دم صدائے کُنْ فیکون

'The universe is perhaps 'incomplete' – As in every movement comes the sound: 'Be and it was'.<sup>22</sup>

This universe, in brief, is finite as well as boundless. It is an open and unfinished entity, constantly undergoing development and extension. It provides a unique type of stimulating field for man's free and creative activity, through which on the one hand, he conquers and overcomes the natural world and on the other, perfects the power of his ego-hood or individuality. Man shares with God in the process of creativity. In the 'Introduction' to *The Secrets of the Self*, Prof. Nicholson interprets the viewpoint of Iqbal about the universe and man's creative activity in the following words:

Thus the universe is not a complete act: it is still in the course of formation. There can be no complete truth about the universe, for the universe has not yet become

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‘whole’. The process of creation is still going on, and man too takes his share in it, in as much as he helps to bring order into at least a portion of the chaos. The Qur’ān indicates the possibility of other creators than God,<sup>23</sup> as “Blessing is God, the best of those who create.”<sup>24</sup> (فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ)

In the entire poetic-philosophical writings of Iqbal these two modes of human existence – freedom and creativity – occupy an importance place. Man is *free* to make or mar his life in this world. It is in this world that man *creates* new things, new values and makes his life as he wills:

Man’s first act of disobedience was also his first act of free choice; and that is why according to the Qur’anic narration, Adam’s first transgression was forgiven.<sup>25</sup>

This means that freedom and creativity have been bestowed upon man by God by virtue of which man evolves his own world and creates his own values. Iqbal points out that if the existing world gives no meaning and importance to human personality, it should be destroyed and reshaped in accordance with human aspirations and ideals. In one of his poems “زندگی” (Life) in *Bāng-i-Darā*, he asserts:<sup>26</sup>

اپنی دُنیا آپ پیدا کر اگر زندوں میں ہے      سرِ آدم ہے ضمیرِ کنِ فکاں ہے زندگی ...  
بندگی میں گھٹ کے رہ جاتی ہے اک جوئے کم آب      اور آزادی میں بحرِ بیکراں ہے زندگی

‘Create thy own world if thou be amongst the living,  
Life is the secret essence of Ādam, the hidden truth of creation...  
Life is reduced to a rivulet with little water in bondage,  
In freedom, life is a boundless ocean.’

Again, in this connection, in the same poem Iqbal declares:<sup>27</sup>

پھونک ڈالے یہ زمین و آسمان مستعار      اور خاکستر سے آپ اپنا جہاں پیدا کرے  
‘Burn up this borrowed earth and sky,  
And raise a world of your own from the ashes.’

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In *Zerb-i-Kalīm* (ضربِ کلیم) in a poem “تخلیق” (Creation), he further says:<sup>28</sup>

وہی زمانے کی گردش پہ غالب آتا ہے جو ہر نفس سے کرے عمر جاوداں پیدا

‘Only he overcomes the revolution of Time, Who creates an eternal life with every breath.’

For human activity, Iqbal uses a very expressive and all inclusive phrase, ‘*Kasb-i-halāl*’ (کسبِ حلال), which stands for “Lawful Acquisition” according to orthodox theologians. But according to Iqbal ‘*Kasb-i-halāl*’, has a wider meaning as “acquiring things or ideas solely through one’s personal efforts and struggle.”<sup>29</sup> Analysing the same theme Iqbal points out that enjoying anything which has not been acquired by work or struggle is harmful for the ego. He does not even consider acquiring anything through inheritance as *Kasb-i-halāl*. He says in *Zabur-i-Ajam*:

پشماں شو اگر لعلے زمیراث پدر خواہی  
کجا عیش بروں آوروں لعلے کہ در سنگ است

‘Be ashamed if you want to inherit a ruby from your forebears; This cannot give the pleasure that lies in quarrying a ruby.’<sup>30</sup>

This interpretation of *Kasb-i-halāl*, according to Iqbal, stipulates that all egos have to undergo an intensive life of active effort and continuous struggle and it totally excludes all ideas of self-renunciation. In his ‘*Pilgrimage of Eternity*’ (*Jāwīd Nāmāh*) Iqbal declares:

طرفیہا در نہاد کائنات نیست از تقلید تقویم حیات  
زندہ دل خلاق اعصار و دھور جانش از تقلید گردد بے حضور

‘The cosmos shapes  
Unceasing wonders even now; the stuff  
Of life is not blind following. A heart,  
Which is alive, creates an epoch new,  
And repetition makes it contract, sag



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With its own inner soul.’<sup>31</sup>

Again, the following version of the ‘*Jāwīd Nāmāh*’ Iqbal asserts man’s freedom and creativity:

زندگی ہم فانی و ہم باقی است      این ہمہ خلاق و مشتاقی است  
زندہ می مشتاق شو خلاق شو      بچو ماگیرندہ آفاق شو  
در شکن آن را کہ ناید سازگار      از ضمیر خود دگر عالم بیار  
بندہ آزاد را آید گراں      زیستن اندر جهان دیگران

‘Life is mortality  
And everlastingness as well; it is  
Compact of both creativeness and zeal.  
Dost Live? Then learn to love and to create  
And hold the heavens in grasp like us.  
And shatter all that suits thee not, and make  
A fresher world grow from thy mind.’<sup>32</sup>

The last two lines reinterpret the famous Persian Sufi- poet, Sa‘adī’s following couplet:

حقاً کہ با عقوبتِ دورخ برابر است      رفتن پیاپی مردی ہمسایہ در بہشت

‘Truly it is an torturous as burning in hell-fire,  
Entering Paradise through the assistance of a neighbour.’<sup>33</sup>

According to Iqbal freedom and creativity are the two fundamental modes of human ego. He holds that it is freedom, constant struggle (کوشش پیہم) and life of activity that develop the ego. To Iqbal, creative and original activity alone can sustain and fortify the ego (*Khudī*). Mere imitation is of no use in strengthening the human personality:

تقلید سے ناکارہ نہ کر اپنی خودی کو      کر اس کی حفاظت کہ یہ گوہر ہے یگانہ

‘Demean not thy personality by imitation;  
Guard it, as it is a priceless jewel.’<sup>34</sup>

Mawlanā Rūmi, whom Iqbal chose as his spiritual guide on his pilgrimage to eternity, also preaches a life of ceaseless

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activity and endless struggle to attain personal freedom and immortality. He goes even to the extent of saying:

کوششِ بیہودہ بہ از حقیقتگی

‘Useless striving is better than inaction.’<sup>35</sup>

Both Maulānā Rūmi and Iqbal agree that the Perfect Man (*Mard-i-Mu'min* or *Mard-i-Kamil*) can work miracles in the sense of creating a new world of values. Iqbal further adds that the Perfect Man (*Mu'min*) is a miracle in himself and is a creator of new values and new worlds. He possesses a special and unique status in the Kingdom of God. Human ego in its movement towards uniqueness has to pass through *three* stages:

- (i) Obedience to the Law;
- (ii) Self-control, which is the highest form of self-consciousness or ego-hood; and
- (iii) Divine Vicegerency.<sup>36</sup>

Iqbal, in a letter to Nicholson, describes the characteristics of the Perfect Man in the following words:

This (Divine Vicegerency: *niabat-i-Ilahi* نیابتِ الہی) is the third and last stage of human development on earth. The *nā'ib* (Vicegerent) is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is the most complete Ego, the goal of humanity, the acme of life both in mind and body; in him the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony. The highest power is united in him with the highest knowledge. In his life *thought* and *action*, instinct and reason, become one. He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity, and all the trials of a painful evolution are justified because he is to come at the end. He is the real ruler of the mankind; his kingdom is the kingdom of God on earth.<sup>37</sup>

Further, defining man's uniqueness and as miraculous power in him, Iqbal very lucidly presents an image of man under the same title *Divine Vicegerency*:

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فطرش معمور و می خواهد نمود      عالم دیگر بیارد در وجود  
صد جہاں مثل جہان جزو و گل      رویداز گشت خیال او چو گل

‘His genius abounds with life and desires to manifest itself:  
He will bring another world into existence.

A hundred worlds like this world of parts and wholes  
Spring up, like roses from the seed of His Imagination.’<sup>38</sup>

زندگی بخشد ز عجازِ عمل      می کند تجدید اندازِ عمل  
جلوہ با خیزد ز نقشِ پائے او      صد کلیم آوردہ سینائی او  
زندگی رامی کند تفسیر نو      می دہد این خواب را تعبیر نو

‘He bestows life by his miraculous action,

He renovates old ways of life.

Splendid visions rise from the print of his foot,

Many a Moses is entranced by his *Sinai*.

He gives a new explanation of Life.

A new interpretation of this dream.’<sup>39</sup>

Regarding creativity he says in one of his famous poems *Takhliq* (Creation) in his collection of Urdu poems ‘*Zerb-i-Kalīm (The Rod of Moses)*’:

جہانِ تازہ کی افکارِ تازہ سے ہے نمود      کہ سنگ و خشت سے ہوتے نہیں جہاں پیدا  
خودی میں ڈوبنے والوں کی عزم و ہمت نے      اس آبِ جو سے کیے بحرِ بیکراں پیدا

‘New worlds derive their glory

From thoughts quite fresh and new:

From stones and bricks a world

Was neither built nor grew.

The resolve of those

Who depths of the *self* explore,

Transforming this stream into a sea

That has no merge or shore.’<sup>40</sup>

Iqbal stresses that human ego is not a datum but a creative possibility, an active effort and struggle, and a co-worker with God. Man smashes the world that does not suit him

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and evolves his own world and creates his values. According to Iqbal, through freedom and creative activity man shares in the deeper aspirations of the universe around him and shapes his own destiny as well as that of the universe. In this process of progressive change (i.e. evolution), God also becomes a co-worker with man, provided that man takes the initiative. As the Qur'ān declares:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ (الرَّعَد: ١١)

‘Verily, God will not change the condition of men till they change what is in themselves.’<sup>41</sup>

This injunction of the Holy Qur'ān, as stated in the previous Chapter of this work, clearly asserts that man is by his nature *creative* and *free*. He can make or mar his life as a result of his actions. Man makes his Heaven and Hell as a result of his deeds.<sup>42</sup>

عمل سے زندگی بنتی ہے جنت بھی جہنم بھی یہ خاک کی اپنی فطرت میں ننوری ہے نہ ناری ہے

‘It is action that makes life either Paradise or hell;  
This earthly creature is neither sacred nor profane  
in its nature.’

تپیدن و نرسیدن چه عالمی دارد خوشا کسی کہ بدنبال محمل است ہنوز

‘Yearning, but never achieving has a charm of its own,  
Most fortunate is he, who is still after the moving camel.’<sup>43</sup>

یقین محکم عمل پیہم اور محبت فاتح عالم جہاد زندگانی میں ہیں یہ مردوں کی شمشیریں

‘Firm conviction, unceasing struggle and love conquer the universe;  
In his struggle for existence man possesses nothing but these weapons’.<sup>44</sup>

According to Iqbal, man being a partner in the creative activity of his Maker (*Allah*) should not subscribe to the oft-repeated notion of ‘*Taqdīr*, that is Fate. He emphatically says that ‘man himself is his fate and the maker of his destiny:

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مردِ حق برنده چوں شمشیر باش      خود جهانِ خویش را تقدیر باش

‘Lover of truth ! Be like a shining sword, and be the fate of  
thine own world.’<sup>45</sup>

In one of his poems in *Darb-i-Kalim* he asserts:

زنده دل سے نہیں پوشیدہ ضمیر تقدیر      خواب میں دیکھتا ہے عالم نو کی تصویر  
اور جب بانگِ اذال کرتی ہے بیدار اُسے      کرتا ہے خواب میں دیکھی ہوئی دنیا تعمیر

‘Decrease of Fate are not concealed  
From man whose heart throbbing seems:  
He sees the image of new world,  
In slumberous state, during dreams.  
When prayer call at early morn,  
Transports him to Morpheus’ domain.  
He tries to build the world beheld  
With utmost might and utmost main.’<sup>46</sup>

Iqbal points out that it is possible for man to change his destiny. It is up to him to attain perfect mastery over his destiny. In this regard he writes in *Jāwīd Nāmāh*:

گرزیک تقدیر خوں گردو جگر      خواه از حق حکم تقدیر دگر  
تو اگر تقدیر نو خواهی رواست      زآنکہ تقدیرات حق لا انتہاست

‘If one destiny does not suit thee,  
Desire from God a different destiny;  
Thy demand for a new destiny is becoming,  
For God can decree numerous destinies.’<sup>47</sup>

Syed Abdul Wahid quotes the following lines of Wilcox, which find an echo of the above Iqbalian thought regarding human destiny:

‘There is no chance, no Destiny, no Fate,  
Can circumvent or higher or control  
The firm resolves of a determined Soul.’<sup>48</sup>

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However, Iqbal says that creative activity and invention of new meanings are the gifts of God bestowed on man:

ہر چند کہ ایجادِ معانی ہے خداداد      کوشش سے کہاں مرد ہنرمند ہے آزاد

‘It is a gift by God bestowed,  
To coin fresh words with meanings new:  
Yet a skilful artist must work hard,  
For inborn talent is owned by few.’<sup>49</sup>

Iqbal maintains that human ego possesses in its unique nature, the attributes of freedom and creativity through which man is distinguished from the non-human beings. He underlines this theme of the uniqueness of individual existence (man’s *Khudī*) with all its inner fecundity and self-sufficiency in the following verses of *Bāl-i-Jibrīl*:<sup>50</sup>

تیری قدیل ہے ترا دل      تو آپ ہے اپنی روشنائی  
اک تو ہے کہ حق ہے اس جہاں میں      باقی ہے نمودِ سیمائی

‘Thy heart is thy candle,  
Thou art thine own light;  
Thou art the only truth in the world,  
The rest is magic’s shadow-world.’

Iqbal is of the view that art, religion and ethical ideas must be judged from the viewpoint of human personality. He holds that actions of an individual can only be judged as good or bad when he is free:

‘A being whose movements are wholly determined like a machine cannot produce goodness. Freedom is thus a condition of goodness.’<sup>51</sup>

Man is known through creativity. A man who has the ability of perceiving, judging and acting freely, rightly comes under the category of Perfect Man and a co-creator along with God. Iqbal underlines these points in the following words:

Inner experience is the ego at work. We appreciate the ego itself in the act of perceiving, judging and willing.<sup>52</sup>

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He contends that it is only due to the ‘*creative skill*’ that man establishes his relationship with God. He refers to the two Arabic words — ‘*Amr*’ (direction) and ‘*Khalq*’ (creation) — to express this relationship of God and man.

The Arabic language is, however, more fortunate in this respect. It has two words “*Khalq*” and “*Amr*” to express the two ways in which the creative activity of God reveals itself to us. ‘*Khalq*’ is creation; ‘*Amr*’ is direction. As the Qur’ān says: ‘To Him belongs creation and direction.’<sup>53</sup>

Iqbal is of the opinion that this verse of the Holy Scripture clearly indicates that the essential nature of the soul is directive, as it proceeds from the directive energy of God, though one does not know how Divine ‘*Amr*’ functions as ego-activity. It is this directive activity of the self that makes man a free being, as the Qur’ān indicates:

قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَىٰ شَاكِلَةٍ تَظْفِرْ بِكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ سَبِيلًا (الاسراء: ٨٣)

‘Say: Each one doth according to his rule of conduct, and thy Lord is best aware of his whose way is right.’<sup>54</sup>

Thus according to Iqbal, the human ego (*Khudī*) can be considered to exist only when it is creative and free. The ego’s experience consists of a series of acts. Its existence is known through its judgments, will, attitudes, desires and aspirations:

Thus my real personality is not a thing, it is an act. My experience is only a series of acts, mutually referring to one another, and held together by the unity of a directive purpose. My whole reality lies in my directive attitude. You cannot perceive me like a thing in space, or a set of experiences in temporal order; you must interpret, understand and appreciate me in my judgments, in my will-attitudes, aims and aspirations.<sup>55</sup>

Above all, according to Iqbal, man is the architect of his own life and is the sole sovereign and master of his destiny:

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عبث ہے شکوہ تقدیر یزداں تو خود تقدیر یزداں کیوں نہیں ہے؟

‘Futile is the complaint about the God-determined destiny,  
Why art thou not thyself the God-determined destiny?’<sup>56</sup>

خودی کو کر بلند اتنا کہ ہر تقدیر سے پہلے خدا بندے سے خود پوچھے بتا تیری رضا کیا ہے؟

‘Develop thy self such that before every decree,  
God May ask thee: ‘What is thy wish?’<sup>57</sup>

### (c) *Freedom and Slavery:*

Iqbal asserts that God speaks through freedom. He (God) does not regard a slave’s prayer as genuine, because he (the slave) is not free to communicate with God. “Prayer in Islām is ego’s escape from mechanism to freedom.”<sup>58</sup> Iqbal holds that Islām recognizes this very significant faculty of ego-activity a d “is anxious to retain the power to act freely as a constant and undiminished factor in the life of the ego.”<sup>59</sup> The real man can only be brought up in the spirit of freedom, while on the contrary, slavery distorts character, degrades human nature and lowers man to the level of a beast. Accordingly Iqbal proclaims:

از غلامی دل بمیرد در بدن از غلامی روح گردد بارتن  
از غلامی بزمِ مِلّتِ فرد فردِ ایں و آں با ایں و آں اندر نبرد

‘In slavery the heart is killed in the body,  
In slavery the soul becomes a burden to the body;  
In slavery the community is disunited,  
This one and that one quarrel with this one and that one.’<sup>60</sup>

Regarding a slave’s action, Iqbal declares that it is devoid of true spirit. In *Darb-i-Kalīm*, he says:

بدن غلام کا سوزِ عمل سے ہے محروم کہ ہے مردِ غلاموں کے روز و شب پہ حرام

‘ In a slave’s body heart for deeds is nil,  
Always his days and nights are at standstill.’<sup>61</sup>

حرفِ اس قوم کا بے سوز، عملِ زار و زبوں ہو گیا پختہ عقائد سے تہی جس کا ضمیر

‘Of ripe beliefs, if a nation’s heart



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Has no share or allotted part,  
Such mortals are devoid of glow,  
Their acts are mean, debased and low'.<sup>62</sup>

Pointing out the worst state of slavery, he goes a step further claiming that even an unbelieving state is better than slavery. In *Bal-i-Jibril* Iqbal says:<sup>63</sup>

یقین مثل خلیل آتش نشینی      یقین اللہ مستی، خود گزینی  
سُن اے تہذیبِ حاضر کے گرفتار      غلامی سے بہتر ہے بے یقینی

'Conviction is at ease in fire like Abraham,  
Conviction is absorption in *Allah* and retirement in one's  
inner being.  
Listen ! O prisoner of the modern civilization,  
Life of unbelief is better than life of slavery.'

Iqbal's man is the architect of his world and creates it with the help of his freedom and wisdom. He is also self-subsistent in a way that he denied to other creatures of the terrestrial world:

ناچیزِ جہانِ مہ پروین تیرے آگے      وہ عالمِ مجبور ہے تو عالمِ آزاد

'The world of the moon and the Pleiades  
Has no worth before thee;  
Theirs is the world of necessity, thine of freedom.'<sup>64</sup>

As mentioned before, Iqbal lays great stress on creativeness, and refers to the Qur'ān which very clearly mentions the human being as 'creator' besides God:

"The ego's creativity clearly shows that ego is a free personal causality. He shares in the life and freedom of Ultimate Ego..."<sup>65</sup>

According to Iqbal, the difference between a believer and an infidel is not grounded in theological beliefs or disbelief, but it is based on the fact that a believer is a creator, while an infidel is not. In this respect Iqbal makes God declare:

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ہر کہ اُورا قوتِ تخلیق نیست پیش ماچوں کا فرد زندیق نیست

‘One who does not possess creative power  
To us is naught but an infidel and a heretic.’<sup>66</sup>

### (d) *Freedom: A Religio-Social Value:*

According to Iqbal, Islām recognizes that an unfree and bonded personality, for all practical purposes, becomes a part of inanimate nature and is completely determined by the law of causation. Islām is certainly anxious to retain the power to act freely as a constant and undiminished factor in the life of the ego.<sup>67</sup> Expressing his viewpoint regarding the role of worship, Iqbal maintains that after a hard day’s work and after sound sleep man tends to become mechanical, and, in order to protect the ego from these lapses, Islām has devised a systematic method of worship at regular intervals during the day and night so as to restore or increase the capacity of freedom by bringing the ego into close touch with the Ultimate Source of life and freedom.<sup>68</sup>

Further, underlining the importance of Islamic way of worship, Iqbal points out that prayer in its real sense is meant to secure the ‘unity’ of feeling in the congregation. Its form, in general, creates and fosters the sense of ‘social equality’ inasmuch as it tends to destroy the feeling of rank, race-superiority or higher and lower status among the worshippers. In this connection, Iqbal writes in a long poem ‘*Shikwah*’ (*The Complaint*):<sup>69</sup>

آگیا عین لڑائی میں اگر وقتِ نماز      قبلہ رو ہو کے زمیں بوس ہوئی قومِ حجاز  
ایک ہی صف میں کھڑے ہو گئے محمود و ایاز      نہ کوئی بندہ رہا نہ کوئی بندہ نواز  
بندہ و صاحب و محتاج و غنی ایک ہوئے      تیری سرکار میں پہنچے تو سبھی ایک ہوئے

‘As in the heat of battle the time approached, the time of *namāz*,  
In the direction of the *Ka‘abah* prostrated the people of Hijāz,  
To the one rank belonged all, whether Mehmud or Āyāz,  
No distinctions of ‘master’ and ‘slave’ were observed;  
The ruler and the ruled, the have-nots and the haves,  
All bowed their heads in reverence in Thine Presence’.

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In the same context, in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, he elaborates:

The real object of prayer, however, is better achieved when the act of prayer becomes congregational. The spirit of all true prayer is social. Even the hermit abandons the society of men in the hope of finding in a solitary abode, the fellowship of God. A congregation is an association of men who, animated by the same aspiration, concentrate themselves on a single object and open up their inner selves to the working of a single impulse. It is a psychological truth that association multiplies the normal man's power of perception, deepens his emotion, and dynamizes his will to a degree unknown to him in the privacy of his individuality.... From the unity of all-inclusive Ego who creates and sustains all egos follows the essential unity of all mankind. The division of mankind into races, nations, and tribes, according to the Qur'ān, is for purposes of identification only. The Islamic form of association in prayer, besides its cognitive value, is further indicative of the aspiration to realize this essential unity of mankind as a fact in life by demolishing all barriers, which stand between man and man.<sup>70</sup>

In Iqbal's view congregational prayers are meant to cultivate among the believers a sense of unity and integrity. The congregational prayers represent an association of free egos affected in full *freedom* by free beings. In his view, psychology has so far failed to understand, analyse and explain how such unity could be brought about. Islām, without making use of analytical tools, arrived at the best way of attaining such unity. Iqbal says in this regard:

Indeed, regarded as a psychological phenomenon prayer is still a mystery; for psychology has not yet discovered the laws relating to the enhancement to the human sensibility in a state of association. With Islam, however, this socialization of spiritual illumination through associative prayer is a special point of interest.

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As we pass from the daily congregational prayer to the annual ceremony round the central mosque of Makkah, (The *Haram*) you can easily see how the Islamic institution of worship gradually enlarges the sphere of human association.<sup>71</sup>

Iqbal may be called the only Muslim thinker who gave the highest status to *freedom* in the realm of values. In Iqbal's poetry and philosophy, freedom seems to be the value of all values – the *Summum Bonum*. He would agree with the existentialists that human existence is grounded in freedom. Sartre's dictum that 'Man is condemned to be free' would have been turned upside down by Iqbal saying 'Man is blessed to be free'. Freedom is not condemnation. For Sartre there is no choice for man but freedom. For Iqbal man chooses his freedom from within, it is not thrust upon him from without. Ibn-i'Arabī says: "What the essence (of man) demands was given to him." He means to say that man chose his being freely, for no compulsion was involved in this process. Man is the architect of his destiny. Iqbal holds that acts are either self-sustaining or self-dissolving according to their affirmation or negation of freedom.<sup>72</sup>

He bases his conception of freedom on the Qur'anic teachings and declares that it is the immense faith in God that provides the capacity and courage to exercise free will and create oneself and one's values. God, in his world-view, does not deprive man of his freedom, as some orientalists hold, but rather guarantees it. He does not accept the oft-repeated notion of fate (*taqdir*) advocated by the orthodox Muslim scholars. He rejects all those systems, which degrade human '*Khudi*' by curtailing man's power of acting freely and make his personality inactive and meaningless. Nicholson makes similar remarks interpreting the standpoint of Iqbal:

"...The conviction that *Khudī* (selfhood, individuality, personality) in real and is not merely an illusion of the mind. Iqbal, therefore, throws himself with all his might against idealistic philosophers and pseudo-mystical poets, the authors, in his opinion, of the decay prevailing in Islām, and argues that only by self-

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affirmation, self-expression, and self-development can the Muslims once more become strong and free.<sup>73</sup>

Iqbal's philosophy is religious. But one must note that he does not treat philosophy as the handmaid of religion. Iqbal conceives free society as a kingdom of ends, in which every individual is free, an end in himself. He holds that the full development of the individual presupposes a free society (*Ummah*). He finds the ideal society in what he considers to be the Prophet's conception of Islām. Every Muslim, he asserts, in striving to make himself a more perfect individual, is helping to establish the Islamic kingdom of God upon earth.<sup>74</sup> In his *Rumūz-i-Bekhudī* (*The Mysteries of Selflessness*), Iqbal poetically explains that the individual who loses himself in the community reflects both the past and the future of *Ummah* as a mirror. It is so because he transcends static morality and enters into the life of Islām, which is infinite, everlasting and ensures a dynamic free morality. It is to be noted that Iqbal's *Rumūz-i-Bekhudī* is not contrary to his *Asrār-i-Khudī*, but a sequel to and a complementary part of it. An individual as a member of a community (*Millat*) does not lose his individual existence. He is, in the real sense, the guiding star that directs the destiny of *Millat*. Only a free and creative individual, according to Iqbal, can make his society free and creative. Man's moral behaviour assumes meaning in collective life, and his individuality is developed in society only. Iqbal, in his *Rumūz*, describes the nature of the relationship of the individual with the social life of the community (*Millat*), in the midst of which he lives, moves, translates his values into action and expresses his authentic being. Alone, man is weak and powerless and his aims are narrow. It is the active participation of the living membership of a vital 'Millat' that confers on him a unique sense of power and makes him aware of higher collective purposes, which deepen and widen the significance and scope of his very individual ego. He says:

افراد کے ہاتھوں میں ہے اقوام کی تقدیر      ہر فرد ہے مِلّت کے مقدر کا ستارہ

The destiny of the nations lies in the hands of the individuals, Every individual is the star of the community's destiny.'

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فرد قائم ربطِ ملت سے ہے، تنہا کچھ نہیں  
موج ہے دریا میں اور بیرونِ دریا کچھ نہیں

‘The individual is alive only due to his relationship with the community. Alone he is nothing:  
The wave’s existence is in the river, outside the river, it is nothing.’<sup>75</sup>

Iqbal points out that freedom is not merely a value or a mode of human existence, but it is the *very life* of the ego. In short, “life is an endeavour for freedom.”<sup>76</sup> However, the unique power of free choice is not a free gift of God: it is to be attained through unceasing hard struggle. Man often has to encounter dangers in his struggle for seeking freedom and completeness. The ego has to attain freedom by moving all the obstructions in its way. Man by his nature is partly free and partly determined. He attains fuller freedom by approaching the unique individual who is the freest Being – God (*Allah*).<sup>77</sup> In reality, Iqbal holds, life is ceaseless striving and an endeavour for freedom. His man believes in ‘endless quest’:

زندہ ہر ایک چیز ہے کوششِ ناتمام سے

‘Everything is alive only through endless efforts.’<sup>78</sup>

بے محنت پیہم کوئی جو ہر نہیں کھلنا  
روشن شہرِ ریشہ سے ہے خانہ فرہاد

‘Without unceasing endeavour no potentiality is actualized, The life of Farhad is illuminated with the sparks scattered from his chip-axe’.<sup>79</sup>

وہی زمانے کی گردش پہ غالب آتا ہے  
جو ہر نفس سے کرے عمرِ جاوداں پیدا

‘Only he overcomes the revolution of Time,  
Who creates an eternal life with every breath.’<sup>80</sup>

زندگی ہر جا کہ باشد جستجو است  
حل نشد ایں نکتہ من صیدم کہ اوست

‘Where’er be life, it means a ceaseless search,  
I know not if I am a prey or He.’<sup>81</sup>

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ہمہ سوزِ نا تمام، ہمہ دردِ آرزویم      بگماں دہم یقین را کہ شہید جستویم

‘I am all an imperfect burning – all a painful longing –  
I give away certainty for doubt, as I am the victim of a  
*ceaseless quest!*’<sup>82</sup>

Emphasizing man’s freedom and constant striving for creativity, Iqbal maintains that man will be able to wash away the blot of sin and guilt through creativity. He says in ‘*Payam-i-Mashriq*’:

گر از دستِ تو کارِ نادر آید      گناہے ہم اگر باشد ثواب است

‘If you do an extraordinary (creative) act,  
It becomes a good work even though it is sinful.’<sup>83</sup>

Iqbal believes that man makes the world with his free creative skill. All worldly objects are there for the service of man. He has only to bring into play his hidden potentialities for various deeds, and all this earth and heavens will move at his command for it is only the free ego-activity which gives them meaning and purpose.

### (a) *Freedom and Immortality:*

Iqbal infers *two* principles from the Qur’anic legend of Prophet Adam:

- (a) Man’s longing for the infinite; and
- (b) His desire for immortality through self-multiplication:  
Accordingly he writes in his *Reconstruction*:

The Qur’ān splits up the legend into two distinct episodes – the one relating to what it describes simply as ‘the tree’ and the other relating to the ‘tree of eternity’ and the ‘kingdom that faileth not.’<sup>84</sup>

According to Iqbal man is the possessor of a free personality accepted at his peril and the ego is free personal causality. Its destiny is self-determined in its unitive experience. He asserts:

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In the higher Sufism of Islām unitive experience is not the finite ego effacing its own identity by some sort of absorption into the infinite Ego; it is rather the Infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite.<sup>85</sup>

The ideal of Islām is self-affirmation, not self-negation. Iqbal attacks Sufism because it tends towards self-annihilation – negation of one’s own freedom to exist as creative agent of the Divine will. Fate is not pre-destined; it is actually the ego’s free creativity.

The ego has a beginning in time and therefore it is finite. But this finite, says Iqbal, is not a misfortune. He writes:

(The Qur’ān) does not contemplate liberation from finite as the highest state of human bliss. The ‘unceasing reward’ of man consists in his gradual growth in self-possession, in uniqueness and intensity of his activity as an ego.<sup>86</sup>

He further claims that even the Day of complete destruction (or in his words ‘Universal destruction’) cannot affect a full-grown ego. In this regard he refers to a Qur’ānic verse:

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ نَصَبَعًا مِّنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْأَمَّنُ شَاءَ اللَّهُ (النجم: ٦٨)

‘And the Trumpet is blown, and all who are in the Heavens and the Earth swoon away, *save him whom Allah Willeth*’<sup>87</sup>

Iqbal holds that true infinity is intensity, not extensity. Action provides the ground for the intensity of the ego. In reality life offers a scope for ego-activity. As he says:

True infinity does not mean infinite extension which cannot be conceived without embracing all available finite extensions. Its nature consists in intensity and not extensity; ... Life offers a scope for ego-activity.<sup>88</sup>

It is in action that the free ego seeks immortality. The martyrs who sacrifice their lives for the sake of higher ends attain immortality. In Iqbal’s view Martyrdom of Husayn ibn



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‘Ali is the highest instance of the individual freely choosing his own destiny and thus attaining immortality. In this context, regarding Imām Husayn (referred to him by name ‘*Shabbīr*’), he says in *Bal-i-Jibrīl*:

حقیقتِ ابدی ہے مقامِ شہیری بدلتے رہتے ہیں اندازِ کوفی و شامی

‘The station of Shabbir (Imam Husain) is eternity,  
While the positions of the Kūfīs and Shāmīs are  
ever- shifting’

Iqbal holds that immortality can be attained through action; living and creating one’s own self and the surrounding universe freely as well. The ego does not end with the death of the body. Iqbal’s Perfect Man is not awed by death. The inevitability of death strengthens his faith in *Allah* and he tries to attain immortality through acquiring approval of God.

In *Bang-i-Darā* in a long poem titled: “والدہ مرحومہ کی یاد میں” says:

موت کو سمجھے ہیں غافل اختتامِ زندگی ہے یہ شامِ زندگی صبحِ دوامِ زندگی  
موت تجدیدِ مذاقِ زندگی کا نام ہے خواب کے پردے میں بیداری کا اک پیغام ہے  
آہِ اغافل! موت کا رازِ نہاں کچھ اور ہے نقش کی ناپائیداری سے عیاں کچھ اور ہے

‘Ignorants consider death the end of life,  
While the eve of life is the beginning of an eternal life....<sup>89</sup>  
Death is nothing but revival of the lust for life,  
It is a dream that conveys the message of awakening.  
Alas! You, the ignorant person, are unfamiliar with the  
mystery of death;

The transitory character of an image implies permanence’.<sup>90</sup>

In *Bal-i-Jibrīl* he further asserts:

یہ نکتہ میں نے سیکھا ابو الحسن سے کہ جاں مرتی نہیں مرگِ بدن سے

‘I learnt this wisdom from Abū al-Hasan [Imam’Ali(a)],  
that the soul remains unaffected by the death of the body.’<sup>91</sup>

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Immortality, in the eyes of Iqbal, is an ideal, which may or may not be attained by every one. Its achievement solely depends upon one's personal efforts or constant striving. As the Holy Qur'ān declares:

تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي يَدُهُ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ<sup>90</sup> الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ  
لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ<sup>91</sup> (الملك: ۲-۱)

'Blessed is He in Whose hand is the Sovereignty, and he is able to do all things. Who hath created life and death that He may try you, which of you is best in conduct (or in point of deed); and He is Mighty and Forgiving.'<sup>92</sup>

According to Iqbal, life offers to the ego a great scope for personal efforts to achieve the ideal of immortality, and death is perhaps the best test whereby the synthetic activity of the ego is brought to trial. In this regard Iqbal says in *Payam-i-Mashriq*:<sup>93</sup>

ترا یک نکتہ سر بستہ گویم اگر درس حیات از من بگیری  
بمیری گر بہ تن جانی نداری اگر جانی بہ تن داری نمیری

'I tell thee a piece of secret wisdom,  
If thou would'st learn from me the lesson of life,  
Thou diest if thou hast not the soul in the body,  
If thou hast the soul in the body thou diest not.'

An ego perfected through a life of creativity and action overcomes finitude. Martyrdom is eternal life, for in it the individual ego becomes one with the creative activity of *Allah* and conquers time, as Iqbal says:

It is here that he becomes the Perfect Man; his eye becomes the eye of God, his word the word of God and his life the life of God — participates in the general life of Nature and 'sees into the life of things.'<sup>94</sup>

To Iqbal, man that has attained a relatively perfect egohood, possesses a privileged position in the heart of Divine

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creative energy and is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of *Allah* — The Supreme Creator:

Endowed with the power to imagine a better world, and to mould 'what is' into 'what ought to be' the ego in him aspires, into the interests of an increasingly unique and comprehensive individuality, to explore all the various environments on which he may be called upon to operate during the course of an endless career.<sup>95</sup>

Iqbal, with reference to Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, points out that in the history of modern thought there is a positive view of immortality.<sup>96</sup> He himself conceives "resurrection as a universal phenomenon of life."<sup>97</sup> He is of the view that immortality is not liberation from the shackles of time, it rather means being eternally present before *Allah*.

Iqbal finds a positive view of immortality in Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal recurrence. In his view of time Nietzsche deviates from Kant and Schopenhauer by regarding it as a real and infinite process. But his doctrine implies fixity of events happening again and again. It is a more rigid kind of mechanism and hence eventuates in determinism. Time, regarded as circular movement, makes immortality intolerable. The Superman of Nietzsche's conception amounts to a repetition of what man has been a number of times before.<sup>98</sup>

Iqbal holds that the creative activity of time does not repeat itself. It is free; it is not deterministic. Consequently, Nietzsche's doctrine fails to overcome finitude. For Kant immortality remains merely a postulate of morality. The Qur'anic view is partly ethical and partly biological. Iqbal defines *Barzakh* as a state of suspension of life between death and resurrection. Resurrection is itself conceived by him as a universal phenomenon of life.<sup>99</sup> In this regard Waheed Akhtar writes:

Reward and punishment on the Day of Judgment are not willed by God, but willed by man himself. He receives what he chooses to deserve. Immortality is within the reach of the ego, but man has to will it; it is

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not given him as a gift. Iqbal asserts that immortality is not liberation from the shackles of time, but it means to be eternally present before God.<sup>100</sup>

Iqbal maintains that the true nature of time is realized when we look into our deeper self:

Real time is life itself which can preserve itself by maintaining that particular state of tension (personality) which it has so far achieved.<sup>101</sup>

In other words, man, according to Iqbal, having time with God, can himself become eternal. In *Asrār-i-Khudī*, Iqbal says:

تو که از اصل زماں آگه نـه  
از حیات جاوداں آگه نـه  
تا کجا در روز و شب باشی اسیر  
رمز وقت ازلی مع اللہ یادگیر  
ایں و آں پیدا است از رفتارِ وقت  
زندگی سریت از اسرارِ وقت...  
وقت ماکول اوّل و آخر ندید  
از خیابان ضمیر مادمید  
زنده از عرفان اصلش زنده تر  
هستی او از سحر تا بنده تر  
زندگی از دهر و دهر از دنگی است  
لَا تَسْبُو الدَّهْرَ فَرْمَانِ نَبِیْ اسْت

‘Knowing not the origin of Time,  
Thou are ignorant of everlasting Life.  
How long wilt thou be a thrall of night and day?  
Learn the mystery of Time from the words:  
“I have a time with God”.

Phenomena arise from the march of Time,  
Life is one of Time’s mysteries....  
Our Time, which has neither beginning nor end,  
Blossoms from the flower-bed of our mind.  
To know its root quickens the living with new life:  
Its being 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.<sup>102</sup>

### (f) Love: A Primordial Source of Freedom and Creativity:

Further in *Asrār-i-Khudī* (*The Secrets of the Self*) Iqbal underlines that when the self is strengthened by ‘Love’ (*Ishq*) it

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gains dominion over the outward and inward forces of the universe. Moreover, it symbolizes man's *freedom* and *creativity*:

The fifth part of the *Secrets of the Self* shows that when the Self is strengthened by Love it gains domination over the outward and inward forces of the universe. Love, in Iqbal's thought and poetry, is the moving force and creator of values and ideals; it symbolizes man's *freedom*. It is through love that the ego conquers finitude and attains immortality. It is not the negation but the affirmation of individuality and hence it individualizes the lover as well as the beloved. Iqbal's concept of love is the culmination of the Sufi concept of love, but he has redefined it and broadened its meaning and scope so that it may embrace the ego, time, creativity, freedom and even God.<sup>103</sup>

According to Iqbal, it is this faculty — 'Love (*Ishq*)' that distinguishes man from other beings. '*Ishq*, he thinks, is a source of knowledge and creative force. It is only '*Ishq*', which is capable of knowing real time and participating in its creative activity. Iqbal maintains that the ego is the seat of '*Ishq* and precedes space and time. He eloquently describes the connection between 'Love' and the ego in his '*Asrār-i-Khudī*:

از محبت چون خودی محکم شود      قوتش فرمانده عالم شود.....  
از محبت می شود پاینده تر      زنده تر سو زنده تر تابنده تر  
از محبت اشتعال جوهرش      ارتقائے ممکنات مضمزش.....  
عشق را از تیغ و خنجر پاک نیست      اصل عشق از آب و باد و خاک نیست  
از نگاه عشق خارا شق بود      عشق حق آخر سراپا حق بود

'When the self is made strong by Love,  
Its power rules the whole world. ...  
By Love it is made more lasting,  
More living, more burning, more glowing.  
From Love proceeds the radiance of its being,

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And the development of its unknown possibilities...  
Love fears neither sword nor dagger,  
Love is not born of water and air and earth ...  
The hardest rocks are shivered by Love's glance:  
Love of God at last becomes wholly God.<sup>104</sup>

Iqbal has given a more comprehensive expression of Love in *Jāwīd Nāmāh (The Pilgrimage of Eternity)* pointing out that due to it man transcends worldly space and time and reaches the super-physical realm. In the following lines Iqbal presents beautiful similes on 'Ishq':

عشق درجان چون بچشم اندر نظر      هم درون خانه هم بیرون در  
عشق هم خاکستر و هم انگر است      کار او از دین و دانش برتر است  
عشق سلطان است و برهان مبین      هر دو عالم عشق را زیر نگین  
لازماں و دوش فردائے ازو      لامکاں و زیر و بالائے ازو  
چون خودی را از خدا طالب شود      جمله عالم مرکب اور راکب شود  
عشق درجان چون بچشم اندر نظر      هم درون خانه هم بیرون در  
عشق هم خاکستر و هم انگر است      کار او از دین و دانش برتر است  
عشق سلطان است و برهان مبین      هر دو عالم عشق را زیر نگین

'Love dwells

With the soul as sight doth in the eye,  
Within and yet without: tis both the fire  
That flames and ashes cold. 'Tis greater than  
One's knowledge and one's faith. The final plea  
Is love, and both the worlds are love's empire.  
Love doth transcend both time and space, and yet  
The far, the nigh, the future and the past  
Proceed from love. When love the ego seeks  
From God, it sways the world, establishes  
The place of heart and breaks the ancient spell  
Of this old idol-house. The lover gives  
His self to God, surrenders he the sense  
That to evasion takes. Art thou one such

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Transcend the bounds of space; be free from death.’<sup>105</sup>

In the light of preceding discussion, we can conclude that in the philosophy of Iqbal, Man’s *Khudī* is a manifestation of his urge for freedom and creativity. Since the act of creation requires freedom, it is a logical corollary that creativity and freedom go together and hence are interdependent. Moreover, freedom and creativity are the Divine qualities which human ego unfolds to shape and mould its particular historic situation according to its aspirations. Therefore, freedom is the source of all values and ideals and above all it is the very life of ego. In a word, freedom, according to Iqbal, is the *raison d’etre* for human *Khudī*.

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81. *Diwān-i-Iqbāl Lāhorī*, *op.cit.*, p.410, (trans. from *The Pilgrimage of Eternity*, *op.cit.*, p.180).
82. *Ibid.*, p.232.
83. *Diwān-i-Iqbāl Lahorī*, *op.cit.* p.208, (Trans. B.A. Dar, *Iqbal and Post-Kantian Voluntarism*, (Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1956), p.146.
84. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, *op.cit.*, p.83.

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85. *Ibid.*, p.110.
86. *Ibid.*, p.117.
87. *Al-Qur'ān*, XXXIX: 68.
88. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, *op.cit.*, pp.118-19.
89. *Kulliyāt-i-Iqbal*, *op.cit.* p.254.
90. *Ibid.*, pp. 231-33.
91. *Ibid.*, p.379.
92. *Al-Qur'ān*, LXVII: 1,2.
93. *Dīwān-i-Iqbāl, Lahorī*, *op.cit.*, pp.199-200.
94. Iqbal, Muhammad, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, (Bazm-i-Iqbal, Lahore), p.119.
95. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction*, *op.cit.*, p.72.
96. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.
97. *Ibid.*, p.116.
98. *Ibid.*, pp.114-15.
99. *Ibid.*, p.116.
100. Waheed, A., "Iqbal's Conception of Time", *op.cit.*, p.93.
101. Nicholson, R.A., *The Secrets of the Self*, *op.cit.*, p.XXV.
102. *Ibid.*, pp.136-37, (Verses 1561-66 and 1575-80).
103. Waheed, A., "Iqbal's Conception of Time", *op.cit.*, p.94.
104. *Dīwān-i-Iqbāl Lahorī*, *op.cit.*, pp.93-97, (Trans. *The Secrets of the Self*, *op.cit.*, pp. 28-43).
105. *Ibid.*, p.321 (Trans. from *The Pilgrimage of Eternity*, *op.cit.*, pp.15-16, lines 315-329).



**CHAPTER VI**

**COMPARISON BETWEEN  
SARTRE AND IQBAL'S  
NOTIONS  
OF  
FREEDOM AND CREATIVITY**

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CHAPTER VI

**COMPARISON BETWEEN SARTRE AND IQBAL'S  
NOTIONS OF FREEDOM AND CREATIVITY**

Both Jean-Paul Sartre and Muhammad Iqbal occupy a unique place in their respective areas of influence in the Modern Western and Eastern philosophical worlds. Sartre is a prominent champion of existential philosophy, while Iqbal's greatness lies in reviving and reconstructing Islamic thought. It would be an interesting study to compare and contrast their position regarding freedom, an issue that has acquired new dimensions in the context of the present historic situation in which individual's identity and freedom have been threatened by bureaucracy, technology and an all-embracing collectivism. This study becomes more interesting in view of their contrasting beliefs — Sartre is a declared atheist, and Iqbal is firmly committed to the Islamic faith — as one of them rejects God in order to safeguard human freedom, while the other reaffirms his faith in God so that man can exercise his freedom fully. Yet both of them are champions of individual man's freedom and creativity. Furthermore, both of them are creative writers of the highest caliber. Sartre is a great fiction writer of our age and Iqbal is universally acclaimed as one of the greatest poet-philosophers of Indo-Persian tradition in the twentieth century.

The similarities and dissimilarities in their philosophical out-looks are equally glaring. There are some areas in which both are in agreement and some others in which they disagree. Their difference seems prominent due to Sartre's tackling of the metaphysical notions on an atheistic basis; conversely Iqbal's system of thought is rooted in the intensive faith in God, and his approach is a theistic one. The main question is how far belief or unbelief in God makes a difference in relation to a philosopher's views on freedom and creativity. Does it make a fundamental difference or give rise to only secondly and minor differences?

Sartre and Iqbal's conception of freedom has been already discussed separately in previous chapters of this study. Here we can compare and contrast in details their notions of freedom and

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creativity and try to find out how their imaginative worlds pave the ways for the lovers of freedom and innovation.

Existentialism is a point of departure, insofar as it provides an alternative approach to the understanding and living of life and consequently changes one's entire out-look by creating new attitudes, values and ideals. The central contention of existential philosophy — in the words of Sartre — '*existence precedes essence*'<sup>1</sup> is a revolutionary one and shakes the hitherto dominant essentialist philosophy to its foundations. It provides a new conception of man, and a new outlook by making '*human existence*' the real frame of reference. For Sartre human reality or human subjectivity is the foundation of all thought, action and values. He says that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world and defines himself afterwards.<sup>2</sup>

Iqbal, whose system of thought is an amalgam of Eastern religious insight into reality and Western intellectualism, has crucial existential insights to offer. He dwells upon certain important existentialist themes without calling himself an existentialist. However, he is not in full agreement with the exponents of the slogan — Sartre's dictum — "*existence proceeds essence*" and its implications. Nevertheless, he emphasizes the main themes current in contemporary existentialist philosophy such as:

- (a) Man's existence and his personal involvement;
- (b) Anti-intellectualism and anti-impersonal functionalization;
- (c) Alienation and authentic existence; and above all
- (d) Freedom and creativity.

These ideas he certainly shares with the continental existentialists. Before proceeding to discuss Iqbal's views on these issues, it would be relevant to enumerate and expound some common elements enunciated by the existentialist thinker, Sartre. Let us discuss their views on the cited issues side by side in order to know their deep understanding of humanism, its various dimensions and the critical analysis of the ethico-religious world-views and the value-systems enunciated and reflected in Christianity and Islam:

**(a) *Man's Existence and His Personal Involvement:***

Existentialism being a philosophy of 'human existence' man's encounter with himself has its roots in the philosophies that emphasized the significance of the study of man and his inner experience. Such philosophies have been predominantly mystical and humanistic. What is described as mystical experience, if analyzed properly, seems to be skin to existential experience or subjectivity. The dictum of Protagoras: "Man is the measure of all things" and that of Socrates: "Know thyself" emphasize the study of human reality from two different points of view. Mystics of the East and the West and Sufis and 'urfa' in the Muslim World, despite their concern and yearning for establishing direct, immediate and intimate relationship with God, have been more concerned with 'human existence' and 'subjectivity' than the philosophies of rationalist and empiricist traditions. Similarly all creative literature right from the pre-Socratic Greek epics and tragedies as well as Sanskrit poetry up to the modern age has always been treating man as the central theme of poetry, drama, novel, plays, stories, artistic activities, and other literary genres. Though existentialism is described as a 'literary philosophy' by the Protagonists of analytical philosophy of our age contemptuously, yet it is an apt description for existential philosophy in view of the similarity of the approaches of creative literature and existentialism to the study of man.

It is worthwhile to trace the elements of existential thought and its approach in the spiritual experiential insight of Sufis and literati expressed in their utterances and poetic works. Starting from *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer up to the medieval ages in the creative experiences of Saint Augustine (*Confessions*), Dante (*Divine Comedy*), Ibn Sīnā (*al-Ishārāt* and *Hay ibn Yaqzān*), Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (*Hikmat al Ishrāq*), Rumi (*Mathnawī*), Sa'adī (*Gulistān* and *Bostan*), Hafiz (*Dīwān*), al-Ghazzālī (*al-Munqadh min al-Dalāl*), 'Attār (*Tadhkirat al- Awliya*) and (*Mantiq'u't-Tair*), Sanā'ī (*Hadiqatu'l-Haqiqat*), Ibn al-'Arabī (*Futuhāt al-Makkiyah* and *Fusūs al-Hikam*), Mullā Sadrā (*al-Asfār al-Arba'at Aqliyyah*), Mīr Taqī Mīr (*Kulliyāt*), Khwājah Mīr Dard (*Dīwān* and *Ilm al-Kitāb*), Bīdil (*Kulliyāt* and *Chahār 'Unsur*), Ghālib (*Diwān-i-Urdu*) and (*Kulliyāt-i-Fārsī*), the works of Mahmūd Shabishtarī, and so on;



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everywhere the spiritual existential experience is expressed in symbolic and metaphorical language unfolding the innermost depths of the totality of human existence.

Similarity in modern times in the works of Goethe, Dostoyevsky, Franz Kafka, Miguel de Unamuno, T.S. Eliot, Leo Tolstoy, Chekhov, Albert Camus, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Iqbal, Tagore and Aurobindo Ghosh one may find certain elements of existential approach and thought intermingled with either romanticism or idealism or mysticism. All the representatives of romanticism from Rousseau to Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Keats share some basic features with the present existentialists. Whatever may be the philosophy or ideology of genuine creative writers the element that threads them together and brings them closer to existentialists is their subjectivity and creative involvement in and commitment to the totality of human existence and its destiny.

In the words of Karl Jaspers, “man is everything”. In view of the same, existentialism aims at describing and evaluating what in its terminology are ‘human situations’. When the term “existentialism” is used broadly, it refers primarily to a type of thinking that emphasizes “human existence” and the qualities peculiar to it rather than to nature or the physical world. Man-centered and individualistic existentialism seeks to probe the darker corners of the human situations. Yet emphasis on ‘human existence’, though the beginning of a definition is actually too vague for us to use in reference to this philosophy.<sup>3</sup> Existentialism, therefore, represents “an attitude or outlook that emphasizes human existence — that is, the distinctive qualities of individual persons — rather than man in the abstract or nature and the world in general.”<sup>4</sup>

All the existentialists have tried their best to construct their philosophical systems on existential basis. For them ‘*human existence*’ is prior to everything. This theme of human existence has been greatly emphasized by various existential philosophers in their respective works, such as Soren Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling*, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, and *Either/ Or*; Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time*; Karl Jasper’s *Philosophy of*

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*Existence*; Gabriel Marcel's *The Mystery of Being* and *Man Against Mass Society*; and Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* and *Existentialism and Humanism*. Besides these prominent advocates of existentialism, the subject of 'human existence' as indicated earlier, is also dealt within the writings of Nietzsche, Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Dostoyevsky and Albert Camus. In short, it can be said that all existential philosophies are concerned with the manoeuvre of existing individuals whose being is ambiguous (both bound and free, separated and joined) in a total existence which is ambiguous (finite and infinite, end and means, a plenitude and nothing).<sup>5</sup>

One should keep in one's mind that there are *two* groups of thinkers in existential philosophy. One is theistic in which Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel fall; the other is atheistic of which Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre are the exponents. Both the theistic and atheistic groups of existentialism explain their conception of human person and his different moods according to their own outlooks. But as for freedom and creativity, there is no basic difference between the two groups.

Sartre in his *Being and Nothingness* and *Existentialism and Humanism* explained his views regarding the existence of man. Analysing his famous dictum, 'existence precedes essence' he says that the being which exists in the world is only man. As mentioned earlier, Sartre does not believe in the existence of God and therefore, his approach towards existentialism is an atheistic one. As he says in *Existentialism and Humanism*:

Atheistic existentialism, of which I am a representative, declares with great consistency that if God does not exist there is at least one being whose existence comes before its essence, a being which exists before it can be defined by any conception of it. That being is man or, as Heidegger has it, the human reality.<sup>6</sup>

According to Sartre, man is the only being that has no nature because there is no God to have a conception of him. He is a subjective being. Man is indefinable because to begin with he is nothing. Sartre asserts:

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He will not be anything later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus, there is no human nature because there is no God to have a conception of it.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, all existentialists, particularly Sartre, emphasize 'human existence'. Sartre very keenly seeks to know the reality of human existence and formulates a comprehensive theory of being. His main interest is directed towards an ontological goal and in fact, all the existential thinkers tackle the common problems of expounding the salient features of human reality.

Iqbal may be considered the first Muslim thinkers to make a serious attempt to reconstruct Islamic thought on an existential experience of human individual. The fundamental difference between Sartre and Iqbal is that the former, as mentioned above, does not believe in the existence of God, while the latter's approach to existential philosophy is rooted in the firm belief in the existence of God. Iqbal approaches human reality in relation to God. Though Iqbal and Sartre's interpretations are different yet their meeting ground — emphasis on human personality — is the same.

It may be said with some justification that it would be more apt to compare Iqbal's approach to human freedom with that of either Kierkegaard or Jaspers or Marcel. For, they share a theistic world outlook with Iqbal and they start their quest for human existence from the same stand-point, which is belief in God Who created man as a free being and ensured his free creativity. But the point at issue is as to how God, the Absolutely Free Being, can create another free being, and how far can man exercise his freedom despite a superior Free Being. God, being the Creator, in His very act of creation, delimits freedom of his creatures. Iqbal has resolved this difficulty in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, but it would be difficult for any authority on theistic existentialism to defend human freedom against the Absolute Freedom of God. Only reducing God to a mere concept, which would be an anti-existentialist, may do it. Iqbal's position with regard to man's freedom is clearer than that of the theistic existentialists. This point needs a much deeper analysis and an elaborate discussion, in which we cannot indulge

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within the limited framework of the present work. However, among the existentialists, Sartre is undoubtedly the most outstanding champion of man's freedom, while among the contemporary theistic thinkers Iqbal may be called the most articulate advocate of man's freedom as well as his creativity.

Iqbal refers to the Qur'anic teachings to stress the significance of human reality in all its aspects. The Holy Qur'ān is in an unambiguous and forceful manner emphasizes "the individuality and the uniqueness of man"<sup>8</sup> and assigns him the highest status of being the Vicegerent (*Khalīfah*) of God on earth.<sup>9</sup> In his 'Reconstruction', Iqbal points out that according to the Qur'ān, "Man is the chosen of God"<sup>10</sup> as His representative and trustee on the earth. He is the Supreme Being among all the creatures of *Allah*.

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ  
عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا<sup>0</sup> (الاسراء: ٧٠)

'Verily we have honoured the children of Adam. We carry them on the land and the sea, and have made provision of good things for them, and have preferred them above many of those whom we created with a marked preferment.'<sup>11</sup>

Iqbal's conception of "man" has been discussed in the previous chapter indicating that the 'self' or 'ego' occupies the central position in his philosophy. He maintains that it is the reality of the self (*Khudī*) through which man approaches superhuman reality. For Sartre, human reality is the supreme object of inquiry.

The most distinguishing element in Iqbal's world-view is his stress on the 'human personality', its reality as a free being and the course to adopt to strengthen it. He holds that '*Khudī*' or selfhood is a real and pre-eminently valuable and significant entity, which is the centre and the basis of the entire organization and order of life. Like the existentialists, particularly Sartre, Iqbal emphasizes the individuality and the uniqueness of human existence. He asserts in his *Asrār-i-Khudī* (*The Secrets of the Self*):

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The moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation but self-affirmation and he attains to this ideal by become more and more individual, more and more unique.<sup>12</sup>

According to Iqbal, “life” is nothing but “individual” and its highest form is, in his words, the ‘Ego’ (*Khudī*) in which the individual becomes prominently a self-contained exclusive centre.<sup>13</sup> He seems in full agreement with Sartre when he says that the human ‘ego’ or ‘self’ is the real entity, and everything, which is there in the universe, is due to its very existence. In this connection he, more precisely in the *Asrār-i-Khudī* says:

چوں حیاتِ عالم از روزِ خودی است پس بقدرِ استوارِ زندگی است  
قطره چوں حرفِ خودی از برگزند هستی بے مایه را گهر گزند

‘Inasmuch as the life of the universe comes from the power of the self,  
Life is in proportion to this power.  
When a drop of water gets the Self’s lesson by heart,  
It makes its worthless existence a pearl.’<sup>14</sup>

پیکرِ هستی ز آثارِ خودی است هر چه مه بینی ز اسرارِ خودی است  
خودیشتن را چوں خودی بیدار کرد آشکار عالم پندار گردد

‘The form of existence is an effect of the Self,  
Whatsoever thou seest is a secret of the Self’.  
When the self awoke to consciousness.  
It revealed the universe of Thought.’<sup>15</sup>

Iqbal formulates and very systematically elaborates his theory of the soul as an active, creative entity eternally seeking and never stopping in its unique search. According to him, like Sartre, individual existence should be regarded as the sole criterion of life and every one must recognize his ‘self’ and its various capabilities and potentialities. Iqbal in *Jāwid Nāmāh* (*The Pilgrimage of Eternity*) underlines:

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آنچه در آدم بگنجد عالم است      آنچه در عالم نه گنجد آدم است  
آشکارا مہرو مہ از جلوتش      نیست رہ جبریل رادر خلوتش  
برتر از گردوں مقام آدم است      اصل تہذیب احترام آدم است

‘What man contains in himself is the world,  
And what the world cannot enclose is man.  
His vision makes the sun and moon unveiled;  
And even Gabriel no access gains  
Unto his solitude. His lofty rank  
Is higher far than heaven; therefore know  
On man’s respect is civilization based.’<sup>16</sup>

Thus, like the existentialists, Iqbal recognizes and underscores the reality of human personality, and, in fact, this is one of the basic themes, which he shares with the existentialist thinkers.

In two of his works ‘*Asrār-i-Khudī*’ and ‘*Rumūz-i-Bekhudī*’, human ego has been most eloquently described in its different aspects and dimensions. These works are composed in the meter adopted in *Mathnawi* of Mawlānā Rūmī, who too emphasized the importance of man, saying:

کز دام و دد مولوم و انس انم آرزوست

‘I am tired of the devil and the beast; I desire man.’

Iqbal elaborates the same theme of his spiritual mentor--Rūmī, by asserting:

آدمیت احترام آدمی      باخبر شو از مقام آدمی

‘Humanity consists in respect of man:  
So acquaint thyself with the dignity of man.’<sup>17</sup>

In juxtaposition to this attitude, Iqbal presents the plentitude of his expressions regarding the importance of human existence in different ways. As he says, in his poem *Lālay-i-Sahrāh* (The Tulip of the Desert), that all other objects, belonging to the heaven and the earth, including the sun and the stars are mute, though curious spectators of the drama of human life. He says:

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ہے گرمی آدم سے ہنگامہ آدم گرم سورج بھی تماشائی تارے بھی تماشائی

‘From Man is the warmth and activity in the Universe —  
The sun is a spectator, and so are the stars.’<sup>18</sup>

The human self (or *Khudī*) according to Iqbal is finite, but it is also boundless in its peculiarity:

وہ بحر ہے آدمی کہ جس کا ہر قطرہ ہے بحر بیکرانہ

‘Man is an ocean of which  
Every drop is itself a boundless ocean’.<sup>19</sup>

In another poem in *Jāwīd Nāmāh*, Iqbal, like Sartre, underlines the uniqueness of individual existence with all its inner fecundity and self-sufficiency, asserting thus:

کوکب بی شرق و غرب و بی غروب در مدارش نی شمال و نی جنوب  
حرفِ اِنِّی جَاعِلٌ تَقْدِیْرًا از زمیں تا آسماں تفسیر او  
مرگ و قبر و حشر و نشر احوال اوست نور و نار آں جہاں اعمال اوست  
او امام و او صلوات و او حرم او مداد و او کتاب و او قلم

‘He is a start  
With neither east nor west, which setting naught  
Doth know; whose axis corresponds to north Nor South.  
His destiny entreaured lies  
In words, “I shall create”; the earth and sky  
Are commentaries thereof. The grave and death  
And resurrection and the crack of doom  
Are facets of his soul; the fire of hell,  
The lights of heaven symbolize his deeds.  
He is the leader, he the prayer too,  
He is the mosque, the holy sanctuary,  
He is the Pen, the Ink and he the Book,  
By portions are revealed the qualities  
That in him latent lie; no limits mark  
His state. His mere existence guarantees

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The promise of all possibilities,  
Their measure is his golden mean.<sup>20</sup>

Iqbal seems to be in agreement with Heidegger and Sartre who hold that it is the fact of consciousness, which radically distinguishes man from other, begins and all other living creatures. According to them, man has achieved the highest measure of individually and is, consequently, most conscious of his own reality. Holding the same view-point, Iqbal says:

The nature of the ego is such that in spite of its capacity to respond to other egos, it is self-centered and possesses a private circuit of individuality excluding all egos other than itself.<sup>21</sup>

According to Iqbal, the entire religious and existential experience of man shows the importance and the uniqueness of the 'human self'.

Existentialism is also a philosophy of man's personal involvement. In this system of thought a human being is treated as an 'actor' and not a "spectator". Existential philosophy lays emphasis on man's inner life and experience. It brings out his inner, personal, immediate and subjective awareness. All the existentialists commonly hold that there is no knowledge apart from the knowing 'subject' — Man's inner life with his unique moods, anxieties and decisions. Kierkegaard, the father of modern existentialism, philosophizes with reference to his own personal problems. As Frederick Copleston puts it:

Philosophy and biography go together in the sense that the former arises in response to personal problems in which Kierkegaard is involved and which are solved on existential level, by choice rather than simply on the abstract and theoretical level.<sup>22</sup>

Existentialism opposes all forms of objectivity and impersonality insofar as they pertain to the life of man. With reference to Kierkegaard, Sartre writes:

Kierkegaard bases his position upon individual man here and now, man in his passion and anxiety; and



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much of his argument is founded openly upon personal experience, ...<sup>23</sup>

The realm of personal involvement is much emphasized by all existentialists. Kierkegaard and Sartre seem particularly inclined to this attitude. Kierkegaard regards the human individual as an ‘actor’ and not as an object — a ‘spectator’:

(Kierkegaard) does not stand back from problems as an impersonal analyst and spectator; he grapples with them as one who is involved in them with his whole being; they are for him not merely objects of intellectual curiosity but rather matters of vital concern which he cannot regard with a purely detached interest. He is not a spectator, but actor.<sup>24</sup>

Sartre incorporates the same views and asserts that the individual is completely involved in the world. According to him, “man is thrown into this world”<sup>25</sup> and therefore he is responsible for every thing he does. Both Sartre and Heidegger analyse this theme and distinguish between man’s being-in-the-world and his being-in-the-midst-of-the-world as the two modes of his existence. The purpose of drawing this distinction is to emphasize that although man is necessarily present and involved in the world and cannot withdraw himself from it, yet he does not lose his individuality. One must note that ‘*present*’ or ‘*involved*’ does not mean, for both the thinkers, ‘absorption’ or ‘losing one’s *self*’ to the world and sink to the level of brute material objects, which both of them termed as the state of ‘*inauthenticity*’.

Existential philosophy is a personal, self-evolving, creative effort rather than an impersonal and imitative process of philosophizing. In short, it is an approach to life that lays its emphasis on man’s existence and his personal involvement.

Iqbal too, like the existentialists, stresses man’s consciousness and personal involvement in his own being and the world as well. There is a remarkable similarity between Iqbal and the existentialists in their approaches to the problems of

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man's consciousness, his identity, personal involvement, death, anguish, dread etc. Iqbal also is, like the existentialists, against classicism and intellectualism. In spite of certain differences between Iqbal and Sartre a number of elements are common to both. The universe, according to Iqbal, the theist, is a God-oriented one. Yet this approach to and description of human existence are much akin to those of the atheistic existentialists such as Sartre and Heidegger, who too have analysed human existence. Concern for *man*, as an existing individual being and his personal involvement in different spheres of life are the common points of the two philosophical systems.

### **b) *Anti-Intellectualism and Anti-Impersonal Functionalization***

Existentialism is a thorough revolt against some of the main features and concepts of the traditional speculative philosophy and impersonal attitudes of the modern industrially oriented and technology-dominated era. It is a protest against the tradition of rationalism initiated by the Greeks, especially the traditional "system building" of philosophy as formulated by Plato, Spinoza and Hegel. In such a 'system', according to the existentialists, the human individual is lost in a supersensible world, in abstract universals, or in a universal ego. In the previous pages, the nature or '*essence*' of man has been discussed and distinguished from his radical '*existence*'. In this way, it can be rightly said that "existentialism is a protest in the name of individuality against 'reason' and 'nature' that were so strongly emphasized during the eighteenth-century 'Enlightenment'".<sup>26</sup>

The basic ideas of reaction against the established religious authority were first found in Kierkegaard's philosophy. In rejecting Christianity, "Kierkegaard had perceived the discontinuity between faith and reason, and in rejecting speculative philosophy he retained this perception and built his position upon it."<sup>27</sup> According to him speculative philosophy has not yet apprehended the true spirit of Christianity:

"...In relation to Christianity, systematic philosophy is merely skilled in the use of all sorts of diplomatic phraseology, which deceives the unsuspecting. Christianity as understood by the speculative philosopher

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is something different from Christianity as expounded for the simple.”<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, in his famous works ‘*Philosophical Fragments*’ and ‘*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*’, Kierkegaard attacks mainly the established “system” of Hegel. He points out that Hegelian philosophy fails to define its relation to the existing individual. Further, by ignoring the ethical values it also confounds human existence. According to him existentialism begins as a voice rose in protest against the absurdity of Pure Thought:

A philosophy of pure thought is for an existing individual a chimera, if the truth that is sought is something to exist in. To exist under the guidance of pure thought is like traveling in Denmark with the help of a small map of Europe, on which Denmark shows no larger than a steel pen-point — aye, it is still more impossible. The admiration and enthusiasm of the youth, his boundless confidence in Hegel, is precisely the satire upon Hegel.<sup>29</sup>

Gabriel Marcel also rejects the Hegelian idea of abstract knowledge. As he says, “What do we know of ourselves? We are beyond truth and falsehood, we cannot be qualified.”<sup>30</sup> and he further says that there can neither be absolute knowledge of the real nor that of the self.

Existentialism, as stated before, is a philosophy of human existence and personal involvement. Besides being anti-intellectualistic in its approach and attitude, as discussed above, it is set against impersonal functionalization and opts for a subjective approach to life. It is a revolt against the impersonal nature of the modern industrial or technological age as well as against scienticism and positivism. As in this regard Karl Jaspers says:

Existentialism is a reaction against pseudo-scientific philosophizing, and the term “existential” (Existenz) focuses this reaction by calling our attention to the concrete human situation from which philosophical thought arises.<sup>31</sup>

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In this way, all the existentialist thinkers attach the greatest value and importance to the existence of human individual as he inwardly perceives himself, feels, enjoys, suffers, wills rather than to a conceptual framework applicable to all. In this respect, the common revolt of existentialists is against certain dominant philosophical, religious, social, political and literary concepts and trends, which imply 'dehumanization' and impersonal functionalization. Frederick Copleston, in his *Contemporary Philosophy*, points out that "the powerful tendency towards the political and social totalitarianism with its reduction of personal responsibility and its evaluation of personal values in terms of service to the collectivity"<sup>32</sup> gave an impetus to the existentialist theme of personal involvement. Thus, it may be said that existentialism is a movement of anti-intellectualism and anti-functionalization of man.

Iqbal, in agreement with the existentialist thinkers, holds that the traditional speculative philosophies have failed to grasp the basic reality of 'human existence' and its various distinctive qualities. In order to highlight and emphasize the uniqueness of the self, Iqbal too, like the existentialists, has developed his critique of classical and modern philosophical, theological, literary and artistic systems of thought.

It must be kept in mind that Iqbal does not completely reject the importance of reason or intellect in life. According to him intellectual knowledge "prepares us for a more masterful insertion into subtler aspects of human experience."<sup>33</sup> Further, he holds that the intellect has been evolved to help man in his actions. Here Iqbal's approach regarding the intellect seems somewhat different from that of the existentialists. For instance Sartre, who completely rejects 'reason' or 'human nature', says:

There is no human nature. ...Man simply is. ...  
Man is nothing else but that which he makes of  
himself.<sup>34</sup>

He further adds in this sphere:

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One will never be able to explain one's action by reference to a given and specific human nature...he is thrown into this world...<sup>35</sup>

Sartre rejects human nature and 'essence' because he does not believe in the existence of God. Iqbal's attitude is contrary to him (Sartre) because he (Iqbal) has firm faith in God's existence and that is why his approach is theistic one. He is against intellectualism in the sense that he, like Kant, points out the inadequacies of the intellect. Here, like Bergson (and unlike Sartre) he thinks that the higher form of intellect is 'intuition'. He sees no unbridgeable gulf between 'intellect' and 'intuition'. Accordingly, he says in his *Reconstruction*:

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 complement each other. The one grasps Reality piecemeal, the other grasps it in its wholeness. The one fixes its gaze on the eternal, the other on the temporal aspect of reality.<sup>36</sup>

Plato and other idealists had repudiated sense experience, as a source of knowledge and the modern irrationalists do not accept the validity of intellect as an instrument of the knowledge of reality. Iqbal's view in this regard, writes Khalīfah 'Abdul Hakīm', is "integrative, considering sense-perception, intellect and intuition to be different modes of apprehension of the same reality."<sup>37</sup> His outlook is unmistakably Qur'anic, not only appealing to reason in support of revelation and faith but also regarding hearing and sight as the most valuable Divine gifts and declaring them to be accountable to God. Sartre's position is different; for him man's reality is the sole criterion of everything and, like Nietzsche, he says that God does not exist. However, Iqbal's rejection of idealists like Plato, Hegel etc. seems similar to that of the existentialists. He, just like the existentialists, attacks Plato's rationalism and calls him 'a sheep in man's clothing'. This is so because according to Iqbal, Plato's thought has deeply influenced the mysticism and literature of Islām by making them follow the sheep's doctrine. In *Asrār-i- Khudī* Iqbal says about him:

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راہبِ دیرینہ افلاطون حکیم      از گروہ گوسفندانِ قدیم  
رخش او در ظلمت معقولِ گم      در کہستان وجود افکنده سم....  
راہبِ دیرینہ افلاطون حکیم      از گروہ گوسفندانِ قدیم  
رخش او در ظلمت معقولِ گم      در کہستان وجود افکنده سم....

‘Plato, the prime ascetic and sage,  
Was one of those ancient flocks of sheep.  
His Pegasus went astray in the darkness of idealism. ...  
He dominates our thinking,  
His cup sends up to sleep and takes the  
Sensible world away from us.  
He is a sheep in man’s clothing,  
The soul of the Sufi bows to his authority.’<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, it may also be pointed out that Iqbal saw Greek thought as the supreme example of classicism, which strictly follows certain laws. Islām, on the other hand, is opposed to the Greek outlook and is in its spirit romantic, inviting man to take risks in his quest for reality:

Plato regarded time an unreal but the Buddha emphasized its reality. Iqbal rejects Plato and accepts the Buddha. He devotes a part of his *Mathnawī: Secrets of the Self*, to the criticism of Plato’s ideas and their deadening influence on the Muslim mind. He warns that ‘we must be on our guard against his theories’. For Plato the concrete physical world is an illusion and ideas alone partake of Reality. Iqbal holds, on the contrary, that:

زنده جاں را عالم امکان خوش است      مرده دل را عالم اعیان خوش است

‘Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living spirit,  
Dear is the world of ideas to the dead spirit’.

Plato ‘made hand, eye and ear of no account’ and ‘slumbered and took no delight in deeds’. The Muslim mind was poisoned by his philosophy of the denial of

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the material universe. It goes without saying that under his influence most of the Muslim thinkers somehow upheld the notion of the unreality of time. Sufism was more deeply influenced by Plato who may be regarded as its presiding genius. Iqbal does not regard change as evil and does not agree with the Buddha that salvation lies in the liberation from the life-cycle by eliminating desire, the root-cause of the will to live. Life is suffering and suffering is rooted in desire. Iqbal, like the Buddha, does certainly regard life as an expression of desire, but, unlike him, he considers it a blessing:

زندگی مضمون تنخیر است و بس      آرزو افسون تنخیر است و بس  
زندگی صید افکن و دام آرزو      حسن را از عشق پیغام آرزو

‘Life is occupied with conquest alone,  
And the one charm for conquest is desire.  
Life is the hunter and desires the snare.  
Desire is love’s message to Beauty.’

Iqbal thus partly rejects the Buddha’s philosophy of life because he, in Iqbal’s view, could not appreciate the life-force of time. Desire is the vitality to grapple with the temporal is real because time is God’s attribute or God Himself<sup>39</sup>.

As far as the concept of space is concerned, Iqbal rejects the Greek concept of space also. The Muslim mind could never agree with the absolutistic concept of space:

The ideal of the Greeks...was proportion not infinity.  
The physical presentness of the finite with its well-defined limits alone absorbed the mind of the Greeks.<sup>40</sup>

Iqbal holds that the ideal of the Muslims was the infinite and this could not be harmonized with the absolutistic concept of space:

All the forms of atomic posed the same difficulty. The Ash’arite atomism was an attempt to overcome this difficulty. Nasir Tusi (A.D. 1201-74), for the first time

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since Ptolemy (A.D. 87-165) gave serious thought to the difficulties of demonstrating the certitude of Euclid's parallel postulate on the basis of perceptual space. He realized the necessity of abandoning perceptual space, furnishing a basis for 'the hyperspace movement of our time' (*Reconstruction*, pp.132-4). Al-Berunī saw, from a purely scientific point of view, the insufficiency of the scientific view of the universe (*Reconstruction*, p.134). Iraqi, as Iqbal claims, insisting on the plurality of space-orders and time-orders, speaks of a Divine time and Divine space.<sup>41</sup>

Again, Iqbal shares with the existentialists the realization of the inconsequentiality of pure intellect or thought. Like that of the existentialists, his philosophical system may be conceived as a reaction against the abstractionism of the idealists specially Hegel and Plato. According to both the systems the intelligible order of things is more than an airy hypothesis or an *a priori* datum. In this regard Iqbal, in his '*Darb-i-Kalim*' speaks with barely concealed contempt about Hegel:

ہیگل کا صدف گوہر سے خالی ہے اُس کا طلسم سب خیالی

'Hegel's shell has no pearl in it:  
His shadow-world is all illusion.'<sup>42</sup>

Iqbal's problem is quite similar to that of Kierkegaard who makes an attempt to meet the challenge of materialism, institutionalized religion and society, which according to him collectively erode the spiritual foundation of human existence. Both the thinkers tried at their levels best to save the individual man from the danger of losing his individual identity. Iqbal realizes the loss of individual personality (*Khudī*) in the modern artificial and technological milieu, especially the Muslim world of pseudo-mystic pantheism, and other such religious movements. He sees that:

Hindu intellectualism and Islamic pantheism have destroyed the capacity for action based on scientific observation and interpretation of the phenomena,



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which distinguishes the Western peoples “and especially the English.”<sup>43</sup>

Iqbal in this way, accuses, particularly, the early Muslim scholastics of failing to grasp the spirit of Qur’ān under the influence of the Greek speculative philosophy and impersonal functionalization of man’s individuality (*Khudī*):

It is the misfortune of our age that it has too much knowledge, that has forgotten what it means to exist”. (Kierkegaard). ... Iqbal’s diagnosis of the sickness of modern civilization is not different from that of Kierkegaard. He is critical of contemporary body of knowledge because of its incapability to teach how to live. In *Jāwīd Nāmāh (The Pilgrimage of Eternity)* the Indian discipline, in his anguish to learn how to manage life, asks his spiritual preceptor:

‘My thought has scaled the heavens but I remain lowly and miserable on earth I cannot make my way in the world; I stumble at every step. Why am I incapable of managing my worldly affairs? Why is the spiritually wise a fool in worldly matters?’<sup>44</sup>

Thus, it seems that Kierkegaard is scientifically wise and Iqbal is spiritually wise and both are at a loss and have forgotten to exist as human beings. Dostoyevsky summarized this situation in the following words:

Leave us without books and we shall be lost and in confusion at once. We shall now know what to join into, what to cling to, what to love and what to hate, what to respect and what to despise. We are oppressed at being men — men with a real individual body and blood. We are ashamed of it; we think it as a disgrace and try to continue to be some sort of impossible generalized man.

Such is, in reality, the predicament of modern man. Immensity of knowledge has made man insignificant in his own eyes. He has drifted from himself in the ever-widening stream of his own intellectual gains. In the gigantic machinery of

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technocracy and bureaucracy he has become an infinitesimal part, replaceable any time on the slightest show of unadjustability with the whole. Dostoyevsky 'generalized man' is multiplying to the point of population explosion, but the real man, whom Rumi sought among demons and beasts with a lantern in his hand, is not to be found. Existentialist thinkers tried to search and rehabilitate the real man in their own way, and Iqbal aimed at fulfilling the same task in his own way. Concern for *man* is the meeting ground for the existentialists and Iqbal. Both have one and the same goal.

As stated earlier, Iqbal's revolt against intellectualism is somewhat different from that of the existentialists who completely reject speculatively philosophy and are rightly called "irrationalists." Iqbal is not an obscurantist who fails to understand the significant role-played by the 'intellect' in the individual's life, worldly affairs and social evolution. However, he points out the inadequacies of the intellect and lays emphasis on its higher form (intuition) to know the 'secrets of the self' that is, 'Reality in its wholeness'. The apparent belittling of the individual self provokes a protest as by the existentialists, against the over-exaggeration of the intellect's role in life. Iqbal's poetry, in particular, records this protest, in which he belittles the intellect as compared to '*Ishq* or intuition, the passion to love and create.

On the whole Iqbal's philosophical attitude like that of the existentialists may be regarded as anti-intellectualistic with a severe attack on the philosophies advocating impersonal functionalization of man. Emphasis on the uniqueness of human reality plays a pivotal role in both the systems.

### **(c) *Alienation and Authentic Existence:***

According to the existentialists, human existence is prior to everything and for them the first principle is man's making of himself, as he is a project, which possesses subjective life. They believe that before this projection of the self nothing exists, that is, man is responsible for whatever he chooses and does in different situations, and hence the responsibility of his action falls on his own shoulders.

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Existentialist thinkers have discussed in detail the fact of alienation in their writings. Among them, most particularly Sartre's position is significant in this regard. According to him, there are two modes of being — 'being-in-itself' and 'being-for-itself'. Being-in-itself, as stated earlier, is the self-contained being of a thing, for example, a stone is a stone, it is what it is and no more or no less. It means the being of a thing always coincides with itself only. On the contrary, 'being-for-itself' is co-extensive with the realm of consciousness, and the nature of consciousness is that *it is perpetually beyond itself*.<sup>45</sup> Accordingly Sartre holds that man in his existence, is always beyond this world, sometimes towards the future and sometimes outside of this world, and even transcends his own being. Man never possesses his being as he possesses a thing. Thus, he never comes to the position of a thing that coincides with an object. This can only be done when he is not conscious of or rather when he is not alienated from himself.

According to Sartre, the human reality has the radical duality of the 'in-itself' and 'for-itself' and is made up of this duality. Whereas the in-itself is defined as a being "which is what it is", man or the human reality is defined as a being "which is what it is not and is not what it is."<sup>46</sup>

Sartre points out that man is nihilizing nothingness, because if existence has no objective ground nor has any reference to any system of values, then, in this sense, conscious human existence is pure nothingness. In other words, due to the fact that man constantly creates himself as well as the objective situation, his empirical being is viewed as nothingness. It can be inferred that to exist man must perpetually transcend himself or be alienated from himself. In this regard Paul Tillich says:

The state of existence is the state of estrangement. Man is estranged from the ground of his being, from other beings, and from himself.<sup>47</sup>

From the above discussion it necessarily follows that man must abandon all hopes of attaining a secure and harmonious integration with the surrounding objective world. Accordingly,

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in desiring, valuing and existing, man necessarily rejects this objective world in which he lives. Therefore, in the words of Olson, all projects, which are turned toward the acceptance of the world, as it is constituted, imply a diminution of man's being and a loss of self-respect in so far as they tend to reduce the tension, which constitutes the necessary condition of free human action. Sartre, in his *Being and Nothingness*, points out that "freedom is a lack of being in relation to a given being."<sup>48</sup> He is emphatic in asserting that the human reality is a 'detotalized totality' (of 'in-itself' and 'for-itself'). Man is both 'in-itself' and 'for-itself' but an important point to be noted is that the two dimensions of his being are radically different. There seems a deep dent in his very being which will never close at all.

The upshot of the above Sartrean theory is that "man is the foundation without foundation" of his values. Value derives its being from its exigency and not its exigency from its being.<sup>49</sup> Sartre says:

Nothing, absolutely nothing justifies me in adopting this or that particular value, this or that particular scale of values. As a being by whom values exist, I am unjustifiable. My freedom is anguished at being the foundation of values, while itself without foundation.<sup>50</sup>

According to Sartre, the core or price of human existence is *alienation* from self, from God, from nature or material world and from society. Man is condemned to freedom.

Existentialist thinkers have discussed in detail the spheres of finitude and alienation or estrangement. Sartre explains death, finitude and guilt from the standpoint of alienation. It is said that estranged from the ultimate power of being, man is determined by his finitude. His destiny is given over to his natural fate. He came from nothing and he returns to nothing. He is under the domination of death and driven by the anxiety of having to die. This in fact, is the first answer to the question about the relation between sin and death. For Sartre, the most important feature of human reality is the fact of self-transcendence; the ontological necessity men are under to exist in and through choice. All the anguish and tragedy of human existence can be traced to this

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source. And it is this feature of human reality, which constitutes its finitude. But, for Heidegger, on the contrary, death is the greatest source of anguish and the prime symbol of human finitude. He does not deny self-transcendence. Sartre points out that the awareness of death has value insofar as it obliges man or helps him to make authentic decisions. Moreover, he says that the awareness of death helps man to achieve authenticity. It necessarily involves a renunciation of the right to choose. Therefore, it is, in fact, nothing other than an impossible attempt to be for oneself the essence or the nature, which one can only be for another. Sartre, in this connection, in his '*Being and Nothingness*' remarks:

The very existence of death alienates us wholly in our own life.... To be dead is to be a prey for the living. This means, therefore, that one who tries to grasp the meaning of his future death must discover himself as the future prey of others. We have here, therefore, a case of alienation.<sup>51</sup>

This is, in short, the existential exposition of alienation as systematically elaborated by Sartre.

Now, we propose to discuss a few observations regarding authentic existence put forward by the existentialists. For them, authentic man is one who recognizes the radical duality between the human and non-human beings. According to the existentialists, man must live in the world; and '*being-in-the-world*' (which constitutes his conscious and purely authentic being), in which man recognizes his existence and knows his potentialities, does not follow from '*being-in-midst-of-the-world*' (which the state of human inauthenticity, in which man loses his existence in the artificial man-made world which is the world transformed by human technology). They hold that an *authentic* life is one, which is based upon an exact assessment of human condition, while in *inauthentic* state man becomes forgetful of the ontological roots of his very being. The ontological necessities of human condition, existentialists hold, are degraded in the state of '*fallenness*' or '*inauthenticity*'.

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A brief account of Iqbal's doctrine of alienation will be given here to compare and contrast his view with that of the existentialists. So far as contrast is concerned, Iqbal's views on death are diametrically opposed to the views of Sartre and other existentialists. Man, according to him, is not condemned to death due to the finitude of his ego. On the contrary, it is finitude through which he may overcome and conquer time. Finitude is not a curse but a blessing, for it motivates man to attain infinity and eternity. As Iqbal says:

Finitude is not a misfortune...This is a very important point and must be properly understood with a view to secure a clear insight in to the Islamic theory of salvation. It is with the irreplaceable singleness of his individuality that the finite ego will approach the infinite ego to see for himself and consequences of his past action and to judge the possibilities of his future... Finitude (is) the highest state of human bliss.<sup>52</sup>

Iqbal believes, unlike the atheist Sartre that man's life does not end with his bodily death. For Sartre, this life in the corporeal world is all that man possesses, while for Iqbal it is just a preparatory ground for the life-after death. He is convinced that man's essence, that is 'soul', is immortal. It is up to man to conquer finitude and attain immortality through his unceasing struggle to overcome time and finitude:

(Finitude): The 'unceasing reward' of man consists in his gradual growth in self-possession, in uniqueness and intensity of his activity as an ego. Even the scene of 'Universal Destruction' immediately preceding the Day of Judgment cannot affect the perfect calm of a full-grown ego.<sup>53</sup>

The man who does not flee from death but faces or rather chooses it freely with a purpose overcomes it, as in the case of a martyr like Husayn Ibn 'Ali ('a). Hence death is not a cause of alienation, as Sartre believes, but a means to attain unity with God. It also, to Iqbal, makes human life meaningful, while Sartre says that the dread of death makes human existence absurd. A perfect believing man, (i.e. *Mard-i-Mu'min*) feels no dread in the

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face of death; he approaches it willingly, knowing that it brings in its wake eternity. *Mu'min*, according to Iqbal, dies with a smile on his lips:

نشانِ مردِ مومنِ با تو گویم      چوں مرگ آید تکتسم برب اوست

'I tell thee the sign of a *Mu'min* —  
When death comes there is a smile on his lips.'<sup>54</sup>

What makes human life absurd and devoid of all human values is seeking refuge in the world and escaping from death. According to Iqbal, it is not death but the attempt to escape from it that alienates man from God, his ownself and the world of human existence.

Before proceeding, it is essential to note that Iqbal has never explicitly used the term "alienation" or "estrangement" in his philosophical or poetical writings. However, the conception of alienation is embedded in his poetic reflections. He raises the problem of two-fold alienation — God alienated from man and man alienated from God. Besides, man's alienation from the world and from himself also figures in his philosophy. In one of his early and powerful poems, "*Shikwah*" (*The Complaint*) Iqbal takes up the question: Why is man alienated from God? And in the '*Answer to Complaint*' (*Jawāb-i-Shikwah*) God's reply does not seem to be satisfactory at all, because of the fact that estrangement or alienation is not God's problem, but is actually a human problem.<sup>55</sup>

No doubt much of Iqbal's poetry and prose suggest to readers a straight way to delineation. In the light of his concept of 'ego' or '*Khudī*' he asks man to overcome his manifold alienation. He deals mainly with the problem of alienation to the social and religious levels.

Iqbal's insistent concern with the problem of alienation is brought out from his early poetry. He is of the view that for a creative person isolation from the world or detachment from the external circumstances is necessary:

The theme of solitariness is also in many instances the necessary conditioning factor for the blossoming forth

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of the creative potential. The creative writer, initially engaged in the act of externalization of his insights, also wishes necessity to have a responsive audience, the absence of whom brings him chagrin and frustration. It is also true that the pressure of the creative impulse finds a fruitful soil in the detachment that is forced upon him by the external circumstances.<sup>56</sup>

But isolation or seclusion, which is a prerequisite condition for creative activity, is different from alienation. 'Alienation' is *imposed* upon man by his society, nature and his own self. On the contrary, a poet's withdrawal from society and his feeling of loneliness is a healthy state of creative self that does not accept alienation. This isolation is aimed at strengthening one's individuality and rejecting the fallen state of day-to-day being. It is rather a first step towards de-alienation and a revolt against dehumanized society.

With the product of his creative activity an artist or poet of genius recovers his authentic self and establishes a new relation with nature and society by participating through his creative activity in reshaping human society and creating human values. Some scholars and critics have misunderstood the true significance of creative loneliness and have wrongly considered it is 'alienation', which according to them is a pre-condition for creativity. Iqbal himself did not confuse these two different human states. *Lāleh-i-Sahrāh* (The Tulip of the Desert) is a symbol of creative loneliness, and Iqbal does not all mean to present alienation as a value state in this poem.

According to Iqbal, man should 'create his own world if he be amongst the living' اپنی دنیا آپ پیدا کر اگر زندوں میں ہے Human existence, Sartre holds, lies beyond thought, and it moves towards transcendence that offers a field for personal venture. According to Karl Jaspers:

As human beings we were never self-sufficient; we are not our own only goal but relate to Transcendence. It enhances us and simultaneously enables us to see through ourselves and realize that we are nothing. ...



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Freedom and Transcendence lead to a basic consciousness.<sup>57</sup>

Sartre sets up a distinction between *being-for-itself* and *being-in-itself* (*pour-soi* and *en-soi*), and argues that values emerge as a result of the insertion of the former into the latter. In other words, according to him values are expression of the ‘for-itself’s striving’ towards identification with the unattainable ‘in-itself.’ The nihilizing movement of Sartre’s ‘for-itself’ towards its possibilities is really an essential mode of over-coming alienation or that which Iqbal calls estrangement or separation “فراق یا جدائی” or deprivation “مجبوری”, which is a recurrent theme in Iqbal’s most significant poetry. Man’s longing and loneliness is his exclusive privilege because according to Iqbal, the totality of the world of non-human beings is not prompted by this unique desire, He says:

دریا، گہار، چاند، تارے      کیا جانیں فراق و ناصوری  
شایاں ہے مجھے غمِ جدائی      یہ خاک ہے محرمِ جدائی

‘Rivers, mountains, the moon and stars —  
What do they know of separation and longing!  
The pain of separation — it becomes me alone;  
This dust — it alone has known separation.’<sup>58</sup>

Again, in this respect, Iqbal says in his *Bāl-i-Jibrīl*:

تارے آوارہ و کم آمیز      تقدیر وجود ہے جدائی

‘The stars are strayed and non-communicative;  
Separation is the destiny of all existence.’<sup>59</sup>

Thus, according to both Sartre and Iqbal, a creative being is condemned to alienation that produces an undying urge for bringing out man’s hidden creative potentialities to overcome alienation. Both the thinkers hold that for a creative human individual estrangement from the dehumanized world and detachment from other external circumstances that reduce ‘being-for-oneself’ to ‘day-to-day-being’ is very essential. Only in such a situation does man’s creative impulse find a fruitful

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soil and he can create and reshape his world according to his desires and aspirations.

However, according to Iqbal, man complains to God for his loneliness:

درجہاں یارب ندیم من کجا است      نخل سینا یم کلیم من کجا است...  
 م ..... ا ..... ص ..... سته      م ..... ا ..... ص ..... سته  
 درجہاں یارب ندیم من کجا است      نخل سینا یم کلیم من کجا است...  
 م ..... ا ..... ص ..... سته      م ..... ا ..... ص ..... سته

‘Where, O God is a companion for me in this world?  
 I am the tree of Mount Sinai, where is my Moses?...  
 I am as the tulip of the field,  
 In the midst of a company I am alone.  
 I beg of Thy grace a sympathizing friend,  
 And adept in the mysteries of my nature.’<sup>60</sup>

Again, in this regard Iqbal asserts in *Asrār-i-Khudī*:

دل بدوش و دیدہ بر فردا ستم      در میان انجمن تنها ستم  
 ”ہر کسی از ظن خودش یاد من      از درون من نجست اسرار من“

‘My heart is with yester eve, my eye is on to-morrow:  
 Amidst the company I am alone’  
 “Everyone fancies he is my friend,  
 But none ever sought the secrets within my soul.”<sup>61</sup>

Iqbal’s complaint to God is a plea to liberate him from his estrangement or loneliness, which hurts him severely. Iqbal’s man complains to God for his ‘being-in-the-midst-of-the-world’. Sartre and Heidegger too have rightly termed this state of being as ‘inauthenticity’. Iqbal says to God:

تیری خدائی سے ہے میرے جنوں کو گلہ      اپنے لیے لا مکاں میرے لیے چار سو

‘My madness has a grievance against thy Divinity;  
 Thou hast for thee spacelessness and has confined me to the  
 four dimensioned space.’<sup>62</sup>

Iqbal is fed up with the corporal short-lived, limited and alienated state of being. His intense feeling of alienation from

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the world reflects in his Urdū and Persian poetry. B.A. Dar expounds Iqbal's view in this regard with reference to his *Gulshan-i-Rāz-i-Jadīd*:

Free yourself from the snare of night and day;  
Reach within yourself and retire from this noisy world;  
Throw yourself into the inner recesses of your heart.<sup>63</sup>

The awful silence of an alienated being and its dread of nothingness is beautifully expressed by Iqbal in his poem "الصحراء" (The Tulip of the Desert) in *Bāl-i-Jibrīl* as follows:

یہ گنبدِ مینائی! یہ عالمِ تنہائی  
مجھ کو تو ڈراتی ہے اس دشت کی تنہائی....  
اے بادِ بیابانی مجھ کو بھی عنایت ہو  
خاموشی و دل سوزی سرمستی و رعنائی

'This azure dome, this loneliness!  
I dread the vast expansion of this desert ! ...  
O desert breeze, let me also have thy gifts:  
Silence and Pathos, ecstasy and grace.'<sup>64</sup>

The opening lines of the poem depict the poet's deep sense of anxiety he is experiencing in the world. Throughout this poem, the 'tulip' is used as a symbol of the passionate nature of man and of the intensity of the apprehension of Nothingness:

The poem evokes a kind of existential dread that rises in undulation little by little, and it also reflects an anticipatory phenomenon.<sup>65</sup>

This conception of dread or anxiety, or the anguish of being prevails throughout existential philosophy. It is a kind of prelude to existentialism: "The anguish of being reveals the radical contingency and ultimate meaninglessness of both man and the world."<sup>66</sup> Therefore, Iqbal's conception of 'alienation' too seems very close to that of the existentialists.

However, it should be noted that Iqbal's conception of alienation is somewhat different from that of the existentialists particularly that of Sartre and Heidegger. *Firstly*, Iqbal's approach is theistic and, therefore, his conception of alienation from God is not similar to that of Sartre and Heidegger's conception because they are atheists and for them the question of

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alienation from God does not arise, God is no guarantee of human freedom, but He, in the view of Sartre, takes away freedom from man. *Secondly*, there is also some dissimilarity between Iqbal's authentic man and the existentialist's authentic being. Inauthenticity is the outcome of alienation, and authenticity means de-alienation. In his later poetry, Iqbal suggests a way to de-alienation. His 'authentic man' or '*Mu'min* (Ideal Man) is the Vicegerent of God (on earth), *Who* has bestowed upon him His unique Attributes like Knowledge, Wisdom, Freedom, Creativity, Power, Patience, Justice, Consciousness, Love, Sympathy etc. This aspect of Iqbal's notion of authenticity is irrelevant to the views of Sartre, for according to him, it is only '*Human existence*', which is the ground of conscious and free life.

### ***(d) Freedom, Creativity and Responsibility:***

After having gone through and analyzed briefly some of the common elements in existentialism and Iqbalian philosophical ideas, we may take up the issue of freedom and creativity in order to compare and contrast Sartre's and Iqbal's approaches to these conceptions.

The conception of freedom in the philosophy of Sartre and Iqbal has been discussed separately in the previous pages of this book. Here we shall bring out the main points of agreement and disagreement between the two thinkers.

As indicated earlier, existentialism being a philosophy of 'freedom' and 'creativity' is anti-deterministic. The emphasis of existentialists on personal existence and subjectivity has led to a new stress on man's freedom and responsibility. According to the existentialists thinkers determinism, whether genetic, social or environmental, does not offer adequate explanation of man's inner potentialities and capabilities. The existentialists say that man brings out his unique inner potentialities and creative skill only because of his freedom. Their viewpoint insists that first of all, man exists in the world and with his utmost freedom creates himself through each of his actions. He is the maker of himself and "by virtue of his freedom, originally creates himself."<sup>67</sup> Man has considerable freedom within his own being in case he will to

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express it. According to Karl Jaspers, the dignity of man is in his freedom. He says:

To see the essence of man in his freedom, however, is to see him in his dignity. All individuals, myself included, are irreplaceable under the same high obligations.<sup>68</sup>

Freedom is a unique quest, which lies in working out the demands of one's inner being and expressing one's genuine or authentic self. Freedom means facing conflicting choices, making decisions and accepting them.

Jean-Paul Sartre alone among all the existentialist thinkers elaborated a systematic and detailed theory of freedom. He approaches the problem from the atheistic viewpoint. Man is completely free at his will to do whatever he likes. To him there no God and hence "everything is permitted."<sup>69</sup> Sartre says:

Nothing will be changed if God does not exist;... and we shall have disposed of God as an out-of-date hypothesis which will die away quietly of itself.<sup>70</sup>

In case God does not exist, Sartre points out, there is only one being whose existence comes before its essence and that being is 'man'. Man is indefinable, because to begin with, he is nothing:

Freedom is precisely nothingness which *is made-to-be* at the heart of man and which forces human reality to *make itself* instead of *to be*... for human reality, to be is to *choose oneself*; nothing comes to it either from outside or from within which it can *receive or accept*... Thus, freedom is not *a being*; it is *the being* of man — i.e. his nothingness of being.<sup>71</sup>

Human individual will not be anything unless and until he will be what he makes of himself. Through his freedom and creativity he makes his own world as suited to him. Hence, there is no human nature, because there is no God to have such an idea of it:

For if indeed existence precedes essence, one will never be able to explain one's action by reference to a

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given and specific human nature; in other words, there is no determinism.<sup>72</sup>

Man is not what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, what he chooses and “what he makes of himself”<sup>73</sup> through freedom, and” that is first principle of existentialism.”<sup>74</sup> However, freedom, according to Sartre, is the only ground of all values.

On the contrary, regarding freedom and creativity, Iqbal has quoted various Qur’anic verses in his Urdu and Persian poetry and particularly in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, affirming his faith in *Allah*. In the *fourth* lecture of the *Reconstruction*, he presents *three* significant themes from the Qur’ān reaffirming the Islāmic view of man’s being (i) a Vicegerent of *Allah*; (ii) a chosen entity; and (iii) a trustee of a free personality which he accepted at his peril.<sup>75</sup> Iqbal argues that man’s freedom and creativity, in the sphere of ethics, must be under the direction of the highest Good and Absolute Freedom i.e. God. The greatest of all the obstacles, says Iqbal, in the upward life of the ego is matter or Nature, yet it is not evil, since it enables the latent powers of life to unfold themselves. According to Iqbal, the ego attains freedom by the removal of all the obstructions in its way. Therefore, it is partly free and partly determined; and reaches fuller freedom by approaching the individual who is most free, termed ‘God’.<sup>76</sup>

Conversely, Sartre’s position is not like that of Iqbal who maintains that man in some spheres of activity is free, and in some other spheres has to follow Divine Commands. Sartre emphatically asserts in *Being and Nothingness*:

Freedom is not a being; it is *the being* of man — i.e., his nothingness of being. If we start by conceiving of man as plenum, it is absurd to try to find in him afterwards moments or psychic regions in which he would be free.... Man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all.<sup>77</sup>

This is, in fact, the major difference between the approaches of the two thinkers. Sartre’s existentialistic outlook is labeled as

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humanistic and theistic because he saves man's freedom at the cost of God. Iqbal's theistic existentialism — if the term may be applied to his approach — is also deeply humanistic despite his firm faith in God, because God in his philosophical *Weltanschauung* does not deprive man of his freedom but rather guarantees it.

However, in spite of some differences, what both the systems have in common is the doctrine of freedom and creativity through which human existence can translate its authenticity into actions. For Iqbal, as for the Sartre, man is a self-contained centre of activity, self-conscious, creative and self-evolving being. Human self is free in the sense that it is not determined by anything outside it. Freedom is its own architect and the very laws governing its mode of operation in the world are of its own making. Above all, according to Iqbal, man is the architect of his own life and is the sole sovereign in the scheme of creation and the undisputed master of his destiny. Iqbal says:

مردِ حق بَرندہ چون شمشیر باش      خود جهان خویش را تقدیر باش

'O lover of Truth! Be conclusively final like a glittering sword,  
Be thy self the destiny of thine own world.'<sup>78</sup>

According to Sartre freedom reveals itself in dread that compels man to seek refuge in the inauthenticity of existence. To him overcoming dread leads to authentic existence that is moral, and flight from it is inauthentic and immoral. In Iqbal's philosophy, when one realizes what freedom is, it seems to be the source of all values. According to him life of the ego is possible in freedom only. He says:

بندگی میں گھٹ کے رہ جاتی ہے اک جوئے کم آب      اور آزادی میں بحر بیکراں ہے زندگی

'Life is reduced to a dried rivulet when it is imprisoned with confines;

In freedom, life embraces boundlessness like an ocean.'<sup>79</sup>

Iqbal maintains that there are only ego-sustaining and ego-dissolving axcts.<sup>80</sup> Freedom sustains the ego, while slavery dissolves into nothingness. Man's first act of disobedience to God, which caused his expulsion from Heaven, was an act of

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freedom that meant to sustain the ego. Escape from freedom, according to Iqbal, is an ego-dissolving act that negates all future for human existence. He asserts that when a person gives up his freedom, he falls down from the high pedestal of human existence, into the state of inauthenticity. Iqbal, in his poems, calls all the acts of the slave devoid of morality. According to him even his prayer is not authentic, because it negates the freedom of ego; it is not a bold “yearning for a response in the awful silence of the universe.”<sup>81</sup> A slave’s prayers deepen and thicken this silence. To accept slavery and to remain contented with this state is the death of ego. Real man can only be brought up in the spirit of freedom, while slavery distorts character, degrades human nature and finally lowers man to the level of beasts.<sup>82</sup> On the one hand, God refuses to respond to the prostrations of the slaves, and, on the other, the earth refuses to accept the dead body of a slave:<sup>83</sup>

آہ ظالم! تو جہاں میں بندہ محکوم تھا؟      میں نہ سمجھی تھی کہ ہے کیوں خاک میری سوزناک  
تیری میت سے مری تاریکیاں تاریک تر      تیری میت سے زمیں کا پردہ ناموس چاک!  
الہذر محکوم کی میت سے سو بار الہذر      اے اسرائیل! اے خدائے کائنات! اے جان پاک!

‘O, the heartless being! Thou hast been a slave in the world;  
Because of thine surrender to slavery this heart of mine is  
burning like hell.  
Thy corpse has made my darkness even darker;  
Thy corpse has torn into shreds my veil of modesty!  
Beware of the corpse of a slave; beware as hundred times;  
‘O, *Israfil*! O the Creator of the Universe! Pure Soul!  
Beware!’

For Iqbal, freedom is the highest religious, social, moral and political value. It is the essence of man’s creativity through which he unfolds his inner potentialities. He gave a philosophical orientation to his attempt to reconstruct the religious ideas according to the historic necessity of his times. Like Sartre, Iqbal accorded the highest position to freedom in the hierarchy of values. No doubt freedom occupies similar position in the existentialist philosophy in general, but Iqbal’s concept of



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freedom seems far more comprehensive than that of any existentialist thinkers including ever Sartre. Sartre's views are in conflict with those of Iqbal when he (Sartre) proclaims that there is no God and "we are left without excuse"<sup>84</sup> and that "man is condemned to be free."<sup>85</sup> Iqbal says that there *is* God — Who is the Most Free and is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. The human ego attains highest freedom by removing all the materials obstacles in its way, though matter is not a bondage, it rather paves the way for attaining freedom. And attaining supreme freedom does not mean that human self or Ego has to annihilate itself for the sake of being absorbed in God. Man remains man and does not lose his *Khudī* or ego-hood. The Prophet of Islam, the ideal and the most perfect of all the Prophets has to ask His followers to proclaim:

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

‘We bear witness that Muhammad(s) is the slave and the messenger of *Allah*’.

On the similar standpoint the Prophet Jesus Christ made his declaration that:

قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَالْحَقِّ عَلَىٰ نَبِيٍِّّ

‘I am the slave of *Allah*. He hath given me the Holy Book and hath appointed me a Prophet’<sup>86</sup>

It reiterates that man is first of all ‘a man’ howsoever high a position he may attain. The obedience to *Allah* ensures the life of human ego and strengthens his *Khudī*, which is life of freedom. For Iqbal freedom is not a value or mode of human existence. It is the very life of his *Khudī* (ego-hood).

Iqbal seems to be in agreement with Heidegger and Sartre who told that it is the fact of consciousness, which radically distinguishes man from other beings and all other creatures. The issue assumes central importance in the thought of Iqbal. For Iqbal the realization of freedom is the core of human consciousness. According to him it is not something static, rigid, given and complete, but it is a dynamic process, and because of

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freedom it is a self-creative process based on an act improvisation and rejection of what has been (its bondage). Like Iqbal, both theistic and atheistic existentialists maintain that man is incomplete, indefinable and unpredictable. As Karl Jaspers says:

Nobody can conceive all human potentialities. Man is always capable of doing more and other things than anyone expected. He is incomplete, he cannot be completed, and his future is never sealed. There is no total man, and there never will be one.<sup>87</sup>

Similarly, Sartre asserts:

[Man] is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself.<sup>88</sup>

For Iqbal, human consciousness is the basic and central subject of discussion. According to him, it is only this unique faculty of consciousness, which makes man radically distinct from other worldly objects, so that he can participate in the creative act of God. Here Iqbal differs from Sartre, according to whom there is no other creator but only human individual. Iqbal says that God is the Supreme Creator of everything and man, with his consciousness and other capabilities, participates in the creative process of *Allah*, he says:

Man, therefore, in whom egohood has reached its relative perfection, occupies a genuine place in the heart of Divine creative energy and thus possesses a much higher degree of reality than things around him. Of all the creations of God, he alone is capable of 'consciously participating' in the creative life of the Maker.<sup>89</sup>

According to Iqbal, this universe is a Divine creation but it is not a complete act of creation:

The process of creation is still going on, and man too takes his share it, inasmuch as he helps to bring order into at least a portion of the chaos. The Qur'ān indicates the possibility of other Creators than God.<sup>90</sup>

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He, again, expresses his views more clearly in the following verses:

یہ کائنات ابھی نامتام ہے شاید کہ آ رہی ہے دما دم صدائے کُنْ فیکون

‘The universe is still incomplete perhaps,  
For one may respond to ever-recurring command of  
“come into being.”’

جہاں اور بھی ہیں ابھی بے نمود کہ خالی نہیں ہے ضمیر وجود

‘There are other worlds unseen  
And the essence of existence is not yet void!’<sup>91</sup>

It is man, in view of Iqbal, who is destined to complete the process of creation. In a long poem *Sāqi Nāmāh*, he writes:

ہر اک منظر تیری یلغار کا تری شوخی فکر و کردار کا  
یہ ہے مقصد گردش روزگار کہ تیری خودی تجھ پہ ہو آشکار

‘Every one of them waiting for thy conquest;  
For the unbridled play of thy thought and action.  
The object of the passage of time is but one;  
To reveal to thee the possibilities of thy ego.’<sup>92</sup>

Iqbal lays great stress on man’s creative activity and refers to the Qur’ān, which expressly mentions creators besides *Allah*. For instance, one of the following verses of the Holy Book (*Qur’ān*) indicates:

فَتَبَرَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ (المؤمنین: ۱۴)

‘Blessed is God, the best of those who create.’<sup>93</sup>

Such a reference to the Qur’ān indicates how Iqbal conceives the act of human ‘creativity’. One will not find in Sartre or other atheistic existentialists this view of human creativity. And it is in this unique interpretation of human freedom and creativity that Iqbal goes beyond existentialist philosophy and surpasses its conception of freedom.

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**CHAPTER VII**

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

In our comparative study of the conception of freedom as advocated by Sartre and Iqbal, we have drawn certain parallels and noted certain points of difference between the two. Such a Study may be considered by some as misleading because of two reasons: *First*, the *Weltanschauung* of the two is apparently radically opposed, that is, one is an atheist while the other is a theist; *Secondly*, Sartre's philosophy is the culmination of the anti-intellectualistic tradition of Western philosophy, particularly representing a revolt against the Platonic-Christian world-outlook, while Iqbal's philosophy is a radical point of departure within the frame-work of Eastern thought, particularly the Islamic tradition of philosophy. Freedom and creativity became the central theme of discussion for both the thinkers.

Iqbal's position is unique in the Eastern world that has been under the influence of a passive, ascetic and other-worldly outlook of Sufistic philosophy. Moreover, it is to be noted that the period in which Iqbal composed his poetry and developed his philosophy of ego with emphasis on freedom was an era of total surrender of the East to the colonial domination of the West and the multidimensional exploitation that the imperial system practiced. The people of the East in general and the Muslim countries in particular, from the far end of the North Western Africa, that is Algeria up to the Middle East and further extending to the Indian sub-continent and the far Eastern Muslim countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, were forced to passively accept the loss of their identity and individuality in the face of the aggressive racial policies of the Western powers, particularly the Britishers. Iqbal was educated under the 'British *Raj*', a product of the English system of education conceived by Lord Macaulay (1800-59). He was a pupil of Sir Thomas W. Arnold, who motivated him to go to England and complete his education there. Moreover, he was knighted an honour much cherished by all the feudal Lords and the servants of the British Empire. It is interesting that his contemporary poet and reformer,

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Rabindranath Tagore, declined to accept this title at a particular juncture of the struggle for freedom of India, but Iqbal never did this act of asserting his hatred for the British Rule. Despite this apparent weakness on the part of Iqbal and his admiration for and his intimate relations with some of the feudal lords like Amanullah Khan, the King of Afghānistān, the Nizām of Hyderābād and his chief minister, Mahārāja Sir Kishan Prasād, Nawāb of Bhopāl and many minor *zamindārs* of Punjab, he could advocate and develop a philosophy that ultimately led not only the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent but also Hindus of India to attain freedom from the slavery of the British Rule.

There is a basic difference in temperament and character of a purely creative genius and a philosopher or an ideologue of revolutionary dimensions. J.P. Sartre, a Western French philosopher and *litterateur*, who was a militant combatant in the French Resistance Movement against the Nazi Occupation of France during the Second World War, could develop a conception of freedom on the basis of existential approach. He was a self-professed atheist. Iqbal is acclaimed as the champion of freedom of the East all over the Muslim World, particularly by the post Islamic Revolutionary Iran. Iqbal never participated as a militant combatant in the struggle for freedom. For a few years he was a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly under the 'British *Rāj*' and he also acted as the president of the Muslim League for a while. During his tenures as the President of the Muslim League and a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, he fought and advocated for greater freedom for Indians, and championed the cause of the Indian Muslims. Taking into consideration the entire career of Iqbal as a philosopher, as a poet and as a political activist, it may be said that he never proved himself to be a revolutionary political ideologue. In Pakistan he is seen and respected as a creator or founder of Pakistan and the advocate of pan-Islamic movement, yet he is equally respected and admired in secular India for his advocacy of the up-lift of the Indians irrespective of their caste, creed, language, religion and region.

Apparently Sartre seems to be a far more radical revolutionary philosopher as compared to Iqbal. Sartre's position

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attains greater prominence in this role in view of his active opposition to the imperialist designs of his own country, France, against the Algerians and the USA's aggression against and occupation of Vietnam. He also emerged as one of the chief advocates of the New-Left in Europe. These peculiar characteristics of Sartre's political activity project him as one of the chief advocates of human freedom in the context of the contemporary political struggle for freedom throughout the world as well as at the level of developing a philosophy to support his politics. On the other hand, apparently, Iqbal's interest is confined to the East and the Muslims only.

In this historical context any study of Iqbal on the basis of his philosophical notions of human freedom, egohood (*Khudī*) and human creativity seems to contrast with the political activities of Sartre. We, in the present study, have tried to put these trivial considerations aside and emphasized Iqbal's purely philosophical notions that are pregnant with revolutionary socio-political implications regarding human freedom that includes man's capacity to create his own being along with his environment, both at the social and political levels. Iqbal may be regarded as a visionary rather than a revolutionary.

This study, as objective as possible, has led us to certain definite conclusions. These may be enumerated as follows:

- (1) The distinction between the two versions of existential philosophy as theistic and atheistic is superficial so far as the positive affirmation of human existence and individuality is concerned.
- (2) Iqbal's theistic position, as compared to others' theistic positions regarding human freedom and creativity, has more points in common with Sartre than any other existentialist thinker, who far from being a theist is a staunch atheist.
- (3) Iqbal's position is unique in the history of Muslim thought with regard to freedom and creativity. No Muslim philosopher, either in the past or at the present has ever regarded freedom as the supreme value or rather the value of all values (*Summum Bonum*).

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- (4) Sartre and Iqbal, living in the twentieth century, which despite all its claims to technological and bureaucratic advancement, reduces individual man to an infinitesimal part of the gigantic socio-political machinery of the present day, emphasize ontologically the right of individual human being to live and act as a free being. Their theistic and atheistic approaches, in spite of the fundamental difference in their respective world-views, converge on the issue of human freedom and creativity.
- (5) So far as human freedom is concerned, no humanistic philosophy, either theistic or atheistic, can deny man's right to freedom and creativity. Iqbal on the basis of his firm commitment to the Absolute Sovereignty of *Allah*, according to the Qur'anic teachings, and Sartre, according to his denial, of the existence of God, affirm the same fact, that is human freedom and his inherent and innate ability to create his own self, his values, his environment and also the entire universe in which he lives.
- (6) The minor differences between Sartre and Iqbal, in the context of the present historical situation of man, seem to be insignificant. However, man's belief or unbelief in God makes a significant difference. Iqbal's man (*mu'min*), who attains freedom through sub-merging his absolute freedom—a freedom that may be ascribed to God only — is freer in the view of Iqbal than the free individual whom Sartre advocates.
- (7) In our view, whether a self-conscious thinker is committed to a particular religion or to humanism, devoid of any conception of a Sovereign-Free Being, that is God, has to affirm his faith in man's freedom.

Sartre and Iqbal seem to agree upon this issue that whether one believes in God or not, it is the individual human being's right to freedom that is to be accepted, supported and believed in. It is this point on which an atheist Sartre and a theist Iqbal converge to agree.

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Such a study that was undertaken by us needs further elaboration by comparing and contrasting various philosophers having divergent world-outlooks, ontologically, politically, socially and psychologically, regarding the nature of human being and his capacity for *freedom* and *creativity*. We feel that such a study is indispensable in the contemporary situation, which threatens to deprive human individual of his freedom and endeavours to submerge all differences within an all-embracing physicalism and technocracy, wrongly called pan-humanism, a modern atheistic version of pantheism. Iqbal revolted against the Sufi's pantheism like Kierkegaard, while Sartre revolt has been against the modern pan-physicalism. Both revolted with a view to affirm and assert the right of individual beings to freedom, for without freedom human existence becomes absurd and meaningless.



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